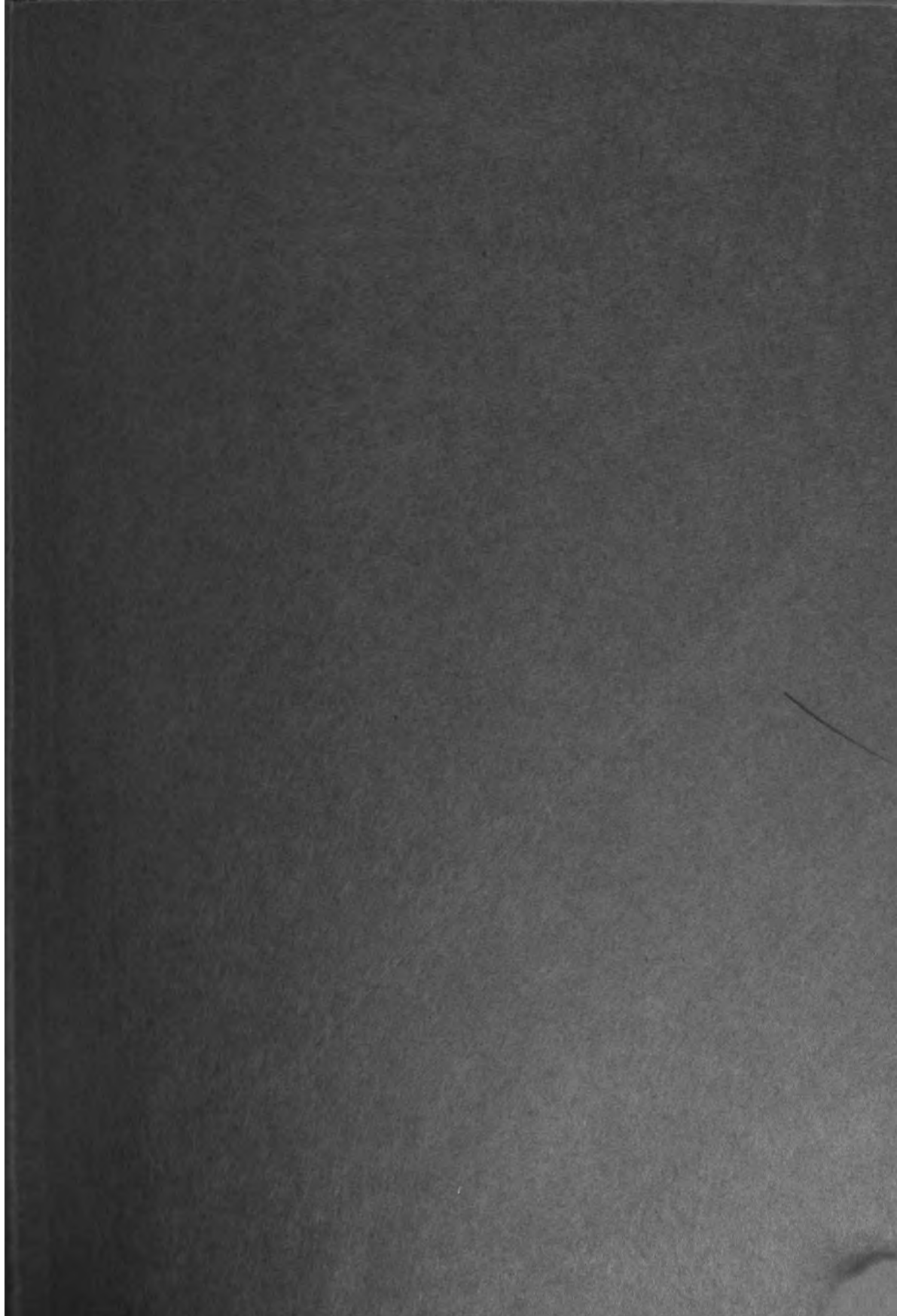


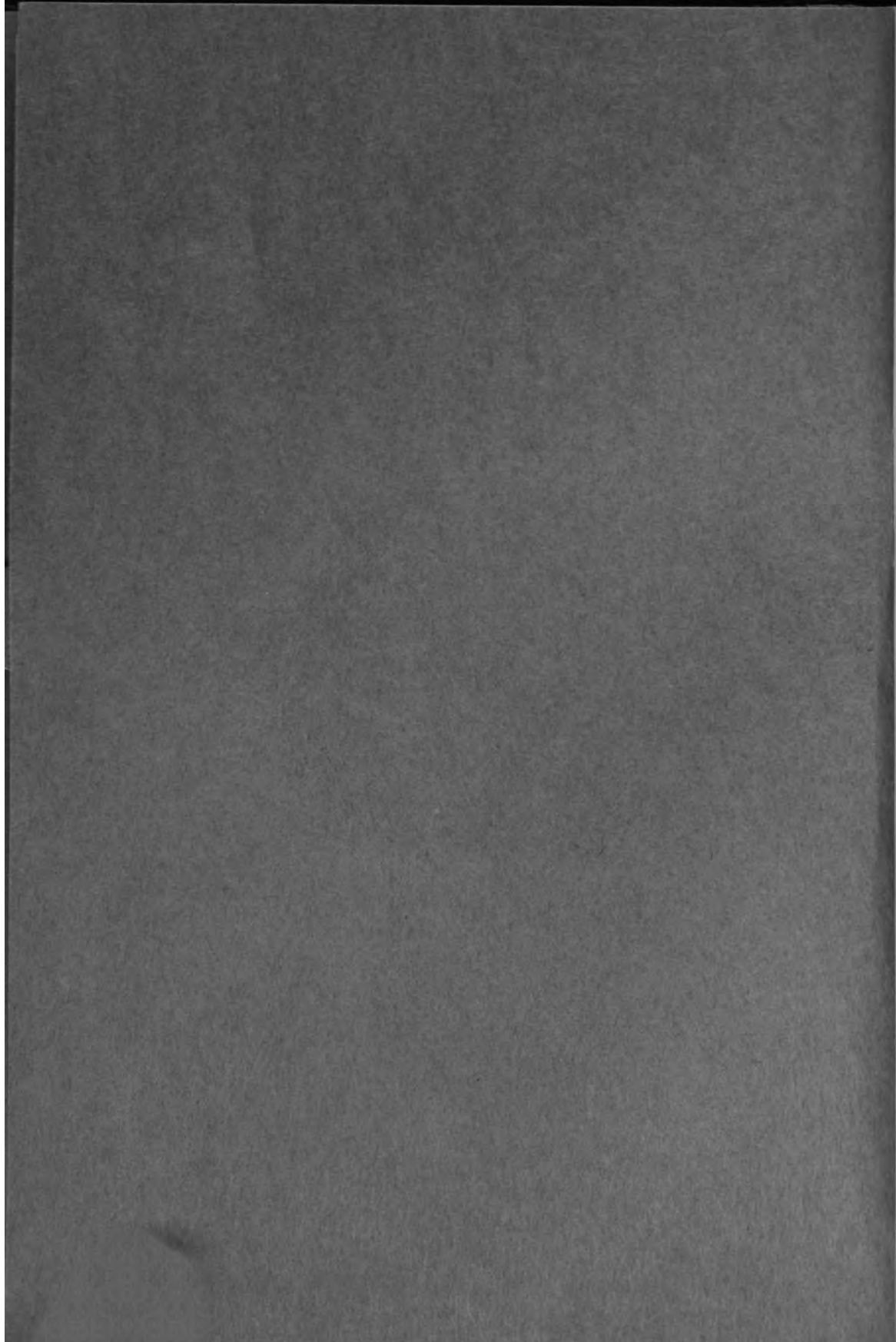


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Poet Lore

A Magazine of Letters

EDITED BY

CHARLOTTE PORTER AND HELEN A. CLARKE

VOLUME XXV

JANUARY—DECEMBER, 1914



Arti et Veritati

BOSTON
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1914

INDEX TO VOLUME XXV

P102
 P7
 V-25
 12

April Dreaming — Ruth McEnergy Stuart	611
Ariel — Charlotte Porter	217
Art of "Humilis," The — Maurice Saint-Chamarand	572
Bayadère, The — Rabindranath Tagore	61
Beauduin, Nicolas — F. Jean-Desthieux	322
Beauduin, Nicolas — The Poetry of the Epoch	336
— The Town in Me	348
Best, Sasha — Translator	
— Great White Bird, The, by Charles Vildrac	228
— Heights, A Play, by A. Goetze	1
— In the Shadow of Statues, A Play, by Georges Duhamel	371
— Light, The, A Play, by Georges Duhamel	161
— Prison in Spring, The, by Georges Duhamel	460
— Spring, by Charles Vildrac	137
— Those There Are, by Charles Vildrac	139
Best, Sasha — Georges Duhamel	204
Braithwaite, William Stanley — Rest Thee, in Thy April Bed	142
— Four Lyrics	254
Bride of the Moore, The, A Play — August Stramm	499
Burden of Lost Prophets, The — Edward J. O'Brien	370
Casey, John — From the Book of Visions	251
Cawein, Madison — The Elfin Garden	602
Chintamini: A Symbolic Drama — Girish C. Ghose	144
Coddington, Hester — Alvilde Prydz	245
Translator — He is Coming, by Alvilde Prydz	230
— From the Mountain Top, by Alvilde Prydz	459
— A Meeting, by Alvilde Prydz	498
Davies, Mary Carolyn, Translator — Chintamini	144
Deus Benignus et Natura — Frederic Hunter	497
Dix, Beulah Marie — The Legend of Saint Nicholas	473
Duhamel, Georges — Sasha Best	204
Duhamel, Georges — The Light, A Play in Four Acts	161
— In the Shadow of Statues, A Play in Three Acts	371
— The Prison in Spring	460
Elfin Garden, The — Madison Cawein	602
Fillmore, J. E. — War, A Play	523
Fool on a Roof, A — Jean Wright	53
From an Unpublished Sequence — Frederic Hunter	226
From the Book of Visions — John Casey	251
From the Mountain Top — Alvilde Prydz	459
Gælic, Three Songs from the — John J. Savage	140
Garden, The Elfin — Madison Cawein	602
Ghose, Girish C. — Chintamini: A Symbolic Drama	144
Goetze, A. — Heights, A Play	1
Great White Bird, The — Charles Vildrac	228
Green, Paula — Christian Friedrich Hebbel	123
Translator — Maria Magdalena, A Play	81
Hanrahan, Agnes I. — Roses	58
— Maureen	59
Hebbel, Friedrich — Maria Magdalena: A Middle Class Tragedy	81
— Judith: A Tragedy	257
Hebbel, Christian Friedrich — Paula Green	123
Heights, A Play — A. Goetze	1
He is Coming, A Play — Alvilde Prydz	230
Horniman, A. E. F. — The Manchester Players	210
House, Roy Temple, Translator — The Bayadère	61

"Humilis"—Body and Soul	594
—Four Poems	593
—Hands, The	593
—Invocation	496
—Love of Love	600
—Predestined Couples	597
"Humilis," The Art of — Maurice Saint-Chamarand	572
"Humilis," The Story of J. G. N., Called — Comte Leonce de Larmandie	576
Hunter, Frederic — From an Unpublished Sequence	226
— Deus Benignus et Natura	497
In the Shadow of Statues, A Play — Georges Duhamel	371
Invocation — "Humilis"	496
Iron Hive, The — Georges Turpin	606
Jean-Desthieux, F.— Nicolas Beauduin	322
Judith, A Tragedy — Friedrich Hebbel	257
Ketcham, Arthur — The Maid's Prologue	206
— A Song Before Twilight	612
Larmandie, Comte Leonce de — The Story of J. G. N., called "Humilis"	576
Legend of Saint Nicholas, A — Beulah Marie Dix	473
Leonard, Lucile Price — To the Pines	215
Light, The, A Drama in Four Acts — Georges Duhamel	161
Litchfield, Gertrude — Prescience	592
Lyrics, Four — William Stanley Braithwaite	254
Maid's Prologue, The — Arthur Ketcham	206
Manchester Players, The — A. E. F. Horniman	210
Maria Magdalena: A Middle Class Tragedy — Friedrich Hebbel	81
Marinetti, F. T. — Two Poems	439
Marinetti, An Appreciation of — Anne Simon	453
Maureen — Agnes I. Hanrahan	59
Meeting, A — Alvilde Prydz	498
Mountain Top, From the — Alvilde Prydz	459
Mukerji, Dhan Gopal, Translator — Chintamini: A Symbolic Drama	144
O'Brien, Edward J.— Arthur Upson	219
— The Burden of Lost Prophets	370
Translator — The Poetry of the Epoch, by Beauduin	336
— The Town in Me, by Beauduin	348
— Sancta Susanna, A Play, by August Stramm	514
Olivero, Frederico — Emile Verhaeren's Lyrical Trilogy	63
Peabody, Josephine Preston — The Wings, A Play	352
Pines, To the — Lucile Price Leonard	215
Plays — Bride of the Moor, The, by August Stramm	499
— Chintamini, by Girish C. Ghose	144
— Heights, by A. Goetze	1
— He is Coming, by Alvilde Prydz	230
— Judith, by Friedrich Hebbel	257
— In the Shadow of Statues, by Georges Duhamel	371
— Legend of Saint Nicholas, A, by Beulah Marie Dix	473
— Light, The, by Georges Duhamel	161
— Maria Magdalena, by Friedrich Hebbel	81
— Sancta Susanna, by August Stramm	514
— Shambles, by Henry T. Schnitckind	559
— Vengeance of Catullus, The, by Jaroslav Vrchlicky	536
— War, by J. E. Fillmore	523
— Wings, The, by Josephine Preston Peabody	352
— Witness, The, by Jaroslav Vrchlicky	546
Poetry of the Epoch, The — Nicolas Beauduin	336
Porter, Charlotte — Ariel	217
Prescience — Gertrude Litchfield	592
Prison in Spring, The — Georges Duhamel	460

Prydz, Alvide — He is Coming, A Play	230
— From the Mountain Top	459
— A Meeting	498
Prydz, Alvide — Hester Coddington	245
Recht, Charles — Jaroslav Vrchlicky and His Place in Bohemian Drama	534
Rest Thee in Thy April Bed — William Stanley Braithwaite	142
Roses — Agnes I. Hanrahan	58
Saint-Chamarand, Maurice — The Art of "Humilis"	572
Saint Nicholas, A Legend of — Beulah Marie Dix	473
Sancta Susanna, A Play — August Stramm	514
Sarojini of Hyderabad — Edith M. Thomas	60
Savage, John J.— Three Songs from the Gaelic	140
Schnittkind, Henry T. — Shambles, A Play	559
Sequence, From an Unpublished — Frederic Hunter	226
Shadow of Statues, In the — Georges Duhamel	371
Shambles, A Play — Henry T. Schnittkind	559
Simon, Anne — An Appreciation of Marinetti	453
— Translator — Two Poems, by Marinetti	439
Song Before Twilight, A — Arthur Ketcham	612
Songs from the Gaelic, Three — John J. Savage	140
Spring — Charles Vildrac	137
Stramm, August — The Bride of the Moor	499
— Sancta Susanna	514
Street, Charles M.— To Be or Not to Be	461
Stuart, Ruth McEnergy — April Dreaming	611
Tagore, Rabindranath — The Bayadère	61
Thomas, Edith M.— Sarojini of Hyderabad	60
Those There Are — Charles Vildrac	139
Three Songs from the Gaelic — John J. Savage	140
To Be or Not to Be — Charles M. Street	461
To the Pines — Lucile Price Leonard	215
Town in Me, The — Nicolas Beauduin	348
Toy Theater Plays — Legend of Saint Nicholas, A, by Beulah Marie Dix	473
— War, by J. E. Fillmore	523
— Wings, The, by Josephine Preston Peabody	352
Two Poems — Georges Turpin	606
Turpin, Georges — Two Poems	606
— War	606
— The Iron Hive	610
Twilight, A Song Before — Arthur Ketcham	612
Upton, Arthur — Edward J. O'Brien	219
Van Doren, Carl, Translator — Judith, A Play, by Hebbel	257
Verhaeren's Lyrical Trilogy, Emile — Frederico Olivero	63
Vildrac, Charles — Spring	137
— Those There Are	139
— The Great White Bird	228
Visions, From the Book of — John Casey	251
Vrchlicky, Jaroslav, and His Place in Bohemian Drama — Charles Recht	534
Vrchlicky, Jaroslav — The Vengeance of Catullus: A Play	536
— The Witness, A Play	546
War — J. E. Fillmore	523
War — Georges Turpin	606
Wings, The — Josephine Preston Peabody	352
Wright, Jean — A Fool on a Roof	53

MAR 31 1914

Heights — A. Goetze

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A Magazine of Letters

New Year's Number



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Heights	A. Goetze	1
<i>Translated from the German by Sasha Best</i>		
A Fool on a Roof	Jean Wright	53
Roses	Agnes I. Hanrahan	58
Maureen	Agnes I. Hanrahan	59
Sarojini of Hyderabad	Edith M. Thomas	60
The Bayadère	Rabindranath Tagore	61
<i>Translated by Roy Temple House</i>		
Emile Verhaeren's Lyrical Trilogy	Federico Olivero	63

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Poet Lore

VOLUME XXV

NEW YEAR'S, 1914

NUMBER I

HEIGHTS

Drama in Four Acts

BY A. GOETZE

Translated from the German by Sasha Best

CHARACTERS

ERICH WALDEN, composer.

ELLEN, his wife.

ANNIE, Erich's cousin.

DR. FRED HELLWIG, lawyer, Erich's friend.

KURT VON HOLZEN, Ellen's foster-brother, owner of large estates.

BRUNO VON HOLZEN, Kurt's cousin and manager.

HANS PAULUS, musician.

PHILIP MOOR, painter.

MRS. ARNE, housekeeper at Waldens'.

SERVANTS, GROOM.

TIME: The present.

ACT I

The scene represents ELLEN'S living and working-room, very simply but comfortably furnished in the Biedermeier style. The style is not rigidly carried out however, and is enlivened by some of ELLEN'S sketches for tapestry, as well as by some still-lives, photographs of famous pictures, casts of antiques, etc. On an easel there is a sketch just begun. The room has three doors, one leading into corridor, the two others into adjoining rooms. A piano is standing against the wall, and over it, very ostentatiously, is hung a copy of Titian's

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painting: 'Celestial and Terrestrial Love.' The picture seems, as it were, to dominate the room.

While the curtain rises are heard the last chords of a powerful symphonic composition. Having finished playing ERICH rises; ELLEN embraces him.

Ellen.— O, that is wonderful, beautiful! It surpasses my highest expectations. You, my all, my only one! How I love your force and your fire!

Erich (still absorbed).— You really like it?

Ellen.— More than I can say. Believe me, this symphony's success will be phenomenal. You will become famous over night.

Erich (nervously).— For mercy's sake, Ellen, don't always speak of fame and success. I beg of you, don't.

Ellen.— But why not?

Erich.— Because I care so little about fame. It means so little to me, so infinitely little.

Ellen.— But I don't understand that.

Erich.— It is only the light stuff that rises easily and quickly,— only shallow, light art finds immediate success.

Ellen.— But surely there is a certain effect, a certain success that must not be lost sight of. For after all, in art it is not one's self alone that one is working for.

Erich.— Every sincere work of art will meet with success sooner or later.

Ellen.— Ah, yes, but sometimes it comes too late for the artist.

Erich.— Maybe, but that is beyond our mortal judgment. But if the artist while working thinks only of the success of his work, he is lost — he is doomed, artistically doomed.

Ellen.— But why?

Erich.— The truest, the best part of the work has gone. (*Dreamily.*) It must grow — everything must grow — noiselessly — from within without — without care or purpose — naturally, quite naturally. As the flower from its root, just so naturally must it come — and all at once it is there, in all its glory and splendor.

Ellen.— Ah, yes, yes, you dearest of men, I understand. It is God who gives rain and sunshine, and the little plant has but to let these act upon it — and to wait.

Erich (earnestly).— Yes,— and it is thus, that life must act upon us and mature us; everything depends on that, in life as well as in art; that is the vital thing. And you see, so that we be not forced to lower our art in the pursuit of our daily bread, I have accepted this position at the Conservatory.

Ellen (embracing him).— Yes, and it is all very lovely so; and I feel

so happy and safe with you. So sheltered in this little nest up here. It was terribly foolish to talk of happiness, of fame and success. (*With much feeling.*) I have happiness, I am the most fortunate of women, and have found the kindest and noblest of men.

Erich (puts his hand over her mouth).— Don't, Ellen. Ellen, my own Ellen.

Ellen.— Yes, yes, yes, — you are the best, the worthiest man under the sun.

Erich (half annoyed, half laughing).— But, Ellen, it makes me afraid to have you put me on so high a pedestal.

Ellen.— You, and afraid?

Erich.— Yes, I'm afraid of tumbling down.

Ellen (earnestly).— Oh, I know it well, I often cause you sorrow,— I am so unstable, so full of caprices and inconsistencies.

Erich.— I ought to get used to it. But your occasional fits of coldness and indifference cause me so much suffering.

Ellen.— I am not indifferent, I am not cold. It only seems so to you at times. I have simply let myself go in this peace and calm. (*With feeling.*) Deep down in my heart I feel myself in harmony with you, and am happy.

Erich.— Really? Is that so?

Ellen.— Yes, it is so. Please believe me. Listen, when those periods of dreary misunderstanding again come, think of this conversation, and — hold me fast, hold me quite fast. Think that this little heart has lost its way and will come back again quite of itself.

Erich.— Yes, Ellen, I will think of that.

Ellen.— Swear to me that deep down in your inner being, with your inner self, you will always hold me fast.

Erich.— I don't have to swear it, that is self-understood.

Ellen.— No, no, swear it.

Erich.— I might just as well swear that I will breathe all my life,— it is so absolutely self-evident.

Ellen.— But you must swear it. You must —

Erich.— Well, then, if it makes you happy (*with mock ceremony*), I swear.

Ellen (smiling happily).— Ah, now all is well.

Erich.— Yes, now all is well. To-day is a glorious, a unique, glorious day. To-day, for the first time you have understood me in my work. Now everything else must turn for the best — because you see, what I have missed the most was your interest in my work. Our work is the very best part of us, the most profound, the most inner part of us.

Ellen (childishly).— But you used to say that your love for me was the best, the most inner part of you, — that love was really your true talent?

Erich.— That is true. Love alone gives me life and soul. Love is the center and the essential element of all my action.

Ellen.— Oh, it does me good to hear that.

Erich.— I have known and loved you three years now — and yet there hasn't been a half hour in my life that you weren't present. When I sit at my writing-desk I feel you beside me — you accompanying me on my lonely walks; when I lie down to sleep, you are my last thought, and when I awaken, I look forward to the moment when I will see you again. (*After a pause.*) Tell me, Ellen, do you also feel like that?

Ellen.— Not always. And I envy you this strong and constant feeling. It must be wonderful to feel one's self so strong.

Erich.— Sometimes this strength, or rather, this exclusiveness almost frightens me.

Ellen.— Frightens you?

Erich.— Yes. Sometimes I feel as though it were too much — as though you and my feeling for you, stood between me and the world — between me and my work. I do not see the glory of the sunset when you smile on me. The fragrance of the flowers is lost upon me; it is your nearness alone that I can breathe in — and over all that there is the terrible fear of ever losing you.

Ellen.— Oh, please, please don't talk like that. If only I could forever drive away from you these foolish tormenting thoughts. You swore to me to-day to hold me fast forever. Here, beneath this picture, you have sworn it. Let us always think of this: 'Celestial and Terrestrial Love' is the name of it. Do you know what that really means?

Erich.— Ah, yes, I know it well. But it is difficult to put it into words, and I should not wish to explain to you. One must live it one's self to understand it.

Ellen.— Oh, how beautifully you said that. Oh, if only I could thank you from the bottom of my heart, for your great and beautiful love. It is like a costly treasure, like inexhaustible riches. I am extravagant with it. I waste it, roll in it; and the treasure never grows smaller, never diminishes.

Erich.— It grows more, always more. (*Clasps her in his arms, rousing himself.*) But one cannot live on this treasure. It is time to go to work. (*Looks at the clock.*) Only a half hour until the lesson.

Ellen.— I, too, am in the mood for work. I shall design a beautiful pattern, something lovely. (*Laughs happily, and calls after him.*) When you become famous, I will become so with you. Then our pictures will appear in the '*Woche.*' (*Jokingly.*) 'The artist couple at work.'

Erich (disappearing by the door to the adjoining room).— Oh, you, have you again arrived at fame and success?

(*ELLEN laughs, goes to her easel and begins to work. Some one knocks.*

ANNIE enters in bicycle costume.)

Annie.— How do you do, Ellen? So deep in your work?

Ellen.— You want me to go bicycling with you?

Annie.— Yes, it is a glorious morning.

Ellen.— Yes, I believe that, but bicycling does not agree with me.

Annie.— Now, that is strange. You teased me every day to buy a wheel, so that I could ride with you when Erich couldn't, and now all at once you can't stand it?

Ellen.— But I can't help that, it isn't my fault that my heart is weak.

Annie.— You — a weak heart? Why you haven't any at all.

Ellen.— How queer you are. I am not as sensitive as others, that is all.

Annie.— I should think that all artistic natures were sensitive.

Ellen.— Nonsense.

Annie.— Erich, for instance.

Ellen.— Yes, Erich is sensitive. But it is like a weakness, and he suffers under it; and he envies me my coolness and my calm.

Annie.— How strange. But it is a part of him; because I should say that the more finely organized a being is, the more sensitive must he become. And now he regards that as a weakness?

Ellen.— Listen now, stop your philosophizing. I don't feel at all like it to-day. I have spent a charming hour with Erich — a heavenly hour, I tell you, I am so happy, so supremely happy that not even your wicked teasing can touch me.

Annie.— So, for a change you are very much in love again?

Ellen.— I, in love? I love Erich. Oh, Annie, if I could but tell you about it, if only for once I could make you understand. I know I was formerly an egoistical creature, but now all that has changed, has just been wiped out. I have to thank Erich for the most exalted hours of my life. I feel that he has saved me.

Annie.— No being can save another.

Ellen.— Yes, yes, believe me. Erich says so too. Regeneration through love. Love surely can do it.

Annie.— How I should love to believe that you really love Erich. (*With much feeling.*) I have always liked you, and should so like to see Erich happy.

Ellen (laughing).— Yes, you have always been terribly in love with your Cousin Erich.

Annie.— Oh, that is horrid; you should not have said that! That is where the little nixie's tail again peeps out.

Ellen.— The nixie's tail? Oh, how gruesome! (*Laughs.*) The nixie's tail? Huh,— the nixie's tail!

Erich (enters).— I heard your boisterous laughter, so I came in to find out what it was all about. How do you do, Annie?

Annie.— How do you do, Erich?

Ellen.— Oh, Erich, Annie is so unspeakably spiteful. She insists that I am a nixie.

Erich (laughingly).— But that is only flattering to you.

Annie (the same).— Oh, but it isn't on account of her beautiful eyes, you know.

Ellen.— She means that I am a heartless creature,— a mermaiden from deepest depths.

Erich.— Even to the scaly little tail? Come and let me see. I suppose you refused her some request?

Annie.— Of course,— she won't come bicycling with me.

Erich (laughs).— There you see? But even if it were so, even if you were a nixie a thousand times over, one of those bewitched creatures from the depths, I would always be the king's son who has come to break the evil spell — to save you.

Annie (banteringly).— Well, I see that it is hopeless, that I cannot tear either of you away from this idyl. And, meanwhile, this beautiful morning is being wasted. So I'll be off and will say good-bye.

Ellen.— And you are going alone?

Erich.— If you wait a minute, I will go with you as far as the Conservatory.

Annie.— No, thank you, don't bother. I want to go further, to Grunau. Good-bye.

Ellen, Erich.— Good-bye.

Erich.— Now I will get ready and get my music together. (*Goes into the adjoining room.*)

(*ELLEN takes palette and brush and begins to work.*)

Mrs. Arne (enters).— Here I am back again, Mrs. Walden. Have bought everything; have forgotten nothing. Potatoes, vegetables, butter and onions. And the grocer will send the kerosene right away.

Ellen (abstractedly).— Very well, very well.

Mrs. Arne (comes nearer).— But don't you want the account?

Ellen.— Oh, it's all right, I suppose.

Mrs. Arne.— Oh, yes, of course it's all right; I will put the change here.

Ellen.— Very well.

Mrs. Arne.— I had to pay a big price for the fish to-day. But they're good, I tell you, very good. But oh, so dear.

Ellen (looking up from her work).— How much were they?

Mrs. Arne.— Eighty pfennig a pound. It's on that slip. I wrote it all down. Last time they were only sixty pfennig, but the fish-woman says —

Ellen (crossly).— But didn't I tell you not to pay any more than last time?

Mrs. Arne.— Yes, yes, I know; living is so high. But Mr. Walden is so fond of fish, and they are good, those fish. Shall I clean them right away?

Ellen (going on with her work).— Yes, please do. And, then, Mrs Arne, Mr. Walden leaves soon, so you can clean up this room before you go.

Mrs. Arne (goes out but comes back after a few minutes, holding the net containing the fish in her hand).— See, Mrs. Walden, you must admit, they are fine, those fish. A delicious morsel. And she gave good measure, that woman did. There will be enough left for supper — fish mayonnaise. And Mr. Walden just loves that.

Ellen.— Why, they are jumping, the little things.

Mrs. Arne.— Yes, yes! Good stuff — jumping and alive! That's what I always say fish must be, alive and jumping.

Ellen.— The lovely little things. How golden they are!

Mrs. Arne.— Yes, of course.

Erich (coming in with his hat and music-roll).— Well, what is going on here?

Ellen.— Oh, just look here, at these lovely fish. See how they jump. Are n't they sweet?

Erich.— Yes, very pretty. Do you want them for a still-life?

Ellen.— They were really meant for our dinner, but it seems such a pity to kill them.

Erich.— Why not use them as models first? We could get some pleasure out of the little beasties first and eat them later. Don't you think so?

Ellen.— Yes, let us keep them alive. Mrs. Arne, please get a large dish to put them into, and fill it with water.

Mrs. Arne.— Yes, but what are you going to have for dinner?

Erich.— Oh, we'll find something. A potato-soup for instance, and I will bring some sausages.

Mrs. Arne (going out).— A queer lot, these artists. Here I bring them a delicious bit and they go and play with it.

Erich (beginning to open the net).— Won't they think it jolly to feel the water again.

Ellen.— And so the pleasure will be threefold.

Mrs. Arne (brings the dish with water).— There you are. I will go into the kitchen now to clean the vegetables for the soup.

Erich (has released the fish and put them into the pan of water).— And bring a little bread for the little beasties. You will see how they jump for it.

Ellen.— I have some here.

Erich.— But I must go — I can't stay another minute. Look at the time. Too bad, but I must miss the first feeding.

Ellen.— What a pity, dear.

Erich (at the door).— Tell me can I go with this old coat? I should like to save the new one a bit.

Ellen.— Yes, dearest, go on. You always look like a prince, no matter what you wear.

Erich (tenderly).— That is because my wife is a little princess. That is why I carry my nose so high. (*ELLEN laughs.*) Yes, the little princess is sitting here high up in the tower-room of our castle, while I am outside knocking about with the ogres.

Ellen.— Oh, you dreamer, you builder of air-castles.

Erich.— Yes, that is just what I am, a builder of air-castles. The building of castles in the air is my specialty. And would you believe it? I am convinced that all my castles will materialize, yes, each and every one of them. When, for instance, I wear this old coat, which I don't like to wear any more, in my thoughts I see myself dressed in the most approved fashion, and within myself I always see you decked out in the most gorgeous frocks, and our home furnished in perfect style. When taking a trip, I always travel first-class, and stop at the best hotels.

Ellen.— And all this in thought? And that satisfies you?

Erich.— For the present, yes! because I know for a certainty that some day it will all come true. That which we believe, which we hope for, and dream of, again and again — that will some time in our lives materialize perfectly. Ah, yes, that is so, the thoughts that we think most intensely, somewhere and at some time in our lives will take material form. And that is why we have so great a need of a cult of thoughts, of dreams. I deliberately and consciously cultivate this act of dreaming of success; it paralyzes all the sordid around me and gives new spring and energy to my nerves.

Ellen.— The dreaming of success? So you, too, think of success.

Erich.— Of course I, too, think of it and dream of it. Only this dreaming must not enter into my work. My artistic activity must not be hampered by such things; it must remain pure and unsullied. Therefore, I must keep my work and my dreams separated.

Ellen (laughs and kisses him). Oh, how strange you are, my prince from

the land of genius. But you really must go now, it is high time. (*Kisses him again.*)

Erich.— Good-bye, my darling. (*Goes.*)

(*ELLEN gets more bread, and crouches on the floor to feed the fishes. She is so absorbed that she doesn't hear the door open. BRUNO VON HOLZEN enters, very fashionably dressed; looks smilingly at her through his monocle. Coughs, and ELLEN starts. She is very much embarrassed.*)

Bruno.— Pardon me for disturbing you, my charming cousin, but your servant bade me enter like this, *sans facon*.

Ellen.— Ah, Bruno, it is you?

Bruno.— Only I and no apparition.

Ellen.— A very rare apparition, surely.

Bruno.— Yes, I must crave your pardon, but I have never been able to look you up, up here, much to my regret.

Ellen (piqued).— Yes, it is irksome to climb up three flights of stairs.

Bruno (ironically).— But it is pretty up here,— charming. And how good the air must be — so high above the masses. And the pretty view over the roofs —

Ellen (shortly).— Yes, very pretty.

Bruno (looking about him).— And cozy, too. Everything so close together; even an aquarium in the sitting-room.

Ellen (a trifle ashamed).— Oh, you mustn't look too closely — it is not very neat here to-day. *Erich* has been playing. (*Closes the piano, takes some music from the chair, etc.*)

Bruno (still gazing about him).— Please, leave it just as it is — it is perfectly charming this way. This is your *salon*, is it not, *chere cousine*?

Ellen (curtly).— I have no *salon*. Each of us has a working-room — *voila tout*. We must save, you know.

Bruno (affectedly).— 'Room enough in the smallest hut,' etc. — and this is the veriest nest for turtle-doves up here.

Ellen (anxious to change the subject).— How is Kurt? I hope nothing serious brings you here?

Bruno.— Unfortunately, I must answer in the affirmative. I have a letter for you. (*Opens his portfolio and hands her a letter.*)

Ellen.— From Kurt? You will pardon my reading it now?

Bruno.— Certainly. (*While ELLEN is opening the letter.*) Kurt has returned from Italy, a very sick man. The death of his wife has depressed him terribly.

Ellen (reads).— 'If you possibly can come out here for a few weeks to help me find a suitable housekeeper. *Erich*, I am sure, will be kind enough to permit it.' (*After a pause.*) Yes, that he surely will.

Bruno.— Your husband should not be too desirous of depriving himself of so much charm and loveliness.

Ellen (flattered).— I see that flattery is still your strong point.

Bruno.— I am still under the spell of your great beauty, my dearest cousin.

Ellen.— Tell Kurt, please, that I will come as soon as I possibly can. I shall only have to look over some of my gowns.

Bruno.— Don't forget a riding-habit, so that we can ride together — as we used to. It's the only thing to do now at Holzendorf; nothing one can do there now, on account of the mourning, you know.

Ellen.— Oh, yes, I had forgotten.

Bruno.— When can I send the carriage for you?

Ellen (gets up).— I must speak to Erich first; but no, he will consent to anything. To-morrow morning?

Bruno (also gets up).— Not to-night?

Ellen.— No, that could hardly be arranged.

Bruno (gazing at her fixedly).— That is too bad.

Ellen.— But to-morrow, surely.

Bruno (kissing ELLEN'S hand.— To-morrow then. *Au revoir.* (*Bows and goes.*)

Ellen (paces up and down excitedly, pushes the dish with the fish aside with her foot; opens the door and calls out).— Mrs. Arne, bring in my hat-boxes, please, and take away these silly things. You can kill them now, and clean them, I won't paint them after all.

Mrs. Arne (comes with the hat-boxes, and takes away the fish).— And shall I tidy up here?

Ellen (impatiently).— Oh, this everlasting rush. No, I'll do it myself. (*Takes out two hats, tries them on before the mirror. After awhile, in monologue.*) Oh, how annoying. The mourning, and black is so unbecoming to me!

Erich (enters with Dr. Hellwig).— Just think, Ellen, I had no lessons to give this morning.

Dr. Hellwig.— How do you do, Mrs. Walden?

Ellen.— How do you do, Doctor? (*To ERICH.*) I am so glad that you came back. Bruno von Holzen was here and brought me a letter from Kurt. He is ill, and begs me to come out to him for a few days, and to stay with him until he has found a housekeeper. (*Hesitating.*) But it will hardly be possible, will it?

Erich (reads the letter).— Why not? You must go this afternoon, and stay as long as he needs you.

Ellen (tenderly).— And you are really going to let me go?

Erich.— Why, of course, that is self-understood, is it not?

Ellen.— How good you are, my dear husband. Then I will arrange things so that you won't be too uncomfortable during my absence. Good-bye, Doctor. I don't suppose I shall see you again?

Dr. Hellwig.— Good-bye, Mrs. Walden.

Ellen (goes out, but turns around in the doorway).— And, Erich, the symphony will soon be finished, very soon?

Erich.— But why so soon?

Ellen.— Oh, I do so want all the people at Holzendorf, and all those who come there to learn to know it, and to envy me my celebrated husband. All, all, all of them.

Erich (laughs heartily).— Nixie, nixie. (*To DR. HELLWIG.*) Aren't they funny, these little women?

Dr. Hellwig.— Funny? Hm. But I must say, this Holzen is asking you to make quite a sacrifice.

Erich.— A sacrifice? But why?

Dr. Hellwig.— Why, yes, I think he is asking rather a great deal.

Erich.— But why? Could there be anything more natural than helping out good old friends?

Dr. Hellwig.— But von Holzen is not your friend in this sense.

Erich.— He is Ellen's foster-brother.

Dr. Hellwig.— Well, yes, but still it is a sacrifice for you to spare your wife for such a long time.

Erich.— But I am willing to make the sacrifice.

Dr. Hellwig.— And a dangerous experiment, too, I call it.

Erich.— How so?

Dr. Hellwig.— Do you think so little of sending your wife back to that soft, luxurious atmosphere after she is just beginning to get used to the simplicity of your home?

Erich (proudly).— If her home is simple, it is her own, and she would not change it for anything in the world.

Dr. Hellwig.— My dear boy, you do not know the dangers lurking in the life of the world for the heart of a woman.

Erich.— And you don't know what it means — a union like ours.

Dr. Hellwig (skeptically shrugging his shoulders).— Perhaps not.

Erich.— Where each but lives in and for the other, where two are so entirely one in thought and feeling, that they can, without the slightest fear allow each other the greatest freedom.

Dr. Hellwig.— Yes, if one were quite sure of that. But where find such a union?

Erich.— Here with us. You know, I feel to-day as though I could

send my wife into most distant countries — for weeks and months — without the possibility of exchanging letters — and yet have the assurance of greatest closeness.

Dr. Hellwig.— These are mere moods, my boy.

Erich.— Oh, no, they are not mere moods. I have a conception of love, such as I can't describe to you. It is the Immeasurable, the Inexhaustible, the Unbounded, the Unlimited, it is, in fact, the Absolute, the Eternal.

Dr. Hellwig.— Oh, my boy — love and eternity. What does that mean, eternity? All that we do here on earth is but for a beginning, and there is always an end,— even though love were to last until death, which it rarely does, for most of the time the general break-up comes a little before. Hardly have we told a girl that we love her eternally, when lo, behold her who already has wrinkles on her brow, to make us rue the vow.

Erich.— What an idea, and is that why you are waiting so long?

Dr. Hellwig.— Well, now let me tell you something. True love, as I understand it, is a sort of a feeling of comfort. When we have that feeling of comfort with another being, then we love him so to say. When I regard a girl with the same feelings as I would my dressing-jacket that I am planning to have lined for the winter, then has the time come for me to marry her. So long as that is not the case, so-called love but causes disturbances in the human mechanism. Only storms — and I thank you for them. And it is just such storms that you are now facing.

Erich.— And what gives you this idea?

Dr. Hellwig.— Ellen's remark about liking to see you famous, so that the world would envy her her famous husband. She wants to be envied.

Erich (smiling).— You are an insufferable skeptic and pedant. To put such a construction on Ellen's child-like ideas. You have n't a very high opinion of women.

Dr. Hellwig.— Oh, I don't know. I believe that most of them are like a mirror that reflects the form of him who happens to hold it in his hand.

Erich.— But you admit that there are exceptions, don't you?

Dr. Hellwig.— Oh, yes, certainly. But you don't put your wife under the head of the exceptions, do you?

Erich (laughing).— But Annie is an exception, is she not?

Dr. Hellwig.— Hm!

Erich.— There you see, that is where I have you. For every man, the woman he loves is the great exception.

Dr. Hellwig.— There are other reasons why Holzendorf is a dangerous place for women.

Erich.— You are alluding to Bruno von Holzendorf? How absurd!

Dr. Hellwig.— He has broken up marriages before this.

Erich.— That is why all women of distinction shun him.

Dr. Hellwig.— Up to the time until they, too, are drawn into the circle of his fascinations.

Erich.— How ridiculous!

Dr. Hellwig.— We are only speaking in a general way, of course. But tell me this, your theory of absolute love would lead one to believe that you would even pardon a little marital aberration.

Erich.— What nonsense again!

Dr. Hellwig.— Theoretically speaking of course. A very small one?

Erich.— Stuff and nonsense!

Dr. Hellwig.— Theoretically speaking, eh? Tell me?

Erich.— Well, theoretically speaking, yes!

Dr. Hellwig.— Even if it were your own wife?

Erich (after a pause).— Lord, yes — theoretically speaking, yes. And considering it in a strictly objective manner — yes.

Dr. Hellwig.— Crazy fellow!

Erich.— Taking the strictly objective point of view —

Dr. Hellwig.— Well, old fellow, I don't want to bore you with my skepticism, and don't wish to break in on your fantastic dreams. I really came only to see whether your Cousin Annie were here.

Erich (abstracted).— Annie? Oh, yes, she was here; went out to Grunau on her wheel.

Dr. Hellwig.— Is that so? I will try to catch up to her. You don't mind?

Erich.— Oh, not at all, not at all! And come to see me when I am a grass-widower. Come for a trio evening.

Dr. Hellwig.— With Annie? Gladly; but on condition that it will be a classical evening — no dishing up of those modern noodle soups. (*Goes.*)

Erich (laughing).— How would I ever dare! Good-bye. (*Alone.*) What have they against Ellen I wonder. Strange — first Annie, then he. Pedants! (*Walks up and down with great strides, then sits down to the piano and plays Beethoven's song.*) I love you — as you love me — from morning until even. No day was there — where you and I — (*half sings, half speaks the words*) our sorrows have not shared. (*ELLEN enters, walks in on tiptoe, so as not to disturb him. ERICH sings louder.*) God's love and blessing on you, child, — my joy, my heart's delight, God keep and bless you, dear — God bless and keep us both. (*Turns to ELLEN.*) Us both.

CURTAIN

ACT II

A half-open, vine-covered veranda in Schloss Holzendorf. To the right, broad steps leading into the garden. Comfortably furnished with wicker tables and chairs.

Ellen (arranges flowers in vases. Gowned richly, in a light morning robe).
— I have been here just four weeks to-day.

Bruno (in a fashionable riding-suit, lying in a comfortable chair, follows her with his eyes).— Is that so? Oh, yes, to be sure. How time flies!

Ellen.— And I have become so used to dear, lovely old Holzendorf again, that it seems as though I had never left it.

Bruno.— You never should have left it.

Ellen.— Oh, how I enjoy it all! Sometimes I think that I should like to spend my whole life as I am now doing. I should ask nothing more of life than to play with these pretty things. To put those wonderful yellow roses in that Meissen bowl, then to try how they would look here or there, and to experiment how that green silk cover would go with the purple flowers — or some such thing. I have n't the least desire to paint it, or to make a design for tapestry from it. Not the least in the world.

Bruno.— Painting, after all, is dirty work.

Ellen.— But it is the only work that is considered ladylike. That's it, you see. But now I just revel in wasting time. (*BRUNO shrugs his shoulders.*) Oh, to have time for all the beautiful things. (*Coquettish.*) I can stand before the mirror for hours to find out how becoming to me this color is, or that, and to choose the suitable stockings for my various gowns. That is too lovely.

Bruno.— All that suffices for the artistic occupation of a lady.

Ellen.— I am very glad that Kurt did not wish me to wear mourning. But now I will have to leave soon, and I don't feel in the least like it.

Bruno.— Yes, that is nonsense, perfect nonsense!

Ellen (laughs).— But I must return to my husband sometime. I happen to be married you know.

Bruno (goes up to her).— That is just it! You should not have done that, dear.

Ellen (laughing).— Dear?

Bruno.— Was it wise, dearest, to do it?

Ellen.— Dearest?

Bruno.— Oh, I beg your pardon, Mrs. Walden. Is that better?

Ellen.— Yes, that is better.

Bruno.— So you are not entirely free from giddiness? You are not free

from moral giddiness,— that is what I mean to say. You are subject to qualms of conscience.

Ellen.— Not at all.

Bruno.— That is not decent, you know.

Ellen.— Not decent?

Bruno.— No, 'qualms of conscience,' says Nietzsche, 'are indecent.'

Ellen (laughs).— Oh, I see. Then, if I am to come under the head of decent individuals, I must have no 'qualms of conscience.'

Bruno.— Yes, and now prove this theory. (*Tries to take her hand.*)

Ellen (draws away).— No, not to-day.

Bruno.— Not to-day? To-morrow then?

Ellen (humming coquettishly).— 'To-morrow, perhaps to-morrow.'

Bruno.— Ah, Carmen. But am I not right, Carmen should never have married?

Ellen.— What an idea. But I love Erich, yes, I really love him. Only when I have n't seen him for some time, I forget him, of course.

Bruno.— The 'of course' is splendid.

Ellen.— Yes, and very often I don't even remember how he looks.

Bruno.— How lovely!

Ellen.— But that is only a weakness of my memory. All people have it.

Bruno (humming).— '*L'amour s'envole, s'envole, s'envole.*'

Ellen.— But that is a pity.

Bruno.— What is a pity?

Ellen.— That love flies.

Bruno.— Oh, I don't think so. On the contrary, that makes room for something new.

Ellen.— But you know, when I see Erich again, I feel how much after all I do love him.

Bruno.— Mere force of habit.

Ellen.— You are horrid.

Bruno.— I am only honest. And you be honest as well, and admit that habit is a terrible bore. One ought to break the monotony of it as often as possible.

Ellen (laughs).— Your conclusions are excellent. (*Goes up to him; he takes her hand and kisses it above the wrist.*) Why do you smile so wickedly?

Bruno.— Why, I am not smiling.

Ellen.— Yes, yes, you were smiling.

Bruno.— I was thinking of an old and tried rule of life.

Ellen.— Which?

Bruno.— The kiss that is asked for is always refused; the kiss that is stolen is always forgiven.

Ellen.— You are a cynic.

Bruno.— I told you that I was honest.

Ellen.— Always?

Bruno.— As much as possible.

Ellen.— You are very courageous. I am cowardly sometimes.

Bruno (laughing).— I have noticed that.

Ellen (quickly).— Have you? How so?

Bruno.— Oh, by certain little formalities of address.

Ellen.— Yes, but — but —

Bruno.— But — but — it is just as well to be a little careful!

Ellen.— Yes, don't you think so? After all caution is not necessarily cowardice.

Bruno.— Oh, no, not by any means. I am anything but a fanatic of the truth. We must keep to ourselves the best things in life.

Ellen (emphatically).— You see, dear, (*holds out her hands to be kissed*) it is quite possible to be courageous in one sense, and cautious in another. Am I right?

Bruno.— Formerly you were more courageous in every sense, dear cousin mine. Do you remember how we used to race over the fields at night-time, on most spirited horses? Or how we used to swim across the lake by moonlight?

Ellen.— Yes, and Aunt and Kurt at the shore, frightened to death. Yes, I was daring in those days, — a perfect dare-devil! And it was always you that drove me on. But time cures us of these things — and when we are married —

Bruno.— The woman at my side would not have to forego her daring. A woman of temperament, a spirited horse, a fiery wine, a strong man — these are surely the things that belong together.

Ellen (excitedly).— It would not take me long to become as daring again as in the old days. But now? I have been weaned away from it all. My only sport consists in the running up and down of three flights of stairs, and bicycling. Erich loves it (*Bruno disdainfully impatient*), it is a recreation for him, he says, and I don't like it at all.

Bruno.— A pleasure for the people. A born rider certainly must not ride on the horse of steel. By the way, how did it happen that your horse ran away from you yesterday?

Ellen.— I don't know. I don't remember. When the animal felt the whip he went off like the wind, and I had only one sensation, that of everything turning, — but one thought, that I must not let go of the reins.

Bruno.— I don't see how you ever managed to keep your seat, flying over the fields as you did.

Ellen.— I expected any moment to be thrown off. How it happened that I lay in your arms, I don't in the least remember; but that moment meant salvation for me, dear, life and salvation and — bliss. (*Closes her eyes; he draws her to him tenderly.*) Is n't that Kurt coming? (*A noise outside causes them to start and separate.*)

Bruno.— No, it is nothing.

Ellen.— Poor, dear Kurt, if only one could give him relief from his suffering.

Bruno.— Oh, bother — relief and always relief!

Ellen.— Bruno!

Bruno.— There the doctors try to prolong his miserable existence, instead of ending it all, by means of a merciful drug.

Ellen.— You are heartless, he does so want to live!

Bruno.— That is just it. The more wretched a being is, the more he clings to life. A tragi-comic world. What is Kurt's life? What has it ever been? From childhood on he has been a weak, anæmic creature, that has been kept above water only by the most artificial means. A tremendous amount of energy, that might much better have been applied in other ways, has been spent to prolong an existence that to my thinking, has no reason for being at all.

Ellen.— How bitter you are!

Bruno.— This long waiting for the inevitable end unnerves me.

Ellen.— Waiting?

Bruno.— Yes, this waiting! Are n't we waiting, daily, hourly? Don't we get up every morning with the secret question, 'Has the end come?'

Ellen.— But we ask it fearfully, and we are relieved when the answer comes 'No.'

Bruno.— No, we are not relieved. Why lie to ourselves? Have you never, when hearing his hacking cough, his everlasting complaints, his glittering castles in the air, his fantasies, thought to yourself: If only this were over?

Ellen (half afraid, half admiringly).— How cruel you are, Bruno. Terribly cruel.

Bruno.— Truth is always cruel, and I want to be cruel. It is my nature to be cruel, because I want to rule.

Ellen (admiringly).— Yes, you must rule!

Bruno.— And that I cannot do, until this here has an end. Do you understand now what this waiting here means for me?

Ellen.— Yes, yes, you are a born ruler.

Bruno.— You understand that, because you, too, are born to rule. Don't you think I have remarked how proudly you sit in the Holzendorf carriage when driving to town?

Ellen (eagerly).— How do you know that?

Bruno.— I feel it because I understand you. How deeply the domestics at the hotel bow when they open the carriage-door for you; how the clerks in the stores fly when you give orders for Holzendorf, and how high you hold your head when you regard the fawning masses at your feet?

Ellen (intoxicated).— Yes, yes, it is as you say — just as you say!

Bruno.— You are born to rule — the same as I. And that is why you understand me. I want to have power over the miserable masses, and I tell you the one thing that gives you that power is gold; gold alone gives power over everything; and that is why we must strive to get it with all and any means in our power.

Ellen.— With all and any?

Bruno.— Yes, with all and any, — and only stop before the letter of the law! All the rest is sentimentality.

Ellen (thoughtfully).— Erich says that power is something quite different.

Bruno.— What does he say?

Ellen.— I don't remember very well. Wait (*thinks, then hesitates*), I think he says that power is absolute command of self.

Bruno (laughs).— Has he that?

Ellen.— No, but he strives for it.

Bruno.— Strives for it! Modest creature! Does he not also say that happiness is to be found in contentment, and unhappiness in the desire for riches and luxury?

Ellen.— Yes, I believe so. Some such thing, I don't quite remember.

Bruno.— And does he not paint that little home of yours to you in the most glowing colors?

(ELLEN *nods*.)

Bruno.— Is n't it ridiculous, Ellen, that you, of all people, should lead a life like the merest *bourgeoise*? (*Sarcastically.*) One God, one room, one bed —

Ellen.— Bruno!

Bruno.— To my thinking this must be the death of love.

Ellen (hesitating).— I, too, think that at times, but I always try to conquer the feeling.

Bruno.— But you must not. You suppress your personality, and it requires luxury and a cultivation of all the senses.

Ellen.— Yes, my staying here has made me realize that.

Bruno.— You feel it also when at home.

Ellen.— What do you mean?

Bruno.— Does n't it give you the creeps to enter a third-class coupé, beyond the town limits, when your friends' backs have been turned?

Ellen.— Yes, I feel the indignity of it, and particularly when I realize that I don't dare to do it openly and honestly.

Bruno.— And yet there are those who say that there is nothing degrading about poverty!

Ellen (struggling with herself).— I don't feel that in Erich's presence.

Bruno.— But you should feel it. Your not feeling it hinders your development.

Ellen.— My development?

Bruno.— Yes, your æsthetic development. And, you know, you don't feel differently when with Erich, at all.

Ellen.— How so?

Bruno (coming closer to her).— Tell me, is n't it, æsthetically speaking, like a cuff on the ears when Erich speaks to you of love, in your not very neatly kept surroundings —

Ellen (offended).— Oh, if you please.

Bruno.— I beg your pardon, but it could not be otherwise — in your not very neatly kept surroundings, and clad in a far from immaculate dressing-jacket —

Ellen.— Stop, I must not listen to you.

Bruno.— You must listen, Ellen. (*Comes very close and whispers.*) See, dear, that is the way of the world. Human beings all depend upon one another to be pushed to heights. Pushed to heights! That is the secret of it all! And of course it isn't always the husband who can push his own wife. Do you understand?

Ellen.— Yes, but——

Bruno.— I don't know whether you understand me. I must repeat it: Power, power is everything.

Ellen.— Yes, yes.

Bruno.— To enlarge the domain of one's power — that is the secret of life. And it is made so easy for woman. Beauty makes it so easy. You begin with one man — you conquer him, and he becomes your husband, your lover. But once you have obtained absolute power over him, you become bored, disappointed, disillusioned — and the end has come. The thing has lost its charm. Tell me, is it not so?

Ellen.— Yes, yes, it is so.

Bruno.— Then fully and consciously you realize that the time has

come for you to increase the domain of your power. (*Very ardently.*)
See, my Ellen, I love you.

Ellen.— No, no, no.

Bruno.— Yes, yes, yes — I love you. And once I am the master of all this I will lay all the treasures of the world at your feet. Ah, I will make different use of all this mammon than does dear Cousin Kurt.

Ellen.— Yes, Cousin Kurt does not do very much for his relations. He gives it all to strangers.

Bruno.— For charitable purposes and such silly rot. (*Draws a little case from his pocket.*) See, Ellen, I have brought you an emerald — a philopena. You have always wished for an emerald, have n't you?

Ellen.— How heavenly? (*Puts it on her finger.*)

Bruno.— What do I get for it?

Ellen (thoughtfully).— Do you know, I could never seriously keep anything from my husband.

Bruno.— Not free from moral giddiness, then?

Ellen.— Ah, but that were infidelity.

Bruno (feigning stupidity).— Infidelity? You don't say so. (*Laughing.*) 'And fidelity is no empty dream,'— is it Schiller who says that?

Ellen.— Now you are laughing again —

Bruno.— I was again thinking of something very funny.

Ellen.— What?

Bruno.— No, this time I shall keep it to myself.

Ellen.— Please tell me, do.

Bruno.—

'No vain empty dream is fidelity.

Oh, let me your companion be,

Grant me this wish, and do permit me,

In your union third to be.'

Ellen.— Very good and very witty. That would be the eternal triangle, would n't it? Poor Erich. You have no very high ideals of fidelity, have you?

Bruno.— Oh, yes, I have. It is a very nice and comfortable thing at times. 'Fidelity is laziness,' says Simplicitissimus. Everything is subject to the law of change — everything changes.

Ellen.— Erich says that change and changeableness are two different things.

Bruno.— Oh, Erich says, Erich says, always Erich says.

Ellen.— Erich says, it is only their lastingness that gives to things their real value.

Bruno.— He is a philosopher. (*Yawns.*) Another of those bloodless romantics.

Ellen.— He suffers greatly under my fickleness.

Bruno.— It ought to make him happy. It prevents one from getting bored. Why don't you impress upon him your stability — your permanency in change? (*Laughing.*)

Ellen.— Poor Erich! I feel sorry for him.

Bruno.— Sorry? I should not care to have anyone feel sorry for me, least of all my wife.

Ellen.— Don't you ever pity anyone?

Bruno.— No, thank goodness, I am not afflicted with that silly malady. (*Has risen and is gazing into the garden, where something has attracted his attention.*)

Ellen.— What is happening there?

Bruno.— Pardon me just a moment. (*Whistles.*) Hello, Christoph. Come here! (*GROOM appears at the foot of the stairs.*) How dare you tie the dogs like that and whip them? I'll take you by the nape of your neck, and lay the whip on you, too. Why, you are ruining my best dog — worth eight hundred marks — Do you know what that means, you donkey? I can replace you any time, but not that dog. And who rode the bay mare so hard this morning? Eh? Who was that? Answer me?

Groom (stammering and afraid).— It was I, my Lord, I rode the mare.

Bruno.— And so that was you, was it? (*Enraged.*) Damn you, you beast! That is too much! You can go to the devil! I have no use for such scum. (*Brutally.*) Loosen the dogs. And then go! But right away, and tell Henry to come!

Groom.— My Lord, please keep me until the first. I won't be able to get another position, and my wife —

Bruno.— What do I care about your wife? Always these lame excuses. But my dogs, meanwhile, can go to the devil? Eh? No! Get out, I tell you! On the spot! (*GROOM leaves.*)

Ellen.— Poor man! He has a family!

Bruno.— And I have an estate. And a careless fellow like that can ruin the entire stud. The stud that is the pride of the estate, and its main source of income. (*Close to ELLEN.*) Never have pity, little woman! Never, never! That spoils our best chances! Yes, yes, we must be brutal at times, little one. But you don't understand that. Confound it all. I should have been born two hundred years ago — when the masters could hang the fellows they didn't like, and who would n't obey, to the nearest tree, to make a jolly target of for new pistols. Those were the days of the true masters and of the true servants. But now? Conscience has made

cowards of all of us. Ah, but you can't understand how it looks inside of me.

Ellen (enthusiastically).— Ah, yes, I understand you. You are great and strong, you are in truth above all the small things of life. Kiss me. (*Throws herself into his arms. A sound outside rouses them. The door opens and KURT is wheeled in, in an invalid's chair.*)

Kurt.— I have waited a long time for you, Ellen.

Ellen.— Really? I was just coming to you.

Kurt.— You were so engrossed in your conversation that I did n't dare to send for you.

Bruno.— We were speaking of Erich, an inexhaustible theme.

Kurt.— And one of the many over which you always quarrel.

Bruno.— We did n't quarrel to-day. Did we, Mrs. Ellen?

Ellen.— We get on very well these latter days.

Kurt.— Yes, I am almost tempted to say, too well.

Ellen.— Why?

Kurt.— Because you are always sticking together.

Bruno.— But I must help the little woman pass the time when you are resting, cousin.

Ellen.— And I need a companion when I ride.

Kurt.— Yes, yes, dear, I am not in earnest. But where is your husband staying? He never comes to Holzendorf any more.

Ellen.— Is it so long since he has been here?

Bruno (laughing).— Thank goodness. The little woman is not sentimental.

Kurt.— Sentimental? The desire of man and wife to see each other after a separation?

Bruno.— After so many years of marriage! Yes!

Ellen.— I believe we quarreled when he was here last. Erich always feels that so deeply.

Kurt.— I hope your coming here has not estranged you?

Ellen.— Oh, certainly not.

Bruno.— What was the trouble?

Ellen.— Oh, some little external thing displeased me.

Bruno.— How curious.

Ellen.— It annoys me to see him so abstracted.

Bruno.— He should not have withdrawn from all society as he did.

Kurt.— He needs solitude for his work. One can easily understand that.

Ellen.— You are so patient and kind with him. That is so good of you, Kurt. (*A servant brings two cards.*)

Kurt (reads).— ‘Hans Paulus, Concert-master. Philip Moor, Painter.’ Bid them enter. (*Servant goes.*) The gentlemen are probably coming with some request.

Bruno.— Of course, and if it were nothing else but for a decent meal.

Kurt.— Bruno, I beg of you, the gentlemen are my guests.

Bruno.— They are parasites, all of them, these gentlemen artists. If they can’t put their feet under others’ tables, they don’t get on. These, also, probably, live seven on three herrings — you may believe me! (*The two gentlemen enter, overdressed and foppish in manner.*)

Kurt.— How do you do, gentlemen? How kind of you to look us up here in the solitude of the country.

Paulus.— Moor and I both had, it seems, the plan of visiting the large-hearted patron of the arts and sciences, after his long absence.

Moor.— Yes, we happened to meet on the way.

Kurt.— Have you met my foster-sister, Mrs. Walden?

Both.— I have not had that pleasure.

Kurt (introducing).— Mr. Paulus, Mr. Moor. My sister is the wife of Erich Walden. You know him?

Paulus.— Oh, yes, I know the name, of course.

Moor.— Mr. Walden is composer, is he not?

Ellen.— Of course!

Paulus.— Mr. Walden is teacher at the Conservatory, and known and respected as such.

Ellen.— My husband has just written a beautiful symphony that will soon make him well known.

Paulus.— Oh, I certainly hope so, but whether or not the symphony will be a success —

Kurt.— Gentlemen, let us wait and see.

Moor.— Being a painter, I am not so well posted.

Ellen.— Oh, you are a painter? I, too, paint. How interesting!

Moor (politely).— How charming. Then, no doubt, you will have excellent judgment. I have taken the liberty to paint a portrait of the late Mrs. von Holzen after a small miniature that I saw of her. May I send it to you for inspection?

Kurt.— You are very kind. You certainly have undertaken a difficult task. Without having seen or known Mrs. von Holzen?

Bruno.— Mrs. Walden and I might come to your studio to look at the picture.

Moor.— Oh, but it will be no trouble at all to send it; not in the least; it will be here this afternoon. It is already on the way.

Kurt.— Very kind of you, indeed.

Bruno (sarcastically).— How thoughtful!

Paulus.— I, too, have come on a special errand. I have written a requiem, and have taken the liberty to dedicate it to the memory of the late Mrs. von Holzen.

Bruno.— Without having known her?

Kurt.— Very thoughtful, I am sure!

Paulus.— Perhaps it would be agreeable to have it rendered here in your music-room on your wife's birthday? It is so difficult to find a publisher before one has found influential friends and patrons. Once you know my requiem, it cannot fail of finding favor and patronage.

Kurt.— We can talk it over later.

Ellen.— Erich, too, has written a very beautiful requiem — do you know it?

Paulus.— I don't seem to remember. (*With a peculiar smile.*) It has n't become known, has it? But to come back to the symphony — I have had the opportunity of glancing over the manuscript, and I must say that I should be astonished if Mr. Walden were to find a publisher for it. And even if so, I should doubt of its success; it appears to me to be an exceedingly crude piece of work.

Bruno (sarcastically).— Oh, crude! The thing is — to be mature! Storm and stress period, it appears.

Kurt.— But there is depth and richness of thought, and temperament.

Paulus.— I don't know. I feel the lack of form too much in the work. There is no clearness, and above all there is no tradition — and tradition is the essential feature in any work of art. They tell me that my requiem is like an old masterpiece.

Ellen.— Erich says that he desires to be a modern, that he wants to work for his own time, because it is better to err with your own age than to be a mere imitator of old forms of art.

Bruno.— There, now we have all the current expressions of art at once. Let us, therefore, pass an opinion to this effect: the symphony combines the errors of the age with the attainments of the moderns.

Paulus (blasé).— Oh, nonsense! The attainments of the moderns! *Je m'en fiche.* It is form that makes the work of art — form alone. Thus it ever was, and thus it will ever be. And the old forms stand firm and immutable.

(*A servant enters and delivers a message.*)

Kurt.— Ah, yes, and there he is himself. He can now answer you in person.

(*ERICH enters, kisses ELLEN'S hand, and bows to the gentlemen. Wears a plain, unfashionable, but becoming suit.*)

Kurt (heartily shaking his hand).— My dear friend, I am very glad to see you here again at last. Your visits are so scarce.

Erich.— I was buried in my work.

Bruno.— You must like to dig.

Ellen (embarrassed).— You look pale.

Erich.— Perhaps it is the joy of seeing you again.

Kurt.— I am so grateful to you for leaving Ellen with me so long.

Erich.— I like to know her with you, and she is happy here.

Ellen.— Yes, Holzendorf is my second home.

Bruno.— Your wife has come back to life here, like a fish that has again found its element.

Erich (bites his lips).— Is that true? (*Politely.*) Yes, Ellen, you do look very well.

Kurt.— That is the air in the country. But I have already talked too much. Please, Bruno, lead the gentlemen into the other room. I will see you all at dinner.

Ellen.— *Au revoir.*

Erich.— We will follow presently. (*Goes up to ELLEN quickly, to embrace her.*) At last, at last, I have you again!

Ellen (somewhat embarrassed, drawing away from him).— Be calm; don't be so stormy.

Erich.— I can't tell you how happy I am to see you again!

Ellen (coolly).— It was very nice of you to come out.

Erich (takes something from his pocket).— I brought you something. A reconciliation gift. We quarreled a little the last time, you remember.

Ellen.— Well, I am curious. Let me see. (*Undoes the little package and opens it; indifferently.*) Oh, an emerald — how curious. (*Puts it aside.*)

Erich (disappointed).— Curious? But it was always your special wish.

Ellen.— Yes, it was. But the wish has already been fulfilled, as you see. (*Shows him BRUNO's costly ring sparkling on her finger.*)

Erich.— You already have an emerald? And as I perceive, a much costlier one than mine?

Ellen.— Yes, a philopena present from Bruno.

Erich (hurt).— Bruno? Oh, of course my gift cannot compete with his.

Ellen.— No, that's just it, and that is why you and I had better not make each other gifts of that sort; one bleeds too much for it afterwards.

Erich.— Bleeds? Yes, but is n't it just that, that enhances the joy of giving? And you know, I am hoping for a very favorable contract for my symphony.

Ellen.— Oh, well, don't take it so tragically. You incline these days

to put a certain construction on everything I say! That is why we have these everlasting misunderstandings.

Erich (bitterly).— That the cause of our misunderstandings? Ellen, Ellen, if you knew how I suffer under them!

Ellen.— Suffer, suffer! I hate always to hear about suffering; it is sentimental, unmanly.

Erich.— Sentimental? My grief at not feeling myself in harmony with the being I love most?

Ellen.— Yes, sentimental, certainly. (*Frivolously.*) Harmony? What does that mean? Everything will come as it must.

Erich (thoughtfully).— Come — as — it — must?

Ellen.— Only in thinking thus can we enjoy life.

Erich.— Enjoy life, enjoy life — there we again have the expression that caused our last quarrel.

Ellen.— But I was right. I said and say it again: all lies in our capacity for enjoyment. And I will enjoy my life.

Erich.— There is a difference between enjoying and enjoying. There is a way of enjoying life, that is lowering in the extreme.

Ellen.— Yes, it requires good taste to enjoy properly.

Erich.— Good taste. How I hate that expression. It has such an empty, artificial sound.

Ellen.— Yes, one must accept it in its deeper sense.

Erich (warmly).— Yes, in its deepest, deepest sense — in its most inconceivably deeper sense. Yes, but it is only Bruno's superficial acceptance that sounds through your words.

Ellen.— Goodness! you are talking like an afternoon preacher. It is such a bore always to hear that one must improve one's self, that one must change.

Erich (calmer).— You may be right. It is much wiser to take things more simply.

Ellen (comes nearer).— Yes, and not so seriously. I always feel that I must make such a terrible effort to be worthy — and that is very trying.

Erich.— Poor child, have I made you suffer?

Ellen.— But now I live only in the moment. And that is beautiful. And you will be sensible, won't you? And we will forget all about those silly trifles and will just be happy together. All is well again? (*Gives him her hand.*)

Bruno.— Oh, I beg your pardon for interrupting so romantic a situation.

Ellen.— I just hate that word, romantic! It has such a disagreeable flavor!

Erich.— But why? It is only cynics that have given it such a disagreeable flavor.

Bruno (laughing).— I suppose that is meant for me?

Erich.— Not necessarily. But you must admit that you are a cynic.

Bruno.— If you mean by that an honest man, yes, then I am a cynic. I wish I could free the world from all its beautiful life-lies. Or rather, to free myself — for, after all, the rest of the world does not concern me.

Erich.— And you believe that we are all in the bondage of these life-lies?

Bruno.— You certainly are.

Erich.— Don't you think that in a sense every artist is a romantic?

Bruno.— No, not every artist. There are those who view things clearly and practically, and who give beautiful form to what they see (*gazes at ERICH, who is silent*); and there are others who enwrap themselves and the whole world in a beautiful false fairy-tale veil (*stops a moment, then continues*) — an unreal art of fantasy, feelingness and fruitless longing.

Ellen (seeing that ERICH is hurt, interferes).— Oh, what is the use of all this talk! Besides, we were not speaking of art at all, and it was in reference to love that we used the word romantic.

Bruno.— Yes, but is not Mr. Walden one of those romantics who always lives in a beautiful, ideal dream-world? On an isle of the blessed that has existence nowhere?

Erich.— Ah, but it does exist.

Bruno.— Only in your own dreams.

Ellen.— Bruno, you are an incorrigible scoffer.

Bruno.— And I think, fair cousin, that you are eminently suited to be the object of this unceasing transfiguration.

Ellen.— And why not?

Bruno.— Is n't it heavenly to be gazed at with folded hands as though one were a divinity?

Ellen (laughs).— You don't understand that, you incorrigible celibate.

Bruno.— Oh, yes, I do understand very well. I find that the bachelor — a sort of a saint of the pillar — has more opportunity than any other for a seraphic-platonic love.

Ellen.— You are queer!

Bruno.— One tends to love in the abstraction alone, in the pure idea. (*Turns to go.*) I hope I have n't hurt your feelings? You can take a joke? Well, I won't keep you any longer. (*Goes out laughing.*)

Ellen.— Stay, please, you are not keeping us from anything.

Bruno.— It is time to dress. Hardly an hour until dinner-time. (*Goes.*)

Ellen (crossly).— Why were you mute before Bruno?

Erich.— Because I did not care to answer.

Ellen.— Oh, Bruno understands well how to corner people so that they don't dare to defend themselves or contradict him.

Erich.— Not dare? There are people before whom one cannot defend one's self, because they strike brutally, as with a club.

Ellen.— I cannot understand that.

Erich.— I feel in Bruno's presence as though what I hold most sacred were being besmirched. (*After a pause.*) I felt as though I must blush for him, in his own soul, before so much brutality.

Ellen (crossly).— That is absurd.

Erich.— Maybe. But even when a child it was that way with me. I blushed when anyone was low in my presence.

Ellen.— You only want to cover your awkwardness. You have a tendency, anyway, to cover everything you do with the cloak of idealism. To place a halo around your head, as it were.

Erich.— That is not true. I merely wished to show you how I felt, so that you would understand.

Ellen.— I do understand you, and I see that you are jealous.

Erich.— I — jealous? Of Bruno? How ridiculous. I think him insufferably conceited and arrogant, and I hate to hear you propagate his views.

Ellen.— Because he does n't judge favorably of your symphony?

Erich.— He has no right to pass judgment on it. He has no judgment in such things.

Ellen.— But Paulus judges the same. He said you were wanting in tradition, that you must acquire that.

Erich.— Tradition is in the blood of every creative artist, is simply a part of his feeling of life. He cannot acquire it, it is instinctive, an inherited instinct of culture. Let that never be misunderstood. See here! What other people call tradition — these Pauluses and such — is n't tradition at all, it is something quite different. They are simply working with finished material because they are too poor to create out of themselves. But no new great art can develop that way. How could I explain all that to you? You see, it is clear that the artist can only rise to greatness and strength in the shaping of raw material. The working up of what already exists, what is already given you, even perfected and finished as those others are doing — only leads to artifice and playing. But to tell the truth, I did not come here to quarrel with you over anything that that ignoramus said.

Ellen.— Belittling others does not make you greater.

Erich (beside himself).— Ellen, Ellen, what are you saying? You dare to say that to me?

Ellen (stubbornly).— But he is perfectly right.

Erich (aroused).— Is that so? He is right, is he? And you say that, you, who a few weeks ago told me the most glorious things about my work?

Ellen.— I was too hasty. Now I see its faults. And by the way, have you found a publisher? No? Well, there you are.

Erich (sorrowfully).— Oh, what a fool I was. What a fool. And I was so happy in thinking that at last I was understood by you!

Ellen (coldly).— Why all this excitement? Must I not assume that for you, comprehension of your work simply means blind, uncritical admiration?

Erich (excitedly).— Ah, no, not that! But give me a criticism that is worth something.

Ellen.— What can I answer to that? It is a work full of temperament, but it is entirely wanting in form.

Erich.— Of course, I know that I must give it more finish, but I can't see that it is so absolutely wanting in form.

Ellen.— Perhaps I have a truer feeling for form than you have — and I think in more respects than one.

Erich.— What do you mean to imply by that?

Ellen.— Oh, I think that is evident enough. (*Looks him over critically.*)

Erich.— You look at me so critically? Was that a reflection on my clothes?

Ellen.— Yes. You should dress with more care. Look at Bruno. He is immaculate. Always as neat as a pin.

Erich.— Oh, Bruno, always Bruno.

Ellen.— There, I told you you were jealous.

Erich.— I am not jealous. Of Bruno? (*Shrugging his shoulders.*) I did not know that dinner was to be so late; it was not so formerly. Had I known —

Ellen.— You always have some excuse.

Erich.— I admit that my nonchalance in regard to dress is exaggerated. But I am doing it with a purpose now, for I find that you dress far too richly for our means. Kurt surely does not expect that of you.

Ellen.— Not Kurt, but it is annoying not to be well-dressed before the servants.

Erich.— That is spoken from the soul of the lackey.

Ellen (angrily).— I must beg of you!

Erich.— I am sorry. I meant to say, I meant to remind you of the

fact that I always warned you not to associate with people who are much wealthier than we. The consequences are too serious.

Ellen.— What nonsense that is again!

Erich.— ‘He who painfully limps along on foot, should not make a companion of the rider on a horse.’

Ellen.— That is so stale. You hate wealth, then?

Erich.— I don’t hate wealth. But so few people know how to use wealth, and regard as the end what should only be the means. And that is why I avoid as much as possible the homes of the rich, unless I feel myself in absolute inner touch with them.

Ellen.— That is very foolish. That is not the way to get on.

Erich.— For heaven’s sake, don’t come to me with such ideas! Don’t you feel that those parasites hanging around the rich are something awful? Paulus, Moor and such? This toadying spoils the atmosphere in many of the refined houses, and easily makes things that might be beautiful and refined, low and mean.

Ellen.— If you keep on like this, my boy, you will always be a proletarian.

Erich.— Very well, then, I will always remain a proletarian. But you belong to me, and it enrages me to see you become accustomed to this life here, that is not your own, and when I hear you rustle in silks I feel that it is all a lie, a contemptible lie!

Ellen.— I see that I am more of an artist than you are. I need these surroundings to get inspiration for my work.

Erich.— If you make yourself dependent on these things you will destroy your talent.

Ellen.— Oh, you just wait, I will earn thousands with my talent!

Erich.— And if you earn hundreds of thousands, your art will be but an empty sham if you put it into the service of gold and pleasure.

Ellen.— Permit me to differ from you on this point.

Erich (entreatingly).— I have no other wish but to get everything for you; but don’t you get inspiration in our little home as well? Must we always have a surfeit of things? Is not he who wears his coat a little longer than others, to buy for the money thus saved, a beautiful work that he loves, and that will better him—is he not very often more truly an æsthete than he who buys a whole library of valuable bindings, only out of the spirit of parvenuism, to feel himself a Mæcenas? It is not the amount of things one owns that counts, it is the love one has for them that gives them their true value.

Ellen (has become thoughtful, and seems to soften; just then BRUNO’S voice is heard in the garden).— Your talk indicates what your bringing up has been.

Erich (beside himself).—Ellen, Ellen, don't drive me mad. I won't let you scoff at my bringing up. It was as good as yours.

Ellen.—Well, then, you have lost all your sense of refinement since.

Erich.—I, too, could have ridden through life on the rubber tires of others, had I so wished.

Ellen.—Then why did n't you do it? That is just where you were stupid.

Erich (angrily).—Because I wanted to form my own life; because I wished by my own efforts to conquer a place near the sun; because I am not the small bird-fry, who, hidden under the eagle's wings, allows itself to be carried to heights, and then twitters from above, 'Behold me, the king.'

Ellen (haughtily).—You should control yourself better, I am thinking.

Erich.—It is easy for the cold and indifferent to preach self-control.

Ellen.—I don't wish to hear any more.

Erich (in a rage).—But you shall hear more. I think it cowardly always to break off discussion for fear of getting too heated.

Ellen.—You have no idea how repulsive to me your uncontrolled passion is.

Erich.—Repulsive? Uncontrolled? I advise you to take back those words.

Ellen.—No, I take back nothing. Your weak anger and want of all control disgust me. Yes, your weak, unmanly anger, that is as feeble and unstable as the whole of your so-called idealism. (*Goes into the house quickly.*)

Erich.—Ellen, oh, Ellen. (*Rushes away.*)

CURTAIN

ACT III

ERICH is sitting in ELLEN'S studio, at her writing-table, his head buried in his hands. The bell rings several times. He starts, listens, and then sinks down in a dejected, disappointed manner. The door is opened softly, ANNIE enters. ERICH starts.

Erich (disappointed).—Oh, it is you, Annie!

Annie.—Yes, it is I. (*Softly.*) Are you expecting anyone?

Erich (nervously).—I? Expecting anyone? Yes, I am expecting someone. I am expecting her, her; who else should I be expecting?

Annie.—Still?

Erich.—Yes, still. For hours, for days, for weeks I have been sitting here, waiting for her.

Annie (anxious).— You should not do that, it paralyzes you, makes you ill.

Erich.— But there must be a change sometime. She must come back some day.

Annie.— Don't make yourself believe that, Erich.

Erich.— I am not making myself believe anything. When I hear the bell, I think — there she is. When a carriage stops at the door, I rush to the window. I expect to see her handwriting on every letter that comes in by the mail.

Annie.— But you must get away from that, you must! It will else become an *idée fixe*.

Erich.— Do you remember how she came back from Holzendorf last time?

Annie.— Yes, you told me about it.

Erich.— Suddenly she was behind me, put her arms around my neck, and when I was startled, she became sad. 'Oh, I was sure you would feel it — when I entered the house to come to you'; that was what she said. (*ANNIE nods her head.*) But that must not happen again. No, no! When she comes now I will have felt it, — long, long before!

Annie (hiding her tears).— Poor, poor boy! Oh, you are ill, really ill!

Erich.— Because I still believe in Ellen's love and in her return? No, you are ill, you and Fred and all of you who want to destroy my faith.

Annie.— But you ought to realize that all is over.

Erich.— Can it ever be over with love? Can there be an end? Believe me, in every marriage there are of necessity estrangements — that can't be helped. It is impossible always to pull at the same cord. Two people cannot be harnessed together like two horses to a carriage, that trot along the same road with even trot.

Annie.— No, of course not.

Erich.— It is possible to wander away from each other — to lose the way entirely — but one always finds the other again.

Annie.— Of course that may happen when there is love on both sides. But that is just what I can't believe.

Erich.— If only I could make you believe it. (*Walks up and down the room excitedly.*) See, these walls know it, they have heard Ellen's vows, and mine. This is where she stood when she begged me always to hold her fast, oh, so fast.

Annie (angrily).— Oh, that was clever of her! Clever and bad!

Erich.— You must not say that! I won't have it!

Annie (after meditating).— But you can't go on like this! You are overstraining your nerves. Why don't you write to her?

Erich.— Writing can do no good. It is just our letters that have caused such tremendous misunderstandings during this separation. They have piled up like mountains, so that letters can no longer remove them. We don't seem to find the right words — say too little here, and too much there, and it only makes matters grow worse. But can't you understand how I am facing an enigma, and that I must expect her — that I must believe in her near return, so as not to fear that a horrible fate is about to overtake me? (*ANNIE turns away with a sigh.*) Annie, Annie, you don't think that this horrible thing will happen? It cannot be! You know the thought that Ellen might leave me haunts me at night like a nightmare; and in the day-time I try to drive it away, with all the strength of my soul.

Annie.— Erich, let me go for the doctor, I beg of you.

Erich (worn out).— Yes, I am ill — I feel it myself — but Ellen is the only doctor that can cure me.

Annie (hesitating).— Perhaps if someone were to send her word?

Erich.— Oh, yes, if the right messenger could be found.

Annie.— The right messenger?

Erich (hopefully).— Yes, the right messenger, who would gently place into her hand the thread with which she could find her way back to me out of this labyrinth of misunderstandings.

Annie (gets up).— I will try it, Erich! Yes, I will try it immediately. I came to you to-day, to be with you, and to prevent some inadvertent person from telling you that Ellen is in town to-day.

Erich (jumps up).— What do you say? Ellen is here, is in town, and you only tell me that now?

Annie.— I wanted to keep it from you. I saw her stop at Behr's Hotel.

Erich.— At Behr's Hotel? Now, do you see that I was right? Oh, I thought so — her heart failed her, and she couldn't spend Christmas Eve without becoming reconciled. She got off there to wait for it to grow dark, because she assumes, of course, that the whole town knows about our quarrel.

Annie.— That may be. I will go immediately.

Erich.— You know I expected some sort of a surprise — Ellen loves these surprises. That is why I got a little tree, and put candles on it to light to-night. There it is in the corner. And I have flowers too, and all sorts of delicacies that she is fond of. She has been terribly spoiled at Holzendorf, you know.

Annie.— I will hurry away, and will soon be back.

Erich.— Yes, get her, and bring her to me. I will wait at the window, and when I see you come, I will light the candles. (*ANNIE goes.*)

*Erich (alone; arranges his suit, moves the furniture about, and goes to the window from time to time, to watch impatiently. At last he goes to the window, and stays there).—*Nothing, nothing, nothing as yet! (*Bell rings. He starts.*) Could I have missed her? (*Rushes to the door to open it. HELLWIG enters. ERICH gazes at him in a dazed way.*)

Dr. Hellwig.— How do you do?

Erich.— How do you do?

Dr. Hellwig.— I am not interrupting you in your work?

Erich.— No, I am not working now.

Dr. Hellwig.— Then I suppose we can arrange this matter of business; it is rather pressing.

Erich.— I have no time now for business matters.

Dr. Hellwig.— Why, are you expecting anyone?

Erich.— Why, of course, I am waiting for someone. Have n't you noticed that yet? Must I tell you? I am waiting for Ellen.

Dr. Hellwig.— But that is impossible —

Erich (aroused).— Why impossible? Annie was here just now, and she has gone to get her. Ellen is in town, you know.

Dr. Hellwig.— You don't say so. Was Annie sent by Ellen?

Erich.— No, she has gone to explain things to Ellen.

Dr. Hellwig.— But, man alive, how could you permit that?

Erich.— Why not? I asked her to do it for me.

Dr. Hellwig.— But don't you realize what a mistake you are making?

Erich.— But I must know.

Dr. Hellwig.— And don't you really know?

Erich.— She did n't answer my letter.

Dr. Hellwig.— And is n't that answer enough? Man, don't you realize that you are on the wrong track? Let me give you good advice! Go out into the world, rush into the whirl and have a good time. Go and travel. Put a clean shirt into your bag, and a few handkerchiefs and a collar! Not to forget the bills of course.

Erich.— How can you be so frivolous about it!

Dr. Hellwig.— Frivolous? Had I said to you: Buy a new wife with those bills, you might have called it frivolous. Had I said *a la Bierbaum* — 'If your hare has run away, buy another the same day' — although I won't even say that he was wrong — you might accuse me of undue lightness; but this way? No. Let me tell you something. I, too, have had a similar experience. Well — forget it. I went traveling, drank lots of Rhine wine, and ate numerous beefsteaks — and made a little novel of my experience; three pages, and it brought me one hundred marks. There was n't enough

material for a drama. You see, old boy, I am not frivolous. I, too, have lived through something like this, and that is just why I can advise you.

Erich.— And I tell you, you don't know Ellen! It is I who must be firm and always bring her back. She will understand at last, and my firmness and constancy will conquer in the end. Yes, as the sun disperses the mists, so will my endurance scatter all confusions.

Dr. Hellwig.— I beg of you, Erich, be a man! Come out of your fantasies and face facts.

Erich.— Facts?

Dr. Hellwig.— Do have some manly pride!

Erich.— Pride? Pride in love? Is not love above all that?

Dr. Hellwig.— Oh, come now, these are just some of your extravagant notions! It is just because I know you to be capable of a deep, abiding love, that I feel how sad it is to waste it so blindly.

Erich.— But let me waste. Is not that what love means? Riches and a desire to give and share?

Dr. Hellwig.— Yes, but give of the riches to him who has use for it, to him who knows what to do with it. (*Very earnestly.*) Have a care lest your treasure be sullied.

Erich.— What do you mean by that?

Dr. Hellwig.— I mean just brutally to say: 'Cast not your pearls before swine.'

Erich (angrily).— If you persist in talking like that I shall have to ask you to leave me.

Dr. Hellwig.— I will leave you when I shall have accomplished my mission.

Erich.— How you torture me. They must be coming in any minute. (*Bell rings, looks out of the door.*) Nothing, only mail. (*Throws some letters on the table.*)

Dr. Hellwig.— Look here, Erich, I know that I am hard on you, but I feel it to be a friend's duty, because you are too soft and easy with yourself. You love yourself far too much. But we must not love and pity ourselves, we must respect ourselves.

Erich.— I love her! I love her! I love her!

Dr. Hellwig.— You are now getting behind barricades. You realize perfectly the truth of my words. You realize at bottom how unbridled are the feelings that, in spite of all your innate depth and delicacy, form the greater part of your love. (*ERICH walks up and down, restlessly.*) Now listen to me calmly. You are now suffering from a morbid exaltation. You imagine you have comprehended the world in its entirety, because you have learned always to see the two sides of things. Well and good! But after all,

is n't it rather foolish in considering others, to willfully overlook their faults, and to see only the bright and good side of their make-up? And in this instance, I mean in your judgment of Ellen, you are like the dazzled fisherman, who is so blinded by the golden hair of the mermaid that he does not even see the ugly, scaly tail.

Erich (wildly).— I love her! I love her! I love her!

Dr. Hellwig.— Well, then. But since no cause is without its effect, it follows that the blinded fisherman is drawn into the deep by the ugly tail.

Erich (putting his hands to his ears).— I won't listen! I won't hear — I hear nothing! I don't want to hear! (*Bell rings, ERICH rushes to the door.*) There they are. (*ANNIE enters alone.*) What, alone? Did you not meet her?

Annie.— Yes, I met her. Give up all hope. All is over.

Erich.— But what has happened? What has happened?

Annie (looks questioningly at HELLWIG, who nods assent).— Ellen received me very ungraciously. 'If he had any pride left, he would have spared us both this.'

Erich.— Pride! Pride! She too, she too!

Annie.— I tried to make her see that only requited love could give happiness and strength and pride, and that you had suffered so much. 'Then why don't you console him? I will gladly hand him over to you.'

Dr. Hellwig.— What good taste the lady did show!

Annie.— Whereupon I promptly left her.

Erich (covers his face with his hands and stands like one annihilated).— She despises me. Oh, my God, she despises me!

Annie.— You will learn to despise her, too. You must learn it!

Erich.— I have groveled on the ground, have lain in the dust before her, as before something divine.

Dr. Hellwig.— But she entirely lacks the divine. That is why she could n't bear the worship.

Erich.— I lay at her feet, in the dust before her, and now she pushes me aside like a dog.

Annie.— Erich, calm yourself, do!

Erich.— Ah, but it serves me right, it serves me right! I worshipped her. Oh, how I worshipped her! I have prayed to her heart as one prays to that of the Madonna! I have lowered myself, dishonored myself! (*Begins to sob.*)

Dr. Hellwig.— Leave us alone now, but keep in the neighborhood.

(*ANNIE leaves softly.*)

Dr. Hellwig.— We must now finish up this matter as quickly as possible.

Erich (warding him off).— Yes, yes! Never mind!

Dr. Hellwig— There is the external, formal side to consider.

Erich.— Never mind, never mind!

Dr. Hellwig.— A marriage is an institution of the state.

Erich.— What, an institution of the state? What does that mean? (*Rousing himself.*) I realize now that nothing can be done with Ellen, and that a separation is the only possible thing.

Dr. Hellwig.— Well at last! You are now coming to your senses!

Erich.— Yes, we will separate; for a year, perhaps for longer. What difference does that make? And then we will find each other again. Yes, yes, I will force her to respect me! I will win her again, and were she bound with iron fetters to hell itself!

Dr. Hellwig.— I see that I will have to operate most radically. I told you that I came on a special mission, didn't I?

Erich.— Oh, don't bother me with that now! There is plenty of time!

Dr. Hellwig.— I came to you in my capacity as lawyer —

Erich.— Lawyer?

Dr. Hellwig.— And am instructed to hand you this letter from your wife —

Erich (excited).— From my wife? You, you?

Dr. Hellwig.— Permit me to read it for you. We must hasten matters. (*Opens the letter and reads.*) 'Dear Erich: Feelings and passions come and go against our will. My feeling for you has died out. I thought at first that it was my duty to fight it, but I see now that inconstancy is the law of my life, which I must respect as such! I expect you to do the same, and beg you of to sign these papers without making any further fruitless attempts to change my decision.'

Erich (laughs hysterically).— Excellent! That is the climax! This letter! Inconstancy the law of her life, and to be respected by me as such! Excellent! How brilliant! (*Laughs nervously.*) What do you think of that? The law of her life!

Dr. Hellwig.— The only thing that now matters is to arrange things so as to procure peace for you. So sit down here, please, and sign these divorce papers.

Erich.— What do you mean by this nonsense?

Dr. Hellwig.— But don't you see that you must? Don't you see that this is more than a mere caprice, and that you must not stand in her way? That she wants to be rid of you?

Erich (trembling).— Rid of me. What do you mean?

Dr. Hellwig.— Don't you feel that? She as much as told me?

Erich (wildly).— Wants — to — be — rid — of — me? Rid of me,

does she? (*Screams.*) Ah, yes, it is so, is it? Yes — she shall be rid of me, and yet not be rid of me!

Dr. Hellwig.— What do you mean?

Erich.— Rid of me, yes! But not as she thinks! I will rid her of me — rid, but yet not rid! Ha, ha, ha!

Dr. Hellwig.— Erich, calm yourself!

Erich.— She shall be rid of me, and yet not be rid of me! (*Rushes to the closet and takes out a revolver.*) No, she shall not be rid of me! I will follow her like a ghost.

Dr. Hellwig.— You are insane! Don't be a fool! (*Forces the revolver from him.*)

Erich.— Insane? Yes, I am insane! Every being that feels and loves and suffers is insane! Ha, ha, ha!

Dr. Hellwig.— Erich, you are ill. But soon all will be over; you will recover and will learn to think differently.

Erich.— Think differently? think differently? Isn't thinking, too, a disease? Isn't all my striving a disease? My striving for the light and the sun? Is n't it all a disease? an incurable disease? Ha, ha! Only the animal is healthy—the animal that follows its brute instincts without shame or soul!

Dr. Hellwig.— If you believe really that — you have the right to end it all! Here, take this! (*Hands him the revolver.*) Farewell! (*Goes to the small table and takes from it a letter that ERICH had taken from the postman and puts it on his writing-table. Very significantly.*) But don't forget that every decent individual puts his house in order and arranges all his affairs before leaving. (*Leaves.*)

Erich (*has dropped into a chair; raises the revolver to his temple: then, after awhile, dropping it again.*) — Ah, the happiness of that! To be able to put an end to it all! To end it! I will sign the papers first. (*Signs, and buries his face in his hands.*) 'Don't forget that every decent individual puts his house in order and arranges his affairs before leaving.' What did he mean by that? What is this? (*Finds the letter that HELLWIG had placed on his table and opens it.*) A letter from the publisher Lukanus? To-day? (*Reads.*) What? What is that? My symphony, my symphony! (*Throws the revolver away and goes to the piano with faltering steps, and falls over it, sobbing. After awhile HELLWIG and ANNIE enter.*)

Annie (*goes to ERICH.*)— Tell me, what has happened?

Dr. Hellwig (*picks up the revolver; goes up to ERICH and leans over him.*)— The crisis is over. I knew it! (*Reads the letter.*) 'Enclosed please find the first printed sheets of your symphony, which I send to you for correction. It affords me great pleasure to notify you that a society has already been

found that has volunteered to perform your great work. And you are to come and conduct it. With best wishes, etc.' Annie, believe me, this will bring salvation!

Annie.— Thank God for it, many times! I will get some *eau de Cologne* to revive him. (*Goes.*)

(*HELLWIG takes the documents and puts them in his pocket; goes to ERICH, who slightly stirs. When HELLWIG approaches him he screams.*)

Erich.— Away, away! Bruno! Bruno!

Dr. Hellwig (tenderly).— It is not Bruno. It is your friend. I have come to congratulate you. You have recovered from a severe illness. (*ANNIE has returned with the eau de Cologne, which she gives to HELLWIG. He begins to rub ERICH's temples. Children's voices from above, who sing: 'Oh, you happy and you merry, merry Christmas time,' etc.*)

Erich.— What is that?

Annie.— The children up-stairs. It is Christmas eve, you know. I will light the little tree. (*Lights the candles on the tree.*)

Dr. Hellwig (to ERICH).— Ah, my boy, within you, too, there will be light again. Light and clearness! You lucky lad! Your symphony! 'Come and conduct it yourself.'

Erich (gets up, a happy look on his face).— You know?

Dr. Hellwig.— Yes, we know, we read the letter.

Annie (giving him both her hands).— Success and luck to you — and happiness in your work!

Erich.— Work, my work? (*Sinks back wearily.*)

Dr. Hellwig.— To help lay the corner-stone for the happiness of humanity with his work — that is something that a man does not pay too dearly for, even with the downfall of his happiness in love.

Erich (wearily).— Help lay the corner-stone for the happiness of humanity? I? I? — who but now was groveling on the ground, so weak, so helpless, so despicable? Won't people be justified in mocking me and my work? My work that is the outcome of a weak, unstable idealism?

Dr. Hellwig.— Nonsense, my boy. Your symphony has pure gold in it. Pure, sterling, true gold! And power and largeness of conception!

Erich (excited and fearfully).— But not in me! Not in me! Not within me, and not in my life! You saw it yourself!

Hellwig.— My dear boy —

Annie.— Don't talk about it any more, it excites him too much.

Dr. Hellwig.— Just one more thing. (*To ERICH.*) Listen, that which you put into your work is also within you. Where else could you have taken it from? From the moon perhaps, or from some misty comet? No, man is that which he creates. And in its purest and most transfigured

form! There may be some ore side by side with the gold — we are but human! But the main thing is the pure, true gold of his work. An exaggerated passion set on the wrong object has thrown you down for the time being. Passion for your work, and successful creativeness will help to carry you to heights again. Believe me (*goes to the piano and opens it*), it is true, I am a miserable skeptic, as you know (*sits down to the piano and strikes a few chords*), but I believe in the divine power of music, in Beethoven, her most glorious son, and in the sacredness of the creative spirit! (*Begins to play the first movement of Beethoven's symphony in C minor.*)

CURTAIN

ACT IV

ERICH'S working-room, large and comfortably furnished in modern style, a la Bruno Paul. Here and there valuable pieces of art. A grand piano and several music-stands denote the musical profession of the occupant. On the piano a violin. The picture, 'Celestial and Terrestrial Love,' again has its very prominent place on the wall. ERICH, somewhat grayer, well-dressed, but not extravagantly so, sits at the writing-table, in the act of composing.

Mrs. Arne (enters).— Here's the tea, Herr Professor.

Erich.— Yes, yes — presently.

Mrs. Arne (putting the tray on the table).— I will put it here — but don't let it stand — the tea — it gets bitter. Eh, Herr Professor? You know I must always remind you!

Erich.— Yes, my dear Mrs. Arne. I give you a lot of trouble. But a cup of this golden, fragrant tea is a gift from heaven. (*Takes a cup.*) How fragrant it is! And how lovely it looks in this fine porcelain cup!

Mrs. Arne.— What a pity that you always take it alone. I mean, you know — But I don't want to disturb you in your work.

Erich.— How do you know that I am composing?

Mrs. Arne.— Oh, I can tell that right away — because you have put on your best coat — your very best!

Erich.— And you have already found out that I always wear my very, very best coat when I compose?

Mrs. Arne.— Yes, and I always think — excuse me for saying it — it would be well if a woman came into the house again, because you really ought not to wear your best coat at home, for working.

Erich.— And that is why you think I ought to marry again? (*Laughs.*) Very well! — but don't believe that that would change matters. But since I have you here to keep things in order for me —

Mrs. Arne.— Oh, Lordie, Lordie! I did n't mean to say anything! I know the Herr Professor can afford it now. But your best coat, at home—

Erich.— Yes, the very best — and only for home and for work! You see, with each work I create something new,— and I must always have in readiness new thoughts, new moods, new powers. Old clothes retain the character of our past experiences. For that reason, away with them! New clothes make the mind light and free. It is like slipping into a new skin. Do you understand?

Mrs. Arne.— I don't know. No, no! But the Herr Professor does talk so beautifully. (*Consoling herself.*) Well, but I do the dusting well, don't I?

Erich (thoughtfully).— Yes, but who knows whether I am not again pushing too far one of my theories. When I think of how that sweet, refined, divine spirit had to drag on his existence in so wretched an outer form (*more to himself*), and in the end to find but a pauper's grave —

Mrs. Arne (sympathizing).— You don't say so? — was it a good friend of the Herr Professor's?

Erich.— A good friend? No. Yes, yes — one of the best I have! — and his name was Mozart.

Mrs. Arne.— Lordie, Lordie! Just think of it! A professor of music, and a pauper's grave!

Erich (smiling).— Well, you know, he was n't exactly a professor of music.

Mrs. Arne.— Not a professor of music? Well, then —

Erich.— But he wrote the loveliest, the most glorious music! (*Takes the violin and plays an excerpt from the 'Magic Flute.'*) See, that is what he wrote! This heavenly music that brings joy to heart and soul — and that is what I, too, long to write; a divine, joy-giving music! That is why I surround myself with what is beautiful and joyous and free! But, after all, it must all come from within — deep from the heart. (*Plays another strain from the 'Magic Flute.'*)

Mrs. Arne.— Oh, I know that! My husband used to sing that! (*Hums.*) 'Man and woman, woman and man, these two approach divinity.' Yes, and you know, that is true; and that is what is missing here — a woman! But, you know, Herr Professor, something wonderful is still in store for you. I read it in the cards. And there will be a great surprise for you to-day. Yes, yes — I dreamed —

Erich.— Tell me about it some other day, Mrs. Arne; I must begin to work.

Mrs. Arne.— Yes, I looked it up in my dream-book. It says — (*Loud and energetic ringing is heard outside.* MRS. ARNE goes out. *Loud*

talking in the corridor. ERICH listens. The door is hastily opened and BRUNO enters.)

Bruno (to the housekeeper).— Stop your talking, I must speak to the Professor. But don't you let anyone enter now, as long as I am here, and don't say that anyone is here.

Erich (very much surprised).— What? You? I am not mistaken?

Bruno (quickly, in great excitement).— No, of course you are not mistaken. It is I. And to make it short,—you must give me two thousand marks right away.

Erich.— I to you?

Bruno.— I happen to know that you and my Cousin Kurt have been very good friends since my quarrel with him. He will return the bagatelle immediately.

Erich.— Mr. von Holzen is expected back almost daily from an Oriental trip.

Bruno.— But I can't wait,—my train leaves in half an hour. (*Draws a revolver.*) The police are close on my heels. You will read all about it in the daily papers. You have your choice: either you give me the money immediately, or I will shoot myself here before your very eyes.

Erich.— And you threaten me with that? However, I will help you all I can. For my sake, not for yours. But where is Ellen? (*Goes to his writing-table and gets the money.*) What has become of her?

Bruno.— What do I know? She lives by her painting. But I know nothing of her. (*Bell rings.*) I must go. Has that room another exit?

Erich.— Yes, through here, please, then to the right. (*Gives him the money, takes him to the bedroom door. BRUNO lights a match, and goes. ERICH goes to the door leading to the corridor and opens it. KURT enters.*)

Erich.— I call that a surprise.

Kurt (slightly stooping, denoting a delicate constitution).— Yes, I returned sooner than I expected.

Erich.— And in better health I hope? What a pleasure to see you so unexpectedly.

Kurt.— I came half an hour ago, and I could n't go back to Holzendorf without first shaking hands with you.

Erich.— That was right. What a strange coincidence! (*Listens to a noise heard in the adjoining room.*)

Kurt.— Coincidence! What do you mean? You seem perturbed? I heard voices and find you alone.—Ellen?

Erich.— No, not Ellen. You find me very much moved,—Bruno was here. He has just left me.

Kurt.— And he dared, the miserable wretch! I heard that the police

were after him for defaulting and card-sharpping. He wanted money from you?

Erich.— Yes, a small sum.

Kurt.— To think of his coming to you! How dared he!

Erich.— Yes, he who so scoffed at that malady called pity, seemed to put some trust in mine.

Kurt (with energy).— He would have appealed to me in vain, as he well knew,— and God knows, for all time. He has besmirched our good name then and now. Yes, that is what he has done. And I will never forgive him that. Let him get on now with his ideas of lordliness and power and rule, his super-man nature, that after all was nothing but unbridled dissipation and libertinage. A lordly nature, the true super-man, is he who subdues himself and has perfect command over himself. There you see where those principles lead to, and he may be even reflecting on my fortune. But he is mistaken. I have changed my will and disinherited him. I shall place my heritage into your hands, my friend, and am confident that it will be well taken care of. Don't refuse. I know what you are going to say. You can, if you wish, share with Ellen. I have left her a slight legacy. But I, for my part, have finished with all that.

Erich.— So you are still unreconciled where she is concerned?

Kurt.— She is a creature entirely wanting in a sense of duty.

Erich.— She, too, in her disregard of all the finer, nobler sentiments, believed herself the superior super-being.

Kurt.— She is a child of the moment, superficial, self-indulgent, fickle and pleasure-loving. Pleasure-loving to frivolity, without any sense of her own dignity, and, therefore, without any for that of others.

Erich.— And we took her for a deep, serious being, and placed a burden on her that she was not able to bear.

Kurt.— That is where the higher being differs from the lower, the one being elevated by confidence, whereas the other becomes only coarser and duller.

Erich.— But coldness and miscomprehension easily embitter the weak.

Kurt.— Has not Ellen all her life received the greatest and deepest love? And what was the result?

Erich.— Perhaps there was a flaw in this love.

Kurt.— No, that is n't it. How can you say that?

Erich.— I am speaking from fullest conviction. I know that my love, despite its absoluteness, was not good for her. My faith in the good and noble in every being was, and is, in itself, commendable, only I should not have overlooked so entirely the impure and faulty that certainly showed itself plainly enough. (*Jokingly.*) It does not do, you know, to pet the wild animals until they have been tamed.

Kurt.— But there are wild animals that are not to be tamed. Just as there are beings that are not capable of development, because incapable of true love.

Erich.— Who can determine the probabilities of development in the human soul? And even if it were so,— even if Ellen were of those poor mortals who cannot love, is not that all the more reason for giving it to her? Is not her need for it all the greater then? Even though she herself were not at all conscious of this need?

Kurt.— This kind of love seems to me to belong rather to woman than to man.

Erich (earnestly).— We have accustomed ourselves to thinking so. And yet it seems to me that love and pity for the weak should be the privilege of the stronger and worthy of the noblest of us.

Kurt.— It would seem much more natural, much more comprehensible to me, if you despised Ellen.

Erich.— Despise? Do you despise the child that in the excitement of its play heedlessly pulls out the butterfly's wings?

Kurt.— But Ellen is no child.

Erich.— Not as regards practical life.

Kurt.— This view appears to me to be a dangerous one. It leads to an impossible tolerance.

Erich.— No tolerance is impossible,— none too far-reaching! We must understand, my friend,— understand! Everything lies there! If only we could realize once for all, that all the suffering and sorrow of the world had its origin in ignorance. Human beings suffer, because they don't know. They make others suffer because they don't know. They make nothing of their lives because they don't know. It is only when we have so fully realized this truth that instead of being merely an idea it will have become a living thing—that we will know how to live.

Kurt.— I consider it positively immoral to forgive a being who does not even ask it.

Erich.— You do not know whether or not Ellen asks it. Perhaps she is too stubborn, perhaps she does not dare to come. And then, after all, what have we to forgive her for? You are not to do any very actual thing,— you need n't even take the first step. Only harbor in your heart kind and conciliatory sentiments for her, and believe me, if there is anything in Ellen that corresponds with this power of good in you, it will respond and find its way to you.

Kurt.— You are a strange being!

Erich.— I will not always appear so to you.

Kurt.— But it is time for me to go. My carriage is waiting. I hope to see you in Holzendorf.

Erich.— Very soon. And if you will permit me, I will take you to your carriage. I could not work now. My encounter with Bruno has thrown me out of the mood. I must get some fresh air. (*Both leave the room.*)

Mrs. Arne (enters, clears away the tea things, and puts everything into place. Bell rings).— Again? What a day this is! I wonder what it all means? (*Bell rings again.*) Yes, that surely means something. I can tell by the sound of the bell. (*Goes out.*)

Annie (enters with ELLEN).— Yes, indeed, Mrs. Arne. This is a surprise. The third-to-day? But this surely is the greatest of all! Not to be expected even according to your dream-book? Yes, yes. You must get over the shock. Naturally. We will wait here. He won't be long? No? Thank you. Yes, go back into the kitchen.

Ellen (looking about her).— How changed it all is. Everything has grown richer, more comfortable,— one might almost say more luxurious. Has Erich dreamed all this for himself, or has he worked for it?

Annie.— Both, I suppose. Here, as with everything concerning him, it must have come from within without.

Ellen.— And how neat it all is, much neater!

Annie.— Yes, to be sure!

Ellen.— Strange, that I have no feeling of doubt or unrest. On the contrary, a wonderful calm came over me, the moment I entered. Such as I have not felt in a long, long time. I feel as though I had awakened from a heavy, troubled dream. I breathe freer. Ah, yes. It was a dream. This is reality,— this is I,— this my room, this my life! All that is behind me was a dream,— a hideous, dark dream!

Annie.— And now you have come, and you firmly believe in Erich's love and faith?

Ellen.— Yes, firmly. For if that could end, there were nothing positive on earth.

(ANNIE silently walks up and down, stops before a little statuette and gazes thoughtfully at it.)

Ellen.— What are you doing there, Annie?

Annie (takes the little statue and shows it to ELLEN, significantly).— Yes, Erich has come out of the chaos of it all. He brought this little statue from India, after his illness, to commemorate his happy recovery.

Ellen.— Let me see. What a funny little thing!

Annie.— It was given him by a Hindoo. It had been this Hindoo's house-god, and from time immemorial it had stood on his house-altar. And this man had always prayed to it. When he traveled, he carried it with

him in his belt, because he could not be separated from it for a minute. Supernatural powers seemed to emanate from it, and all the good that came to this Hindoo, all the good he did, seemed due to this little idol.

Ellen.— How strange all that is!

Annie.— But it so happened one day that the Hindoo made the discovery that this god, whom he was worshiping, was a thing of clay, and that all the powers that seemed to emanate from it came in reality from within himself. He had but clothed the little thing in his own divine illusions.

Ellen.— You are saying that in so serious a manner. I see nothing in all that. The good Hindoo at all events found enlightenment, and a new comprehension.

Annie.— Yes, that is just it. And you see, to this little idol that at one time was all and all to him, he to-day devotes a loving thought, but he could no longer have it on his house-altar. He gave it to Erich as a remembrance.

Ellen.— How pretty all that is! He knows that Erich will always hold it in due respect.

Annie.— But he is perfectly indifferent, and does not care whether or not he ever sees it again.

Ellen.— The little story has a sad ring. And you tell it with so much significance.

Annie (goes up to ELLEN and takes her hand).— Because I wish to spare you a disappointment. Because —

Ellen.— A disappointment? (*After a pause, calmly but firmly.*) No, Annie, no.

Annie.— Tell me one thing. How did it happen that you found Erich again? Found him with your inner self? — so that you decided to go back to him?

Ellen.— How it happened? Oh, quite naturally. At bottom, I have never really lost Erich. And since I have freed myself from the toils of this creature Bruno, an inner, irresistible power has driven me on.

Annie.— Why did n't you come sooner?

Ellen.— I fought against it, because I believed or made myself believe that you and Erich would marry.

Annie (perturbed).— Erich? and I?

Ellen.— It was only when I heard of your engagement to Fred Hellwig that I —

Annie (terribly shocked).— Ellen!

Ellen.— How strange are the workings of fate! You remember that Christmas eve,— you remember? I had come to town, torn with remorse,

and had firmly decided to go back to Erich. Only I wanted first to go to Hellwig to find out whether he had already begun the divorce proceedings. I did not find him in. Bruno had followed me and he told me that you and Erich had entered into closer relationship. Then when you came to the hotel,— well, you know the rest.

Annie.— Ellen, Ellen, that is awful! Oh, that is too — (*Buries her face in her hands.*) And I — I — imagined myself to be the best messenger! I — I! But there is Erich now. I hear footsteps. I will go.

Ellen.— No, stay! Please stay!

Annie.— I can't see him now! Could n't look into his eyes. It is all too awful for words! (*Goes through the door at the right, not through the one that BRUNO has gone through.*)

Ellen.— Please stay!

Annie.— No, no! Not now, not now!

Erich (*stands in the doorway a moment, without showing the least excitement or surprise.*)— How are you, Ellen?

Ellen (*confused.*)— Erich — you are not surprised to see me?

Erich.— Surprised? Oh, no! We had to meet again. Why not to-day? Why not here? It seems natural even that it should be here.

Ellen.— You know why I came? You know it, don't you?

Erich.— Yes, there had to be some final understanding between us, for that abrupt rupture could never have been the end.

Ellen.— No, that was not the end,— that is why I came.

Erich.— No, the three years of our married life could not be effaced so easily as that, could not be thrown off as one throws off an old coat.

Ellen.— No, that was not possible.

Erich.— We have become indebted to each other for many things during that time. We had to meet again to thank each other for all that was beautiful and tender. (*Gives ELLEN his hand, which she holds a few seconds.*)

Ellen.— Don't say that, Erich. I have only given you pain. I feel it now.

Erich.— No, Ellen. No being can harm another, no one. It was I who harmed myself, all the wrong has come from myself alone. You were but the executioner who carried out the sentence.

Ellen.— A horrible task! Awful to think that!

Erich.— Pardon me, it was a badly chosen expression. I merely meant to say that I don't blame you for anything.

Ellen.— But I now feel my guilt, and have come to make it up to you.

Erich.— I thank you for that, but you see life has made it up to me, and in my heart there is springtime again.

Ellen.— So you have found a new love?

Erich.— The times when woman's love meant happiness for me are past.

Ellen (comes nearer, puts her hand on his arm).— But they will come again, these times.

Erich.— No, they will never come again, these times, no, no! They are over forever; and they have fulfilled their purpose.

Ellen.— Their purpose?

Erich.— Yes, Ellen, their purpose.

Ellen.— I don't understand that.

Erich.— Well, how am I to explain it to you?

Ellen.— You wish to say, perhaps, that you are now living only for your work, for your ideas?

Erich.— Yes, something to that effect.

Ellen.— But you can't be happy so. Work alone can't bring you happiness,— real, true inner happiness. You must miss something!

Erich.— Oh, no,— you must not think that! My life has grown richer; my soul-life has grown more beautiful all the time. And I feel as though that were to continue so, in endless climax.

Ellen (falteringly).— I don't know what to make of your words.

Erich.— I will try to make you understand. In youth there is the longing for the endless, the boundless, for infinite happiness. We seek in the world what embodies for us the highest, the purest, the most perfect,— that which resembles the light, the sun. And we meet woman. We love her, we honor her, we worship her, because in her we see what we have been seeking: the perfect, the divine. And then comes the moment when the heavens crash down on us, when the earth trembles, when all the stars stand still; and with infinite suffering, with untold pains, is born the realization: Man, that which you seek, you will not find it! not in woman,— not in any other being!—for that which you are seeking is perfection, is divinity itself! That is the immeasurable, the boundless, the infinite, to which goes all your longing! And you will not find it in this wide round, so you do not succeed in forming it within yourself. And we go into solitude, into silence. Oh, I cannot describe it all to you, all that one lives through! But one comes back a new being, blessed with untold riches!

Ellen (after a pause).— Yes, I feel that you are rich. And yet — all these riches, you wish to keep them for yourself alone?

Erich.— Oh, no! I give of them to all that wish to have of them. I should wish to fill my whole soul with harmony and happiness; — to fill the longing hearts of humankind with floods of beauty and music coming from me.

Ellen.— Once I stood between you and the world, now your world stands between you and me. I will go now. Farewell.

Erich.— Farewell, Ellen. — (*Gives her his hand.*)

Ellen (*goes to the door, stands helpless*).— But what is to become of me?

Erich (*goes up to her quickly*).— Kurt will receive you with open arms,— believe me.

Ellen.— Ah! this is retribution. To-day you discard my love, as I once did yours.

Erich.— I am not discarding your love —

Ellen.— You don't even believe in my love,— I feel it!

Erich.— Yes, Ellen, I do believe in it. I believe in it as firmly as I believe that the rose loves me, when it wafts to me its fragrance. It loves me, as it loves the wind and the sun that play with its petals.

Ellen.— And you?

Erich.— I love the glow of your lips and the silken sheen of your hair. I love the smile in your eyes, and the grace of your movements —

Ellen.— And my soul? You do not love that? You do not love my soul?

Erich.— Is not your soul in all that?

Ellen (*after awhile, thoughtfully*).— But that is not the love of man for woman.

Erich.— Call it love of humanity, love of the universe,— what you will. (*Takes two violins and gives one to ELLEN, and softly touches the strings of the other.*) Do you hear how the same tone resounds from your violin, when you hold it to your ear?

Ellen.— Yes, quite distinctly.

Erich.— That is because both instruments are perfectly attuned, because they have the same resonance. It were not possible else. And this perfect accord must be between two beings who wish to form a marriage.

Ellen (*rises*).— I think I am beginning to understand you, and I see that it is now too late.

Erich.— Too late for a marriage, but not for friendship.

Ellen.— And here, on this very spot, under this very picture, you swore to hold me fast as long as you live.

Erich.— Yes, Ellen, and I have kept this vow.

Ellen.— And this is the love which you said was eternal, indestructible? A myth!

Erich.— It is eternal, it is indestructible. And it is *not* a myth, it is truth. Only the truth is different from what we thought.

Ellen (*sinks down on a chair*).— Oh, that is worse than contempt or hatred,— that is absolute indifference.

Erich.— It is for the absolute that we strive, for the perfect. And we attain it only at the cost of the annihilation of the individual, the personal. (*Takes ELLEN to the picture.*) See, Ellen, you have suffered under my love, have despised it because it was selfish and passionate, seeking exclusion and understanding. It seemed all too human in its weakness, in its folly. And you were right. I loved you as I then was,— an erring, weak being,— as only an erring, weak being can love another. But during these years of separation, my love has cast off all the impurities that annoyed you. One shell after the other of human weakness have I cast off,— but the beautiful, costly ornaments have gone as well. And now I can interpret for you this picture, to which you appealed as the witness of our love vows. See, this (*points to the clothed female form*) represents earthly love. She needs the garments to cover her, and the gems, and the fairy veils, so as to be able to be among us. For poor, short-sighted humanity cannot endure the presence of absolute, infinite love in its uncovered clearness and nakedness. It is not ripe for it. But when we can endure to see each other spiritually in perfect clearness and bareness, then has Eros become Charitas, — then has terrestrial love become celestial love.

Ellen.— I hear your words — but they seem to come from far away. It is you, and yet is not you. I see you, yet a gray, cold mist seems to enshroud you. You stand before me with the mien of a priest,— and I, I am the sacrificial offering.

Erich.— When fate severed you from me it made me its priest for humanity. Yes, yes, an artist is a priest, and it is better for such to remain solitary. It is to humanity alone that he should devote his strength and love.

Ellen (has slowly walked to the door, but now suddenly turns around).— No, no! For the priest, too, have the words been spoken, ‘It is not meet for any creature to be alone!’ It is cold on your heights of humanity, Erich, and even though I understand the sacredness of your priesthood, and do not wish to intrude on it, I feel it to be good and necessary even for it to descend into valleys, to disport itself on the flowery meadows and just simply to bask in the sunshine of life. The artist-man must not allow the faculty for mere joyous play to starve within him. He could not do it with impunity. And this is where I want to help you. I want to help you to find your way back to the sunny meadows of the flowers. And if I have forfeited the right to be your wife, and you, like your Hindoo friend, have lost faith in the efficacy of your one-time little idol,— why then, I will be your mistress!

Erich (speechless, as though before something incomprehensible).— Ellen, Ellen, what are you saying?

Ellen.— And don't think that I am lowering myself in saying this to you. You must not! Because I am rising to the same heights on which you and your love are now standing. My love is no lower than yours, only different in its manifestation. Your love came to me from the heights even then,—yes! But these heights were not *my* heights, and that is why I did not know what to do with your love! You wanted to mould me and my love according to your ideas. That could not be. I myself had to do that,—I myself, in the struggle with life, in the struggle with the man-brute Bruno. But now I, too, have grown, have attained to heights of my own, and from these I call to you: I give myself to you, my loved one, unwoo'd, unasked for,—give myself to you as the sun gives light and warmth to the earth, out of a pure and infinite love of giving!

Erich (in greatest excitement).— Ellen, Ellen! (*Bell rings. Outside, loud voices.*)

Ellen.— What is that? Bruno's voice? I can see no one now, least of all him! Where can I hide? (*Runs into the bay window and draws the curtain. BRUNO opens the door and enters quickly.*)

Erich.— You? Again?

Bruno.— Yes, again! I have come again to cast into your face what you are and what I think of you. I used to think that you were nothing but a foolish idealist, a fantastic fool, whose silly dreams and high-faluting notions were harmless in daily life. But you are something quite different. You are one of the very clever ones, the designing ones!

Erich.— Mr. von Holzen, I beg of you, moderate yourself!

Bruno.— I don't want to moderate myself. I will tear the mask from your hypocritical face, and will cast into it your own villainy.

Erich (has looked at him calmly and in a superior manner, without interrupting him).— Your calumnies pass over me without touching me. Something wondrous has come into my life, and I don't even get the sense of your words. Please tell me, simply, the reason of your excitement.

Bruno.— The reason? You don't know it? Excellent! You act your part well. Has n't my Cousin Kurt been here, and did n't he tell you that he had disinherited me and made you his heir? Are you going to deny that?

Erich (as though from far away).— Yes, yes, it is true, Kurt did say something like that. And I see no reason why I should refuse to be his heir. I should certainly, were I to survive him, dispose of his fortune in a manner worthy of him and of his ideas. That is certain.

Bruno (sarcastically).— And certain it is that you, with all your sentimental, high-faluting ideas, are nothing better than a practised intriguer, a cunning fortune-hunter.

Ellen (emerges from the curtain).— Go on, go! You cannot accomplish what you wish to,— you cannot insult Erich.

Bruno (surprised).— You here, Ellen, you? (*Then, as though comprehending.*) Oh, I see! The wondrous experience! This is its manifestation! I must say, Ellen, you know when to come! Just at the right moment.

Ellen (terribly frightened).— Bruno, what are you saying? For shame, for shame! (*Gazes fearfully at ERICH.*) But you, you don't believe that. Not that, oh, not that!

Erich (firmly).— No, Ellen, never! (*With energy.*) Mr. von Holzen, I forbid you to insult my wife —

Bruno.— Your wife! Oho! My mistress, you mean. (*ELLEN screams and falls.*)

Erich (beside himself).— Leave my house!

Bruno (gazing on ELLEN).— Well, what of it? A pity that she is my mistress no longer,— that I discarded her —

Erich (trembling with rage).— Get out, I tell you, get out!

Bruno.— I almost regret it now! Anyone who can fly from arm to arm like this, and can always be there when the best opportunities offer themselves (*ERICH grabs him and tries to push him out. BRUNO releases himself*) — will always find a place over there, where I am going. Let go of me! I am going! I have nothing more to add!

Erich.— No, you are not going! Now you and I are going to settle! You have taught me that I was a fool to believe that kindness and tolerance of man should be without limit. Now I know that there is a limit — and one which we cannot without impunity disregard! It were madness not to deliver up to justice a villain like you! It was wrong of me to help you to flight! I shall repair this wrong! I am going to notify the police of your whereabouts (*makes a movement*) —

Bruno.— I don't know as you will succeed in that. (*Draws his revolver. ELLEN throws herself before ERICH to protect him, and is struck by BRUNO's bullet. Falls into ERICH's arms, who carries her to a chair. Another ball now strikes him. He sinks down at ELLEN's feet. BRUNO listens a moment, then turns out the electric light and goes. The moon throws its full light on the two figures. In the distance are heard the strains of violins.*)

Ellen (raises herself).— Is that the music of your violins?

Erich.— No, Ellen, it is the music of our souls. They are now perfectly attuned and form a single, a new force in God's great harmony of the spheres. (*The strains grow louder and clearer.*)

CURTAIN

A FOOL ON A ROOF*

"ET IN ARCADIA EGO"

BY JEAN WRIGHT

In a cave dug out of the side of a cliff,
— The Agent calls it a flat;
He thinks he knows, so I pay my rent,
And let it go at that —

I dwell in peace and fair content,
Nor mind the lack of air;
For the Garden of the Gods is mine
By climbing just one more stair.

My cave is snug and warm and cheap,
And rich with the loot of years;
But the key of the Yale lock lets me out
Too often, Margot fears.

But what can I do, when the housetop calls
With a voice that I must obey?
It's no use to try — let the work go hang —
I'll do it another day!

Up on the housetop, under the sun,
— Ah, but it's good to be here —
The wind off the river's a wee bit sharp,
But I fancy the sad old year

Like some poor woman, young at heart,
And use to being fair,
Forgets her age and thinks of spring;
For spring is in the air.

Yet, the north wind is a stinging wind,
And the fog looms mistily;
But the Palisades are friends of mine
And stand heart-high to me.

*From 'A Fool on a Roof,' by Jean Wright.

And the old church tower, so close at hand,
 Holds a clanging and busy bell
 That warns my heedless ears of the hours,
 — But it says that I waste 'em well.

.

What's that? As I live it's a strolling band
 In the well they call a court;
 And its blatant brass 'gainst the sheer brick walls,
 If one wanted to work, would thwart

One's best intentions — look — over there —
 That red thing swinging high!
 Margot says it's a cheap old rug,
 But I know it's Tyrian dye.

That dancing clothes-line, hung with things
 That belong to the cave it's above —
 I held my breath when I saw it stretched,
 For Young Love helped Young Love.

.

Listen — that man in the near-by flat —
 He fiddles his hours away —
 I've never seen him — of course he's fat —
 But all that I have to say

Is, whenever he draws his loosened bow
 Across the taut G string,
 It thrills me down to my very boots
 And the strings of my heart all wring.

Alack-a-day, what a day it is!
 But I must get to work;
 For all my brains are held in pawn,
 And a pawn he mustn't shirk.

.

The sullen clouds are hanging down
 Right over the town, and I think
 That the sleet and snow have made my roof
 As slick as a skating rink.

And I am a fool to venture up
Unless on business bent;
To hang the clothes, or latch the door,
— And it's almost time for the rent.

But the fog on the river is thick, Margot,
And the fog in my brain is as bad.
The sky and my heart are both like lead,
And the old world seems so sad.

So— it's me for the housetop —
Hey, old Wind — my, it's a bitter day —
But the sullen clouds are scudding fast,
And the fog is blowing away.

I fancy my fiddler stayed in bed,
Perhaps he sent for some beer.
Maybe he had it, and bread and cheese,
— He'll starve some day, I fear.

Look — down the street, in his rough old coat
Along comes my whistling man;
“Hello, here's a dime!” It'll go for a drink —
But it's hey for the Pipes o' Pan!

It's Sunday morning, and well-clad folk
Are going to church over there;
Perhaps I'm a pagan, up on my roof
Breathing God's own fresh air.

But the choir boys are singing some wonderful thing
That floats straight up to the sky;
It's a good old hymn, like the angels sing;
And we listen, the angels and I.

Margot has donned her last year's gown,
And let her old veil float,
To hide the rent that's under the chin,
— But I have no Sunday coat.

She says it's a flimsy poor excuse,
 That I want to stay at home;
 Well, Sunday mornings are good up here,
 And it's here that I generally come.

.
 My cave is snug and sweet — but sweet —
 And the lamps are burning bright,
 And Margot says I'll catch my death
 If I go on the roof, to-night.

But I say that I want to see my star;
 For something has gone wrong
 In the way that I hitched my wagon on,
 And I promise I won't stay long.

So — the Yale lock clicks, and I sneak up-stairs
 As quiet as can be.
 I know I'm a fool, but what can I do
 When the housetop's calling me?

.
 Whew! but the wind is a bitter wind —
 Old Wind, you don't play fair,
 To hit a man when he's off his guard,
 And decidedly up in the air.

But I'm king, on my own housetop,
 And the moon is all my own;
 There's never a soul in sight to-night,
 And it's good to be alone.

Just a minute more — till the old bell clangs —
 For my fiddler's mad to-night;
 And my wagon runs on rubber tires
 And it's hitched to my star all right.

Ah, it's good to be on the housetop,
 'Way up from the tired town,
 But Margot's hair is gold in the light,
 And I think I'll be going down.

.

We have a gorgeous bunch of flowers,
— The flowers of yesterday —
They cost a beautiful great big dime,
But Margot likes things gay.

And Margot's gown is old — but old —
She says 'twas made from a scrap;
But it matches her eyes — her deep blue eyes —
So I don't care a rap.

Neither does she, for the matter of that —
It's as good as new, don't I see?
Then she laughs and sticks a rose in her hair,
And the world looks good to me.

So the housetop calls, and it bids me come,
To the night and the biting air;
But my cave is warm and sewet — but sweet —
And Margot calls me there.

ROSES*

BY AGNES I. HANRAHAN

There's a Rosie Show in Derry,
An' a Rosie Show in Down;
An' 'tis like there's wan I'm thinkin'
'Ill be held in Randalstown.
But if I had the choosin'
Av a rosie prize the day,
'Twould be a pink wee rosie
Like he plucked whin rakin' hay.
Yon pink wee rosie in my hair —
He fixt it troth — an' kissed it there!
White gulls wor wheelin' roun' the sky,
Down by — Down by.

Ay, there's rosies sure in Derry,
An' there's famous wans in Down;
Och there's rosies all a hawkin'
Through the heart av London town!
But if I had the liftin'
Or the buyin' av a few,
I'd choose jist pink wee rosies
That's all drenchin' wid the dew—
Yon pink wee rosies wid the tears!
Och, wet, wet tears! — ay, troth 'tis years
Since we kep' rakin' in the hay
Thon day — thon day!

*From 'Aroun' the Boreens,' by Agnes I. Hanrahan.

MAUREEN*

BY AGNES I. HANRAHAN

Ay, yonder the thrushes is pipin' now,
 'Way up the wee boreen;
But maybe 'tis lonesome enough they'll look
 Waitin' on my Maureen!
An' roses is climbin' roun' hedges the day,
An' peepin' down by, for to smell the new hay:
Och, but sure the wee child does be far away——
 Maureen — Maureen!

An' down in the glen they're whistlin' a tune—
 The tune you loved, Maureen;
But sad is yon grass that grows on a grave—
 Ay, grass so young an' green!
Och circus wee ponies is jinglin' in town,
An' swallows is wheelin' an' twitt'rin' aroun'
Ay, but sure av your voice for to hear wan soun',
 Maureen —Maureen!

*From 'Aroun' the Boreens,' by Agnes I. Hanrahan.

SAROJINI OF HYDERABAD,

BY EDITH M. THOMAS

Sarojini of Hyderabad,
Seen vanishing — like even-star,
That makes the twilight glad— and sad,
That shines, and dips, and passes far—
Seen once, whom I no longer see,
Star-bright Sarojini!

Sarojini of Hyderabad,
From East, from West, in London grey
We met. You made its twilight glad,
You cast enchantment on my way,
From which my soul went never free,
Singing Sarojini!

Sarojini of Hyderabad,
Both lotus-flower and precious dew
Within the flower! Upanishad
Of Ancient Wisdom springing new,
What new-old truths you taught to me,
Flower-child, Sarojini!

Sarojini of Hyderabad,
A vision far in Krishna's Land,
In robe of fading-violet clad,
You wave me forth with slender hand,
Yet, beckoning, forever flee.—
Mirage! Sarojini!

Sarojini of Hyderabad,
Though Time bears many dreams away,
Still lingers one that I have had—
To meet you, smiling, as you stray
Beneath some Heavenly banyan-tree—
Meet you, Sarojini!

THE BAYADÈRE

BY RABINDRANATH TAGORE

(Translated by Roy Temple House)

Ougaponta, disciple of Bouddha,
Slept lying in the dust,
At the foot of the city walls of Matoura.

The fires had died and all the city gates were closed.
In the troubled August heaven
The clouds hid the stars.

And suddenly a rude foot
Shook the bracelets of silver
And touched the breast of Ougaponta.

The young man wakened with a start,
And the wavering light of a lantern
Fell in his eyes, the eyes full of kindness.

He saw before him a bayadère,
Drunk with the wine of her youth,
Covered with jewels of many colors,
Wrapped in a pale blue mantle.

She lowered the lantern to light the features,
The stern, fair face of the young hermit.

'Your pardon, young hermit, that I have roused thee,'
Spoke the bayadère. 'Come with me.
The dusty way is not a bed for thee.'

'Go thy way, fair one of the fair ones!'
Said the hermit. 'When the moment is come
I will come and find thee.'
Then all at once the black night
Showed her teeth in a lightning flash,
And the bayadère trembled with fear.

THE BAYADÈRE

The new year has not sounded.
The wind growls, the branches weep,
And a rain of petals falls to the earth.

A soft spring breeze bears from far the sound of
the chalumeau.
Men rush to groves
Called by the festival of flowers.

On the roofs of the sleeping city
The light of the full moon falls from heaven.

The hermit treads the deserted way
And turns his ear to a love-sad bird
Who sings from magnolia branches.

Ougaponta comes near the city gates,
And his steps grow slow and slower.

Who is the woman lying in the dust
Near the walls of the city?

It is the bayadère, covered with sores,
A prey to the black pest,
Driven out of the city.

The young hermit sits at the bayadère's side;
He lays the sick woman's head on his knees,
He wets her burning lips with cool water
And bathes her body with oil.

'Who art thou, sweet angel of mercy?'
Said the bayadère, and groaned.

'The moment is come. I promised thee,
And I have come to find thee, as I promised.'

EMILE VERHAEREN'S LYRICAL TRILOGY

Les Soirs, Les Débâcles, Les Flambeaux noirs

BY FEDERICO OLIVERO

THESE poems were written during that period of the Romantic movement, when the poetical current, not only in France but also in the neighboring countries, was dividing into two streams, one of which continued the traditional course, while the other swerved aside and went rambling through the forest of Allegory and Mystery. What gives Verhaeren's lyrics their peculiar character is the combination of Hugo's and Lamartine's style with the philosophical thought of Laforgue and the symbolic *préciosités* of Verlaine and Mallarmé. Having revived the impassioned fervor and the mystic melancholy of *Les Feuilles D'Automne* and *Les Harmonies Poétiques* in *Les Flamandes* and *Les Moines*, the Poet suffered from perplexity in composing some poems afterwards published in *Les Bords de la Route*; but there was a new strain in his soul and he began to record with a forcible style a set of original, wild, deep impressions. *Les Soirs* are essentially a mirror of the utter dejection and hopeless gloom of his spirit; *Les Débâcles* reveal the disease of his soul, and *Les Flambeaux noirs* show us the symbols of a darkened mind, the last stage of his spiritual illness.

In *Les Soirs* he limits himself to sing the tragic splendor of sunsets, the desolate grandeur of midnight skies; his poetical world does not seem to know either the balmy freshness of dawn or the golden radiance of noon; the blood-red flare of a perpetual afterglow broods over the horizon of his dismal dreamland. The lonely marshes — their rotting waters glittering with metallic iridescence through bristling tufts of rushes — reflect, as a broken mirror, the sinister glare of the dying sun; no breath of life is blowing upon this wilderness, no breeze wrinkles the imprisoned river, stretching far in scattered pools to a sky of greenish vapors and dazzling crimson clouds.

. . . Les soirs

Saignent, dans les marais, leurs douleurs et leurs plaies,
Dans les marais, ainsi que de rouges miroirs,

Placés pour refléter le martyre des soirs, . . .*

. . . 'The evening skies
Shed the blood of their wounds, of their pains, on the marshes, —
On the marshes, as on red mirrors,
Set to reflect the martyrdom of the evenings, . . . '*

It is not the sweet and strange twilight of Verlaine; it is the grim closing of night, when drear bars of red light linger in the darkening West. Sometimes it is a silent, ice-bound landscape, — the Realm of Death, — where iron cliffs raise, from the snow-fields, their sharp peaks to a sky glistening with the everlasting, fiery eyes of stars, — a sky symbolizing Eternity.† To intensify the luminous atmosphere of his pictures, to infuse the dream of intense light haunting his soul into his descriptions, — which appear to him always too pale to represent exactly his visions, — he accumulates gold and scarlet and purple with an effect of fantastic gorgeousness, wrapping in a golden radiance his fairy islands, 'Where the Dreams, crimson-clad, are scattering on the foam with their golden fingers the golden flowers dropping from the sun,' — kindling 'funereal pyres of red gold on the river's bank' in the bleak November evening, — depicting the colossal towns of fire and shadow, where '*sous les toits plombés et dans les murs nitreux*' shine '*ouverts, de grands yeux d'or en de rouges paupières.*'‡ He

**Poèmes*. [*Les Soirs, Les Débâcles, Les Flambeaux noirs.*] Paris, Mercure de France, 1896; p. 19. — Cf. *Ib.*, p. 67:

Un soir plein de pourpres et de fleuves vermeils
Pourrit, par au delà des plaines diminuées,
Et fortement, avec les poings de ses nuées,
Sur l'horizon verdâtre, écrase des soleils.

'An evening sky, full of purple hues, of crimson rivers,
Is decaying, — beyond the dwindling plains, —
And strongly, with its clouds, as with powerful fists,
It crushes the sun upon the greenish horizon.'

In a poem of 1886, published in *Les Bords de la Route* [Paris, Mercure de France, 1895; p. 17], he had already evoked a landscape of a similar character.

'En ce soir de couleurs, en ce soir de parfums,
Voici grandir l'orgueil d'un puissant crépuscule
Plein de flambeaux cachés et de miroirs defunts; . . .
Le cadavre du jour flotte sur les pâtures
Et, parmi le couchant élaboussé de fiel,
Planent de noirs corbeaux dans l'or des pourritures.'

'Look at the proud grandeur of a stately twilight
Spreading, glorious with reflections of hidden torches and mirrors,
Through the many-colored, fragrant evening; . . .
The corpse of the day is lying on the pasture land,
And black ravens are soaring among the golden lights of the decaying sunset,
Among the greenish flecks of gall of the decaying sunset.'

†*Les Soirs*, 68.

‡*Les Soirs*, 13, 52, 53, 65.

lavishes the richest colors of his palette in his endeavor to paint the emblem of his ardent and wild soul, the smouldering ruins of his heroic ideals, the sunset of his hope, as Baudelaire did trying to portray the changing hues of his tragic hallucinations, '*ces rouges de cuire, ces ors verts, ces tons de turquoise se fondant avec le saphir, toutes ces teintes qui brûlent et se décomposent dans le grand incendie final.*'* As some contemporary artists, with whom he shares the tendency to deal with *macabre* subjects, as Odilon Redon and Henri de Groux, he likes violent contrasts of light and shadow,—tumultuous fights between gloomy clouds and sunbeams piercing as fiery swords the monsters of dark vapors,—oceans, all pitch-black chasms and glittering amber foam,—cyclopean towns of ebony and gold. We do not perceive any delicate penumbra, any transparent shade in his pictures; they are like dusky frescoes on which dazzling spots of colored light would be dancing and playing, as when the crimson shafts of the setting sun are sifted through wind-tossed trees. And from these murky lands, from these blazing horizons, strange sounds arise, long reverberating in his soul: magic, alluring songs of wizards and sibyls, shouts of mad terror, the clamor of routed armies, the crash of burning towers, the echo of clanging bells, voices of agony and distress, the cry of suffering nature. On the lonely moorland he listens to a cry of despair,

Un cri grêle, qui pleure au loin une agonie, . . .

'A faint cry, bewailing an agony, far away' . . .

to the desolate knell in the closing night:

Appels de cloche à cloche et sanglots vers les morts

Et leur prochain anniversaire,

— Larmes de bronze et pleurs d'accords —

Criant malheur, criant misère,

O mon âme des soirs, entend les morts hurler aux morts.†

O my soul, sad with the sadness of evening, listen to the dead calling to the dead, . . .

Listen to the bells calling to each other, sobbing on the dead,

Shedding tears of bronze, weeping in mournful accord, . . . †

His mind is haunted by funereal images; night is to him the vault where are lying the unknown heroes who died on their lonely roads to glorious goals,—the stars burning around the gigantic catafalque as glimmering tapers in the mournful gloom. Nature shows him only symbols of universal death; the moon—a maiden wan in her golden coffin—is

**Théophile Gautier*. Preface to *Les Fleurs du Mal* [Paris, Levy], p. 16.

†*Les Soirs*, 35, 51, 53, 63, 64.

brought down the ebony staircase of black clouds to the tomb waiting for her in the depths of a dismal lagoon. And his own face, his haggard, care-worn countenance, does it not look as the sepulchre of his blighted hopes, of his sumptuous dreams all turned to dust? * Autumn is to him no time of slow and melancholy decay, but a bright outburst of life, the supreme and fullest bloom of the Rose of Nature, the apotheosis of the magnificent forces ruling the world, and yet the dominion of an imperial, solemn Form, whose head is crowned with the ruby studded diadem of Death.

Et comme Octobre, avec paresse
Et nonchaloir, se gonfle et meurt dans ce décor:
Pommes! caillots de feu; raisins! chapelets d'or! . . .
Mourir ainsi, mon corps, mourir serait le rêve!
Sous un suprême afflux de couleurs et de chants,
Avec, dans les regards, des ors et des couchants, . . .
Mourir, mon corps, ainsi que l'automne, mourir! †

'And see how October, lazily,
Heedlessly, is growing and dying in this scenery:
Apples! clots of fire; grapes! chaplets of gold! . . .
My dream would be to die in this way!
Under a supreme harmony of colors and songs, flowing together,
Having in my eyes the golden lights of sunset, . . .
To die, as the Autumn, O my body, to die! †

* *Les Flambeaux noirs*, 202.

Ton front, comme un tombeau, dominera tes rêves,
Et sera ta frayeur, en des miroirs, la nuit.

Les Débâcles. Le Glaive, 82.

'Your forehead, as a tombstone, shall rise on your dreams,
And, in mirrors, it shall be dreadful to you.'

Les Débâcles. Le Glaive, 82.

Comme en un tombeau noir, de vieux astres de fer
Brûlaient, trouant le ciel de leurs flammes votives.

Les Soirs, 23.

'As in a black grave, old stars of iron
Were burning, their votive flames piercing the gloomy sky.'

Les Soirs, 23.

Un catafalque d'or surgit au fond des soirs,
Quand les astres, comme des lampes,
Brûlent, en étageant leurs rampes,
Vers les lointains d'argent marbrant des parvis noirs.

Quel mort en ce cercueil? Le cœur des hommes d'ombre . . .

Les Soirs. A Ténèbres, 69.

A golden catafalque rises in the distance, on the twilight horizon,
When the stars, as lamps,
Are burning and lifting their glittering rows

Towards dim silver glimmerings, remote and scattered in the black vestibules of
temples, far away.

What is closed in this coffin? The heart of men of shadow . . .

Les Soirs. A Ténèbres, 69.

† *Les Soirs*, 67, 68.

When Verhaeren has to express his essential emotions — a hopeless sadness, a wild sorrow — he has only to draw upon a large treasure of images accumulated during his long hours of solitary and intense contemplation; and the outcome of the mystic wedding of his soul with the external world is a morbid and deep poetry of nature, his mournful ideas pervading all things with a strange, vehement life, his peculiar feelings casting on the landscape a lurid shadow, where no sense of joy, not even a sweet melancholy, can survive. The trees, in their mantles of dusty gold, seem to go as weary pilgrims towards a never approaching goal, on the plains lying dead under the autumnal clouds hanging motionless in a leaden sky; — the woods, when the blast is not wringing their gnarled boughs, shudder with the terror of eternal pain, — the cliffs raise their impotent wrath, their dumb despair, to the sunset glowing with a bitter, vain passion; and no one shall know the mystery of the tortured stones, and no one shall tell when an unseen hand will close the lids of the stars' diamond eyes.

Quels pas sonnant la mort et quelles cohortes
Viendront casser l'éternité des heures mortes
De ce minuit, dallé d'ennui?

Et clore, à tout jamais, ces yeux de pierre,
Cristaux mystérieux et ors, dans la paupière
De ce minuit, dallé d'ennui?†

'What steps, like a knell, — what cohorts
Will come and break the eternity of the dead hours
Of this midnight, paved with weariness?

'And close, for ever, these eyes of stone,
Mystic, golden crystals, close the eyelids
Of this midnight, paved with weariness? '*

When, like a sad Narcissus sitting on the bank of a weird pool, he explores his pale reflection in the dark mirror of Nature, he only perceives the dizziness of terror in his look, the bitter smile of despair on his lips. Even the gorgeous blossoming of a garden in spring-time is to him but a symbol of the vain magnificence of his dreams, of his fruitless effort, of his ineffectual yearning towards happiness, and also of his solitary and proud disdain. Beauty is dying, lonely, forsaken, along the gleaming alleys; no hand plucks the fine flowers, their perfumes vanish on the incense-laden breeze, their chalices burst open as caskets of jewels only to reflect the purple of the desolate evening.

**Un Soir*, 146; *Les Arbres*, 55-58; *Les vieux Chênes*, 59-61; *Tourment*, 31, 32.

Songe à ces lys royaux, à ces roses ducales,
 Fiers d'eux-mêmes et qui fleurissent à l'écart,
 Dans un jardin, usé de siècles, quelque part,
 Et n'ont jamais courbé leurs tiges verticales.

Inutiles pourtant, inutiles et vains,
 Parfums demain perdus, corolles demain mortes,
 Et personne pour s'en venir ouvrir les portes
 Et les faire servir au pâle orgueil des mains.*

'Think of those royal lilies, think of those ducal roses,
 Proud of themselves and blossoming apart,
 Somewhere, in a forsaken garden worn by centuries,
 Which never have bent their vertical stems.

Nevertheless they are useless, useless and vain,
 — Perfumes to-morrow lost, flowers to-morrow dead, —
 And nobody will come and open the doors
 And adorn with them the pale pride of hands.*

In the last part of this lyrical trilogy the darkness is deepening; the images taken directly from nature yield the place to sinister, quaint emblems wrought by the poet's mind, the mystic voices of things are hushed by the obscure warning of destiny. The artist is startled by ghastly visions, born in the fever of his brain and intertwined in bizarre arabesques; his spirit is lost in a maze of idle reasonings, in a labyrinth of contradictory arguments; the dead silence of his soul is broken by fitful whispers of dark forebodings; only the queer flowers of insanity glimmer here and there in the spiritual night. As in the sickly psychological conditions analyzed by Poe in *Ulalume* and *Berenice*, where mean, insignificant objects acquire a symbolic value, a deep and wide meaning, in his diseased soul everything becomes the mystic token of unseen presences, assuming a strange and great significance.† His anguish changes into a torturing doubt,

**Les Débâcles*, 94, 95.

†Hélas! ces tours de ronde de l'infini, le soir,
 Et ces courbes et ces spirales
 Et cette terreur, tout à coup,
 Comme une corde au cou,
 Sans aucun cri, sans aucun râle,
 Lorsque soudain les noirs chats d'or
 Se sont assis sur ma muraille
 Et m'ont fixé de leurs grands yeux,
 Comme des fous silencieux,
 Si longuement fixé de leur mystère,
 Avec de telles pointes de clous,
 Que j'en reste béant, avec des trous,
 Dans ma tête réfractaire,
 Morne de moi, fini d'essor,
 Hagard — mais regardant encor
 Les yeux des chats d'ébène et d'or. — *Les Flambeaux noirs*. *Les Livres*, 200.

(See p. 69 for translation.)

into a wild rush of his thoughts for certainty, for light and truth; his sadness rises to anger and despair, to the maddening dread of a child lost in a gloomy forest, to the wrath of a blindman trying to escape from a house on fire, until his reason breaks under the strain and dies in the hopeless struggle.

En sa robe, couleur de feu et de poison,
 Le cadavre de ma raison,
 Flotte sur la Tamise; . . .
 En sa robe de bijoux morts, que solennise
 L'heure de pourpre à l'horizon
 Le cadavre de ma raison
 Traîne sur la Tamise.
 Elle s'en va vers les hasards
 Au fond de l'ombre et des brouillards,
 Au long bruit sourd des tocsins lourds,
 Cassant leur aile au coin des tours;
 Derrière elle, laissant inassouvie
 La ville immense de la Vie;
 Elle s'en va vers l'inconnu noir
 Dormir en des tombeaux de soir,
 Là-bas, où les vagues lentes et fortes,
 Ouvrant leurs trous illimités,
 Engloutissent à toute éternité:
 Les mortes.*

'Clothed in fire and poison,
 The corpse of my reason
 Is floating on the Thames; . . .
 Shrouded in its robe of dead jewels, solemn
 With the purple light of the horizon,
 The corpse of my reason
 Is floating on the Thames.

(Translation of note on p. 68.)

'Alas! this circling of the infinite, at evening,
 And these curves and these spirals
 And suddenly, this terror,
 As a rope tightening around my neck,
 Without any cry, without any rattle,
 When, all at once, the black golden cats
 Have come on my wall
 And have stared at me with their large eyes,
 Like silent madmen;
 They have so long gazed at me with their enigmatic eyes,
 Keen as points of nails,
 That I remain stunned, with holes
 In my stubborn head,
 Haggard — but still staring
 At the eyes of the cats of ebony and gold.'

*Finale, 205-208.

My reason, she is going towards the perils
 Lurking in the shadows and the fogs,
 Accompanied by the long, dull sound of the heavy knells,
 Crumpling their wings against the corners of the towers;
 Leaving behind, unsatiated,
 The immense town of Life;
 She is going towards the black unknown,
 She is going to sleep in twilight graves,
 Over there, far away, where the waves, slow and strong,
 Opening their limitless chasms,
 Swallow forever
 The dead women.*

The atmosphere of his dreams is heavy, stifling as the blue, poisonous air of Maeterlinck's *Serres chaudes*; his spell-bound, visionary soul has no power to disentangle herself from the net of beautiful, horrid and incoherent images, subtly woven by a black magic.† Baudelaire's influence is to be detected in the dark melancholy of his general tone, but especially in the dreadful phantoms hovering above that *Mare Tenebrarum* in which his soul is drowning; in *Heures mornes, Le Depart, Un Soir*, he leads us to a land of darkness and horror, suddenly lit up by red flashes of lightning, by glaring crimson stars, by a flaring torch, the dusky, limitless, desolate land, once visited by Baudelaire and De Quincey in their opium trances; the lines of the French poet,

Sur le fond de mes nuits Dieu de son doigt savant
 Dessine un cauchemar multiforme et sans trêve,

'On the background of my nights the finger of all-knowing God
 Draws, without respite, a many-shaped nightmare.'

are the keynote of several eerie poems contained in *Les Débauches* and *Les Flambeaux noirs*. Bloody idols of ebony and gold rise on pedestals of basalt in the blazing twilight; idols of black marble stare at him in moonlit caves, the gleam of fateful stars in their eyes of precious stones, which have the fascination of Medusa's baleful look. Satanic guiles embodied in ghastly forms, they allure his soul with their wicked irresistible smile; they descry his inmost thoughts; they drag him to unsufferable torments; a cruel serenity sits on their foreheads, the serenity of inexorable destiny.

**Finale*, 205-208.

†Sur un étang d'yeux ouverts et de reptiles
 Des groupes des cygnes noyés,
 Vers des lointains de soie et d'or broyés,
 Traignent leurs suicides tranquilles
 Parmi des phlox et des jonquilles. — *Les Flambeaux noirs*, 179.

cf. *Serres chaudes*, p. 75:

Et les cygnes sont morts au milieu des serpents . . .

Et mon désert de cœur est peuplé de dieux noirs;
 Ils s'érigent, blocs lourds de bois, ornés de cornes
 Et de pierre, dieux noirs silencieux des soirs; . . .
 Avec des yeux, comme les yeux des loups, la nuit,
 Avec des yeux comme la lune, ils me regardent; . . .
 Ils sont les éternels de mon désert, ils sont
 De mon ciel violent, dont les anciens tonnerres
 Ont saccagé l'azur, l'immobile horizon;
 Ils sont mes éternels et mes tortionnaires.

And in Au loin:

Songe à ces dieux d'airain debout au seuil des porches,
 A ces colosses bleus broyant des léopards
 Entre leurs bras, à ces processions de torches
 Et de prêtres, par les fortés et les remparts,
 La nuit, sous l'oeil dardé des étoiles australes . . .*

'And in the desert of my heart black gods arise;
 They stand upright, heavy blocks of wood, ornamented with horns
 And with stones, — black, silent gods of the evenings; . . .
 With their eyes like the eyes of wolves, at night,
 With their eyes like the moon, they are staring at me; . . .
 They are the eternal gods of my wilderness, they are
 The motionless horizon of my tumultuous sky, whose blue depths
 Have been raided by ancient storms;
 They are my eternal, torturing gods.'

And in Au loin:

'Think of those brazen gods, upright on the threshold of vestibules,
 Think of those blue giants crushing leopards
 With their arms, think of those processions of torches
 And of priests, through the forests, on the bulwarks,
 At night, under the darting eye of the austral stars . . .'*

**Les Flambeaux noirs. Les dieux*, 183-85. — *Les Diables*, 115-117. — See also *L'Idole* [*Les Soirs*, 35-36] and *Là-bas* [p. 97-100]; in this poem the symbolic images strangely appeal to him among the barbaric pomp of Indian scenery:

Desir d'être soudain la bête hieratique
 D'un éclat noir, sous le portique
 Escarbouclé d'un temple, à Benarès.
 Et regarder, témoin impassible et tragique,
 Dardés, les yeux de fer, et les naseaux, hagarda,
 Droit devant soi, là-bas, le ciel mythologique,
 Où le Siva terrible échevèle ses chars,
 Par des ornières d'or, à travers les nuages:
 Scintillement d'essieux et tonnerres de feux;
 Etalons fous cabrés, sur des tas de carnages;
 Rouge, la mer au loin et ses millions d'yeux.

(Continued at bottom of p. 72.)

Vainly he has endeavored to wring their mystery, their secret, out of the mouths forever dumb; vainly he has questioned the awful figures, whose enigmatic, unfathomable eyes glitter as phosphoric jewels in the gloom. Among these terrible forms of *Welt-schmerz*, all that man has done goaded either by necessity or by the desire to increase the amount of joy allotted to him, appears to the poet aimless and vain. Both the crumbling hamlet, so utterly sad and forlorn in the gathering night, when the last songs are dying, monotonous and tragic, on the lonely roads, — and the monstrous town, where the streets, swarming with haggard, weary people, twist and writhe as snakes around the harbors and docks and the grimy, resonant walls of huge workshops, the big city wrapped in yellow fogs, where mankind, withered and wizened, bows to the lust of gain, to the hideous golden idol, — both these manifestations of human labor seem to the poet symbols of a useless fight against the iron laws of an inflexible destiny.

Tel qu'un lourd souvenir lourd de rêves, debout
 Dans la fumée enorme et jaune, dans les brumes,
 Grande de soir! la ville inextricable bout; . . .
 Voici Londres cuvant . . .
 Enormément son rêve d'or et son sommeil
 Suragité de fièvre.
 O mon âme, ces mains en prière vers l'or,

(Continued from p. 71.)

'O, this craving to be, all at once, the hieratic monster,
 Of a black brilliance, under the ruby-studded portico
 Of a temple, in Benares,
 And to look, — tragic, impassable witness, —
 With darting fiery eyes, and wild, dilated nostrils —
 Straight before oneself, down there, at the mythologic sky,
 Where the terrible Siva furiously drives his chariots, drawn by horses with dishevelled
 manes,
 Along golden ruts, through the clouds;
 The axle-trees are glittering, the chariot of fire thundering;
 The wild horses rear on heaps of slaughtered men;
 Red, the sea appears in the distance, with its millions of eyes.'

In *Le Gel* [p. 37] we can observe the formation of the mystic figure in the poet's mind, deeply affected by the majesty of nature.

Silencieux, les bois, la mer et ce grand ciel
 Et sa lueur immobile et dardante!
 Et rien qui remuera cet ordre essentiel
 Et ce règne de neige acerbe et corrodante.
 Et la crainte saisit d'un immortel hiver
 Et d'un grand dieu soudain, glacial et splendide.

Silent are the woods, the sea, and this great sky
 And its motionless, darting gleam!
 And nothing will change this essential order
 And this realm of snow, of sharp, corrosive snow.
 And one is seized by the terror of an everlasting winter,
 And of a god suddenly arising, great, glacial and radiant.

Ces mains monstrueuses vers l'or — et puis la course
Des millions de pas vers le lointain Thabor
De l'or, là-bas, en quelque immensité de rêve,
Immensément debout, immensément en bloc.†

'Like a dream-laden remembrance, upright
In the enormous, yellow smoke, in the fogs,
Great with the evening glamour! the inextricable town boils; . . .
Behold! London is dreaming
Its huge, golden dream, London is sleeping
Its feverish sleep.
O my soul, those hands lifted in prayer towards the gold,
Those monstrous hands towards the gold — and then the racing
Of million steps towards the far Thabor
Of gold, down there, in some vast dream, —
Towards the far Thabor, rising immense and massive.'*

In his first poems he had sung the undaunted power of his race, Artevelde and the Flemish heroes, the wild beauty of mediæval times, of ages of war and freedom; he had descended into the forgotten tombs of the kings of old, and, descrying among the royal dust the ruby ring and the jewelled helmet, had exalted the renown of his native country.

Ils passaient par les rocs, les campagnes, les hâvres,
Les burgs — et brusquement ils s'écroulaient, vermeils,
Saignant leurs jours, saignant leurs coeurs, puis leurs cadavres
Passaient dans la légende, ainsi que des soleils.†

'They passed along the cliffs, the fields, the harbors,
The castles — and, suddenly, they fell, crimson,
Bleeding their life, bleeding their heart; then their corpses
Passed, sun-like, into the legends.'†

But, afterwards, he shut out of his mind the dream of ancient glory, and having turned his look to modern times he felt with keen grief the loss of any noble ideal, he was struck with pity and disgust at the sight of the ghostly throng without confidence in life, without fervor, without hope.

And now, analyzing his own soul, he discerned his spiritual ruin; since the enjoyment of life, — a mirage of opal and gold, held, glistening and enticing, before our fascinated eyes by the wicked sorcerer, the World, — is mere vanity, a sullen pessimism rules with unrestrained sway over his mind. Nevertheless, though he is aware of the bitter deception lurking

**Les Villes*, 171-74. — *Les Complaintes*, 17-18. — *Londres*, 45-46.

†*Les Bords de la Route*. Paris, Mercure de France, 1895; p. 42.

under the brilliant illusion, he also knows that he will not be able to dispel his eager longing for joy, his yearning towards bliss, his unquenchable thirst for happiness; and he tries to love his desires in spite of their treachery, conscious that these aspirations are life itself.

Hommes tristes, ceux-là qui croient à leur génie
Et fous! et qui peinent, sereins de vanité;
Mais toi, qui t'es instruit de ta futilité,
Aime ton vain désir pour sa toute ironie.

Besides he knows that he is not fit for the deadly battle which is fought in the world uninterruptedly, without truce, and from his tower of pride he looks in somber dejection on the triumphal pagentry of life.* In these hours of despondency his soul is sometimes stirred by mystic, vehement aspirations towards the Absolute, the Eternal. He had before, in *Les Moines*, clearly expressed these tendencies; he was then leading us through a blessed land of peaceful joy, through holy gardens where the lilies of chastity emerge from the brambles of pain, where the apparitions of dreaming angels illuminate, as a divine sunrise, the woods and the golden shores of the ideal country.

Heureux, ceux-là, Seigneur, qui demeurent en toi,
Le mal des jours mauvais n'a point rongé leur âme,
La mort leur est soleil et le terrible drame
Du siècle athée et noir n'entame point leur foi.

Obscurs pour nos regards, ils sont pour toi les lampes,
Que les Anges sur terre, avec leurs doigts tremblants,
Allument dans les soirs mortuaires et blancs
Et rangent comme un nimbe à l'entour de tes tempes.

Heureux le moine saint s'abattant à genoux,
Devant ta croix, dressant au ciel ses larges charmes; . . .
Son coeur est tel qu'un lac dans la montagne blanche,
Qui réverbère en ses pâles miroirs dormants
Et ses vagues de prisme emplis de diamants
Toute clarté de Dieu qui sur terre s'épanche.

**Les Débâcles*, 94. — cf. *ib.*, *Le Glaive*, 81-82:

Tu seras le fiévreux ployé, sur les fenêtres,
D'où l'on peut voir bondir la vie et ses chars d'or, . . .

Eclatants et claquants, les drapeaux vers les luttes,
Ta lèvre exsangue hélas! jamais ne les mordra: . . .

Tu t'en iras à part et seul — et les naguères
De jeunesse seront un inutile aimant
Pour tes grands yeux lointains — et les joyeux tonnerres
Chargeront loin de toi, victorieusement!

'Blessed are the men, O Lord, who dwell in You;
The evil of the wicked age has not corroded their soul;
Death is to them like a sun, — and the terrible tragedy
Of the black, atheistic century does not shake their faith.

Dark to our eyes, they are for You like the lamps,
Which the Angels, on earth, with their trembling fingers
Light up in the funereal, white twilights;
They set them around Your forehead, as an aureole.

Blessed the holy monk, kneeling
Before the Cross, which lifts to the sky its vast graces; . . .
His heart is like a tarn on the white mountain,
A tarn reflecting in its pale, dormant mirrors, —
In its iridescent waves glistening with diamonds, —
All the splendor of God flowing upon the earth.'

He had contemplated in cloisters built among black desolate mountains the ascetic faces, the pure, azure eyes looking at him under the wimple of the hood; in the still atmosphere of lonely valleys, of untrodden meadows, he had heard the whisper of lilies growing in the religious silence.* Then the Gothic cathedrals, lit by the glow of barbaric jewels, by the sumptuous light filtered through the stained-glass windows, — slender and bright as a figure painted by a Flemish Primitive, through which the soul burns visibly, — had shone in his rapturous spirit.† But now this background

**Les Moines*. Paris, *Mercur de France*, 1895, p. 243. — *Soir religieux*, p. 185:

Car c'est l'heure ùs, là-bas, les Anges, en guirlande,
Redescendent cueillir, mélancoliquement,
Dans les plaines de l'air muet, le lys dormant,
Le lys surnaturel qui fleurit la légende; . . .
Et tel est le silence éelos autour du cloître
Et le mystère épars autour de l'horizon,
Qu'ils entendent la pure et belle floraison
Du pâle lys d'argent sur les montagnes croître.

'Because it is the hour, when, down there, the Angels, in wreath-like flight,
Come down again, melancholy, to pluck,
In the plains of the silent air, the sleeping lily,
The supernatural lily, which perfumes the legend; . . .
And such is the silence blossomed around the cloister,
And such is the mystery spread round over the horizon,
That the Angels hear the chaste, beautiful flowers
Of the pale, silvery lily, grow upon the mountains.'

†*Ib.*, p. 273:

La nef allume auprès ses merveilleux décors:
Ses murailles de fer et de granit drapées,
Ses verrières d'émaux et de bijoux jaspées,
Et ses cryptes, où sont couchés des géants morts;

L'âme des jours anciens a traversé la pierre
De sa douleur, de son encens, de sa prière,
Et reparaît dans les soleils des ostensoirs; . . .

(Continued at bottom of p. 76.)

of blazing gems is dimmed by the dark ghosts of remorse; there is in him an ardent desire for renunciation, a wild love of suffering; from the swamps of Despair his mind soars on untiring wings to the sapphire sky of Hope; he would like to quench his burning fever, to still the violent throbbing of his impassioned heart among the stone flowers of austere crypts, in the solemn, immense shadow of gloomy churches, where only a crucifix gleams under the violet beam alighting on it from the dusky rose-window.

Je rêve un existence en un cloître de fer,
 Brulée au jeune et sèche et râpée aux cilices,
 Où l'on abolirait, en de muets supplices,
 Par seule ardeur de l'âme enfin, toute la chair.*

'I dream of a life in a cloister of iron,
 A life burnt by fasts, dry, and torn by haircloth,
 A life where one would abolish, in dumb tortures,
 At last all the flesh, only by the soul's ardor.*'

The style he adopts to represent his wildest moods, his hard struggles against the all-prevading gloom, the fight in his soul between the ideal and the lowest instincts, between *l'Ange et la Bête*, recalls Baudelaire's

(Continued from p. 75.)

Le temple entier paraît surgir au fond des soirs,
 Comme une chasse énorme, où dort le moyen âge.

'The aisle kindles its marvelous prospects,
 Its walls draped with iron and granite,
 Its stained-glass windows diapered with enamels and jewels,
 And its crypts, where the dead giants lie;

The soul of the ancient day has pierced through the stone
 With its sorrow, its incense, its prayer,
 And it shines now in the suns of the monstrances; . . .

The whole cathedral seems to rise above the evening horizon
 As a huge reliquary, where the Middle Ages are lying asleep.'

**Les Débâcles*, 103. — See also *Les Vêpres*, 107-108:

Là-bas, cette existence en noir des grandes vieilles,
 Par les enclos en noir et les porches d'église, . . .
 Et pendant des heures et des heures, l'extase
 Au pied d'un ostensor, le soir, en des chapelles
 De cathédrale en noir; . . . et l'ombre
 D'un grand pilier, sur les dalles, droite, allongée
 Ainsi qu'un bras de soir et de volonté sombre.

'Down there, this existence in black of the great old women,
 Through the gardens in black and the church porches, . . .
 And, during hours and hours, the ecstasy
 At the foot of a monstrance, at twilight, in some chapels
 Of the cathedral in black; . . . and the shadow
 Of a great pillar, upon the flags, straight, stretched
 As an arm of evening and of dark will.'

rough power of images; thus in *Eperdument** and in some strophes of *Les Débâcles* we perceive the influence of *Les Fleurs du Mal* in the violent chiaroscuro, in the flowing rhythm, in the sincerity and energy of the form. But, as regards the inmost spirit of Verhaeren's poetry, the French poet breathes a mystic life into his lines, when his nostalgic soul remembers the everlasting bowers of light, the celestial flowers she lay among. Elsewhere these fierce emotions yield to a softer mood; and the sweet, passionate tenderness of *Sagesse* strikes us in a deeper way, coming, as it does, after tumultuous discords of anguish and smarting pain.† Verhaeren's poetic utterance feels also the influence of Hugo's magniloquent, bombastic diction; the harmony of his verse is now and then marred by a tendence to a rhetoric declamatory style; he shouts instead of singing. The jarring impression derived from his accumulations of loud consonantal sounds, clashing with a sharp clang in his tormented form is indeed sought by the

**Les Débâcles*, 87:

Lève ta volonté qui choit contre la borne
Et sursaute, debout, rosse à terre, mon coeur!

Cf. *Le Gout du Néant* [*Les Fleurs du Mal*, LXXXII]:

Morne esprit, autrefois amoureux de la lutte,
L'Espoir, dont l'éperon attisait ton ardeur,
Ne veux plus t'enfourcher, . . .
Vieux cheval dont le pied à chaque obstacle butte.

Cf. the dreary images in several of Verhaeren's poems, hinted at in the preceding pages, and the general tone of Baudelaire's lyrics; the funereal gloom of the Belgian poet finds a counterpart in such strophes as those of *Spleen* [*Fleurs du Mal*, LXXX]:

Quand la pluie é'talant ses immenses traînées
D'une vaste prison imite les barreaux, . . .
Des cloches tout à coup sautent avec furie
Et lancent vers le ciel un affreux hurlement, . . .
Et de longs corbillards . . .
Défilent lentement dans mon âme; l'Espoir,
Vaincu, pleure, et l'Angoisse atroce, despotique,
Sur mon crâne incliné plante son drapeau noir.

'When the rain spreading its immense trails
Imitates the bars of a vast prison, . . .
The bells all at once bound furiously
Raising to the sky a hideous yelling, . . .
And long hearses
File off slowly in my soul; Hope,
Vanquished, is weeping, and Anguish, cruel, despotical Anguish,
Plants her black flag on my bowed skull.'

†*Les Débâcles*, 92:

Ecoute: et du petit village il s'en souvient
Ton coeur; écoute: et puis, accueille en confiance
A cette heure d'ennui, ton bon ange gardien,
Le tien, qui te rhabillera de ton enfance.

'Listen: your heart remembers the little village;
Listen; and then receive with confidence,
In this weary hour, your good guardian angel,
Who will dress you again with the robe of your childhood.'

artist trying to convey and faithfully reflect the turmoil of his exasperated feelings, of his deep emotions; strongly personal are the accords of a note, very often the sounds *oir, or, ent*, struck at the beginning of a poem, with the subsequent sounds, thus creating a solemn melody, as a plain-chant, which goes on in beautiful modulations throughout the lyric. The poet is fond of dwelling on a particular idea, on a unique musical effect; consequently repetitions of single words and phrases are often employed, and a rhyme is frequently accompanied by a long train of resonances; this bent of his technique culminates in the use of the refrain.*

The influence of J. K. Huysmans may also be noted, either regarding the mystic side of Verhaeren's poetry or his evocations of the grand, painful effort of mankind, of the struggle going on in the whirlpool of the big industrial towns; in *A Rebours* we find the portrait of a soul, the analysis of a psychological condition showing striking analogies with our poet's spiritual state; the gorgeous pictures in *Les Moines*, the nostalgic songs in *Les Débauches* look like a reflection and an echo of passages of the novel here quoted,† which contain in germ the fundamental thoughts

*The strophes at pp. 13 and 22 might be quoted as striking instances of repetitions; in the former the æsthetic effect aimed at is attained; in the latter it is spoiled by the too often occurring of the word *pâle*.

Vides les îles d'or, là-bas, dans l'or des brumes,
Où les rêves assis sous leur manteau vermeil,
Avec de longs doigts d'or effeuillaient aux écumes,
Les ors silencieux qui pleuvaient du soleil.

Seule, qui se souvient du jour, *pâle* évoquée,
Et des grands ciels brandis avec de l'or au clair,
Pâle évoquée, en la *pâleur pâle* de l'air,
Eternellement *pâle* et lointaine, la lune.

The frequent use of adverbs is one of Verhaeren's most salient characteristics.

La terre *immensément* s'efface au fond des brumes
Et *lentement* aussi les frênes lumineux
D'automne et *lentement* et *longuement* les noeuds
Des ruisselets . . . [p. 25.]
Voici très longuement, très lentement, les râles, . . . [p. 65.]

Cf. p. 52, l. 5; p. 27, l. 1; p. 99, l. 5; p. 189, l. 5; p. 202, l. 2; and the titles of poems: *Insatiablement*, 39; *Infiniment*, 65; *Eperdument*, 87; *Pieusement*, 101.

The burden is either unchanged, and formed by a single line [*Tourment*, 32; *Un Soir*, 145; *Les Nombres*, 187] or a strophe [*Les Rues*, 49; *Les Vieux Chênes*; *Là-bas*, 97], — or modified according to the different shades assumed by the leading idea of the poem in its growth [*Les Malades*, 11-14; *Les Complaintes*, 17; *A Ténèbres*, 69-71; *La Dame en noir*, 159], — or sometimes developed as a repetend [*Les Livres*, 193-200].

†Il vit défilér toute une procession de prélats: des archimandrites, des patriarches, levant, pour bénir la foule agenouillée, des bras d'or, agitant leurs barbes blanches dans la lecture et la prière; il vit s'enfoncer dans des cryptes obscures des files silencieuses de pénitents, il vit s'élever des cathédrales immenses . . . [p. 109.]

'Un Londres pleuvieux, colossal, immense, puant la fonte échauffée et la suie, fumant sans relâche dans la brume se déroulait maintenant devant ses yeux; puis des enfilades de docks s'étendaient à perte de vue, pleins de grues, de cabestans, de ballots, grouillant d'hommes perchés sur des mâts . . . Tout cela s'agitait sur des rives, dans des entrepôts gigantesques, baignés par l'eau teigneuse et sourde d'une imaginaire Tamise, dans une futaie de mâts, dans une forêt de poutres crevant les nuées blafardes du firmament.' [p. 171.]

of some of Verhaeren's lyrics. A disciple of both Huysmans and Verhaeren is to be pointed out in Mr. Jean Delville, whose *Horizons hantés* reproduce, with some exaggerations, the main characteristics of the French thinker and of the Belgian artist. The first stanza of *Un Soir futur* may be adduced as an instance of the resemblance of his technique to the method of expression of his masters.

Un grand soir douloureux et des clameurs au loin,
— Un soir de révolte et de flammes funèbres —
Éclabousse de nuit, aux loins, les quatre coins
D'une ville de bronze rouge et de ténèbres.*

'A great sorrowful evening, and clamours in the distance,
— An evening of revolt and of funereal flames, —
Splashes with the darkness of night, far away, the four corners
Of a town of red bronze and of gloom.'*

Some features of Verhaeren's technique can also be traced in the following lines:

Un tourbillon d'horreurs hallucine les regards
Dardés vers on ne sait quels horizons hagards
De rêves monstrueux d'or, de sang et de folies. . . .

Vision de Ville, 44.

Là-bas: un grand soleil blessé saigne en les halliers
Du bois hécatombal qu'angoisse un souffle épique,
Et râle de l'effroi et râle du soir tragique.

Crépuscule, 81.

A whirlwind of horrors hallucinates the eyes
Staring at some strange, weird horizons
Of monstrous dreams of gold, of blood, of madness. . . .

Vision de Ville, 44.

Down there: a great wounded sun is bleeding in the thickets
Of the sepulchral wood, stirred to an anxious murmur by an epic breath,—
Of the sepulchral wood rattling with dread, rattling in the tragic twilight.

Crépuscule, 81.

The mournful images which hallucinate the dreaming poet of *Les Soirs* are frequently met with in Delville's work, where we see enlarged and developed the motives taken from Verhaeren's rich and expressive symphonies. The funereal allegories hinted at in the preceding remarks appear again in such verses as these:

C'est l'heure mortuaire au deuil universel,
C'est l'heure ténébreuse et pieuse où chacun
Rêve aux splendeurs mortes du grand soleil défunt . . .

*J. Delville. *Les Horizons hantés*. Bruxelles, Lacomblez, 1892, p. 5.

— Et célébrant mornement le sacre sépulchral,
 — Drapé de lumière morte et pétrifiée, —
 Se dresse un catafalque immense en ma pensée . . .
 . . . — Et voici la lune que le sacre des Morts solennise;
 Ascendue au ciel noir irradié de cierges et d'âmes,
 Elle veille en l'effroi du soir son spectral regard de flammes.*

'It is the deadly hour of universal mourning.
 It is the gloomy, pious hour, when everyone
 Dreams of the dead splendours of the great sun which has died.'

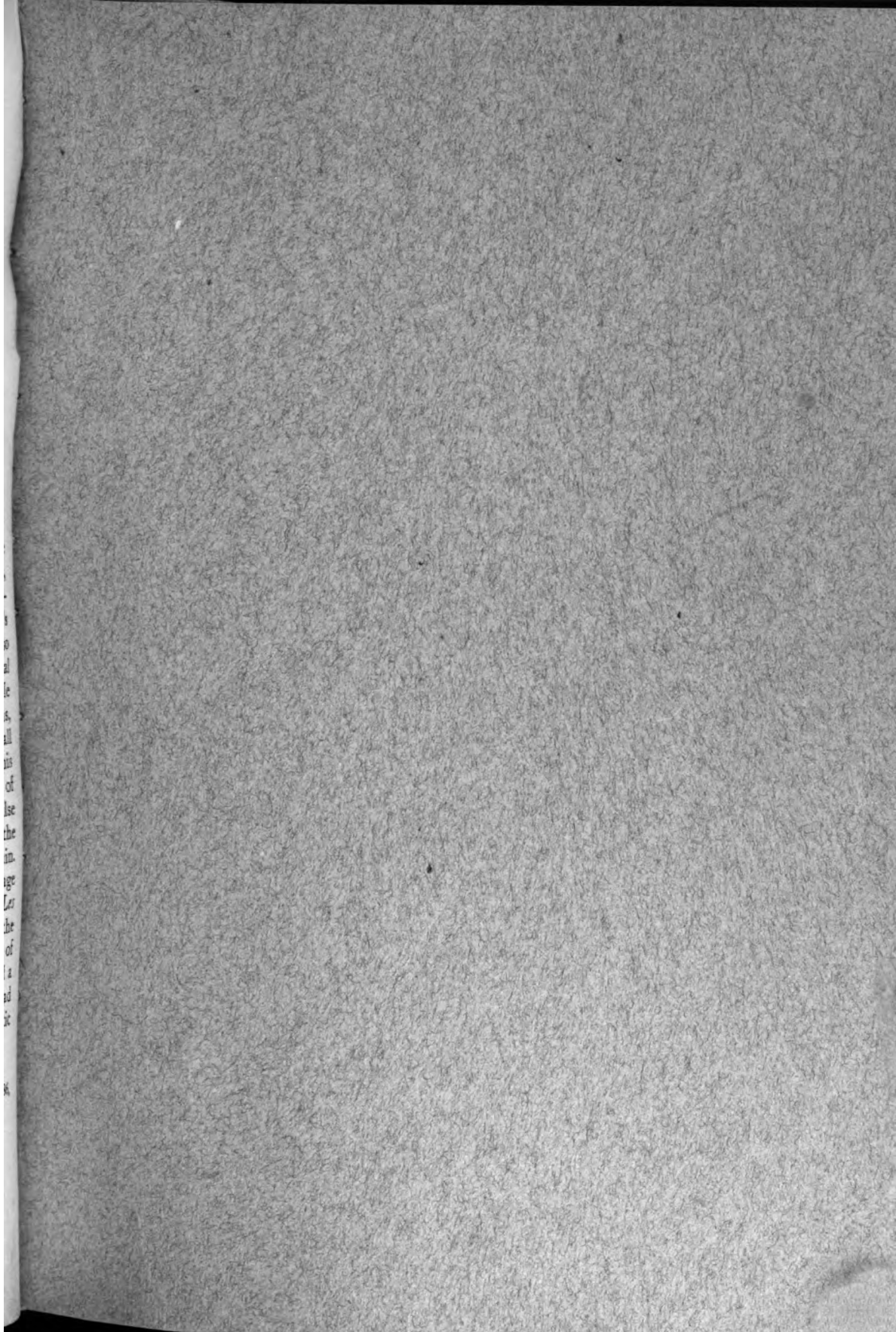
'— And, mournfully celebrating the sepulchral rite,
 — Wrapt in dead and petrified light,
 An immense catafalque rises in my mind . . .
 . . . — And see! The moon, solemnized by the rite of the Dead,
 Having climbed to the black sky, radiant with tapers and souls,
 Keeps vigil with her ghostly, flaming eye in the terror of the twilight.*'

As regards the metres he employs in this work it ought to be remarked that it is in these poems that Verhaeren first uses the *vers libre* with a forcible effect. *Les Flamandes* and *Les Moines* are written in quatrains and sonnets, the influence of the Parnasse school being still clearly visible in the treatment of these metrical forms; but it is in the *vers libre* that Verhaeren's art shows itself at its best, and to this free arrangement of the lines, so particularly dear to the symbolists, he will stick in his later poems. Several among the lyrics of *Les Débauches* are written in this way, the most suitable to the rush and fervor of the poet's fiery inspiration. He also uses distichs, triplets and quatrains; when the strophes of four lines cannot contain all his ideas, and the frequent stops would break the tumultuous flow of his thought, he links the quatrains together, thus forming a long stanza of sometimes a score of lines.† Conversely, when the intellectual impulse is too slight to fill a long strophe he resorts to the narrower limits of the distichs and triplets, occasionally binding them together with a refrain.

With this lyrical trilogy the poet has first given us a complete image of his true self, of the personality, which we only get glimpses of in *Les Flamandes* and *Les Moines*. Here at last he passes the boundaries of the magic circle traced around him by the combined influences of old and of contemporary artists, and enters his own ground, where he can build a fit dwelling for his soul, a somber and powerful work of art, a palace sad with the gloom of Romanic crypts and barbaric fantastic carvings, mystic with the high soaring of slender Gothic columns and aerial arches.

**Ib.*, p. 82, 100.

†*Les Villes*, p. 172. — Poems in *vers libres*: p. 141, 187, 199, 205; in triplets: p. 27; in distichs: p. 86, 145.





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MARCH-APRIL, 1914

Maria Magdalena: A Middle-Class Tragedy,	Friedrich Hebbel	81
<i>Translated from the German by Paula Green</i>		
Christian Friedrich Hebbel	Paula Green	123
Spring	Charles Vildrac	137
Those There Are—		
<i>Translated from the French by Sasha Best</i>		
Three Songs from the Gaelic	John J. Savage	140
Rest Thee, in Thy April Bed	William Stanley Braithwaite	142
Chintamani: A Symbolic Drama	Girish C. Ghose	144
<i>Translated and adapted from the Hindu by Dhan Gopal Mukerji and Mary Carolyn Davies</i>		
The Child of To-day: His Book		
Bi-Monthly Bulletin of Books Relating to Poetry and Drama in all Languages		

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SPRING, 1914

NUMBER II

MARIA MAGDALENA

A Middle-Class Tragedy

BY FRIEDRICH HEBBEL

(Translated from the German by Paula Green, A.M.)

PERSONS

MASTER ANTON, carpenter.

HIS WIFE.

CLARA, his daughter.

KARL, his son.

LEONHARD.

A SECRETARY.

WOLFRAM, a merchant.

ADAM, a bailiff.

ANOTHER BAILIFF.

A BOY.

A SERVANT GIRL.

Place of Action: A medium sized city.

ACT I

SCENE I

(CLARA. CARPENTER'S WIFE)

Clara.—Your wedding gown? Oh! How becoming! It seems as if it had been made but yesterday!

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Mother.— That is true, child; you see, fashion runs ahead until it can run no further and must turn back. This dress was at least ten times out of fashion, and each time it was in the height of fashion again.

Clara.— But not quite so this time, dear mother! Excuse me, mother, but the sleeves are too wide.

(*MOTHER smiling.*)

Clara.— Well, then! Is that the way you looked? But you wore a wreath, I hope?

Mother.— I should say so! Did I not nurse a little myrtle tree in a flower pot for many years before my wedding?

Clara.— I so often asked you to put on that dress, but you would never do it, you used to say: 'It is no longer my wedding gown, it is to be my shroud, and with such a thing we must not play.' Finally I began to hate it, because hanging there in all its whiteness, it reminded me of the day when the old women will come and put it on you. What made you put it on to-day?

Mother.— If people are as sick as I, and do not know whether they shall ever get well again or not, then many a thought passes through their minds, child. Death is more awful than we think. It is bitter! It darkens the world; it blows out all lights, one after another. All the lights that used to shimmer around us in such sparkling brightness! The friendly eyes of a husband and the shimmering eyes of the children stop shining, and all grows dark around us. But in our hearts a light is lit, there it will be bright, and then we see many things that we don't like to see. I don't remember of having done anything particularly wicked; I always observed the Lord's Commandments, have worked in the house all I could; I brought you up; you and your brother in the fear of the Lord, and I saved all I could of your father's earnings, and yet I always had a penny to spare for the poor. If now and then I refused to give, just because the man came inopportunistly, or because there were too many who came, it was not his loss, as I always called him back and gave him more for it. But of what avail is all that! We tremble nevertheless when our last hour threatens to approach. We wriggle like a worm in the dust; we implore God to grant us some more time, just like a servant who implores his master to give him another chance, so that he may not lose his job.

Clara.— Stop, mother dear, it tires you too much!

Mother.— No, my child, it does me good to talk about it! I am all right now. The Lord did not call me. He merely wanted to warn me, to make me see that the festival garment is not quite clean and pure. He made me turn back from the gate of the grave and gave me a respite to prepare properly for the heavenly wedding feast! He was not as merciful as all that

to the Seven Virgins in the gospel, of whom you read to me last night. That is why I wish to wear this gown to-day for Communion. I wore it the day that I felt most pious and made the best resolutions for my life. It is to remind me of all the good resolutions which I did not keep.

Clara.— Mother, you talk as you used to when you were sick!

SCENE II

Karl (entering).— Good-morning, mother! Well, Clara, what do you think of me? Would n't you just fall in love with me, if I were not your brother?

Clara.— A gold chain? How did you get it?

Karl.— What do I work for? Why do you think that I stay two hours longer in the shop than my comrades? You are impudent to ask such questions, miss.

Mother.— Quarrelling on a Sunday morning! Shame on you, Karl!

Karl.— Mother, have you no money you can give me?

Mother.— I have no money to spare. All I have is household money.

Karl.— Give me some of that! I'll not kick if the pancakes are somewhat less rich. You did it before, when you were saving for a white dress for Clara. For months we had nothing good on the table. I closed my eyes to it, but I knew very well that something like a new hat or dress was behind it. Let me, for once, have a share in it, too!

Mother.— You are impudent!

Karl.— I have no time, or ——— (*He is about to leave.*)

Mother.— Where are you going?

Karl.— I am not going to tell you, then you need not blush when the old crank asks where I am and you have to say that you don't know. By the way, I don't need your dollar, it is just as well! (*To himself.*) Here at home they think the worst of me, anyhow; why should I not enjoy frightening them a little? Why shall I tell them that since I cannot get the dollar, I'll have to go to church, unless some friend should come along and help me? (*Off.*)

SCENE III

Clara.— What does he mean?

Mother.— Oh! He'll break my heart! Father is right! These are the consequences! As sweetly and irresistibly as he used to beg for a piece of sugar, when a little curly-headed boy, as defiantly he demands money now! I wonder, whether he would ask for the dollar, if I had refused him the sugar in those days? That question often torments me now!

And I almost think he does not even love me. Did you ever see him shed a tear while I was sick?

Clara.— I saw him but little, only at table. He had a better appetite than I, to be sure!

Mother (quickly).— That was but natural, he had to do heavy work.

Clara.— To be sure! All men are that way. They are more ashamed of tears than of their worst sins! Ready at all times to show fight, but never to show tears. Father is the same. Did he not cry like a child that day, when they tried to bleed you and the blood would not come? He was in his workshop and I felt so sorry for him and caressed him, he said: 'I wonder whether you can get that splinter out of my eye. There is so much to be done and somehow or other always something like that to interfere with my work.'

Mother (smiling).— Indeed! Well! Well! By the way, what about Leonhard, I have not seen him here for quite awhile. How is that?

Clara.— Well, let him stay away, if he wants to!

Mother.— I hope you do not meet him in any other place than your home?

Clara.— Do I stay long when I go to the well in the evenings, that you are suspicious?

Mother.— No, indeed! But I gave him the permission to see you here in our house only for the very reason that he might not meet you clandestinely. That is the way my mother used to do.

Clara.— I don't see him!

Mother.— Did you have a falling out with him? I rather like him. He is staid and settled! If he only had his position secured. In my time he would not have needed to wait so long. People were more than anxious for a good clerk, for they were very scarce. Even small people like ourselves had use for such a man. They were given all kinds of clerking, such as writing a New Year's congratulation for a son to his father, and for the initial letter in gold and silver he was paid enough money to buy a blanket for a child. Then, again, a father asked him secretly the next day to read that self-same document to him, of course in secret, with all the doors locked, so that his ignorance may not be disclosed to his son. That meant double pay, of course. In those days the scribes played quite a part. But things have changed; now we old people who do not know how to read and write are laughed at by nine-year-old youngsters. The world is getting too smart lately. Perhaps there will be a time when people have to be ashamed because they cannot dance on a rope.

Clara.— There goes the bell!

Mother.— Well, child, I shall pray for you. And as to Leonhard,

love him as he loves God, no more, no less. These were the words my mother said to me, when she left this world and gave me her blessing. I kept that blessing long enough and I now transmit it to you!

Clara (giving her a bouquet).— Here!

Mother (smiling).— From Karl, I suppose?

Clara (nodding, then in an aside).— I wish it were! If anything is to give her pleasure it must be from him.

Mother.— He is good and loves me so dearly. (*Off.*)

Clara (looking after her through the window).— There she is going! Three times I saw her in her coffin, and now — oh, those terrible dreams! They clothe themselves in garments of fear to frighten all our hopes. I will never believe in dreams again. I will not rejoice over a good one, so that I need not fear an evil one that may follow it. What a firm step she has. Now she is already at the cemetery. I wonder who will be the first one to meet her? I don't want it to mean anything, I only think — (*Frightened.*) The grave digger! He just dug a grave and got out. She is greeting him and is looking into the dark hole; now she throws the bouquet into it and enters the church. (*A hymn is being sung.*) They are singing. (*She folds her hands.*) Indeed, if mother had died I should never have been happy again, for — (*With a glance toward heaven.*) But thou art merciful! How I wish I were a Catholic, then I could make thee a present. I would empty my whole bank and buy thee a beautifully worked heart in gold and wind roses all around it. Our parson says that sacrifice is naught to thee, because all things are thine, and we cannot give thee what thou already possesseth. But all things in this house are my father's, too, and yet he likes me to buy him a handkerchief and to embroider it for his birthday and put it at his place at table. Indeed! He even does me the honor to wear it only on high feast days, such as Christmas or Pentecost! Once I saw a tiny Catholic girl carrying cherries to the altar. Oh! How pleased I was! They had been the first ones in that season and had been given her, and I noticed how eager she was for a taste of them. Yet she overcame her desire. She threw them away at the altar, quickly, to end the temptation. The priest, who was just raising the chalice, looked angrily at her; she got frightened and ran off. But the Holy Virgin over the altar smiled down upon her, as if she wished to step out of her frame and run after the child to kiss her. I did it in her place. Alas! Here is Leonhard!

SCENE IV

Leonhard (before the door).— Are you dressed?

Clara.— Since when are you so considerate? I am no princess.

Leonhard (enters).— I did not know that you were alone! While passing I thought I had noticed Barbara from next door standing by the window.

Clara.— Oh, is that the reason?

Leonhard.— You are always in a bad humor. I may stay away for two whole weeks; rain and sunshine may have come and gone ten times but there'll always be the same cloud in your face when I return.

Clara.— There were times when things were very different.

Leonhard.— Indeed! If you had always looked as you do now, I doubt that we ever would have become friends.

Clara.— And what if we had not?

Leonhard.— Do you feel yourself so free from me? Well! I don't object, it is all the same to me. Then (*significantly*) your toothache the other day did not mean anything?

Clara.— Leonhard, it was wrong of you!

Leonhard.— Wrong! That I tied you, the greatest of all my treasures, closer and firmer to me by the last bond? And at the very moment when I ran in danger of losing you? Do you think I did not see the furtive glances you exchanged with the secretary? Indeed, a nice how-do-you-do! I take you to a dance, and —

Clara.— Stop insulting me! I looked at the secretary, why should I deny it? But only on account of his moustache, which he grew while away at college, and which — (*She stops.*)

Leonhard.— Is so becoming to him. That's what you wanted to say. Oh, you women! You are enchanted with such things as that, even in caricatures. The fool — I make no secret of the fact that I hate him. He stood long enough in my way to you — he reminds me with his forest of hair, parted in the middle, of a rabbit hiding behind a bush.

Clara.— I never praised him, so you need not disparage him.

Leonhard.— You seem, nevertheless, warmly interested in him.

Clara.— We used to play together as children, and afterward — You know it very well!

Leonhard.— Do I know it? Indeed, I do! Just on that account.

Clara.— Well, then, it was but natural that I, after seeing him again after all those years, should look at him, and marvel at the size to which he has grown and how — (*Interrupts herself.*)

Leonhard.— Why did you blush when he looked at you?

Clara.— I thought he was looking at the wart on my left cheek, and I wondered whether it had grown. You know, I always imagine that whenever anybody gazes at me, and I always blush on that account. It seems to me as if that wart is growing each time anyone looks at it.

Leonhard.— Be it so! I lost all control; and I thought: this very night I shall test her. If she really wishes to marry me then she knows that she risks nothing in giving herself to me completely. If she refuses, then —

Clara.— Indeed! You said very wicked words when I pushed you away from me and jumped up from the bench we were sitting on. The moon, that until then assisted me by shining gently into the arbor, suddenly drowned itself in the wet clouds. I wanted to hurry away, but I felt myself detained. First, I thought it was you, but it was the rosebush which clung to my dress with its thorns. You outraged my feelings and I did not trust them any longer myself. You stood before me like one who demands payment of a debt. I — Oh, heavens!

Leonhard.— I am not sorry for it. I know that you would never be my own, that it was the only way to keep you to myself. The old love of your youth opened his eyes again and I could not close them quickly enough.

Clara.— When I reached home I found my mother sick — sick unto death. Suddenly she had been stricken as if by some invisible hand. Father wanted to send for me, but she would not have it, so as not to disturb my pleasure. You cannot imagine how I felt when I heard it. I kept away from her, I did not dare touch her, I trembled. She took it for my anxiety for her and beckoned me to her. When I slowly approached, she drew me to her and kissed my desecrated lips. I nearly died. I felt like telling her all. I could have screamed and yelled out to her all I thought and felt: ‘On my account you are lying here!’ And I did so, but my tears and sobs stifled my words. She took my father’s hand and pointing to me, she said, ‘What a loving heart!’

Leonhard.— She is well now. I came to congratulate her on her recovery, and — what do you think?

Clara.— And?

Leonhard.— To ask your father for your hand.

Clara.— Alas!

Leonhard.— Don’t you want me to?

Clara.— Want you to? It would be the death of me if I were not to become your wife, now. But you do not know my father! He does not know why we have to hurry — he cannot know it — and we cannot tell him. A hundred times he declared that he would give his daughter only to a man who has, as he calls it, not only love in his heart, but also bread in the cupboard. He will say: ‘Wait a year or two, my son.’ And what will you answer?

Leonhard.— Little fool! That difficulty has been removed. I got the position, I am appointed cashier.

Clara.— You are cashier? And what about the other candidate for the place? The parson's nephew?

Leonhard.— He was drunk when he came for the examination. He bowed to the stove instead of to the mayor. When he sat down he pushed three cups from the table. You know what a temper the old man has. 'Sir!' he yelled, but as yet he controlled himself; he only bit his lips, and his eyes began to sparkle through his glasses like a pair of snakes that are ready to jump, and every muscle in his face was tense. Then the examination in accounting began, and, ha, ha! My rival counted after a self-invented multiplication table which showed very original results. Well! 'He is miscalculating,' the mayor said, and giving me a glance that assured me of my installation, shook hands with me, and, although they smelt of tobacco, I kissed them most humbly. Here is the document, signed and sealed.

Clara.— That is —

Leonhard.— Very unexpected, is it not? Well! It was not all mere chance. Do you know why I did not show up here for two whole weeks?

Clara.— How do I know? I guess because we had a falling out the Sunday before!

Leonhard.— That little quarrel I brought about myself on purpose, so that I could stay away without it being too conspicuous.

Clara.— I don't understand you!

Leonhard.— I believe you. I used that time to flirt with the mayor's little hunchback of a niece, who is the old man's pet and his right hand, just as the bailiff is his left. Understand me aright! I did not tell her anything nice and agreeable myself, except a compliment about her hair, which is, as you know, red. I only told her a few things about you that she liked to hear.

Clara.— About me?

Leonhard.— Why shall I keep it a secret from you? I did it with the best intention and for the best purpose. As if I never had cared for you seriously, as if — Well! Suffice it! I did it until I had this here in my hands. The credulous little flirt will soon know how I meant it all — as soon as she hears the banns read in church.

Clara.— Leonhard!

Leonhard.— Child! Child! You may be harmless as a dove, let me be wise as a serpent, then we shall supplement each other, since husband and wife are one, at least according to the Bible. (*Laughs.*) It was not altogether mere chance that young Hermann was intoxicated at the most important moment of his life. You never heard that the young fool has ever been addicted to drinking?

Clara.— Never!

Leonhard.— So much easier for my plans. It needed only three glasses. A few of my boon companions had to take him in hand. ‘May we congratulate you?’ ‘Not yet!’ ‘Oh, but there can be not the slightest doubt about it! Your uncle ——’ And then: ‘Drink! Little brother, drink!’ When I was on my way to you just now he was standing on the bridge, leaning over the railing in a most melancholic attitude and looking into the water. I greeted him somewhat sarcastically and asked if something had gone to water with him. ‘Yes,’ he said, without looking up, ‘and, maybe, it would be better for me if I were to jump after it.’

Clara.— You wretch! Leave me! Get out of my sight!

Leonhard.— All right! (*Moves as if he were to comply with her wish.*)

Clara.— Oh, heavens! And I am tied to such a man!

Leonhard.— Don’t be childish! One more word in confidence. Has your father still that mortgage of one thousand dollars on that drug store?

Clara.— I don’t know anything about it.

Leonhard.— Nothing about so important an affair?

Clara.— Father is coming.

Leonhard.— Listen well! I am asking because the druggist is said to be on the brink of bankruptcy.

Clara.— I must be off to the kitchen. (*Exit.*)

Leonhard (alone).— Well! I declare! All that’s lacking now would be if there were nothing for me to get here. But that cannot be. Master Anton is the kind, who, if they were to put one letter more upon his tombstone than he deserved, would go about as a spook until they had scratched it off. For he would consider it dishonest to own one letter more of the alphabet than is his due.

SCENE V

Master Anton (entering).— Good morning, Sir Cashier! (*Takes off his hat and puts on a woolen cap.*) Will you allow an old man to cover his head?

Leonhard.— Then you know already?

Anton.— Since last night. I heard a few of your good friends call you by all kinds of names when I went to the home of the dead miller to take the measure for his last house. Then I thought right away, well! Leonhard did not break his neck. In the house of the dead man I learned the details from the sexton, who had come with me to comfort the widow and to get drunk.

Leonhard.— And Clara had to learn it from me?

Anton.— If you did not feel like giving that pleasure to her, why

should I feel like doing it? I do not light any candles in my house except my own. Then I know that nobody can come and extinguish them, just at the very moment when we enjoy them most.

Leonhard.— I hope you did not think of me —

Anton.— Think? Of you? Of anybody? I polish the boards with my plane to suit my mind, but not men to suit my thoughts. I gave that folly up long ago. If I see a tree turning green, then I think that it will soon blossom. And if it blossoms, then I think: Now it will soon bear fruit. In that I am not deceived, and for that reason I stick to my old habit. But as to men! As to them, I do not think at all of them, nothing at all; neither good nor evil. Then I need not be disappointed if they excite my fear or deceive my hopes. All I do with regard to them is to make experiences and deduct things from what I see. I do not think, but I see. As to you, I think I have had my experiences; now, however, that I see you here, it seems that my experience was but half a one, I must confess.

Leonhard.— Master Anton, you are wrong. A tree depends upon wind and weather. Men have rules and laws that they follow.

Anton.— Do you think so? Indeed! We old people owe many thanks to death that it allows us to live so long among you young ones, and that the opportunity is given us to educate and form us. In former times this stupid world of ours thought that the father was here to educate his son. It is just the other way. It is the son's duty to give the last touches to his father's education, so that the poor old simpleton need not be ashamed of the worms when he is in his grave. God be praised! I have an excellent teacher in my son Karl, who, regardless of my feelings, and without spoiling the old child, his father, knocks all prejudices out of him. Thus, for instance, he gave me two lessons this morning only, and in the most skillful manner, at that, without even expressing it in words, without even seeing me, in fact, — just on *that* account it was clever. In the first place, he showed me that we need not keep our word; secondly, that it is wholly superfluous to go to church and to freshen up in our minds God's Commandments. Last night he made the promise to go to church. I relied upon this promise, and I believed he would go to church. For I thought: he will thank the good Lord for having restored his mother's health. But he did not go. It was very comfortable in my pew, which, to be sure, feels very crowded with two people in it. I wonder how he would like it if I were to benefit by his lesson and were to break my word to him? I promised him a new suit of clothing for his birthday, and this would give me a good opportunity to see his joy over my adaptability! But, then, I have still old-fashioned prejudices. Indeed, if it were not for those prejudices! That's why I shall not do it!

Leonhard.— Maybe he was not well —

Anton.— Maybe. I need only ask my wife and I shall learn surely that he has been ill. She tells me the truth in all things except in what concerns the boy. And if not sick — that is another advantage that the young have over us old ones — that they can find their edification in anything and everything. Therefore they can pray anywhere, while out hunting, walking or even in the inn. ‘Our Father, Who art in Heaven!’ — Halloo, Peter, are you here too; going to dance to-night? — ‘Hallowed be Thy name!’ — Indeed, Catherine, it’s easy for you to laugh at me, but we’ll get even! — ‘Thy will be done!’ — The dickens, I have not been shaved yet! — And so on, and as to the benediction, well! They can give that themselves, too, for they are men just as well as the preacher, and the power that is in the black gown is also in a blue coat. I don’t object by any means, and if you wish to insert between the seven supplications seven drinks, what does it matter? I cannot prove that beer and religion do not go together. And, maybe, it will become *the thing* to take Holy Communion that way. Old sinner that I am, to be sure, I am not strong enough to keep step with Dame Fashion; I cannot catch devotion like a fly in the air. The chirping of the swallows and sparrows cannot take the place of the organ with me. If I have to have my heart uplifted, then the heavy iron doors of the church have to close behind me and I must imagine that they are the gates of the world, and the gloomy high walls, with their narrow windows, which allow the bright daylight to penetrate but scantily, must surround me, and in the distance I must be able to see the entrance to the cemetery with the death-head over the entrance gate. Well — well! Maybe it’s better that way. Who knows?

Leonhard.— You are too exacting.

Anton.— To be sure! Quite true! Moreover, I must confess it is not even quite true, what I said just now. In church to-day I was distracted; for the unoccupied seat next to mine made me mad, and out in the garden under the pear tree devotion came back to me. You wonder why? Look here, I went home sad and in sorrow, like a man whose harvest was destroyed by a hail storm, for our children are the fields. We put our good grain into them and only weeds shoot up. Beneath the pear tree, which has been eaten by caterpillars, I stopped. ‘Indeed,’ I thought, ‘my boy is like that tree here, empty and barren.’ Suddenly it came to me that I was very thirsty, and that I simply had to go to the inn. I deceived myself, it was not for a glass of beer, it was only to look up the fellow and to give him a piece of my mind, and I knew I should have done so, if I had found him. I was just about to go, when the old tree dropped a juicy pear at my feet, as if it wanted to say: ‘This is for your thirst, and also because you

insulted me by comparing me to that scoundrel, your son.' I came back to my senses, bit into the fruit, and went into the house.

Leonhard.— Do you know that the druggist is near bankruptcy?

Anton.— What has that to do with me?

Leonhard.— Nothing at all?

Anton.— Oh! Well! I am a Christian, and the man has a lot of children.

Leonhard.— And still more creditors. Children, too, are creditors in a way.

Anton.— Well for him who has neither!

Leonhard.— I thought you ——

Anton.— Oh, that has been settled long ago.

Leonhard.— You are a careful man. You most likely withdrew your money at once, when you saw that things went against him.

Anton.— So it is! I need no longer tremble that I may lose anything, since I lost all long ago.

Leonhard.— You are joking!

Anton.— No, indeed not!

Clara (looking into the room through the open door).— Did you call, father?

Anton.— Are your ears ringing? We did not talk about you.

Clara.— The paper! (Off.)

Leonhard.— You are a philosopher.

Anton.— What do you mean?

Leonhard.— You know how to take things coolly.

Anton.— Once in awhile I carry a millstone around my neck just in place of a collar. Instead of going into the water with it — well! It gives you a stiff backbone.

Leonhard.— All who can would like to do the same, I guess.

Anton.— People who find such a companion as you seem to be, ready to help carry the burden, ought to be able to even dance beneath it. You have become quite pale at this news,— well! That's what I call true sympathy.

Leonhard.— I hope you'll not misjudge me.

Anton.— Oh, no! By no means. (Drumming upon a bureau.) Too bad that wood is not transparent. Don't you think so?

Leonhard.— I don't understand you!

Anton.— How stupid of our great-grandfather to marry Eve, although she was naked and did not even have a fig leaf for a dowry. We, the two of us, would, no doubt, have whipped her out of Paradise as a female tramp! What do you think about it? Hm?

Leonhard.— You are mad about your son. I came to ask you about your daughter —

Anton.— Stop, perhaps I may consent, and, then —

Leonhard.— I hope you will. And I will tell you a piece of my mind now. Even the ancient Patriarchs did not scorn the treasures their wives brought. Jacob loved Rachel and wooed her for seven years, but he also liked the fat sheep and rams he gained while in her father's employ. I think it was no disgrace to do so. I should have liked very much if your daughter could have brought a few hundred dollars into our household, and that is but natural, for then I could have given her so much more comfort. For if a girl brings some wool along with which to line her nest, she need not gather it. Well! It is not to be! What does it matter? We'll make our week-day food do for Sunday dinner, and the Sunday roast will be our Christmas dinner. Things will go all right that way, too.

Anton (shaking hands with him).— You speak well! And God will approve of your words, well! I'll forget that my daughter for the past two weeks vainly placed a cup at the table for you for tea at night. Now that you are to become my son-in-law I'll tell you what became of the thousand dollars.

Leonhard (aside).— Gone after all! Well, then I need not put up with all the whims and caprices of the old fool when he is my father-in-law.

Anton.— In my youth I suffered much want. I was no porcupine when I was born, any more than you were, but the world made one of me. First, all my quills were directed inwards. Here they pressed and pinched my smooth, yielding skin, and they rejoiced over my suffering, because the points tore my heart. I did not like that, I turned my skin inside out, and now the points hurt them who first laughed at my pains, and since then they leave me in peace.

Leonhard (aside).— Even the devil himself would leave him alone, I should think.

Anton.— My father, because he did not take any rest, night and day, worked himself to death when only thirty years old. My mother worked for me and made some money, as well as she could by spinning. I grew up, without learning anything. When I was bigger and could not make any money, I should have liked to get rid of the habit of eating, but, even if at dinner I acted as if I were sick and pushed back the plate, what did it matter? At supper my stomach forced me to be well. My greatest sorrow was that I was wholly unschooled, knew no trade. I used to get so mad about it, as if it had been my fault. I blushed when the sun shone on me. Right after my confirmation the man whom they buried yesterday came to us. He wrinkled his forehead and contorted his face, as he always did

when he had something good to tell. Then he said to mother: 'Did you bring your boy into the world that he should eat you out of house and farm?' I was ashamed, and put the loaf, from which I was just about to cut off a slice, back into the cupboard. Mother' was angry at the well-meant words; she stopped the spinning-wheel and answered angrily, that her son was a good boy. 'Well! We'll see about that,' the master answered; 'if he wants to he can, right now, just as he is, go with me to my shop. I don't ask any money for his apprenticeship, I'll give him board and shall also look out for his clothes. And if he is willing to rise early and go to bed late he will not lack — once in awhile — an extra penny for his old mother.' Mother began to cry and I danced around like one possessed. When I finally recovered speech, the master held his hands to his ears, walked out and beckoned me to follow him. I did not take my hat, for I had n't any. Without bidding farewell to mother, I followed; and when on the following Sunday I was allowed to go and see her for an hour or so, he gave me a whole ham for her. May God's blessing be with him in his grave. I am still hearing his half grumbling and scolding words: 'Tony, hide it, quick, beneath your coat, my wife is coming!'

Leonhard.— Well! I believe you are even crying over it now.

Anton (drying his tears).— Yes. Each time I think of it I must cry, however much I may be hardened in other ways. Well, never mind! (*With a sudden turn.*) And what would you have done, if, when calling on a man to whom you owed all and everything, in order to smoke a pipe some Sunday afternoon in his company, you were to find that man all upset, a knife in his hand with which he had cut the bread for you many a time. If you were to see blood on his throat, and he were to pull the kerchief close up to his chin —

Leonhard.— Old Gebhard always had his throat covered tight to the day of his death.

Anton.— Yes, on account of the scar. And you were to come just in time, and you could help save the man, not merely by tearing the knife away from him, and dressing the wound, but by giving him the miserable sum of one thousand dollars, which you had saved. And this had to be done on the quiet so as not to excite the sick man, what would you have done in such a case?

Leonhard.— Single as I am, with no wife and child to provide for, I should have sacrificed the money.

Anton.— And if you had ten wives like the Turks and as many children as were promised to Father Abraham, and you could have hesitated but for one moment, you'd be, you'd be — well! You are to be my son-in-law. Now you know where the money has gone. To-day I can tell

you about it, for my old master is buried. A month ago I would have kept it from everybody, even on my deathbed. The bond I put into the coffin with the dead body, before they closed the lid. I put it beneath his head. If I knew how to write, I should have written beneath it: 'Paid honestly.' Ignorant as I am, I tore the paper lengthwise. Now, he can rest in peace, and I hope I can do so too, when I shall be put to rest beside him.

SCENE VI

Mother (entering in haste).— Do you remember?

Anton (pointing to the wedding gown).— The frame, indeed, kept well, but not the picture. Meseems too many cobwebs have collected upon it. Well! there was time enough for them to collect.

Mother.— Don't you think I have a very honest husband? But I need not praise him, honesty is the virtue of all husbands.

Anton.— Are you sorry that you were more gold-plated at twenty than you are at fifty?

Mother.— No, to be sure not. If it were not so I should have to be ashamed for you and me.

Anton.— Well! Then, kiss me! I am shaved and tidier than usual.

Mother.— I shall, and were it only to find out if you still know how to kiss. What in the world made you think of it?

Anton.— Good little wife. I'll not ask you to see me into my grave. It would be too hard on you. I'll perform this last act of charity on you and close your eyes; but you must allow me time for it, do you hear? I'll be strong and must be prepared for the last act of love, so that I'll not blunder. As yet it would be too soon.

Mother.— Thank the good Lord in heaven, we'll stay together for awhile yet.

Anton.— I should hope so. Your cheeks are almost as ruddy as they used to be.

Mother.— By the way, our new grave digger is a funny kind of a man! He dug a grave this morning. When I passed by I asked him for whom he was digging it. 'For whomsoever God wishes it to be,' he said. 'Maybe for my own self, I may fare like my grandfather, who, too, dug a grave in advance, and that very night, when returning from the inn, he fell and broke his neck.'

Leonhard (who until now had been reading in the weekly paper).— The fellow is not from our town, so he can lie as much as he pleases.

Mother.— I asked him why he did not wait until a grave is ordered

to be dug? He answered that he was asked to a wedding to-day and that he knew he would not have a clear enough head the next day, and he was sure that somebody would be just mean enough to die. Then he would have to get up early the following day without having a chance to rest after the spree.

Anton.— Fool! Why did you not ask him, ‘And what if the grave were too small or too large?’

Mother.— That’s exactly what I did ask. But you may shake questions out of your sleeve like the devil the fleas, he would find an answer. ‘I took measure from Weaver Veit,’ he said. ‘He is like King Saul, a head taller than anybody else. Now let come who will. He will not find his house too short. And if it is too long, it will hurt me only, since, as an honest man, I do not make anybody pay for an inch more than the length of his coffin.’ I threw my flowers into the open space and said, ‘Now it is filled.’

Anton.— I think the fellow meant it for a joke and that is sinful. To prepare a grave in advance is like setting a trap for death; the rascal who does such a thing ought to be bounced. (*To LEONHARD who is still reading.*) Anything new? Does some philanthropist seek a poor widow who needs a few hundred dollars? Or does a poor widow want the philanthropist to give it to her?

Leonhard.— The police publishes a theft of jewels. Strange to say that, in spite of the bad times, there should be people who own such things as jewels.

Anton.— A theft of jewelry? Where?

Leonhard.— At Wolfram’s.

Anton.— At — impossible! Karl polished a desk in his house only a few days ago.

Leonhard (to ANTON).— So it is. It was taken from a desk.

Mother.— May God pardon you for such suspicion.

Anton.— You are right. It was an infamous thought.

Mother.— Well, we know that wherever your son is concerned, you are acting like a stepfather.

Anton.— Wife, don’t let us discuss that to-day.

Mother.— Because he differs from you, is it necessary that he is, on that account, a bad man?

Anton.— Where is he anyhow? The noon hour struck long ago. I bet you that dinner is getting spoiled in the kitchen, because Clara has the secret order not to set the table until he shows up.

Mother.— Where may he be? Where else, but in some bowling alley, and he must take the one farthest away from home, so that you may not

discover him. Of course, the return trip is a long one. I really don't know why you are so much against this innocent game.

Anton.— Against the game? Not at all! Aristocratic gentlemen must have some sport. Without the king in the card game, the real king would often be bored to death. And if the bowling ball were not invented, who knows, if princes and kings would not bowl with our heads. But an artisan can commit no greater sin than risk his hard-earned wages. Men must, or ought to, honor what they gain with difficulty and with the sweat of their brow; they ought to think highly of it, esteem it, if they are not to lose themselves and think their whole life's work contemptible. How is it possible to do our best and have all our nerves agoing for the dollar that we intend to throw away!

Mother.— Here he is now!

SCENE VII

(*BAILIFF ADAM and another bailiff entering.*)

Adam (to ANTON).— Well! Now you may go and pay your wager. People in red coats with blue cuffs and collars (*the last three words he accentuates*) are never to enter your house. Was n't that what you said, only the other day? Now, here we are, two of us! (*To the second bailiff.*) Why did you take your hat off? Who is going to make so much ado with one's equal?

Anton.— With one's equal, you rascal?

Adam.— You are right, we are not your equal! Rascals and thieves are not our equals. (*Points to the bureau.*) Open! And then stand aside three steps from it! So that you cannot smuggle anything from it.

Anton.— Wh — what? What?

Clara (entering with dishes).— Shall I — (*Stops.*)

Adam (showing a paper).— Can you read script?

Anton.— How can I know what my schoolmaster did not even know?

Adam.— Then, listen! Your son stole jewels. We have the thief. Now we are searching your house.

Mother.— Good Lord! (*Falls down and dies.*)

Clara.— Mother! Mother! Oh, look at her eyes!

Leonhard.— I'll run for the doctor!

Anton.— Not necessary! That is the face of a dead person. I have seen it a hundred times. Good night, Therese! You died, when they told you, and these words ought to be put on your tombstone.

Leonhard.— Perhaps — (*Going away.*) Horrible! But well for myself. (*Off.*)

Anton (drawing forth a bunch of keys and throwing them away).— Here, open! Box upon box! Give me an axe! The key for the trunk is lost. Oh! You rascals and thieves! (*Turns his pockets inside out.*) There is nothing in here!

Second bailiff.— Master Anton, compose yourself, calm down. Everybody knows that you are the most honest man in town.

Anton.— Is that so? Do you think so? (*Laughs.*) It seems that I used up all the honesty in our family. The poor boy! Nothing of it was left for him. She (*pointing to the dead woman*) was much too honest, too. Who knows whether or not her daughter — (*Suddenly turning to CLARA.*) What do you think, my innocent little daughter?

Clara.— Father!

Second Bailiff (to ADAM).— Have you no pity?

Adam.— No pity? Do I search the pockets of that old fool? Do I force him to take off his stockings? Or to turn his boots upside down? I had had the intention of doing it, for I hate him as much as I can hate a man, ever since that day in the inn, when he took his glass and — Well! You know the story. And you, too, ought to feel the same way if you had a spark of honor in you. (*To CLARA.*) Where is your brother's room?

Clara (showing it).— In the back.

(*Both bailiffs off.*)

Clara.— Father, he is innocent! He cannot be guilty! He is your son! He is my brother!

Anton.— Innocent! And the murderer of his mother. (*Laughs.*)

A servant girl (enters with a letter in her hand).— From the cashier Leonhard. (*Off.*)

Anton.— You need not read it. He is breaking his engagement to you! Well done! You rascal! (*Beats his hands.*)

Clara (having read).— Yes! It is so! Oh, my God!

Anton.— Let him go.

Clara.— Father! Father! I cannot! Oh, my God!

Anton.— Cannot? You cannot? What do you mean? Are you —

(*Both bailiffs returning.*)

Adam (maliciously).— Seek and you shall find.

Second Bailiff (to ADAM).— What nonsense! It does not apply to this case.

Adam.— Shut up! (*Both off.*)

Anton.— He is innocent and you — you —

Clara.— Father! Oh, you are horrible!

Anton (taking her hand, gently).— My dear little daughter, Karl is only a blunderer. He killed his mother. And what is that after all!

His father is still alive! Help him! Go to his aid! You cannot ask him to do the whole job alone. Give me the last blow. It is true, the old tree looks strong, but it is already tottering. It will not cost much of an effort to strike it down. You need no axe, you have a pretty face, I never told you so before, but to-day I may as well tell you, so that you may have courage and confidence in yourself. Your eyes, your nose and your mouth will find, I am sure, many admirers,— therefore you may become —

Clara (half insane, falls at the feet of the dead woman, and calls out like a child).— Mother! Mother!

Anton.— Seize the hand of your dead mother and swear to me that you are what you ought to be!

Clara.— I — swear — to you — that — I — shall — never bring — disgrace — upon — you! Never!

Anton.— Well! Then! (*Takes his hat, puts it on.*) All right, then. Fine weather to-day. Let us be on public exhibition and go from one street to another. (*Off.*)

CURTAIN

ACT II

SCENE I

(*Room in ANTON'S house.*)

(*ANTON rising from table. CLARA about to clear table.*)

Anton.— Again you have not eaten anything.

Clara.— I have had enough.

Anton.— Of nothing?

Clara.— I ate some in the kitchen.

Anton.— Only people with a bad conscience don't eat. Well! We'll see. Time will show. Or was there any poison in the soup, as I dreamt last night? Some herb might, by chance, have come in with the vegetables? Then you did well!

Clara.— Oh, heavens!

Anton.— Pardon me, I — go to the dickens with your everlasting air of suffering, which you stole from the Mother of our Lord. You ought to have red cheeks, like all young people have. Only one person has a right here to look that way, and he does not do so. Well! Praising one's self would be boasting, but what did I do when our neighbor was about to nail the lid on your mother's coffin?

Clara.— You tore the hammer from his hands and did it yourself, and said, ‘This is to be my masterpiece.’ The deacon, who was just singing with the choir boys, before the door, thought you had gone crazy.

Anton.— Crazy? (*Laughs.*) Crazy! Indeed! He has a wise head upon his shoulders, and he will lose it some day. Mine is too firmly planted upon me, or — I was sitting comfortably in some part of the world and thought that I had found a good shelter, when suddenly a light was put upon the table, and, behold! I was in a robber’s den, and the attack came from all directions, but what does it matter? Fortunately I was given a heart of stone.

Clara.— Yes, father, so it is!

Anton.— What do you know of it? Do you, perhaps, think you have a right to curse the world with me, just because your clerk has abandoned you? Some other man will take you out for a Sunday walk; some other man will tell you that your eyes are blue, your cheeks pink; some other man will make you his wife, if you deserve it. But when for thirty long years you bore all burdens that life brings patiently and in honor, never grumbling at them, when you bore it all, life, death and every other misfortune in patience and with resignation, and then suddenly your son were to come, he who was to be the prop of your old age, and bring disgrace upon you; such disgrace that you want to implore the earth: ‘Devour me, if you are not overcome by disgust, for I am dirtier than you.’ Then you have a right to pronounce all the curses that swell your heart, then you may tear out your hair and beat your breast. I’ll then give you that privilege and you shall have this advantage over me, for you are a woman.

Clara.— Oh, Karl!

Anton.— I wonder what I’ll do to him when I shall have him again before me. When some evening, before the lights are brought in, he will enter the room, his head shaved, for in jail they do not allow fancy head-dressing, and he will stammer out his ‘Good evening,’ the door-knob in his hand. I’ll do something, for sure, but cannot tell what it will be. (*Gnashing his teeth.*) And if they will keep him ten years, he’ll find me. And I’ll live that long, I know I shall! Mark my words, Death. Henceforth I am a stone for your scythe, it will break rather than that it can push me from my place.

Clara (taking his hand).— Father, you ought to lie down for an hour or so.

Anton.— In order to dream that you are to be delivered of an illegitimate child? Then, that I take hold of you, and, coming to my senses again, say to you, ‘Dear daughter, I did not know what I was doing.’ No! Thank you! My slumber took a prophet into its services, who shows me

the most horrible things with his bloody fingers. And I don't know how it is, but all things seem possible to me now. Oh! I shudder when I think of the future. I shrink from it as from a glass of water, seen through a microscope — is that the word, Sir Schoolmaster? You spelled the word for me the other day. I looked through one once, in Nuremberg, at the fair, and could not drink for the rest of the day. I saw 'dear Karl' last night with a pistol in his hand; when I looked close at the hero, he fired it off. I heard a scream, but could not see for smoke, and when the smoke vanished gradually, I could not see any broken skull, but my gentleman of a son had in the meanwhile become a very rich man. He stood and counted gold pieces, shifting them from one hand into the other, and his face was — the devil take me —

Clara.— Calm yourself, father!

Anton.— Get well! Why are you sick? Why don't you ask me that? Yes, physician, give me medicine to make me well. Your brother is a bad son, be a good daughter to me. I must appear to the world like a miserable bankrupt. I owe you a good husband, who could have taken the place of such an invalid, and I deceived her by giving her such a rascal and scamp. Be as good a woman as your mother was, then people will say, 'It was not the parents' fault that the boy went wrong, for the girl is straight and a model for all women.' (*With horrible coldness.*) And I'll do my share, I'll make matters easy for you. The very moment that I notice people pointing their fingers at you, I'll — I'll — (*with a motion at his throat*) shave myself, and I swear to you, I'll shave this whole head off. You may spread the rumor that I did it by accident, in sudden terror, because I saw a horse run away in the streets, or the cat had overturned a chair on the floor above, or a mouse ran across the floor. The people who know me, it is true, will shake their heads, for I am not nervous, as a rule, but what does it matter? I could not live if people were to throw pitying glances at me, or perhaps scorn me.

Clara.— Oh, Almighty God, what am I to do?

Anton.— Nothing! Nothing! Dear child, I know I am too harsh with you. Nothing! Only be as you are now, then all will be well and good. Heavens! I suffered such great wrong that I have to do wrong, so that I may not collapse. Look here! I just crossed the street a short while ago, when Smallpox Fritz passed by, the thief, whom I a few years ago had had arrested and convicted because he had robbed me three times. Ever since then the scamp did not dare look at me. This time he stretched out his hand to shake mine. I was about to strike him down, when suddenly I remembered that we have been cousins for the past week, and relatives have to exchange greetings with one another. Our parson, the

charitable man, called on me yesterday. To be sure, he tried to tell me that we are responsible only for our own misdeeds, not for those of others. He told me that it is arrogance on my part to feel responsible for my son's conduct; for, if this were the case Adam himself would have to feel as badly as I. 'Well, sir,' I said, 'I fully believe that it will not disturb the peace of our first father in Paradise, if one of his distant descendants murders and steals, but did he not tear his hair over Cain?' No! No! I cannot stand it; it is too much. Once in awhile I look around for my shadow, just to see if it did not get darker. For I can stand all and everything, I have given proof of that, but I cannot stand shame and disgrace. Put any burden you like upon my back, only do not cut the one nerve which holds me together.

Clara.— Father, as yet Karl did not confess anything, and they did not find the jewels with him.

Anton.— What does that matter? I went all over town and inquired about his debts in all the inns, and it was more than he could have made in my shop for the next three months, were he three times as industrious as he is. Now I also know the reason for his working two hours overtime every day. But he saw that all that could not have helped much, and therefore he took an easier road, and a quicker one, too, when opportunity presented itself.

Clara.— You always believed the worst of Karl. You always did so. Don't you remember when —

Anton.— You talk like your mother, and I shall answer you as I would answer her — by silence.

Clara.— And what if Karl should be found innocent, after all? And what if the jewels were to be found?

Anton.— Then I would hire a lawyer and risk my last penny to see if the mayor has the right to have an honest man's son put into jail for nothing at all. And if so, then I have to submit, for what can happen to any man in the country may also happen to me, even if I have to pay dearer for it than most other men. I'll accept it as my fate. I'll take it as a blow coming from God, and I'll fold my hands and say, 'Lord, Thou knowest the reason for this trial.' But, if he has no right to do so, if the man with the golden chain round his neck had been too hasty, thinking only that the man robbed is his brother-in-law, then I shall find out the why and wherefore. The king knows well that he owes justice to his subjects in exchange for our loyalty and obedience to him. He does not like to owe anything to anybody, least of all to us humbler ones. I then shall see that amends will be made. But all that is stuff and nonsense. The boy is as guilty as can be. He will as little come forth innocent and guiltless from

the trial — as little as your mother will ever come to life again in this world! I shall never derive comfort or joy from that scamp. Therefore, do not forget what you owe me. You keep to your oath, so that I need not keep mine. (*He goes, but turns back again.*) I shall be home late to-night, as I have to go into the mountains to see the old wood dealer. He is the only man who is still greeting me, because he does not know of my disgrace. The man is deaf. They can't tell him anything without screaming themselves hoarse over it, and even then he does not understand the story right, that's why he does not learn any news. (*Off.*)

SCENE II

Clara (alone).— Oh, Lord! My God! Have pity upon me! Have pity upon the old man! Take me! He cannot be helped in any other way! See, the sun shines so beautifully in the streets that the children try to grasp it with their hands. The birds fly to and fro; flowers and herbs do not tire out and give up. All and everything is alive and wishing to live. Thousands of sick people are trembling in fear of you, Death! Whoever cried for you last night because he could no longer bear his pain, is satisfied now and thinks his bed soft and comfortable. But I cry to you for help! Spare him whose soul is most afraid of you, give him a respite until this beautiful world seems again sad and barren to him, and take me in his stead. I shall not shudder when you are reaching out your cold hand for me. I shall grasp it courageously and follow you more joyfully than any human child has ever followed you.

SCENE III

The merchant Wolfram (enters).— Good morning, Miss Clara! Your father at home?

Clara.— He just left.

Wolfram.— I came — My jewels are found.

Clara.— Oh, father, I wish you were here! He forgot his glasses. How I wish that he would miss them and come back for them. How? Where? With whom?

Wolfram.— My wife — Tell me frankly, Miss Clara, did you never hear strange stories about her?

Clara.— Yes, I did.

Wolfram (breaking out in despair).— Good Lord! All in vain! No servant who ever entered my house was allowed to go away, I gave them double wages, and overlooked everything, only to buy their silence. And

yet — those false, ungrateful creatures! My poor children. It was only for your sake that I tried to hide it all.

Clara.— Do not blame your servants. They are innocent. Since your neighbor's house burnt down,— at the time when they saw your wife by the window laughing and clapping her hands, and trying to blow at the fire with full cheeks, as if she wanted it to burn higher, — since then it was only a question, whether she was a devil or crazy. Hundreds of people saw her do it.

Wolfram.— It is the truth. Now that the whole town knows of my misfortune it would be foolish if I were to ask you to promise silence. Well! Listen! The theft for which your brother is in jail was committed by an insane woman.

Clara.— Your own wife!

Wolfram.— I knew for a long time that she, who formerly was the noblest and most charitable person in the world, has become malicious and takes delight in seeing misfortune befalling others. She is delighted when a servant breaks a glass or cuts her finger. What I did not know, however, was that she takes all kinds of things, — money and other things, — and hides them from us. She takes paper, too, a thing I only learned to-day, at my expense. I was lying down and was just about to fall asleep, when I noticed that she, approaching me gently, examined me closely to see if I were asleep. I closed my eyes firmly. She took the key from the pocket of my vest, which I had hung over my chair, opened my desk, took out a roll of money, locked it again and put the key back. I was horror-struck, but controlled myself, so that I would not disturb her. She left the room, I glided after her on tiptoes. She went to the attic, and there she threw the roll into an old chest, which was empty ever since grandfather's time. Then she turned, looked around on all sides timidly, and not noticing me, hurried away. I lit a candle and searched the chest. Here I found my youngest daughter's doll, a pair of slippers belonging to one of our maids, an account book, letters, and, worst of all, or rather, fortunately, at the very bottom I found the jewels.

Clara.— And my poor mother! It is horrible!

Wolfram.— God knows that I would willingly lose the jewels could I thereby make reparation. But it is not my fault. If my suspicion fell upon your brother, in spite of my great esteem for your father, it was but natural. He had polished the desk, and the jewels disappeared with him. I noticed the disappearance almost immediately, for I had to take some papers from the drawer in which they had been. I did not think of taking any severe measures right away. All I did was to tell the bailiff, Adam, to investigate the matter discreetly. The bailiff however, would not consent

to keep the matter a secret. He told me that he was in duty bound to report the case right away. Your brother, he said, is a drunkard and overwhelmed with debts. Unfortunately, the mayor thinks so much of Adam that the fellow can do as he pleases. The man seems to have a deathly hatred against your father, I don't know why. It was an utter impossibility to pacify him. He would not listen to me, but in running out he cried, 'If you were to make me a present of the jewels it could not have made me happier than this!'

Clara.— The bailiff once put his glass next to my father's when they were in the inn and nodded to my father, as if he wanted to click glasses with him. My father withdrew his glass and said, 'People in a red coat with blue cuffs and collars had formerly to drink from glasses with a wooden base; they had also to stand modestly outside, and take their hats off when the host offered them a drink. If they wanted to click glasses with anybody, they had to wait until the man came out to them.' Oh, God! My God! To think that my poor mother had to pay for all this with her life!

Wolfram.— It is a dangerous thing to arouse anybody, especially bad people! Where is your father?

Clara.— He went into the mountains to see the wood dealer.

Wolfram.— I shall ride in that direction to meet him. I was at the mayor's before, but, unfortunately, he was not at home, or else your brother would be home by now. The secretary sent a messenger after him. You'll see your brother before night, though.

SCENE IV

Clara (alone).— Now I ought to feel happy. Oh, my God! My God! I can think of nothing else but, 'Now it is only me!' And meseems some idea will come to me which will make it all come out right in the end.

SCENE V

Secretary (entering).— Good morning!

Clara (supporting herself by a chair, as if to fall).— He! Oh! If he had not come home!

Secretary.— Your father not at home?

Clara.— No.

Secretary.— I am bringing good tidings. Your brother — No, Clara, I cannot talk like that to you. It seems the tables, the chairs, all these old friends — Good morning, then! (*Nods at a clothes-press.*) How are you? You did not change one bit. You, around which we chil-

dren used to run and play. You will shake your old heads and laugh at the old fool, who does not talk in the old familiar way. I must talk to you as I used to. If you don't like it, then think that I am dreaming and that you can wake me. Then step before me, raise yourself to your full height, so that I can see that you are no longer the little girl of our childhood days. See here, this was your height when you were eleven. (*He points to a mark on the door.*) But you are a grown-up girl who can reach for the sugar now, even if it is put at the top of the closet. Do you remember? That was the fortress where it was safe from us, even if not locked away from us. When it was out of our reach we used to pass away our time by chasing flies, that were flying around cheerfully, and, oh, how we begrudged them what we ourselves could not get!

Clara.—I thought people forget such things when they have gone through hundreds and thousands of books.

Secretary.—That is true! To be sure! Oh, all the things we forget over Justinian and Gajus! The boys who object to studying their letters know very well why they do so. They know that they will never quarrel with the Bible if they have nothing to do with the Primer. But it is disgraceful, truly disgraceful. They show them the picture of a red rooster in the back of the book with a basket of eggs, and then there is no stopping them, and they hurry down to the letter 'Z' and so on, and so on, until finally they are in the very middle of the *Corpus Juris*. Then only do they notice with horror into what a wilderness those cursed twenty-four letters have carried them. Those letters which first led a gay dance of all good things to eat and smell, combinations of such words as 'cherry' and 'rose.' These are the things that enticed them first.

Clara.—And what do they do afterwards? (*Absent-minded, without any interest.*)

Secretary.—That depends upon the different temperaments. Some work their way through it all. These are the ones who three or four years later, come back to daylight. They are, however, somewhat thin and pale, but we must not take offense at that! I belong to that class myself. Others lie down in the middle of this big forest, they want only to rest, but they never get up again, or rarely. I myself have a friend, who has been drinking his beer in the shade of his *Lex Julia* for the past three years. He chose that passage on account of its name, which stirs pleasant memories in him. Again some others become desperate, and turn back. Those are the most stupid of all, because, let loose from one desert, they run straight into another. And then there are some who are even worse — they never end studying. (*To himself.*) All the nonsense we talk, when we have something else upon our hearts and lack the courage to say it.

Clara.— All seems so gay and cheerful to-day; it must be on account of the fine weather we have.

Secretary.— In such weather the owls are falling from their nests, the bats commit suicide, because they have a feeling that the devil created them. The mole digs his way so deep into the earth that he cannot find his way back to daylight and he must choke miserably, if he does not succeed in digging his way clear through to the other side of the earth, and saying how-do-you-do to America. On a day like this, each ear of wheat grows twice as quickly, and the poppies turn redder than ever before. Shall we human beings be put to shame by them? Shall we cheat God of the only interest which His capital brings Him? A cheerful and happy face, which reflects all the glory of the world. Truly, when I see this grouchy fellow or that crank creeping out of his house early in the morning, his forehead wrinkled up to his hair, and gazing at the sky, like a blotter, I then often think, 'There'll be rain in a minute or two, God cannot help dropping the cloud curtain, if it were only to prevent Himself from getting angry at that caricature of a face.' Such fellows ought to be tried before a court-martial for spoiling the weather for the harvest. How else can we give thanks for being alive, if not by living? Sing and be cheerful, bird, or you do not deserve your throat.

Clara.— Oh! How true! I could cry!

Secretary.— It is not meant for you. Knowing your old man, I can understand why you go around with such a sad face. But, thank Heaven! I can restore your cheerfulness. That's what I came here for. You will have your brother back before night. People will now point their fingers not at him, but at the people who had him arrested. Don't I deserve a kiss for this good news? Only a sisterly kiss, if it cannot be otherwise. Or shall we play blindman's buff? If I cannot catch you within ten minutes then I shall have to go without one and get a box on the ear into the bargain.

Clara (to herself).— I feel as if I were a thousand years old, and as if time were stopping. I cannot advance nor retreat. Heavens! All this cheerfulness and this everlasting sunshine around me!

Secretary.— You do not answer. To be sure, I forgot, you are engaged to be married. Oh, Clara! Why did you do that? And yet— I have no right to complain about it. You are good and sweet. Everything that is good and pure ought to have recalled you to my mind; and yet for years you did not exist for me. Therefore, you now have — Well! If it were at least a fellow of whose superiority I could be convinced. But Leonhard —

Clara (suddenly, at the mentioning of his name).— I must go to him. That's just it. I am no longer sister to a thief — Oh, my God in

heaven! What shall I do? Leonhard will not, and he must — He cannot be a devil! Then all will come out right. All will be as it was (*Shuddering.*) As it was! (*To the SECRETARY.*) Don't take it amiss, Friedrich! Oh! Why do I suddenly feel so heavy?

Secretary.— You will —

Clara.— Go and see Leonhard. What else do you think! That is the only way left for me to take in this world.

Secretary.— Then you love him? Then —

Clara (wildly).— Love him? Either him or death! Is anyone wondering that I chose him? I would not do so if I were only thinking of myself.

Secretary.— Either him or death? Girl! Only despair can talk that way, or —

Clara.— Don't drive me crazy! Don't repeat those words! It is you, you I love. Now! Now! I told you, cried it out to you, as if already I were on the other side of the grave, where we don't blush any more, where we all creep past each other, naked, and chilled, because God's terrible and sacred nearness takes from us all thought of our neighbors!

Secretary.— You love me? Me! Still love me! Clara, I thought you did when I saw you outside in the yard.

Clara.— You did! Did you? So did the other one, too! (*Dully, as if alone.*) And he came to me. 'He or I!' Oh, my heart! My cursed heart! For his sake, in order to prove to myself that it was not so, or— was it to stifle the feeling? Was that the reason that I did the thing which now — (*Breaking into tears.*) Oh, God, my God! I would have mercy, if I were You!

Secretary.— Clara, be my wife! All I came for again was to look into your eyes in the old way. Had you not understood that glance, I should have left without speaking. Now I offer you all I am and all I have. It is little enough, but it may become more as time goes on. I would have come long ago, had it not been for your mother's illness and her death.

(*CLARA laughing like one insane.*)

Secretary.— Calm yourself, my girlie! The man has your word and that frightens and upsets you. To be sure it is — How could you!

Clara.— Oh! Don't ask! Heavens! All the things that come together to set me crazy. Nothing but scorn and contempt from all sides when you went off to the university and did not write to me. 'She is fool enough to think of him.' 'She thinks that such childish promises were meant seriously.' 'Does he write?' And then my mother: 'Keep to your equals. Haughtiness and arrogance will bring misery upon you. Leonhard is a good man. All wonder why you despise him.' Then my own

heart began to doubt. I wondered if you had really forgotten me. It said: 'Show him that you too ——' Oh, Lord!

Secretary.— It is my fault. I know it. Well, even if it should be a difficult matter, it is not on that account impossible! I shall ask him to release you. Perhaps ——

Clara.— Oh, as to my word.— Here! (*She throws LEONHARD'S letter to him.*)

Secretary (reading).— I, as the cashier — your brother — thief — very sorry — but, on account of my position and office, I cannot —— (*To CLARA.*) Did he write this the very day your mother died? He expresses at the same time his sympathy for her sudden death.

Clara.— I think so.

Secretary.— Well! I declare! I —— Good Lord! The cats, snakes and all the other monsters which slipped through your fingers at the creation must have stirred the devil's joy and delight, and he imitated them. Only he improved on them greatly by putting them into a human skin. Now they are standing in rank and file with us and we can only find them out when they sting and scratch us! (*To CLARA.*) But well for us! That's just what we want. (*Is about to embrace her.*) Come! Forever, now! With this kiss ——

Clara (falls on his shoulder).— No! Not forever! It is only that I may not fall to the floor. No kiss!

Secretary.— But, girlie! You don't love him. He gave you back his word ——

Clara (dully, straightening herself).— And yet I must go to him. I must throw myself at his feet and stammer, 'Look at my father's white hair, and have pity upon me — take me!'

Secretary.— Unhappy woman! Do I understand you aright?

Clara.— Yes!

Secretary.— No man can get over that! To have to blush and have to cast down one's eyes before a man who is fit to be spit at. (*Presses CLARA to his heart.*) You poor girl! You poor girl!

Clara.— Go now! Go!

Secretary (to himself, brooding).— Or, the dog who knows about it must be shot down! Wish he would have the courage and accept a challenge! Or, maybe, I can force him to it. I am not afraid, as far as hitting him is concerned.

Clara.— I beg you ——

Secretary (while going).— When it will be dark! (*He turns around once more and takes CLARA'S hand.*) Girl! Clara! You stand before me —— (*Turns away.*) A thousand others would have been silent about it, and

would have whispered it into the ears of their husbands in the supreme hour of sweet forgetfulness. I know what I owe you. (*Off.*)

SCENE VI

Clara (alone).— Stop! Stop, my heart! Retire within me, so that not a drop of blood can escape which might be able to rekindle life in me. Something like hope offered itself to me. Now only do I realize it. (*Smiling.*) No! 'No man can get over such a thing!' And if — Could I myself get over it? Could I have the courage to seize a hand, which — No! No! I would not have such a bad kind of courage. I have to shut myself in my own hell, even if they were to open the door to me from without — I am for all eternity — forever — Oh! How I wish it would stop! If it were only for a few minutes! It is only that which makes it last so long. The tormented person thinks to have a rest, because the tormenter has to stop a moment to catch his breath. Then a relief comes over him like over the drowned man upon the waves, when the whirlpool, that drags him down, gives him up once more, only to seize him again. He does not gain anything by it, except a prolonged struggle with death.

Well, Clara! Yes, father! I am going! Your daughter is not going to drive you to suicide. I shall soon be the lawful wife of that man, or — Lord! I am not begging for any happiness, I am begging for misery, for utmost misery. You will grant me that misery! Away, now — where is the letter? (*She takes it.*) I shall pass three wells on my way to him — I must not stop at any of them. As yet I have no right to do it. (*Off.*)

CURTAIN

ACT III

SCENE I

(*Room in LEONHARD'S house.*)

Leonhard (at a table covered with legal papers, writing).— Well! That's the sixth sheet since dinner. What a nice and important feeling when we do our duty. Let come who will, and if it were the king himself,— I shall rise, to be sure, but I'd not be embarrassed one bit. There is but one exception to it, and that is the old carpenter. But, what does he matter, after all? Poor Clara! To be sure, I *am* sorry for her. I cannot think

of her without some misgivings. Wish that one cursed night had not been! To tell the truth, it was more from a feeling of jealousy, which was devouring me, than of love. I know she only yielded to prove that my reproaches were unfounded, for she was as cold as death. She will have to face hard times now, and I, too, shall have many annoyances coming my way from the whole business. Well! Let each bear his own burden. Above all things, I must tie that little hunchback firmly to me so that she cannot escape me when the storm will break loose! For then I shall have the mayor for me and need fear nothing.

SCENE II

Clara (enters).— Good evening, Leonhard!

Leonhard.— Clara? (*To himself.*) I did not expect her, to be sure. (*Aloud.*) Did you not get my note? But — maybe you are coming for your father — to pay the taxes. How much is it? (*Looking over some papers.*) I ought to know by heart.

Clara.— I came to return your letter! Here it is! Read it over once more.

Leonhard (reading very earnestly).— It is a very sensible letter. How can a man to whom public money is entrusted marry into a family of (*swallowing a word*) of which your brother is a member?

Clara.— Leonhard!

Leonhard.— Or do you think the whole city is wrong? Is your brother not in jail? Did he never go to jail? Are you not the sister of a — of your brother?

Clara.— I am here as my father's daughter. Not as the sister of a brother accused innocently, who, moreover, has already been acquitted. He is only my brother. I did not come here as a girl trembling and fearing undeserved disgrace, for (*in a half whisper*) I am fearing you more. I am here as the daughter of the old man to whom I owe my life.

Leonhard.— And what do you want?

Clara.— Can you ask? Wish I could go and leave you. My father will cut his throat, if — Do marry me.

Leonhard.— Your father —

Clara.— He swore it. Marry me!

Leonhard.— Our hands and throats are first cousins, they'll not harm each other. Don't you worry about it!

Clara.— He swore it — marry me, I shall commit suicide right after and I shall be grateful to you for both the marrying and the suicide.

Leonhard.— Do you love me? Did you come because prompted by your heart? Am I your all and everything?

Clara.— Answer that question yourself.

Leonhard.— Can you swear that you love me? That you love me as a woman must love the man to whom she is tied forever and ever?

Clara.— No, I cannot swear that. But this much I can: You'll never know whether I love you or not! I'll serve you! I'll slave for you! You need not support me, I'll do that myself. I shall do sewing and spinning at night, and I'll go hungry if I cannot find work. I shall tear my own flesh rather than complain to my father. He'll not learn anything about it. If you whip me because your dog is not at hand, or because you did away with him, I shall swallow my own tongue rather than betray you to the neighbors by my screams. I cannot promise that my skin will conceal the marks of your whip, for that does not depend upon me, but I shall lie to them. I'll tell them that I fell and struck my head against the closet, or that I slipped on the floor; and I shall do so before anyone will have a chance to ask me any questions about my black marks. Marry me — I shall not live long. And should it last too long, and should you regret the expenses of a divorce suit to get rid of me, well! then buy some poison in a drug store, place it as if it were meant for the rats. I'll take it, and, dying, I'll let the neighbors know that I took it by mistake.

Leonhard.— If you expect me to do such things, you must not be astonished if I refuse to marry you.

Clara.— Well! Then, may God not judge me too hard, if I go to Him before He calls me. Were it only for my own sake — I'd willingly bear the burden. I'd accept it as a well-deserved punishment, if people were to point their fingers at me instead of helping me. I would love my child, even if it were to have the features of this wretch. I would shed so many tears in his presence that, when older and wiser, he would not despise nor curse his mother. But I am not the only one concerned. On the day of Judgment it will be easier to answer the Judge's question, 'Why did you kill yourself?' than to answer, 'Why did you drive your father to it?'

Leonhard.— You talk as if you were the first and the last one. Thousands met with the same fate before you, and thousands will meet with it after you, and they will all be resigned in the end. Are you any better than they? They, too, had fathers who invented all kinds of new curses, when they first discovered their daughters' shame and disgrace. They, too, talked of murder and suicide. Afterwards they were ashamed of such talk; they atoned for it by watching the cradle and helping raise the bastard.

Clara.— I can understand that you cannot believe in anybody keeping his oath.

SCENE III

A boy (entering).— Here are flowers! I am not to tell from whom.

Leonhard.— How lovely! (*Striking his forehead.*) The dickens! How stupid of me! I ought to have sent some. How am I to get out of it gracefully? The little hunchback is so exacting! She has nothing else to think of. (*Taking the flowers.*) But I am not going to keep them all. (*To CLARA.*) Did you not tell me once that these signify shame and repentance? (*CLARA nodding.*)

Leonhard (to the boy).— Mind, my boy, these are for me, I pin them on me, right here, where my heart is. These, the dark-red ones, which burn like fire, you'll take back. Do you understand me? By the way, don't forget to call when my apples will be ripe.

Boy.— That'll be a long time. (*Off.*)

SCENE IV

Leonhard.— See here, Clara! You spoke about keeping one's promise. Just because I am a man of my word I had to answer you the way I did. I gave you back your word a week ago. You cannot deny it, the letter is here. (*He gives her the note, she takes it mechanically.*) I had good cause for doing it. Your brother — you say he is acquitted? I am glad. During that week I formed another alliance; I had the right to do so, since you did not object to my note. I was free to do so both in my heart and before the law. Now you come to see me, but it is too late. I gave my word and received hers, in fact — (*To himself.*) How I wish it were true. To tell you the truth, the other one is in the same condition as you. I am sorry. (*Pushes her curls from her brow, which she allows, as if not noticing it.*) But, you'll understand — there's no joking with the mayor.

Clara (absent minded).— No joking!

Leonhard.— Well! Now you are getting sensible! And as to your father, you may tell him straight to his face that it is all his own fault. Don't look at me like that. Don't shake your head. It is so! Just tell him that. He'll understand and be sorry, I'll vouch for it. (*To himself.*) If he could give away his daughter's dowry he must not be astonished if his daughter is abandoned in the end. When I think of it I could — I could — How I wish the old fool were here to learn a lesson now. Why must I be so cruel? Only because he was a fool! He is responsible for whatever comes from it now. That's clear! (*To CLARA.*) Or do you want me to tell him? For your sake I'll risk it. He'll be rude to me. He may hurl things at me, but he'll have to swallow the truth, no matter how

painful, and will have to leave you in peace. Depend upon it. Is he home?

Clara (straightening herself up to her full height.)— I thank you. (*About to go.*)

Leonhard.— Shall I go with you? I have courage enough!

Clara.— I thank you as much as I would thank a snake which got hold of me and lets me go suddenly, because some other prey has come his way. I know that I am doomed by his bite, that he leaves me only because it is not worth his while to suck my life. Yet I *do* thank him, because now I shall have a peaceful death. Yes, you scamp, I thank you. Meseems now when I saw your heart, that I looked into the abyss of hell. Whatever my lot may be in that terrible eternity, one thing is sure, I'll have nothing in common with you there, and that is *some* comfort. The unfortunate being, bitten by a snake, is not blamed for opening his veins that his poisoned life may flee quickly, therefore God's everlasting mercy will have pity upon me when He looks at you and me and sees what you made of me. Only one more thing. My father does not know. He has no suspicion. That he may never learn of my disgrace I shall do away with myself this very day. If I were to think that you could — (*She advances a step toward him, wildly.*) But that is folly! It can only be welcome to you when they will all stand around, shaking their heads, and asking each other vainly: 'How did it happen?'

Leonhard.— There are cases. What can be done! Clara!

Clara.— Away, now! That monster can talk! (*About to go.*)

Leonhard.— Do you imagine I believe you?

Clara.— No!

Leonhard.— Fortunately, you cannot become a suicide without becoming an infanticide.

Clara.— Rather be both than a patricide. I know well that one sin cannot be atoned for by committing another. But what I am going to do now, I alone shall be responsible for. If I deliver the knife into my father's hands, it would hit both of us. It will hit me one way or another. That's what gives me the courage and the strength in all my fear. You'll do well in the world. (*Off.*)

SCENE V

Leonhard (alone).— I must! I must marry her! Indeed! Why should I have to do it? She is about to do something crazy, in order to prevent her father from doing something cracked. Where is the necessity of it? Why should I prevent her from committing a crazy deed by doing a still crazier thing myself! I'll not do it! At least, not till I see a man

before me who is ready to do a still crazier thing, and should he think as I do, well! Then there would be no end of it. That sounds plausible and yet — I must go after her. Somebody is coming! Thank Heaven for it! Nothing can be worse than to have to be at variance with one's own thoughts. There's nothing worse than a rebellion in one's own brains, when one worm makes room for another and where one devours the other, or bites into the other's tail.

SCENE VI

Secretary (entering).— Good evening!

Leonhard.— Sir Secretary? What gives me the pleasure of —

Secretary.— You'll learn it soon enough!

Leonhard.— To be sure, we were schoolmates —

Secretary.— And maybe, we will be comrades in death! (*Draws forth two pistols.*) Do you know how to handle these?

Leonhard.— I don't understand you!

Secretary (cocks one of them).— Look here! That's the way. Then you take aim at me, the same as I now aim at you; and then you pull the trigger. This way!

Leonhard.— What are you talking about?

Secretary.— One of us must die. Die! And that right away, this minute.

Leonhard.— Die?

Secretary.— You know why!

Leonhard.— By God in heaven, I don't!

Secretary.— That does not matter. You'll remember it when it comes to dying.

Leonhard.— I have no idea —

Secretary.— Remember! You had better do so! Or it might occur to me to take you for a mad dog who bit the person I hold dearest in this world, unconsciously; and I might shoot you down like one. Although I intended to treat you as my equal for the next half hour at least.

Leonhard.— Don't talk so loud. If anybody should hear —

Secretary.— If there was anybody who could hear us you'd have called him long ago. Well?

Leonhard.— If it is on account of the girl, well! I don't care, I may as well marry her as not. I had almost made up my mind to do so when she was here just now.

Secretary.— She was here and left again? And you did not fall down at her feet in sorrow and repentance? Come now! Come!

Leonhard.— I pray you — You see a man before you who is ready to do anything you wish of him. I'll publish my engagement to her this very evening.

Secretary.— That will be my business, not yours. You shall not touch even the hem of her garment, even if the salvation of the world depended upon it. Come! To the woods with us. But mind! I take you by your arm, and if, on our way, you utter but one cry, I — (*Raises the pistol.*) You may believe me! But that you may not be tempted we had better take the back road behind the houses, past the yards.

Leonhard.— One of these is for me — give me this one.

Secretary.— Not yet! You might throw it away and force me to murder you, or to let you run away, is that it? Have patience till we are at the spot I have selected, then I'll share it with you.

Leonhard (goes and knocks his glass from the table by accident).— Can I not first have another drink?

Secretary.— Courage, my boy! Maybe you'll fare well. It seems that God and the devil are constantly fighting for the possession of the world. Who knows who will have the upper hand and be the master? (*Takes hold of his arm; both off.*)

SCENE VII

(*Room in ANTON'S house. Evening.*)

Karl (entering).— Nobody home! If I did not know the rat hole beneath the door where they always hide the key, I couldn't have entered. Well! It would not have mattered much. I should like nothing better than to run around the entire town and imagine to myself no greater pleasure than making use of my legs. Let us have some light. (*Lights lamp.*) The matches are in the same place as usual, I bet you. Here in this house we have twenty commandments, instead of the ten. My hat goes on the third nail, not on the fourth. At half-past nine we must be tired. Before St. Martin's day we must not be cold, and after it we must not perspire. All these commandments are on the same list with: Thou shalt love and fear the Lord thy God! I am thirsty! (*Calls.*) Mother! The devil! I forgot that she is lying where even the innkeeper's bartender cannot open his jaws to let out his everlasting, 'Yes, Sir!' I did not cry, when in my dark hole I heard the death-bell rung for her, but — red coat, you did not allow me to make the last throw in the bowling alley, although I held the ball in my hand, ready for throwing. I'll not allow you time for a last breath, when I'll meet you under four eyes. This may even happen

to-night, for I know where you can be found around ten o'clock. After that, I'll take the first boat. Where in the world is Clara? I am both hungry and thirsty. To-day is Thursday. They have had veal soup. If it were winter there would have been cabbage; before Lent white cabbage, after Lent green cabbage. That's as much a matter of fact as Thursday has to come back each week after Wednesday.

SCENE VIII

(CLARA enters.)

Karl.— At last! You have no business to be kissing all the time. Wherever four red lips meet, a bridge is built for the devil. What have you here?

Clara.— Where? What?

Karl.— Where? What? In your hands, of course!

Clara.— Nothing.

Karl.— Nothing? Is it a secret? (*Tears LEONHARD'S letter from her hands.*) Let me see! If the father is not here the brother is the guardian.

Clara.— I held it firmly in my hands, and yet the wind was so violent that it threw the tiles from the roof. When I went past the church a tile flew down and I knocked my foot against it. 'Oh, God!' I prayed, 'send another one!' and I stopped. That would have been too good to be true. They would have to bury me and they would say: 'She met with an accident!' I hoped in vain for another tile to come down.

Karl (who, meanwhile, has read the letter).— Thunder and lightning! You scoundrel! The hand which wrote these lines shall be struck lame by me! Get me a bottle of wine! Or is your savings bank empty?

Clara.— There is another one in the house. I had bought it secretly for mother's birthday and put it aside. To-morrow would have been the day. (*Turns away.*)

Karl.— Give it to me!

(CLARA brings wine.)

Karl (drinks hastily).— Well! Now work can begin again! The eternal and everlasting planing, sawing, hammering; in between, eating and drinking and sleeping, so that we can go on planing, sawing and hammering. On Sunday a genuflexion or two and a: 'I thank Thee, oh Lord, that Thou givest me the permission to plane, hammer and saw!' (*Drinks.*) Long life to every good dog who does not bite when tied to the chain. (*Drinks.*) Once more, 'Long life to him!'

Clara.— Karl, do not drink so much! Father says that the devil is in wine!

Karl.— And the priest says that God is in it. (*Drinks.*) We'll see who is right! The bailiff has been here in the house. How did he behave?

Clara.— As if he were in a den of thieves and murderers. Mother fell down dead as soon as he had opened his lips.

Karl.— Very well! If, to-morrow morning, you should wake up and should hear that the scoundrel has been found slain, do not curse the murderer.

Clara.— Karl, I hope you will not ——

Karl.— Am I his only enemy? Has he not often been attacked before? It will be hard to find the guilty one among all those who might have done it, provided the murderer does not leave a cane or a hat behind him. (*Drinks.*) Whoever may do it, 'Here is to good success!'

Clara.— Brother, you talk ——

Karl.— Don't you like it? Well, it does not matter! You'll not have to put up with me much longer.

Clara (*shuddering*).— No!

Karl.— No? Do you know already that I want to be a sailor? Are my thoughts upon my forehead that you can read them? Or did the old crank, in his amiable manner, threaten to close his door to me? That would not mean much more than if the bailiff had sworn to me, 'You shall no longer be here in jail, I'll push you out into the open.'

Clara.— You don't understand me!

Karl (*sings*).— Yon ship, it swells its sails,
The wind falls into it!

Indeed! So it is! Nothing can tie me any longer to the work shop! Mother is dead. There is nobody here who would cease eating fish after each storm! And from my early youth it has been my desire. Away, then, with me! I shall never prosper here.

Clara.— And you will leave father all alone?

Karl.— Alone? Aren't you with him?

Clara.— I?

Karl.— You! His pet! What is going on in your brain that you ask such a silly thing? I leave him his joy and rid him from his everlasting anger, namely, from my charming person! Why should I not do it? We don't get along together, that's a sure thing! He cannot have things narrow enough around him. He would like to close his hand into a fist and creep into it. I should like to shed my skin, like the frock I wore when a little boy. If I only could! (*Sings.*)

The anchor is lifted,
The wheel is turned,
Now she flies away!

Tell me, did he doubt of my guilt for one instance? And was it not a comfort for him to be able to say, 'That's what I always expected! I always thought so! It could not end any differently!' Oh, the super-wise fool! If it had been you, he'd have committed suicide! I'd like to see him! If you were to meet with the fate of some women, he'd feel as if it were he himself who had to suffer it. And with the devil into the bargain!

Clara.— Oh! How it breaks my heart! Yes, it is so! I must away!

Karl.— What do you mean?

Clara.— I must go to the kitchen — what else do you think? (*With her hand to her forehead.*) Yes! That's it! That's what I returned home for! (*Off.*)

Karl.— She seems somewhat strange to me! (*Sings.*)

A bold sea gull

Greetingly encircles the mast!

Clara (re-entering).— The last thing is done. Father's supper is on the stove. When I closed the kitchen door and thought, 'You'll never enter here again!' a shudder passed over my soul. That's the way I'll leave this room, this house, this world!

Karl (sings).— The sun, he shines so hot,
Some fish so nice and cheery,
Play boldly round the guest!

Clara.— Why don't I do it? Shall I ever do it? Am I to postpone it from one day to another, as I do now from one minute to another? Until—
—— To be sure —— Away with me— Away! Yet, I hesitate! Is it not as if something were to raise its little hands imploringly to me, as if eyes —— (*Sits down on a chair.*) What nonsense! Am I too weak? Then am I strong enough to see my father with cut throat —— (*Rises.*) No! No! Our Father, Who art in Heaven — Hallowed be Thy Kingdom —— God! My God! My head is all wrong — all confused — my poor head — I cannot even pray. Brother! Brother! Help me ——

Karl.— What is the matter with you?

Clara.— The 'Our Father!' (*Coming to her senses.*) I thought I was already in the water, and was sinking, sinking, and had forgotten to say my prayers! I — (*suddenly*) Forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us. That's it! Yes! Yes! I forgive him! To be sure, I do, I do! I don't think of him any longer! Good-night, Karl!

Karl.— Are you going to bed so early? Good-night!

Clara (like a child who recites the Our Father).— Forgive us ——

Karl.— You could get me a glass of water first, though, but let it be fresh!

Clara (quickly).— I'll get it from the well—!

Karl.— Well, if you want to, it is not so far.

Clara.— Thanks! Thanks! That was the last thing that troubled me. The deed itself would have given me away! Now they'll say, after all: 'She met with an accident! She fell into it!'

Karl.— Be careful, the board is most likely still loose!

Clara.— The moon is bright! Oh, my God! I only go to you, because else my father would go! Forgive me, as I — Have mercy upon me — mercy — (*Off.*)

SCENE IX

Karl (singing).— Should have liked to jump,
Out there in my realm!

Indeed! But before — (*Looks at his watch.*) What time? Nine!
Am still so young in years,
I therefore only care,
To travel somewhere,
Where, I do not care!

SCENE X

Anton (entering).— I have to ask your forgiveness, but if I pardon you for having incurred debts secretly, if I pay them all for you, I may spare myself asking your forgiveness.

Karl.— The former is right and good, the latter is not necessary. If I sell my Sunday clothes I can satisfy the people to whom I owe a few dollars myself. I'll do that to-morrow. As a sailor — (*to himself*) now it's out — I don't need them any more.

Anton.— What nonsense are you talking again!

Karl.— It is not the first time you hear it. You may say what you like this time, my decision is taken.

Anton.— To be sure, you are of age.

Karl.— Just because I am so, I don't stand on my dignity about it. But I think fish and bird ought not to fight and quarrel about whether it is better to live in the water or in the air. One more thing. You'll either not see me again, or, if you do, you'll pat my shoulder and say, 'You did well!'

Anton.— We'll see. I need not dismiss the fellow I took in your place then. That's all.

Karl.— I thank you.

Anton.— Tell me, is it true that the bailiff, instead of taking you the shortest way to the Court House, took you all over town?

Karl.— From one street into another, across the market place, like an ox that is taken to market. But don't worry, I'll pay him for it, too, before I leave here!

Anton.— I don't blame you, but I forbid it!

Karl.— Oh! I say!

Anton.— I'll not let you out of my eyesight, and I myself would assist the scamp if you were to attack him.

Karl.— I thought you had loved my mother, too!

Anton.— And I'll prove it!

SCENE II

Secretary (*entering pale and tottering, presses a kerchief against his chest*).— Where is Clara? (*Falls upon a chair.*) Jesus! Good-evening! Thank God that I got here! Where is she?

Karl.— She went to — Where is she? Her talk — I begin to fear — (*Off.*)

Secretary.— She is avenged — the scoundrel fell — but I, too, am — Why this, my God? Now I cannot —

Anton.— What is the matter with you?

Secretary.— It does not matter about me! Give me your word that you will not abandon her — do you hear? Not abandon her when she —

Anton.— What queer talk! Why should I — Oh! I understand! Is it possible that I did her do no wrong, when I —

Secretary.— Your word! Give me your word!

Anton.— No! (*Puts both his hands into his pocket.*) But I'll make room for her. She knows it, too. I told her I would!

Secretary (*horrified*).— He told — her! You unfortunate woman! Only now I understand her words! He —

Karl (*rushing in*).— Father! Father! Somebody is in the well! If only it is not —

Anton.— The big ladder! Hooks! Ropes! Hurry! Why are you so slow? And if it were only the bailiff, hurry!

Karl.— All the things are there. The neighbors rushed to the spot at once. If it is only not Clara!

Anton.— Clara? (*Grasps the table.*)

Karl.— She went for water, and they found her kerchief.

Secretary.— Scoundrel! Now I know why your bullet hit. It is she!

Anton.— Go and look, will you? (*Sits down.*) I can't! (**KARL** *off.*) And yet! (*Rises.*) If I understood you aright (*to the SECRETARY*), then all is well!

Karl (returning).— Clara! Clara is dead! Dead! Her head horribly battered and smashed by the edge of the well, when she — Father, she did not fall in, she jumped in — a maid saw her.

Anton.— She had better think it over before she talks. It is not light enough so that she could have distinguished clearly.

Secretary.— Do you doubt it? You would like to do so, but you cannot! Only recall all you told her! You sent her out on the road to death, and I, I am guilty, too. It is my fault that she did not come back. You thought, when you were suspicious of the tongues that were going to whisper behind your back, but you did not think of the maliciousness of the serpents who own these tongues. You said words that drove her to despair. I, when she in her terrible fear and dread opened her heart to me, thought only of the scamp, instead of taking her to my heart, and — Well! I am paying it with my life. Because I made myself dependent upon one who is worse than I. You, too, you, however firmly you may seem, you, too, will say some day, 'Daughter, I wish you had not saved me from the gossip of the Pharisees! It is a greater sorrow to me that you will not be near me when I am on my death-bed, with nobody to do me the last service of love. With nobody to close my eyes for me.

| *Anton.*— She did not save me from anything — they saw her!

| *Secretary.*— She did all in her power. You were not worth it!

Anton.— Or the reverse!

(*Tumult outside.*)

Karl.— They are bringing her — (*About to leave.*)

Anton (firm to the end, calling after him).— Into the back room, where her mother's coffin stood!

Secretary.— Let me go and meet her! (*Wishes to rise, falls back.*)

Karl!

(*KARL helps him and leads him away.*)

Anton.— I do no longer understand this world! (*While he is deep in thought the curtain drops.*)

CHRISTIAN FRIEDRICH HEBBEL

BY PAULA GREEN, A.M.

CHRISTIAN FRIEDRICH HEBBEL, one of Germany's most powerful dramatists, came to his own only during the past twenty years. Although well known among a certain class of the German populace, the general public until quite recently was more or less unaware of the dramatic value his works offered.

Hebbel, born in 1813 at Wessleburen in Holstein, Danish territory at the time, but whose inhabitants were always more or less German in language and inclinations, shows all the characteristics of the North German Lowlands.

The people of Schleswig-Holstein are of the Low Saxon race, a race which gave Germany many great men: poets, novelists, scientists, but only this one dramatist. It is a hardy stock, one that has but seldom intermarried with other German tribes, on which account it has kept its native peculiarities better than any other Germanic race. Hebbel, a true son of his soil, therefore exhibits in all his works that primitive wildness and passion, which so often borders on the brutal. But on the other hand he has also all the redeeming qualities of his people: their loyalty, perseverance, and the great fighting spirit of his ancestors. Hebbel follows almost by instinct all these ancient traditions, both in the conception of his themes and in the depicting of his characters.

Our poet was the son of a poor mason, and his childhood and early sufferings were pathetic. They were planted so deeply in his soul and cut so clearly upon his memory that all his works seem to give forth echoes of his early privations, fears, terrors and restraint.

It seems that Klaus Friedrich Hebbel, the father, showed little ability in his trade, and on that account, in spite of his great industry, failed in gaining success in life. During the winter months, which form a large portion of the year and are exceedingly hard in that part of Germany, it was impossible for the father to obtain even irregular work. Most likely it was the great struggle against poverty which embittered the man, who was of a proud nature, to such a degree, that living with him was not only a difficult task, but filled the hearts of his children with terror and fear toward him. Proud as he was, the fact that he was unable properly to feed and clothe his family, the various members of which often had to go to bed

suffering from actual hunger and from cold, must have made his character harsher than it really was. Traits of his character are undoubtedly found in *Master Anton*, in 'Maria Magdalena.' Hebbel's childhood recollections are therefore of a rather dismal nature, although youth, the one element which covers with a glorifying shimmer so many early miseries and sufferings, came to the poet's aid in those days.

Hebbel's mother, although the descendant of a citizen's family of Wesselburen, seems to have been employed as a servant in the family of the Lutheran minister of her native town. She married Hebbel's father at the age of twenty-four, her husband being her junior by two years.

When four years old Hebbel was sent to a sort of primary school, kept by an elderly spinster. Here he was taught reading, but not writing. About the time that Christian was promoted to a more regular school, his father, who until then had owned the little house in which he had lived, was forced to sell it. Miserable as it had been, it had given the family a certain social standing. This they now lost together with the property. Henceforth Hebbel belonged to the lowest social grade of his native town. With increasing poverty the quarrels between husband and wife became more frequent. Hebbel speaks very bitterly about this period of his boyhood days. The old man hated Christian. Himself a pessimist — like *Master Anton* — he could not forgive his children their just inheritance of childhood: cheerfulness and a healthy appetite, both of which he considered a sin. He was also very much opposed to any higher strivings in his boys, and he was highly incensed when he heard that somebody was giving drawing lessons to his oldest son. Excepting a hymn-book and a Bible, he would not tolerate any books in the house, burning them, whenever he discovered any. Hebbel's mother did all she could for her children, keeping them and her house clean. She could, however, not change her husband's disposition, nor could she provide much toward their support.

The dramatist was fourteen years old when his father died, leaving his family in dire want. Christian, having been an excellent pupil, was on that account encouraged and helped by his teacher, Dethlefsen. As it was impossible for the boy to continue school without helping his mother, Dethlefsen succeeded in obtaining for him a position in the house of Mohr, the magistrate, who was then occupying that important place. Mohr was to play quite a part in the early life of Hebbel. Young Christian was at first used as an office boy, but, since he was good in using his pen, he had also to do all kinds of clerical work. Besides all the marketing for the house, other household duties for Mohr's housekeeper fell to his share. By means of his office work, which brought him into contact with all kinds of people of various social standing, the boy gained an insight into life and

man's character earlier than is usual with most young people. Moreover, his clerical work made him acquainted with the practical side of law, before he had had any real opportunity of taking up that study. As Mohr put his good library at the boy's disposal, young Hebbel had also the means of enlarging his reading. There is no doubt that Hebbel, during the first years of his changed surroundings, felt very happy. Besides the financial advantage of his position, it involved also a social rise. During the eight years which Hebbel spent in Mohr's employ his mental development must have been rapid, but it cannot be denied that it was one-sided. It did not give the boy the necessary disciplinary training which a mind like Hebbel's needed most in those days. The lack of this training is therefore felt throughout the poet's works, even in his maturest dramas and poems. Nobody was more aware of it than Hebbel himself. When an opportunity was offered to him for a more regular education it was too late, Hebbel was too old, his mind too mature to enable him to go through the regulation drill of a German schoolboy. On the other hand, just this irregular way of acquiring his knowledge developed his individuality to the highest degree. In fact, Hebbel is one of the most individual dramatists Germany had ever produced, outside of Goethe, Schiller, and the half insane Kleist.

During all these years Hebbel, who associated with a number of young men, all being more or less musical and interested in literature, wrote a number of poems. Some of these he sent to one Amalie Schoppe in Hamburg, who edited the "*Nuen Pariser Modeblatter*," a fashion paper. The poems and also a few other contributions were accepted by her. Amalie, who had lost a son of Hebbel's age, became at once interested in the young man, and she decided to help Christian, who about this time felt very unhappy in the position he occupied in Mohr's house, where he was still kept partly as a servant and partly as a social equal. Hebbel could no longer bear to stand midway, feeling that he was intellectually, if not by training or education, superior to the people around him. After having confided all his grievances to Amalie, the latter tried to gain the interest of several prominent men in Hamburg. Finally, after many efforts, she succeeded in collecting money and securing families enough who were willing to give the young man his meals free of charge, so that the young poet could come to Hamburg for the purpose of attending the 'Gymnasium' there, and be prepared for the university.

He was now twenty-two, but mentally nearly thirty. The subaltern police official, for that was the place he had practically occupied for the past few years, had to become a German schoolboy. From the servants' hall, to which he had been assigned in Mohr's house, he now was given the place of a German student, who participated in the old time-honored German

institution of the so-called '*Freitisch*' (or free meals), given to poor students in Germany. Amalie Schoppe, who had procured for Chirsitan all he needed, was a woman above the ordinary. She was then forty-four years old, and took a motherly interest in the young man. Her life was interesting, full of many changing fortunes, which brought her later on to this country, where she died in 1858 in Schenectady, N. Y.

In Hamburg Hebbel confronted many new difficulties. First of all Amalie had looked out for a room for the young man, where he would not have to pay any rent. This room was offered by people who did not enjoy the very best reputation. The house belonged to a couple by the name of Ziese. The wife had a daughter by her first marriage, Elise Lensing, who was destined to play a most prominent part in our dramatist's life. In fact, her tragic destiny is the one great blot upon Hebbel's memory. It is hard to do justice to either Hebbel or Elise. Unfortunately we see Elise only with Hebbel's eyes, from his letters and diaries. There can be no doubt that in her way she had as great an influence upon his youth as his wife Christine Enghaus had upon his maturity. When Hebbel met Elise she was thirty-one years old. He was twenty-two. Elise was a faded woman, with a reputation that had suffered considerably, owing to strange circumstances of her very sad life.

Very soon Hebbel got on intimate terms with her. Elise was by no means an uneducated woman. She had been for a short period teaching school, and she was well-informed in a general way. Yet from the outset, in his relations with her, Hebbel made a strict distinction between her and the girl he would take for a wife.

Meanwhile Hebbel's studies in Hamburg proved a great disappointment to him. He did not derive the satisfaction from them he had hoped for. He was too mature to take an interest in a course of studies planned for immature boys, although under the circumstances it was just such a systematic course which was needed for Hebbel. The latter, although being fully aware of this necessity, could not force himself to do what would have been an easy matter, had the opportunity been given him a few years earlier.

His dissatisfaction soon reached its climax, his benefactors began to lose interest in him; disagreements with them and Amalie Schoppe made him decide to leave Hamburg. He resolved to try and enter the university without preparatory education, an utter impossibility in Germany. He wished to study law, as had been decided by Hebbel's friends at the outset. One great difficulty now presented itself. Not having finished the prescribed study of a German Gymnasium, Hebbel could not be given a certificate. No German university could admit him without it as a regular

student. His benefactors finally agreed to let him go to Heidelberg and try to do whatever he could achieve without a diploma there.

The year spent at Hamburg was a general disappointment both to Hebbel and his benefactors, yet it added a great deal to his experiences and development. From his various criticisms, dated back to his Hamburg period, we obtain a good insight into the strange maturity of this comparatively untutored mind. These criticisms were papers for the '*Wissenschaftliche Verein*,' a society of German Gymnasium students, of which he was a member. Altogether there are twenty-two such papers, all remarkable both for their critical standpoint and for the powerful way in which he expresses his ideas. This is not the place to enlarge upon minor works. Suffice it to say, that at as early a date as the year 1835, when the great Heinrich von Kleist was wholly overlooked or openly denounced and attacked, Hebbel recognized at once Kleist's great superiority over the idol of the people, Theodor Körner.

In his lyrics, too, Hebbel had made marked progress during his Hamburg residence. They show the speculative side of his character, an element to be found throughout all of his work. He took certain facts for granted in his earlier poems. Now he makes the attempt, like the true Faust nature that he was, to solve the riddles of the universe.

Hebbel left Hamburg in March, 1836. He was paid the rest of the money that had been collected for his education. It had now dwindled down to eighty thalers. Before starting for South Germany, he paid a last visit to his mother in Wesselburen, and then set out on foot for Heidelberg. He reached that university town on the third of April, foot-sore and wet through by a pouring downfall of rain.

Owing to the fact that he had no credentials he was not permitted to matriculate, and was admitted only as a hearer, in which capacity he attended the lectures and began his studies of law.

Owing to his straitened financial circumstances he had to keep aloof from the real student life. Nevertheless he saw so many new and strange things that he was amply compensated for the lack of this phase of life. First of all, Catholicism attracted the attention of the young North German. On the Feast of *Corpus Christi* he saw exhibited for the first time in his life all the splendor of the Catholic ceremonies. Immediately he provided himself with a number of books dealing with Catholicism and tried to fathom various religious problems with all the speculative tendencies of his mind.

Art he saw here, too, for the first time in splendid productions, that left a deep imprint. He had never before been in an art gallery and when he saw pictures by Durer, Holbein, Lukas Kranach, and others, he was simply overcome by their grandeur.

He tried to grasp all new impressions and wrestled to give them adequate expression. Even science had its attraction for the poet. Now only he began to realize fully the defects of his early training. Being from the North German Lowlands, even the landscape was new. Never having seen mountains and valleys, he was stirred to his innermost soul by their beauty. Nature offered an entirely new aspect. During this period he stood literally under the spell of Jean Paul. His labored style he imitated in several short stories, all characterized by a highly dramatic element.

While progressing intellectually in certain ways, it cannot be said that he did so in his law studies. In these he went from bad to worse. One of his professors, however, recognized Hebbel's genius. Seeing that he was not fitted for the regulation course of studies in any line, he advised the young man to direct his efforts toward channels in keeping with his abilities. Having met Emil Rousseau, a young Bavarian, who assured him that life was much cheaper in Munich, Hebbel now decided to attend that university. He left Heidelberg, in spite of the fact that the law course at the Munich university was far inferior to that given in Heidelberg. But Hebbel was no longer aiming to become a jurist. His aim now was for wider knowledge. All this time he had supported himself very poorly by his writings, and, finding it impossible to live on the small earnings he could gain by these, he accepted the great sacrifices which Elise Lensing made for him. Having practically spent her little patrimony upon him while he was in Heidelberg, she now made money by sewing and other work. Starving herself, she economized enough to help her lover finish his studies. On his way, on foot, for Munich in September, 1837, he stopped at Tübingen to see Uhland. Uhland's great simplicity and childlike personality was a disappointment. About the end of September, he reached Munich, worn and weary, having walked more than a hundred and forty English miles. At first his change of abode seemed beneficial. Soon he found that here, too, he had to economize greatly with what money he could make and the little that Elise could send him, to make both ends meet. Here, as in Heidelberg, he had not enough to satisfy his hunger and suffered from the lack of the barest necessities. He contributed to the papers. He tried his hand at all kinds of literary work. Pessimism, to which he inclined by nature, was strengthened by this dire distress. He now came more than ever under the spell of Schelling's philosophy. Although he never really adhered to it, yet Schelling directed his thoughts into independent channels and gave new vistas to his intellect. He tried also to work his way through Hegel's 'Phenomenology of the Mind,' but had to give up the attempt.

Munich was not without its special attractions. Here he met one of

the prototypes of his heroines for his later drama of 'Maria Magdalena,' in the person of one Josepha Schwarz. Josepha was the daughter of a carpenter, and like all Bavarians, a Catholic — a fact which worked greatly upon the poet's imagination. Her education was that of a girl of her own class. She attracted Hebbel and had a slight influence upon him, yet her hold was not for long. A few traits for his heroine, a few external circumstances were taken from Josepha's life. The real kernel of the character was furnished by Elise, although the foundation-stone of his first great work was laid in Munich. Not only 'Maria Magdalena' but also 'Judith,' 'Der Diamant,' and 'Genoveva' are rooted in his Munich experiences. Hebbel stayed two years in the Bavarian capital and from there went back to Hamburg and Elise in 1839. Although returning without having accomplished any practical study, he had gained in experiences that were to prove of incalculable value. He had acquired greater assurance. The wavering of his early years passed and made room for a firmer judgment. His name, too, had begun to be known.

Elise was overjoyed to have her lover with her again. He met with Gutzkow and other men of renown who were then residing in Hamburg. Gutzkow asked him to contribute to his paper and the publisher Campe gave him work to do. An open break came soon with Gutzkow, but it was the latter's 'Saul' which led him to write his first tragedy, 'Judith,' a work as full of 'Storm and Stress' elements as any early work of Goethe's or Schiller's. The plot is the story of the Apocrypha of the widow Judith of Bethulia, who, inspired by God, went into the camp of the enemy of her people, Holofernes the Assyrian, and, after the latter had fallen asleep killed him. This accomplished, she hurries home to her people, where she is hailed as their deliverer. Changing the plot to suit his purposes, Hebbel here approaches the modern conception of a dramatic subject in his first tragedy by making a wholly psychological basis the motive of the action. Judith does not kill Holofernes, although she sets out with that purpose, until she had been disgraced by him. Then only, when she has to avenge a personal, an individual insult, has she the courage to accomplish her purpose. Here we have no longer a dramatized story. The center of the action is wholly modern. The contrast of the sexes and the resultant psychological problem are utilized to form the motive power. Hebbel was the first poet to take up this motive, since followed by Ibsen, Strindberg and others. Although, like most first tragedies of great men, it is in some respects a monstrosity, yet the dramatic intensity, the clarity in the drawing of the characters are characteristic and foreshadow the greater works to come.

Holofernes is the embodiment of rudimentary physical force in all its

brutality and cruelty. Filled with the inexhaustible joy of living, he disregards in Judith all higher elements, to him she is but another woman to be submitted to his will. He is a primitive kind of Faust nature, without the nobler elements of the soul.

Just as Karl Mohr is the outcome of young Schiller's restraint of freedom and liberty at the *Karlsschule*, so Holofernes is a product of all the humiliations suffered by Hebbel. Holofernes is a worthy companion, both of Schiller's Karl and Goethe's Götz. The work has another trait in common with the 'Storm and Stress' works of an earlier period. It is in prose, and the diction is unusually outspoken. The force and power of Hebbel's language is remarkable even in this immature dramatic creation. Each word drives home some definite picture, some decidedly clear idea. The development of the action likewise shows the future master of dramatic literature. It is rapid and concise, it shows a unity of style rarely to be met with in the world's best works.

In Hebbel's next play he again developed a new and wholly modern phase of dramatic conception. 'Genoveva,' his second tragedy, is based upon an old legend. Treated as it has frequently been before Hebbel, the center of the action had always been the goodness of the heroine, who suffers from the wrongs and intrigues wrought upon her by the villain. This so far had always been the main interest in the typical versions of all such dramatized legends in general and of the Genoveva legend in particular. Contrary to former views, Hebbel saw at once that the real center of interest was by no means the saintly, somewhat Sunday-school-like heroine, but the villain. And here again we have in Hebbel a forerunner of modern conception and treatment. There could not be any soul conflict in a character of Genoveva's stamp. The soul conflict could only be in Golo, the wicked plotter. Taking this standpoint, Hebbel developed the whole dramatic action from the character of Golo.

On the whole, this second work of Hebbel's is dramatically inferior to 'Judith,' but much more poetic. The language is no longer as unrestrained and impossible, nor as uncouth as in some passages of 'Judith,' where all bounds of propriety are broken with at times.

To the same period of Hebbel's activity belongs his comedy 'Der Diamant,' and some of his poems. These are characteristic in expressing his longing for the beautiful, and his doubts in his own mission as a poet. The result is always the same. Resignation. Meanwhile Hebbel had reached his thirtieth year. The great fire in Hamburg in 1842, destroying one-fifth of the entire city and making twenty thousand people homeless, put an end to the dramatist's stay in that city. Campe's house was burnt to the ground. Campe, the publisher gave Hebbel a sufficient sum of

money to enable him to live care free for a few months, at least, and the poet was again seized by the *Wanderlust*. After various plans had been rejected he decided in favor of Copenhagen. There he hoped to obtain a pension, for the purpose of traveling, from King Christian VIII, who had just then ascended the throne. Although at this time a recognized poet and writer, he was still not much better off financially than he was when he returned to Hamburg four years before. At Copenhagen during the first few months the change, as usual with him, was cheering. But as usual, reaction set in and the beginning of the New Year found him as depressed and pessimistic as ever. Here in Copenhagen he became very friendly with Oehlenschläger, and in his house he met the Danish poet, Hans Christian Andersen, eight years Hebbel's senior, yet already in great repute as one of Denmark's first poets. Hebbel was repulsed by his ungainly appearance, and a friendship did not come about. On the other hand the sculptor Thorwaldsen, then about seventy-three years old, attracted Hebbel greatly. Both men had struggled against a hard fate in their early days. Hebbel was still in the midst of that struggle; Thorwaldsen had passed beyond it. Hebbel's new friends finally succeeded in arranging an interview with King Christian. Hebbel asked for a pension for three years to enable him to travel and educate himself for his mission as a poet. Upon old Oehlenschläger's recommendation a pension was granted for two years, and this award together with the fuller insight life had now given him put him in a better mood. He had learned to value and respect the rights of others, always before, because of his great individuality, a difficult task. Above all, he had begun a new drama, and was thinking of still another. His relationship to Elise, too, had entered a new stage, owing to the new meaning that he now gave to it. While away from her his feelings underwent a decided change. His love gained in warmth and gratitude, he now began to realize the great sacrifices she had made for him. Bad as her reputation had been, she had added to it by becoming his mistress. In his mind he now created an ideal of her. It was far from being a true picture. This last glow of love for her was in truth nothing but a prelude to the separation soon to follow. It was decisive for his relation to Elise that, while in Copenhagen with Thorwaldsen, he had learned for the first time the real meaning of the beautiful in life. He had come to see and understand the beautiful in woman; and what opened to him the new idealization of her was ultimately to estrange him from her. Upon his return to Hamburg he became ill and the depressing conditions to which he returned worked havoc with the picture that he had made.

His illness made it impossible for him to start at once for Paris, and during this period he completed the first act of his 'Maria Magdalena,' but

then the work was interrupted and not resumed for some time. Provided with letters to Heine and others given him by Campe, accompanied to the boat by Elise, he started for Paris in September, 1843. A new period of his life began, which was to bring many new conflicts, new experiences, a larger outlook upon life, greater maturity of mind and intellect, but also many new heart burns. The inevitable was to come: his break with Elise and his marriage with Christine Enghaus, who was to set him free from all petty financial worries, enabling him to live solely for his art.

Here in Paris he soon got into the old habit of keeping aloof from people, instead of mixing with them, as he had resolved to do, while in Copenhagen. Hence he soon fell again into a desolate mood. To strengthen this mood he received the news that his little son Max had been hurt seriously by a fall, and soon the news came that little Max had died. The effect of this news upon Hebbel was of so passionate a nature that Bamberg, a friend of Hebbel's, forty years later, wrote that even then he could not give a picture of the man's grief, without thinking of an abyss that opened before him. From Hebbel's diary we can see the feelings to which he now was a prey. Self-reproaches, pity for the mother, which even drove him to propose to Elise to end their illicit love affair by a marriage. He had always opposed the idea of marriage for himself, he could not bear the idea of having to tie himself down, but he now would atone for the wrong done to Elise and her dead child by a marriage. Soon, however, Hebbel saw the utter impossibility of it all. Elise had been ready at once to accept the offer. She was ready to go to Paris when a letter reached her, in which Hebbel pointed out to her that it was not advisable, after all, to do so, since they had not even the necessary traveling expenses, nor the means to start a common household. She now began to doubt the sincerity of Hebbel's grief for their little boy, nor can she be blamed. Yet Hebbel too suffered greatly. There is no doubt that he began to realize, if he had not already done so for some time, that Elise could not follow his feelings nor the flights of his mind. But nobody could expect such a thing from a woman of Elise's type and education. Hebbel's friends, especially his German admirers, like to put the blame on the woman altogether, but Hebbel, although in his way suffering as much from the whole relation, deserves blame. Germans are only too apt to look upon the domestic conditions of their great men with leniency. They allow to genius a freedom which they condemn most bitterly in others. Admitting the fact that the temperament of a genius may be more sensitive, the nervous strain greater than with other mortals, genius has nevertheless the same, if not even greater responsibilities with regard to morality, just on account of the greater mental power given them. Elise, who was just then expecting another

child, reproached Hebbel for his indifference to her. Hebbel, on the other hand, had been jealous of her attentions to their first-born. In judging Hebbel and Elise we must consider both sides. It is true that Elise tormented the poet much about many little immaterial things. As we have mentioned before, she was unable to understand his higher aims, to see life with his eyes and judge men and things from his point of view. Yet she had been good enough for Hebbel in earlier days; Hebbel had accepted her sacrifices both of her own personal self and of her slender earnings. But all this had been at a period when he had been undeveloped, when he had not found himself. Therefore, to a certain extent, neither can be blamed, if only these things are all considered. But the poet ought to have had the strength to bear the consequences, even with a life of domestic unhappiness. No doubt, we should not have works of the same kind, but his genius would have produced great works under any circumstances. They might have been of another nature, but in any case they would have been mature and great. Hebbel had never really promised to marry Elise, he had never deceived her in this respect. As well as he could, while in Paris, he provided for Elise and their little boy, after the latter's birth. But all the detailed attention that Elise began to demand from him while he was traveling in order to develop and mature his talent, was, no doubt, a source of great annoyance. He felt dragged down by it from his heights.

While here in Paris his tragedy, the germs of which had been laid during his Munich sojourn, was finished. This tragedy was 'Maria Magdalena.' It is his most personal work, perhaps, since its very essence — not to speak of personal experiences, which are easily recognizable — is rooted in Hebbel's soul. 'Maria Magdalena' marks also a kind of transition. With it his youthful period ends and his literary productions now reach their manhood. The work belongs to the so-called 'middle-class tragedy,' a type that has been developed greatly in Germany, although its origin is more French and English than German. To this class of drama Hebbel gave a higher value than had been given by any of his predecessors. This is due to the fact that the development of action is more or less an outcome of the temperament of his characters. His characters are psychologically true, the plot itself is an outcome of every-day life, it is even a good picture of history and civilization, a '*Kulturbild*,' as the Germans would call it. The idea intended need not be expressed, and is not, since it expresses itself through the action. In this respect it is metaphysical, since the idea it contains is to be found in life itself, and is its outcome. Even the brutality and its equally brutal logic, as expressed by the scoundrel Leonhard, are truths, which are driven home with truly revolting but very forceful precision, frankness and realism.

It is a work of unusually firm structure, harmony and unity of style. The action is swift, without any side interests. Each event prepares for what is to come. It is modern in coloring and in mood. Both are local. It has often been said that the title is wholly misleading, which is true. Hebbel in letters and in his diary, mentioning the play, speaks of it as 'Clara,' a title which would certainly have been more appropriate; even if not highly original. Why Hebbel changed it to 'Maria Magdalena' has never been clear. It certainly has nothing in common with the Biblical character of the same name. Maria Magdalena may have suggested itself to Hebbel on account of the subject matter of the fallen woman, but since there is nothing of repentance in the tragedy, since the fate of Clara is a wholly different one from that of the Saint, it is no wonder if the title has been condemned. After all, however, this is a slight detail. It cannot take away anything from the greatness and inner truth of the work.

The year the dramatist spent in Paris was on the whole a very quiet one. He formed a few new friendships, some of which were of more or less importance. He met men that were congenial to him. Some of them were distinguished. Heine was kind to the young rising poet whose name gradually became known as a dramatist. He himself said of his stay in Paris: 'In Paris I fared well.' Italy, however, was beckoning to him now, and after his year in the capital of France, he set out for new impressions in the country of his dreams.

Like many another man, he came to Italy with great expectation, filled with pictures of the glory of old Rome. He was disappointed greatly at the beginning. He caught the fever in Rome. Money difficulties embittered his life again, in the midst of a country where everything around him was steeped in beauty. The contrast between the beauty of his surroundings, the misery of his own ill-health, the refusal of a renewal of his pension — he was only granted the necessary sum for his return trip home — prevented full enjoyment of his stay in the country of Art. Elise now began to ask more money from him. Her conduct toward him had changed. 'Since I have been traveling,' he complains, 'you have written and told me nothing but disagreeable things.' Poor Elise! She now insisted that Hebbel should come home and settle down, apply for some professorship and marry her. Everywhere she now bore herself openly as 'Frau Doktor Hebbel.' Italy, which inspired Goethe to his most perfect works, which brought about an artistic revolution in Germany's greatest poet, did not stimulate Hebbel toward new works of any consequence. The influence of Italy upon him came out only at a later time, when he had gained domestic felicity and peace at the cost of Elise's happiness. We have, indeed, some lyrics of this period, characterized by his one cry for 'Beauty.' These lyrics do not

reflect a depressed spirit. In writing them Hebbel threw off, it would seem, all thoughts that could disturb his peace of mind. He finds in them relaxation from the bitterness of his life. But in dramatic productions we have nothing worth recording here.

Hebbel now decided to go to Vienna, just for a very brief stay in order to see this old imperial city. He intended to stay but a few days — he was to stay there for the rest of his life!

In Vienna, Hebbel was unknown, except by a few persons connected with the Burgtheater, then, as now, one of the foremost German stages. When the poet presented himself to the manager of the theater, Count Moritz Dietrichstein was so dismayed by his queer appearance and his clothes — ill-fitting, old-fashioned and shabby — that he gave the order not to let Hebbel come into his aristocratic presence again. Hebbel called also on the great dramatist Grillparzer, who lived his hermit-life in the very heart of the metropolis. Grillparzer received his fellow-poet kindly, but a friendship never sprang up between them. Then he met the woman who was to become his wife. Christine Enghaus, like Hebbel a North German, had, after a youth full of distress and want, succeeded in becoming a well-known actress at the Viennese Burgtheater. Here she met Hebbel, and at once the two people were attracted to each other. This interest was soon followed by love. Hebbel was thirty-three years old, Christine twenty-eight, Elise forty-two. Hebbel realized that he would now have to choose between Elise and Christine, between a life of domestic happiness and one of utmost, unspeakable misery with a woman much older, faded, embittered, mentally inferior, and every way below him. Elise, who always had assured Hebbel of the fact that he was perfectly free at any time to marry whomsoever he pleased, now that it came to this pass raised the most violent objections. Her situation was truly pathetic. Harassed by debts, she had to think of her little son, who grew up without a father. On the other hand Hebbel saw the impossibility of ever being able to provide for Elise and their child, not to speak of the intellectual torture that a life with Elise would now mean for him.

The end of May, 1846, Hebbel and Christine were married. Neither ever repented of this step, although things did not always go smoothly. There were exciting scenes at times, owing to Hebbel's peculiar disposition, to his passionate nature, his fears of poverty that often haunted him, and also to quarrels with Christine's family. But gradually both learned to understand each other, and Christine's gentleness, her womanliness, succeeded in exerting their influence upon a nature embittered by a harsh fate.

Hebbel's works in Vienna were at first of little importance. His 'Trauerspiel in Sizilien' and his 'Julia' are conventional and melodramatic,

and not of sufficient interest to be discussed here. In his lyrics he takes up a new tone, it can be seen plainly that his ideals have undergone a change again. To the great public, however, Hebbel was yet unknown.

When the Revolution of 1848 broke out, the poet took an active part in it and gathered new experiences. The main import of this political movement for Hebbel was the fact that the gates of the Burgtheater were opened for his works now, and in February, 1849, 'Judith' was performed here for the first time.

In Hebbel's next tragedy he again took up the old thread of his first drama. The theme of his 'Herodes und Mariamne' is the same as that contained in 'Judith,' but the conflict this time is brought about by a soul conflict, not as in 'Judith,' by merely physical means, although here, too, the problem of the two sexes hovers in the background. The play is one of the most intensely dramatic tragedies of which the German stage, so rich in that respect, can boast. Yet, the performance, when given in Vienna, with Christine as the heroine, proved a great disappointment to Hebbel and his wife. The public, not used to this new type of dramatic production, did not understand the play, and the work was greatly misjudged, although critics realized at once the greatness of this new work.

Our dramatist had now reached the full maturity of his talent. The works that followed 'Herodes und Mariamne' are masterpieces of dramatic literature. They have the characteristics of the earlier tragedies, but express the ripe powers of a speculative mind. In 'Agnes Bernauer,' Hebbel represents the conflict of the right of the state against the right of the individual, which is sacrificed for the welfare of many, while in 'Gyges und sein Ring,' Hebbel shows the relation of the individual to the world in general and to his narrower world in particular.

In March, 1860, Hebbel's masterpiece, 'Die Nibelungen,' a tragedy in eleven acts, was finished after he had worked at it for five years. It was a hard task to bring this great German epic into the shape of a modern drama, but Hebbel succeeded most marvelously. Here again, as he had done previously with his material taken from ancient or medieval sources, Hebbel creates a human soul-conflict and makes it the motive power of his action, always humanizing his subject matter and lifting it above the mere dramatization of an old legend.

Hebbel's health had never been very good. It began to fail rapidly just when the Burgtheater had begun its preparations for the celebration of his fiftieth birthday. In March he was taken ill with a violent attack of his old foe, rheumatism. His bad health continued all through the year, brightened up somewhat by the many attentions bestowed upon him at the occasion of his fiftieth birthday. Shortly before his death he was

awarded the *Schillerpreis* for his 'Nibelungen.' On December the thirteenth, Hebbel died, he was buried in the Protestant cemetery in Matzleinsdorf, a suburb of Vienna. The greatest simplicity was observed at the funeral, according to his own wishes.

SPRING

BY CHARLES VILDRAC

(Translated from the French by Sasha Best)

A woman is walking on the road,
And tenderly pushing before her
An old and creaking child's carriage.

All around her the young country-side,
The new April country-side
Is smiling at the adolescent sun.

And because all to-day is young and tender,
This woman, too, is very young to-day
And more tender even than the green on the trees,
Her heart is feeble and trembling
Like that of a convalescent.

And with those young eyes of hers,
That she has found again this April morn,
She gazes at all about her with delight,
In thus walking.

Gazing before her
She sees all the small things that are on the road:
The gravel still wet with March's rains,
Where her steps are making a crunching noise that she loves;
The green leaflets, the tiny birds,
The arid *paysage* in miniature,
Such as she sees it from her height,
And which is the road before her.

The two ditches running parallel on either side,
The small carriage that she is pushing,
And the blossoms still in their green coverings,

That the wind brushing against them shakes from the trees,
 And here and there a miniature grass-plot,
 Like an oasis.

At all these is she gazing
 While with rapid steps she is onward treading
 And living over again
 A happy and familiar past.
 Then also sees she the road far ahead of her,
 With its poplars all alive with tender young green —

She sees the orchards in their gala display,
 And the angelic smile of the hedges
 And the languorous sky
 Under which high branches seem transported with joy.

And up she soars, soars to the very heart of the azure,
 And takes flight with the blissful skylarks,
 And is dazzled and blinded, and sinks with them.

And she gazes at her little child
 Lying there on its back and in wonder lost
 At seeing the sun shine through its fingers.

And at times she stops the rickety carriage,
 To bend over the little one,
 To look at it, and to cover its tiny face with kisses.

A woman is walking on the road,
 A poor woman who surely has shed many tears.
 But her eyes of to-day are those of one re-awakened,
 Of one who has never wept.
 A poor woman who has lost
 All the other children that have been hers,
 But who has the one child before her,
 The one that still is hers and living.

When she passes through villages,
 Drunk with the lilacs and the sunlight,
 She laughs at the old walls, and begins to sing
 An air that is gay as a holiday. . . .

A woman is walking on the road,
 A woman and her new-born child
 Are walking on into the summer ahead.

THOSE THERE ARE—

BY CHARLES VILDRAC

(Translated from the French by Sasha Best)

Those there are who rush through mazes
Of narrow, crowded streets,
To barter under unclean roofs
Their beautiful days for filthy bread.

And those there are who grouped together,
Madly screaming and gesticulating,
And jostling one another like children,
Organize a party.

And some there are behind curtains,
Who arrange their lives,
Who arrange their lives like so many beds to make,
And who write their little history,
And who breathe their touching credo,
Back of the curtains —

And those there are who clamor loudly
From galleries, making great hue and cry,
And those there are who toll the large tocsin,
And those there are in silent corners
Bemoaning their so uncommon misfortune!
And those there are who wait.
And those there are who —

And here am I among all these,
A little of this, a little of that,
Here am I,
My dream despairingly stretched towards distant seas,
And towards a life! —

A life out in the winds, with sails all aflutter,
Flesh, spirit, the heart, the eyes — be it
in ecstasy, be it in tears,—
Ah yes, furiously, the wind furiously blowing:

A life that has nothing in common with death. . . .

THREE SONGS FROM THE GAELIC

BY JOHN J. SAVAGE

I. THE MAKING OF MAN

(From the Ancient Irish)

The fair head of Adam, a saying glad,
From the sunny-pure earth of high Garad;
The breast ('tis a truth) from the beautiful land
Arabian with the lure of gold sand;
His middle from the country of rich Liban,
His feet from the fabled Agorian,
His blood from the mist o' the riotous air,
And still he stood humid and dumb-blind there,
For he knew not yet his Beginning and End,
And knowing,— he would that Knowledge amend.

II. THE WANDERER'S SONG

(From the Original in Hardiman's Collection)

For a year through Erin round I trudged it,
Then turned the road to Ballymote;
The spirit within me, something nudged it,
And I heard from the cowherd's throat:
Come! Come, aroon O!
Come, aroon O! I'm calling you.
Come! Come, aroon O!
And take your renown as the fire burns down.

Last night I sat in a farmer's kitchen,
Whose bacon and bread I'll surely miss:
There were three maids there and they stitchin'. —
When himself was away, I stole a kiss.
Come! Come, aroon O!

Come, aroon O! I'm calling you.
Come! Come, aroon O!
And take your renown as the fire burns down.

III. THE MAID O' THE RUSHES

(From the Original in Hardiman's Collection)

One morning and I lonesome
I arose and went to Clare,
Proudly my hunting-dog with me,
And gaily — a devil-may-care.
Who should I meet but a maid
Of bright locks, lovely and sweet;
A bundle of rushes with her,
Their blossomy branches a treat.

O little maid o' the rushes,
Would you leave your bundle here
And come with me and me only
Walking the greenwood near?
Priest will not see nor hear us,
And nobody's in the bush,
Till language comes to the blackbird
And speech to the misslethrush.

O little maid o' the rushes,
Be calm and at your ease;
No sense in looking haughty,
You can come or not as you please.
If I scatter your share of rushes,
Sure Nature will grow some more,—
And then I'll cut you a bundle,
And bring up two to your door.

REST THEE, REST THEE, IN THY APRIL BED

In Memoriam, A. O'N. Obiit March 31, 1911.

BY WILLIAM STANLEY BRAITHWAITE

Rest thee, rest thee, in thy April bed,
While Spring comes overhead,
Spring that to us brings poignancy and pain,
To thee the endless gain
Of that undimmed and everlasting grace
Thy Paradisal face
Makes brighter in the fields beyond our sorrow,
Shadowing our tomorrow.
Forgive us thou, if our too saddened speech
Lifts but to beseech
What thy too gracious strength
All thy life's length
Forebore to question, nobly reconciled
In nature sweet and mild
To follow, lured by some familiar sign,
Promptings of the Divine.
Let our poor grief be strong as earth may render,
We must but think— so tender
God greets thee beyond our weakness,
And glorifies thy meekness—
That where thou art we see thee
With kindling memory
In unforgetably gracious guise
Cherished of our mortal eyes,
In which affection immortally binds
To heaven our hearts and minds.
April shall come again, but never thou
With gladdening Spring avow
The beauty of the flowers, the green grass;
Thy feet shall pass
No more to that retreat which knew
Thy Presence calm as dew,

Gentle as peace, and delicate
In service. . . . No more we wait,
But bid you, bid you, our most gracious friend,
Rest to the end,
Among the tender April flowers,
And thoughts of ours,
Till it so please His will who summoned you
To call us too ——
And we bring with us hoarded by the years,
Not griefs nor tears ——
But all the joys you gave us, knowing you,
Womanly true!

CHINTAMINI

A Symbolic Drama

BY GIRISH C. GHOSE

*(A Translation and Adaptation from the Hindu
by Dhan Gopal Mukerji and Mary Carolyn Davies)**

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ

BILLWAMANGAL, a young Brahmin.

CHINTAMINI, his mistress.

PUNDIT, or man of wisdom, mendicant.

DISCIPLE OF PUNDIT.

With **CHINTAMINI**: blind man, lame man, poor woman, four ragged and starving children.

HOUSEHOLDER.

HOUSEHOLDER'S WIFE.

THREE HERMITS.

DRUNKEN MAN.

SHEPHERD, attendant of Billwamangal.

THE "VISION."

ACT I

SCENE I

(To the left, outer door of house. In the foreground, front yard of the house. The house has thatched roof, white walls. Eaves overhang wall. From one of the projecting beams hangs a dead black snake, looking like a thick black rope. There is an open space between roof and wall, passage enough for a man to creep in. At back of stage the Ganges is visible, dark and stormy. Flashes of

*This drama is mystical and symbolic, some of the meanings being entirely Hindu, i. e., the snake mistaken for a rope. The figure has been used many times in the Upanishads, Gita and the other scriptures. Here it implies, "Love is blind when it is guided by passion." As to the word, "Unknowable," which the Pundit flings at Billwamangal, this "Unknowable" is used in the Upanishads in many senses — one being, God is unknowable to the senses but not to the soul. The author here also makes fun of Herbert Spencer's chapter on the Unknowable in his "Synthetic Philosophy."

Mr. Ghose, from whose drama this is taken, died at Calcutta, November 11, at the age of sixty-two, leaving in print ninety-five plays and playlets. He was the father of the Bengali stage. Ghose is the "Hindu Shakespeare."

The enclosed drama is almost wholly the work of the young Bengali poet, Dhan Mukerji, my own share being slight. — MARY CAROLYN DAVIES.

I wish to acknowledge here my obligations to Miss Carolyn Davies for her kind assistance and suggestions in preparing this English version of Chintamini. — DHAN GOPAL MUKERJI.

lightning, low rumble of thunder throughout the scene. Wash of waves also audible.)

(Curtain rises on empty stage, all is still except for storm. Suddenly voices are heard from within the house. BILLWAMANGAL and CHINTAMINI come out through the door. She has a lamp in her hand. His clothes and hair are wet and dripping. She has long, black curls, loosely falling on her back. Her large, dark eyes are remarkable. She wears silk "saree.")

Billwamangal.— Come, see! Here is the rope you hung for me. That is how I came to you.

Chintamini (mystified).— But I tell you I hung no rope. Why should I? I knew you would not come to-night because of your father's funeral. Does not the law forbid it? Are you not afraid of God?

Billwamangal (passionately).— God,— I have no God but you —

Chintamini.— But the funeral rites?

Billwamangal.— What did I care for that? It is only you I think of, you, you, you,— Chintamini. (Goes toward her, arms outstretched.)

Chintamini (shrieking, as she sees how wet and disheveled he is).— What — you are dripping,— and there is a smell of dead things about you. You have swum the river? (Wonder in her tones, turns and looks at dark river, shudders.) A night like this. (Waves her arm toward the river, gesture of amazement.) How did you do it?

Billwamangal (contemptuously).— The river? I swam it. Why not? You were here. I swam for more than two hours. Had it not been for the log that I clung to, I would be at the bottom of the river by this time.

Chintamini (as he sways with exhaustion).— You are faint. You must rest.

Billwamangal.— I want no rest. Only you. Come to 'me, Chintamini. (Approaches her.)

Chintamini (distracting his attention).— But why do you not tell me how you got into the room; the door was locked?

Billwamangal.— Locked? Love knows no lock. (Looks at the door.) If it were iron I would break it open to come to you. (With sudden revulsion of feeling.) How I love that door because it keeps my treasure secure. (Goes to the door and kisses it.)

Chintamini.— Be reasonable. I locked the door because I did not suppose you would come. (As BILLWAMANGAL walks past looking at the wall.) What are you looking for?

Billwamangal (dazedly looking at the hanging snake).— I thought it was a rope.

Chintamini.— What — (Looks at him and then at snake.) Oh, what is that? (Draws away in fear.)

Billwamangal.— Oh, Father! Do not fear it. It is dead.

Chintamini (in horror).— A dead snake — why?

Billwamangal.— Don't you see? How blind love is! I scaled the wall with that rope, that black rope whose sting would have me lie here — dead. In the morning you would have found me dead at your door. You see how I love you. Look at me. With those beautiful large eyes. (*Gazing at her face adoringly.*)

Chintamini (steps closer to the house, holds lamp near the snake).—

Billwa, you are insane. In the dark of night, when the clouds dart down the rain like arrows. The swollen river — the surf in frenzy. How could you do this? And what a sin! Seeking the couch of your mistress on the night of your father's funeral. Have you no fear of sin?

Billwamangal (with his eyes fixed on her).— Sin, there is no sin in that face. Those lips with each kiss will wipe away the sins of ages from my mouth. Come,— let me kiss you.

Chintamini (recoiling).— No — I do not believe you. Did you go home at all? Did you perform the ceremonies? Are you not afraid of what — awaits those who neglect the funeral of a father?

Billwamangal.— Father? What is a father? What is anything beside you? When the priest was chanting his Montra, I was hearing the melody of your voice. He asked me to recall my father's face. Yours beamed in the mist of the smoke. In the perfume of the incense I felt your breath. I tried to say many things, but my lips whispered, Chintamini. Come to me Chintamini, come to me Chintamini, do not talk of the dead. The only thing about them is that they remain dead. I don't want them to come to life for that will come between you and me. Let us go in. I am cold. (*Comes closer to her.*)

Chintamini.— There is the smell of dead things clinging to your clothes. No, I will not go in. (*With sudden whimsical gesture.*) I want to see your log that helped you to swim to me.

Billwamangal.— It may be another snake.

Chintamini.— I want to see it just the same.

Billwamangal.— Can't you wait till morning?

Chintamini (petulantly).— I want to see the piece of wood.

(*BILLWAMANGAL shrugs his shoulders and gives in, and they walk toward the river bank, she still holding the light.*)

SCENE II

(*At river bank; at a distance, to the left, lies a dead body.*)

Chintamini.— Where is it?

Billwamangal.— I do not remember where I left it. Let us go back now; we will come in the morning.

Chintamini.— But that horrible smell that hangs about you! It must have been something other than wood.

Billwamangal.— If it is, what difference does it make? I love you. Isn't that snake testimony enough? I might have clung to a crocodile when I swam. Oh, Chintamini, come home. I know it is a log.

Chintamini.— I will not go back. You are insane. Look! See if you can find the place where you came out of the water.

Billwamangal (bending with her).— It is hard to tell. The rain has washed away the footprints. Oh! Here is one. Let us follow it.

Chintamini.— There is another! (*They go nearer the hidden body on the left.*)

Chintamini (starting).— You smell so horrible. (*The light falls on the rotting corpse; she shrieks.*) 'Dead!' (*Drops the lamp.*)

Billwamangal (catches lamp as it strikes ground, horror-stricken as light falls on corpse).— Oh!

Chintamini (in awed voice).— Billwa, you clung to a corpse!

Billwamangal.— How I love you!

Chintamini.— You are insane. You have no abhorrence of dead things.

Billwamangal.— Even death brings me to you! Chintamini, how I love, love you! (*Comes near her.*)

Chintamini.— Don't touch me! (*The lamplight falling on her face. shows her pale and more attractive than before.*)

Billwamangal (gazing at her face. As he speaks she stays in deep thought).
— How beautiful!

Chintamini.— If you gave this love to God instead of to a harlot; what could you not become? A snake, a corpse, only to kiss a girl's painted lips.

Billwamangal.— All my gods are in your face. All my passions, all my emotions are in your eyes, Chintamini! Your eyes charm my heart from me.

Chintamini.— Don't talk to me. Oh, leave me!

Billwamangal.— What are you saying, Lila? Can a man leave his soul? Only Death can take it away from our body. And (*pointing to corpse*) I have conquered Death.

Chintamini.— Billwamana, you are a god.

Billwamangal.— Your slave. For you I will be a god. My wealth, my name, my fame, all I have has been given up for you. When other men would have been sorrowing for a dead parent, I was rejoicing over your

living beauty. Beauty is eternal. Chintamini, you shall live, live for ages, and each age I will be with you! Chintamini (*draws closer to her*)

Chintamini (withdrawing).— I am beautiful. But how long will that last? A few more years. All these black curls will be white; this forehead will be furrowed; these brows, shaped like bows whence love hurls his arrows, will droop, and (*choking with her emotion*) these eyes, what will they be? Dim, hollow —

Billwamangal.— Don't! I love you. You must remain young.

Chintamini (with a sardonic laugh).— Young to satisfy your lust. Your love will not let me grow old. Then I must die. What then?

Billwamangal.— No. (*Looks at corpse.*) Yes.

Chintamini.— Death will take me. Will my memory then stay with you? No, you will seek out another Chintamini.

Billwamangal.— You are my only Chintamini!

Chintamini.— Death, Billwamana —

Billwamangal.— Death — what is death!

Chintamini.— What have we done that can make us scorn death? Have we any noble work that would have to be completed after we die? Is there one aspiration that will go beyond the funeral pyre? Our life! How hollow! It will end with death! (*Throws up her arms despairingly.*) It cannot go beyond.

Billwamangal.— My God, stop —

Chintamini.— I will not stop. God, yes, is n't he watching us? Billwa, think! Is n't it written in his book that he who seeks his mistress' couch on the night of the funeral ceremony of his parent, for him heaven will hold no room? How we are throwing away our youth! Billwa, you are a Brahmin —

Billwamangal.— Don't. I am not a Brahmin. The day I saw you I gave up my caste and creed. All that I know, Chintamini, is that I am yours!

Chintamini.— You will have to know much more. When you see God what will you say to him?

Billwamangal.— I will say to Him, that you are my God! While I have you, I don't want God! (*Tries to embrace her.*)

Chintamini (with such awed majesty that his arms drop).— I — keeping you from God! Billwa, love God as you love me. Why not? You can do it. Look (*points at the snake*), you can do the impossible. Go, do that for God! He is the true Chintamini. Look for Him! (*Gesture.*)

Billwamangal.— You are my only Chintamini!

Chintamini (paying no attention to him).— Look!

Billwamangal.— I will but look at you.

Chintamini (pointing to corpse).— That is the end of such lives as ours. *(They look at it silently. Even BILLWAMANGAL is awed for a moment.)*

Chintamini.— Look to God! *(Gesturing upward again.)*

Billwamangal (forgetting all but her beauty).— How fair you are, Chintamini!

Chintamini (stepping back).— Not me, but God alone!

Billwamangal.— All my God is in your face!

Chintamini (dashing the lamp to the ground from his hand; nothing can be seen in the dark).— God alone!

(There is a moment's silence. Then, with a sob, CHINTAMINI runs back to her house, goes in and shuts the door.)

Billwamangal (turning quickly round as he hears the door shut).— Chintamini! *(In heartbroken tones.)* Chintamini! *(Takes a few steps toward the house, realizes the futility of such an attempt, comes back to center of the stage, still in darkness.)* Dark clouds follow dark clouds. What darkness! I cannot see far or near. Come back, Chintamini! *(Lightning and thunder.)* Why does not lightening strike me? Roar, thunder, I fear you not! Waves, rise, I care not. Life — what is life — without Chintamini? I will never see her again! How can I find her? Chintamini! *(Waits and listens.)* Chintamini! *(Pale glimpse of dawn, shows corpse and BILLWAMANGAL. He is standing in an attitude of despair. He sees corpse, shudders, turns to the dawn.)* Gone — mother, father, one by one, have floated on the stormy breast of the Ganges. None to call mine. Who is mine? Yet, am I alone? *(Looks up at the dawn, raises hands to it.)* From birth, who has been mine? I seem to know someone! Who is he? Is he that Chintamini, the Most High? Where is he? *(Goes toward the right almost in a spell.)* Where is the light that will lead me to him?

CURTAIN

ACT II

SCENE I

(A street paved with red macadam, like other Indian towns. In the background is a row of white houses with black iron-plated doors.)

(The crimson rays of the setting sun fall along the street; the purple shadows of the white houses slightly touch the pavement. People are passing — a stray beggar leaning on his stick; a girl barefoot, with silver anklets and pale yellow face. Two men enter. One old and the other young. The old man is a 'pundit,' and the young man is his disciple. The PUNDIT wears a white

tunic, yellow toga; the young man wears a plain white cotton garment. They talk a little.)

(Enter BILLWAMANGAL dressed in the yellow tunic of a mendicant. He listens to them attentively; he leans on his staff.)

Pundit.— What do you wish, my son?

Billwamangal.— I have heard of your fame,— I have come to learn wisdom of you.

Pundit.— What are you seeking, my son?

Billwamangal.— I am looking for Chintamini.

Pundit.— Oh, great man, I make my obeisance to you. Blessed art thou, seeker after truth!

Billwamangal.— I am a humble pilgrim looking for the light.

Disciple.— I am glad to see your humility, my friend. Our master possesses all the wisdom of the world; he will impart all the knowledge you want.

Pundit (looking vaguely at BILLWAMANGAL, then in the direction of the sunset).— Do you see the hermits bathing in the Ganges? *(Turning to DISCIPLE.)* Would n't you like to lead an existence like that? They are purifying their bodies and their souls in the holy waters; for the evening worship is at hand. Those great souls know too well that to cling to passion, love and emotion is to cling to a dream. They have realized that the soul is the only reality. Having realized, they are spending each day of this brief existence in search of truth. Are n't they blessed?

Disciple.— I know that, master. They inspire me for the highest, it is true. But their lives do not fascinate me.

Billwamangal.— And I who live their life know it is hollow.

Disciple.— There is an uncouthness about it. *(Looking to the right.)* Look how beautiful the sunset is. The slanting rays, what magnificent mesh work they have wrought on the river. Look at the birds,— they are soaring high in the air, then they fly for their nests. *(To BILLWAMANGAL.)* Do you not like a life like that? Bird-life is what existence ought to be.

Pundit.— Ah, poor mortal, you see not the higher charms that are more enchanting than this mortal existence?

Billwamangal.— What is the higher charm? How do you know of it?

Pundit.— You remind me of what I learned once at my master's feet. It was a story about a certain righteous man. His life was spotless. He was famed to have possessed wisdom. Once the God of death came to him and took him to pay a visit to a saint. After they had reached the river bank they found a tall man, covered with long white hair, standing there and looking at the sun. At his feet lay a pile of such white hair, which he was supposed to have shed in course of time. At the arrival of the

God of death, he said, 'Why are you here? The time of your arrival is not yet at hand.' Death asked when the hour should come. The saint replied, 'Ere long,—I have only a few million more hairs left—each of which I will shed in every ten years. When I shall have shed the last one, that will be the signal of your coming. Please don't disturb me now. I must apply this brief period to work out my salvation.' The God of death then asked him a question — that is — What is the most astonishing thing in life? The saint replied, 'From day to day, so many are dying, yet, those that live are contented and happy as if they did not have to die.' My son, this story made me realize my ignorance.

Disciple (to BILLWAMANGAL).— What do you think of it?

Billwamangal.— That tells me nothing of Chintamini.

Disciple.— The master's wisdom will tell you all that you want to know, for he knows everything.

Pundit.— No, I know very little. I am only one of those who have been able to count a few waves of the ocean of wisdom.

Billwamangal.— I am pleased to hear your remarks, sir. But have you been able to know where Chintamini is?

Pundit.— Yes. No — I do not know how to answer your question. My knowledge of him is like this evening hour. The sky yonder is illumined with the fragments of light that are still lingering after the sun. Above from the hollow of the blue, peers a single star. I feel like saying that I know the star for I see it, yet, that ever increasing darkness that is rising from the darker surface of the river makes me say, 'Perhaps it is all dark.' I yet seem to know — though I don't feel so, yes — my knowledge is like this evening hour. Light here, dark there, day here, night there. Perhaps it is all a dream.

Billwamangal.— Then you have n't found it yet? Chintamini could surely be seen, if seen could be expressed without difficulty.

Disciple.— You speak aright, venerable stranger. But you should bear in mind that God cannot be known in a short time, for he is the whole universe.

Pundit.— He is unknowable.

Billwamangal.— Words, words, words, words.

Disciple.— Word is God.

Billwamangal.— No, God is love.

Pundit (bell rings at a distance; restrains the DISCIPLE, who was trying to answer BILLWAMANGAL).— Come, let us go to the evening worship. The hour has struck. (*Exit.*)

Billwamangal.— You vain beings, how could you know of Chintamini? I know — I possessed Chintamini once. (*A woman enters, she goes to the*

door of the first house from the right. Her anklets jingle. She enters. The door closes behind her. BILLWAMANGAL observing her.) How she resembles Chintamini! She has her eyes. Ah, God, you are merciful at last. (Goes slowly toward the door.

SCENE II

(Setting same as Scene I. BILLWAMANGAL'S staff leaning on the wall of the house. The street is darker and deserted. Enter CHINTAMINI leading a blind man by the hand. They are followed by two ragged children, behind them another woman, holding a child in her arms.)

Chintamini (stopping).— Let us rest here for a few minutes.

Blind man (feeling the ground with his hands).— I am so tired. (Sits down.) How far from here is the place, Mother Chintamini?

Chintamini (looking at the other woman, who makes the two children sit by her, and tries to put the baby to sleep).— How far is it, sister?

The woman.— Not very far. About half an hour's journey from here. (Looking at the sky.) It is the new moon. Look at the yellow horns of the crescent.

(Ring of gong from a distance.)

The woman (to CHINTAMINI).— They have commenced the evening worship.

Chintamini.— Ah, God, how long should we have to repent?

Other woman.— Please, Chintamini, don't grow sad. You do not know yet what suffering is. You were born rich. Had many luxuries,— but look at these who are born poor. (Pointing at the children.) You had wealth, you had love. To these even mother's love has been denied.

Chintamini (aside).— Ah, what a blessing we had no child.

Blind Man.— Do you know how I lost my eyes, it was mid-summer, about thirty years ago — I was very young then. I was passing through the town, Bajara, on my way to Benares. At an inn in Bajara, one night, as I lay on my back staring at the dark roof, something fell into my eyes.

Chintamini.— Oh — do not say any more. Always some misfortune befalls each one of us. Life without misfortune is impossible. Look at the setting crescent.

Blind man.— I cannot see. Is it red?

Other woman.— Chintamini! (Who had hid her face in her hands.) One of the boys has fallen asleep. It is getting dark. Let us go before the other one gets sleepy.

Chintamini.— Shall I wake him up?

Other woman.— No, carry him in your arms.

Blind man.— But who will lead me in the dark?

(*A light is lighted on the door-post of the house, on whose wall the staff is leaning. The gong sounds again.*)

Chintamini.— Let us go — they are ringing.

Other woman (looking at the staff leaning against the wall).— There is a staff. God is always with us. Brother, could n't you lean on that staff and walk behind us?

Blind man.— Yes, I will. Give it to me. Is it very, very dark now? They are ringing.

Other woman (taking the staff in her hand, looking at it).— Oh, Chintamini, who has written your name on it? This must be a hermit's staff. He has written God's name on it. For that is his only support. Wherever we go we find your name. How kind God is — He is always with us.

Chintamini (looking at the staff, aside).— He is here, — Billwa, where are you? (*Aloud.*) Let us go, somebody may come.

Other woman.— What is that to us? We are beggars. (*Hands staff to blind man.*) Come on brother, let us go. (*Exit. Gong rings.*)

Blind man (rising).— They ring, is it for the last time?

SCENE III

(*In a room inside the house.*)

(*BILLWAMANGAL seated on the floor with the householder, the latter's wife making a bed in the inner room, to the right.*)

Householder.— Have you visited Juggernaut, too?

Billwamangal.— Yes, I was there for a week.

Householder.— Is it a very beautiful place?

Billwamangal.— The city of the protector of the world is not only beautiful but full of love, too. Love rules supreme in Juggernaut. None goes hungry in that city. One and all, from the hermit to the householder, each has plenty to eat. Fasting, too, is prohibited there. People believe that in the city of the supreme protector, starvation of any kind should remain unknown. There they feed everyone — because they love one another.

Householder.— They have the sea there, I hear. How does the sea look? I have never seen it.

Billwamangal (paying very little attention).— At evening, like this, you go to the beach, you hear the roar of waves wax louder. The sea looks dark blue. The stars rise up from the abyss one by one; the lights carried by the incoming pilgrims from afar look like so many stars. About you

sitting on the beach are hundreds at their evening meal. It is all love and harmony there. It is the city of Chintamini.

(Noise outside.)

Householder.— Excuse me for a moment. *(Exit to the left.)*

Billwamangal *(peeps at the inner room at the right, aside).*— How ——
(As he hears the approaching footsteps, collects himself.)

Householder *(entering).*— Some beggars passed by.

Billwamangal.— Did n't you ask them in?

Householder.— Yes, but they had already found shelter somewhere else.

Billwamangal.— This is a generous town.

Householder.— Yes, we are not very poor, by the grace of God.

(Gong rings.)

Billwamangal.— Is it late now? They are ringing — is it for the last time?

Householder.— No, this is the last but one.

Billwamangal.— Does it ring like this always?

Householder.— Yes, it tells people how time passes.

Billwamangal.— Do you wish me to do anything for you when I arrive in Benares?

Householder.— Yes, please pray to Biawanath to give us a child.

Billwamangal.— Anything else?

Householder.— No, nothing else.

Billwamangal.— I must sleep now.

Householder.— I will show you where. Do you desire anything else? Everything is at your disposal.

Billwamangal.— Send your wife to me to-night.

Householder *(staggering).*— Such a humor for a hermit!

Billwamangal.— Observe the rule of hospitality. Do what I bid you.

Householder.— If she consents. *(Exit.)*

Billwamangal.— You blinded fool. Can you not see? I am not a saint. There are no saints. What eyes she has! They are so large, so dark — dark like the darkest night. She is fairer than Chintamini. Eh, where is she? At the bottom of the Ganges! Where is she? Dead? For me — she died. Her eyes are there searching for me, Chintamini. *(Gong rings.)* Who rings, wrings my heart away? Chintamini, Chintamini, my love, my soul; I have sinned, sinned against you. Where are you, Chintamini? Forgive. *(Somebody knocks.)* Come in. *(Enter HOUSEHOLDER'S wife.)*

She.— My lord's orders are to obey you to-night as I obey him.

Billwamangal *(as if dazed).*— Bring me a couple of needles.

She *(timidly).*— They may be here. *(She goes into the inner room, looks in the box under the bedstead.)*

Billwamangal.— What's your name?

She (timidly).— Sarala. (*She comes out and hands him the needles.*)

Billwamangal.— Sarala, go fetch your husband here. (*She goes out.*)

(*BILLWAMANGAL turns his back to the audience. Enter HOUSEHOLDER, followed by WIFE.*)

Householder.— What more do you want? Shelter, food, bed, and even honor I have given you. What else do you want?

Billwamangal (groans, turns round, his eyes bleeding).— My eyes, where are they now? They sinned against Chintamini. How dark it is now!

(*HOUSEHOLDER and WIFE give out a shriek.*)

Billwamangal.— Don't cry. Sin must be paid with sacrifice. I am punished. My eyes, look now! Can you see her face? Mother Sarala, my mother, give your hand.

(*SARALA, weeping, goes forward and gives her hand.*)

Billwamangal.— Do not weep. Shed tears of joy. You have done me the greatest favor of life. Your needles — they are my saviors. My mother, forgive your son. Henceforth I will go from door to door and beg my living. My feet will be bruised. And my blind eyes look to heaven and cry to Chintamini for light. Don't cry, my mother, your eyes are not to shed tears for a sinner like me. Shed tears of joy, for you have saved me. Let your eyes be two untarnished mirrors of virtue and love for the good to look in. Where are you, my son? Give me your hand.

(*HOUSEHOLDER, bewildered, takes his other hand in his.*)

Billwamangal.— You, too, must forgive me. I am always your grateful slave. It is at your house I realized what a sinner I am. Come, put me on the street. There I will find my way to Chintamini. (*They move out slowly.*) Ah, Chintamini, Chintamini!

(*The curtain goes down on the second act before they go off the stage.*)

ACT III

(*A street. CHINTAMINI, a blind man, a lame man and three or four children seated on the ground. They are all talking. CHINTAMINI is distributing some food.*)

(*Time: Afternoon. Enter three hermits in yellow.*)

First hermit.— How painful a spectacle. Famine is raging everywhere. There are so many hungry and thirsty. Their suffering is as inconceivable as their number. What horror. I wonder what it means,— particularly in a city like this, where people are so generous.

Second hermit.— This is the punishment for sins committed in the past.

Who can tell how mysteriously the law works. Who knows, maybe you and I in some previous life gave no alms to the beggar, nor rendered help to the helpless. Probably we gave no shelter, food, nor drink to the homeless, hungry and thirsty. All those accumulated evils are reaping their harvest now.

First hermit.— Who can tell? You, perhaps, are right. This world is heaven and hell as we deserve it. Yet — why should they, all these human beings, suffer, all at the same time?

Third hermit (he is young looking).— It might be the will of him who created them, and —

(Enter a drunken man from the left. He presses his back close to the background, that is, the wall of the house, until he reaches the middle of the stage. Then looks vaguely at hermits).

Three hermits (eying him).— What are you doing there?

Drunken man (speechless).

First hermit.— What are you?

Third hermit.— Who are you?

(Hermits come nearer to the right, almost where the beggars are eating.)

Drunken man.— You need not come near, don't touch me. I am a picture drawn on the wall. *(The beggar smiles and wonders.)*

Third hermit.— What idiocy?

Second hermit.— He is drunk. Leave him alone.

Drunken man.— Sure, you cannot get me off. I am made of ink. *(The beggars laugh.)*

Third hermit.— Are you not ashamed?

Drunken man.— I am not lazy like you.

First hermit.— You know, my son, people are dying of hunger while you are wasting your money on drink.

Drunken man.— That makes no difference. They eat, I drink. Man has got to do something. Especially when wine makes one forget hunger.

Second hermit.— But you must not drink at such a time as this.

Drunken man.— Why must I not? When I see stars from hunger, and I can hardly stand up, should I not take a little wine if I can get it? *(Looking to the left.)* There he comes. I am off. *(Exit.)*

(Enter shepherd with a bundle.)

First hermit (stopping him).— What have you got, my son?

Shepherd (timidly).— Food.

Chintamini.— Won't you give us some?

Shepherd.— No, my man has not eaten anything these two days.

First hermit (to shepherd).— Wait a minute, my son. *(To CHINTAMINI.)* My daughter, may I ask you what you have been giving them?

Chintamini.— My lord, these children, these children have been starving for about a week. It was so little.

(The hermits wonder.)

Blind man.— For three days I have n't eaten anything. Mother, is there anything left?

Hermits.— Shepherd, give them some. We will bring some to you very soon. If you wait here till we come back, you will get what you have given away.

(Shepherd hesitates.)

Blind man.— *(Striking his staff thrice on the ground).*— Ah, God, ah, God, why was I given this existence?

(Shepherd gently gives the bundle to CHINTAMINI. She distributes the contents of the bundle to her companions.)

Second hermit (to his comrades).— But growth and death are the three laws of life. We travel from birth to death, not knowing what awaits us at the end.

First hermit.— Suffering and ignorance are the soil where grows the plant of life. Destiny is the axe that hews it, in time.

Third hermit.— Creation, preservation and destruction are the eternal laws of existence.

Chintamini (coming nearer them).— My lords are you going to bring some more food?

Shepherd (to first hermit).— My man has been waiting all day long. Please give me something to bring to him.

First hermit (to his comrades).— Let us fetch what we can get. *(To CHINTAMINI and Shepherd.)* We will do our best, our children. Wait here for us. *(Exit.)*

Blind man.— Who is coming?

Lame man.— I have been fasting I know not how long. Give me some grass.

(The deep, crimson blue from the left betokens the sunset.)

Shepherd.— He is waiting for me, and crying —

From a distance, drawing nearer, a voice.— Chintamini!

(Enter BILLWAMANGAL, leaning on his staff, feeling his way with it.)

Shepherd.— Oh, brother, I was coming to you. Why do you come out here?

Billwamangal.— I feel a presence, somebody calls me. What a pain,— Who is here — is anyone weeping? Shepherd, brother, forgive me. Go back to your flock. They are bleating in hunger. Please go. See! Oh —

Shepherd.— I will go. But I will come back soon. Don't go away anywhere. Wait here for me. *(Exit.)*

Billwamangal.— How happy he is. Each day he — Ah, day! It is dark, so dark, minute for minute, score for score. It is darker and darker and desolate. There is no day for the blind. Somebody is near. Chintamini —

(CHINTAMINI signs to her people to draw aside and keep silent.)

Billwamangal (touching the lame man).— Who are you?

Lame man.— I am a lame man.

Billwamangal.— Why are you sitting here?

Lame man.— The lame always sit.

Billwamangal.— Can't you walk at all?

Lame man.— I can if I have my crutches.

Billwamangal.— You can see, too. You walk, you see — what a blessing. Ah, Chintamini.

A beggar child.— Mother!

Billwamangal.— Mother! How sweet. When did I call, mother? How long is it since these eyes had vision, and I looked at her face full of affection. Oh, mother! Holding her hand I used to stand on the bank of the Ganges and watch the rising sun. How the golden God rose from the purifying bath in the Holy Water, and coursed up the sky, higher and higher. What joys He gave me. Now He, too, is merciless. The sun is so hot here. It must be a very red sun. It is so warm. (To CHINTAMINI.) Where are you? Each day leaves me feebler and fainter. These legs can hardly support this body. Shall I find you at all — at all in this life? Shall I see you at all?

(CHINTAMINI struggles hard to restrain herself.)

Blind man.— Mother, whence is that cool light?

Billwamangal.— How many dark days have been spent in this vain search. Who can tell? I will not see you again. Ah, my eyes. Ah, my eyes. They sinned against you. (Strikes his forehead.) Oh, fate — Chintamini. Can you not see from above? I sinned. But I was ignorant. No pardon for such a sin?

Lame man.— What do you want?

Billwamangal (not heeding).— Oh, Chintamini, come to me, lead me on. Don't leave me to the sun and the wind.

Lame man.— Who are you?

Billwamangal.— I am Billwamangal, the sinner. Have you ever heard that name? You have eyes. Have you seen Chintamini?

Lame man.— What is she? Why do you want her?

Billwamangal.— You can ask her about me. Tell her how her Billwa died of hunger. No, no, do not. I do not want her. Tell her nothing. I want him, the ruler, the supreme Chintamini. Where is he? Where

is the light that will take me to him? (*A pause as he turns to the right. The moonlight, with distinct three colors: white, blue and yellow, falls on his face, bathes him in its radiance. The light falls from the right. He thrills and shivers; he goes as if hypnotically drawn by the light. Others make movements to follow.*)

CURTAIN

ACT IV

(*From the foreground rise up jagged rocks, tier upon tier, till they meet upon the sky in the background. On the top of the highest tier, in the middle of the background, is a cave, whence emanates the three-colored light. A sad melody is almost imperceptibly heard from the cave. Flakes of light shimmer in the eastern sky to the right. It is just before the dawn, though very hard to distinguish.*)

(*Enter BILLWAMANGAL from the left, climbing the rocks. He gropes, yet walks up and on. The morning breeze faintly stirs in the few bushes here and there. At last he reaches the cave where, amid its darkness, is seen the vision of a man in white. His face, except his white beard falling luxuriantly on his breast, is not discernible. As BILLWAMANGAL's groping hand touches the white cloak of the vision, the light goes out. They are seen like shadows in the slowly progressing light of the dawn.*)

Billwamangal (ecstatically).— The Presence!

The Vision (touches BILLWAMANGAL's forehead).— Let thy soul fear not to face the Unknown.

(*BILLWAMANGAL shudders and groans.*)

The Vision.— What seest thou?

Billwamangal.— Man. He walks by the ocean — the ocean parts in two. He walks between two oceans. Many follow him. Ah! Ah!

The Vision (touching his heart).— What seest thou?

Billwamangal.— A child. The child grows into a man. The Man weeps. Don't, don't! Who are they? They scourge him. Oh, oh!

The Vision (puts his hand on BILLWAMANGAL's head).— What seest thou?

Billwamangal (slowly, almost in a trance).— A prince. Night; a woman and a child asleep. He leaves them. He climbs the Himalaya. He ascends to the highest. (*As a strong ray of light, pure white light, falls upon him from behind the VISION, the audience sees BILLWAMANGAL distinctly, but the VISION remains shadowy as before.*) Don't close it! Open! Open the door! Show me — (*Pauses slightly.*) Now I see you! (*Kisses the VISION's garment.*) You pilgrim from Sinai, bringing the divine ten laws to man. Child of man, healing hatred with love! Raising the dead to life

eternal! Meek, merciful. The waves of the sea are silent at your word. I know you (*reverently*), the Son of Man. You trample the high Himalayan crests, opening the gates of Nirvana!

(The VISION touches BILLWAMANGAL'S eyes. The other lights have become dim, so that the stage is almost in darkness. At the touch upon his eyes, BILLWAMANGAL sees again, and at that instant, all the stage flashes into light. This is due to the sudden dawn, the flashes of light upon the horizon having presaged it. The cave and the VISION have vanished.)

Billwamangal.— I see! I see! (*Raises his arms above his head in joy and thanksgiving.*)

(Enter CHINTAMINI and beggars, from the left. They climb to him and stand before him. As BILLWAMANGAL and CHINTAMINI face each other, there is a hushed pause. They have lost all trace of passion; there is nothing but spiritual feeling between them.)

Chintamini (as she and her followers fall on their knees about him).— Glorious being, cast your benign glance upon us, your children. Show us the pathway to Light.

Billwamangal (his arms raised in benediction above them).— Come! See! It is the Light! The Light! (*Blesses them.*)

CURTAIN

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He is Coming: A PLAY IN ONE ACT

Authorized translation from the Norwegian of ALVILDE PRYDZ

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The Light: A Drama in Four Acts	Georges Duhamel	161
	<i>Translated from the French by Sasha Best</i>	
Georges Duhamel	Sasha Best	204
The Maid's Prologue	Arthur Ketchum	206
The Manchester Players	A. E. F. Horniman	210
To the Pines	Lucile Price Leonard	215
Ariel	Charlotte Porter	217
Arthur Upson	Edward J. O'Brien	219
From an Unpublished Sequence	Frederick Hunter	226
The Great White Bird	Charles Vildrac	228
	<i>Translated from the French by Sasha Best</i>	
He is Coming: A Play in One Act	Alvilde Prydz	230
	<i>Translated from the Norwegian by Hester Coddington</i>	
Alvilde Prydz	Hester Coddington	245
From the Book of Visions	John Casey	251
Four Lyrics	William Stanley Braithwaite	254

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SUMMER, 1914

NUMBER III

THE LIGHT

A Drama in Four Acts

BY GEORGES DUHAMEL

Translated from the French by Sasha Best

CHARACTERS

BERNARD, 26 years old, born blind.

JEROME, 60 years old, father of Bernard and John.

A PHYSICIAN.

LITTLE JOHN, 12 years old.

BLANCHE, 20 years old.

CATHERINE, the old governess.

GENEVIEVE, ISABELLE, young girls, friends of Blanche.

Time: The Present.

Scene: In a mountainous country, on the shores of a lake.

Ten days have passed between the first and second acts; between the second and third acts, another ten days; the fourth act takes place on the same evening as the third act.

ACT I

An elevated terrace around JEROME's house. To the left, steps of the stairway that leads into the garden. To the right extends the terrace, beyond the house; ends at the back of the stage in a stone balustrade. Beyond, the trees of the park slope downward toward the lake, of which the water is visible. On the opposite shores, the outlines of the mountains.

161

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End of summer. 5 o'clock in the evening.

To the left, CATHERINE, BLANCHE, ISABELLE, GENEVIEVE embroidering. BLANCHE is holding her work very close to her eyes, and is using her needle slowly.

Catherine.— Don't tire yourself, Blanche. You haven't spoken a word this last hour; you will have a headache again and we will have to forbid you to touch your needlework. Let me see your eyes. They are not very strong, believe me. There is a slight cloud on the pupils,— as though you were ever ready to cry. Come, look at the lake and the trees and the mountains. That won't tire you, and is a never-ending source of wonder to those who, like you, are not from these parts.

Blanche.— But who will finish my embroidery, Catherine? You will see, it will not be finished in time, and if I cry it will be worse for my eyes than the work.

Catherine.— But don't neglect to take a rest, and the work will go on all the better; we can see that in stories and sometimes in life as well. We, who are from these parts, don't often look at the mountains, and not nearly enough at the trees and the other marvels of this earth. They are merely old things that we have always seen, and we know them without looking at them. But we have good eyes for fine embroidery and that gives us our pleasure as well as our bread. Have no fear, child, I don't want to deprive you of the joy of offering Bernard something made entirely by your own hands; I will do nothing on it, almost nothing,— a stitch or two, perhaps. Wait, I will count the stitches. (*CATHERINE leans over the work surrounded by the young girls.*)

Genevieve.— Have no fear, Blanche, the embroidery will be finished and Bernard will be made happy.

Blanche.— Above all, don't tell him that I have begun the work. It will give him pleasure to touch it with his fingers, but were he to learn that I am working it for him, it might trouble him, and I would not dare to continue.

Isabelle.— You will see how he will let his fingers glide over it softly, and when he will have felt the beautiful flower there, he will be as happy as those who see. He will take it again and again and feel of it much longer than those who merely look at it.

Catherine (finishing her counting).— Ten, eleven — ah, Blanche, you will never be a good pupil. And it is not your eyes that are at fault, it is your want of attention. You don't look at the model, you don't think of your model. Look here, this flower is too far away from its stem, and the stem is much too large, and the whole no longer resembles what you have set out to copy. We must follow what is traced out for us, my child;

failing there we arrive at nothing. I know there are those who invent while working, but these are rare ——

Genevieve.— There is Bernard ——

Catherine.— What do you mean?

Blanche.— You don't know the story, Catherine? — It was a month ago; we were gathering flowers in the mountains and they came to fetch us. The shepherd knew the valley where the most beautiful ones were to be found. I had never seen flowers like these. I was very happy and went off with Isabelle and Genevieve. We left Bernard here with the frames, the canvas and the embroidery. The walk had been long and fatiguing, and we found scarcely anything worth while. I had found but one little flower of a grayish white velvety hue. When we came back it was completely dark. Bernard was still here; he was leaning over the frame, and he was embroidering, — not as we do it — but he was sewing in the dark with great application. Although we all knew, it was very touching. Genevieve came with a lamp, and we saw — ah, Catherine, you can't imagine such a piece of work! He had designed something that resembled a flower, but a flower of which we knew neither the design nor the origin. It appeared very beautiful to me, but Bernard would not permit us to keep it. He seemed troubled and his hands trembled. He folded the work and took it all with him.

Isabelle.— He had that same perturbed look that he has when he is playing and when he feels that someone is listening.

Catherine.— Bernard is proud and a little shy, my children. You, no doubt, often annoy him. His affliction requires that he be not judged as others are, nor that the same demands be made upon him. You are but little girls to him and there is not one of his words from which you cannot derive some profit; but not one of your words that does not in some way express the happiness of seeing clearly and speak to him of something unknown to him. You can't help it; you can't drive the light away from your heart and from your words, but you must collect yourself when near him, without seeming to do so. Blanche knows this well and she never makes him feel that she pities him.

Blanche.— I do not know whether to wish that he might ever regain his eyesight. He seems to wish for nothing, and when near him I seem to forget that he has no sense of the color of things. His eyes are calm and full of expression. Certainly, when one knows and looks closely, it is easy to see that they are empty and that they don't follow the idea easily. But when he wishes to speak he puts into his face something so wonderful, so alive that I want to close my eyes and no longer see, so as to be worthy of listening to him.

Catherine.— Oh, he is not unhappy, but there is always someone who carelessly reminds him of his affliction. Ever since the day when we first realized that the pupils of the child did not turn about with the light, his father has lived in anxiety. What has he not tried! To-day Jerome is old and discouraged by this long grief; his son has become a man and nothing has been able to give him his eyesight. It is evident his sight is not to be restored. But Jerome is still seeking, and still sends for healers who do not heal. Those eyes are not sick, they simply don't exist. (*Pause.*) Another doctor is coming to-day and Bernard will receive him to please his father. (*Pause.*) I hear Jerome coming, don't let us speak of it any more.

Jerome.— Good evening, Catherine, good evening, girls, let me have Blanche and take John in return. He is tired of running and will hold your yarn for you like a good boy. Let me have Blanche, for I want to look at her eyes; they are now doing work for which they are scarcely suited.

Catherine.— Yes, but don't make her anxious. You think of nothing but eyes, Jerome, you talk only of them.

Jerome.— Ah, not without reason, Catherine. (*Affectionately carries off BLANCHE.*) My child, your eyes are not made for pain, reserve them for pleasure.

Blanche.— And the pleasure of pain?

Jerome.— Do you believe me capable of giving you bad counsel, child? For more than twenty years the light has given me, who see it, who possess it, more torments, more cares, than any man can conceive of. I am old, and have given the subject much thought. The light of day seems useful to you, but were it to fail you, you could supply and trust to the counsel that your eyes have given you; but the light is a perpetual distraction as well, and for that you would have infinite regrets.

Blanche.— I had promised myself to finish this embroidery to give to Bernard. Don't scold me for wanting to give pleasure to our Bernard.

Jerome.— Yes, I know, I understand. Bernard is shy and sensitive. I have never seen him as troubled as he is now. A year ago, before you came here, so weak and ill, he was not so troubled. He did not feel your presence at first — you were just another of the gentle prepossessing objects that move in the darkness in which he lives. You have now regained health and strength here in the fresh air. And I know, too, that your presence now is precious to Bernard, and I think it is that that troubles him. Ah! how I wish I were right! Blanche, you are a good and simple woman, — but I am not sure of what is going on within him.

Blanche.— Can't you divine what is going on within me?

Jerome (brusquely affectionate).— Take good care of your eyes, then, for mine will be closed some day. (*Kisses her.*) Another doctor is coming presently. He is very famous and very clever — a genius even, they say — but who knows? I will try again, I want to try again. He can, at any rate, examine Bernard. Look for my son and bring him here. I must prepare him a bit, I must talk to him.

Blanche.— Very well, I will go for him. Whatever you do, will be well. I also think of his eyes, but not as you do. I truly couldn't find what would give him joy. He will never resemble ordinary men, and I am not sure that what I have to give would be enough even for an ordinary man.

Jerome.— Keep your gift for the present, my child. It may some day be light to him who has no other light; it may be needed some day. We do not know whether there is still time; we cannot measure his night. (*BLANCHE goes.*)

Blanche.— Come, John. Come with me to look for your brother. Let us run,— I will surely get there before you will. (*Runs, and JOHN follows her.*)

Jerome.— It is getting dark. Haven't you worked enough, girls? Catherine, take them down to the lake for a walk; it is not too cool; there is no danger.

Catherine.— Yes, we will go. We want to get that strong, refreshing odor, that delightful coolness that comes from the mountains with the evening shadows, that rises from the grass, and that we love to inhale. Blanche, too, must come. (*BLANCHE has returned.*) I will show her the herbs that are for the beasts as well as those that heal. I will also show her those that make one beautiful and that make one's cheeks grow red.

Blanche.— And those that make us good? Do you know those too? I care nothing about being beautiful — There is Bernard. He was sitting under a tree back of the house. He is coming alone. (*To JEROME.*) He wouldn't take my arm; he never will take it. He wants nothing that I can give him.

Jerome.— I think he does want something from you, besides the aid of your eyes. But he knows everything here, the distances between objects, the odor of the earth, the savor of the season — (*BERNARD enters, tall and slender; his thin head slightly bent. He wears a small brown beard. His hair is parted high over the brow, and the temples are bare. His eyes, very deep, are without brightness, and only move in an unconscious fashion. Walks hesitatingly when alone, with an automatic and hardy decision when anyone is about. Wears a straw hat, and is carrying a cane in his right hand.*) Bernard, I should like to talk to you. Do you want to stay on the terrace? It won't be too warm there now.

Bernard.— As you wish, Father. (*Takes off his hat and sits down on a stone bench.*) You are here, Catherine?

Catherine.— Yes, my child.

Bernard.— O, yes, I know! Those young girls over there are so industrious — there is an odor of work here. I know then that you are there, too; and there is also an odor of a certain familiar kindliness —

Catherine.— You do me too much honor, Bernard, — and a lesson to these children here, who tease me by insisting that you only know me because of the ever so little snuff that I take occasionally.

Bernard.— I think if you were to kiss them just once in that robust, motherly way of yours, they would never again notice the odor of tobacco.

Catherine.— I am ashamed of all these beautiful compliments and I'll run away so as not to hear any more. And I will take my whole school away with me. (*BLANCHE hesitates, not knowing whether to stay or go.*) Come, Blanche, come with us.

Jerome.— Go, Blanche, divert yourself a bit. Leave the child with us. He has been out enough. (*CATHERINE goes with the young girls. JOHN plays in the sand awhile, then also goes. JEROME sits down beside BERNARD. In a hesitating manner.*) Someone is coming here to see you —

Bernard.— Very well, who is it?

Jerome.— A physician.

Bernard.— But I am not ill.

Jerome.— You don't understand. (*Gets up and walks up and down.*) Or rather, you understand quite well; and you are too kind, I know, to make me repeat things that we both know so well. Well, my boy, you have nothing to say?

Bernard.— Yes, yes, I will say this: you are a good man, and the most affectionate and most devoted of fathers.

Jerome.— Well, then, my boy, you must see this doctor, and you must let him examine you. He is a great scientist and has made many wonderful cures —

Bernard.— Yes, yes, he may have made many cures, but has he ever created anything? In order to produce living things there must be some germ, and you know it well; my eyes contain nothing, and I don't think anything new can ever come to me from there.

Jerome.— Oh, but the light —

Bernard (interrupting him).— The light, yes, the light! I have thought more than I can say about this word that is on the lips of all those around me and that is to my ears a familiar music. I believe that to you all, young and old, — with here more of love and there more of regret, with

here more of hope, and there more knowledge of the world,— it all means the same great and ardent thing, and I feel this light over you all who breathe the warmth in which I live. But when I am alone, and I say to myself “Light,” there arise within me such visions, there burst forth such powerful grave chants that I realize how my parents and their parents in their turn, my father and my mother, have left in my body the essence and nature of that which you call light. And I am proud, I am almost happy, and I — But pardon me, I do not know what I am thinking and saying,— I am entirely happy, not almost happy. I live with my dreams and I cannot explain to you how I miss nothing, nothing.

Jerome.— Yes, I have made twenty useless attempts, but let me try once more. With a soul so rich, so generous, what a man you would be!

Bernard.— I beg of you don't say that again. You are too just to think of what I might be, when you love what I really am. No, no, I assure you, I miss nothing at all. See this shrub that grows here — oh, it is not the same thing, I know it, but it stays, it lasts and produces leaves and fruit according to its species. It would never occur to you to ask it to produce a flower that is not its flower, and in a season that is not its season. Leave to others such folly. I need nothing, miss nothing; all that I have I owe to you, my dear father.

Jerome.— This man is coming, receive him at any rate; receive him to satisfy an old obstinate man. I am getting old, Bernard, and my illusions now are those of an old man and they take stronger hold than those of children. Don't take them all from me, my boy, and make allowance for my dotage.

Bernard (walks up and down in an agitated manner).— Don't think that I don't realize what it is that you want to give me. Don't believe that. You are here close to me, you hear my words, the sound of my steps on the sand, the sound of my breathing; you inhale this odor of the closing day, and the heat of summer is slowly flowing from your moist hands. You are seated on this stone bench; your fingers feel of its grain, sink into its hollows and divine the little shells there incrustated. You breathe, we breathe here both of us the air coming from the heights; it leaves in our mouths the slightly acrid taste of the juniper, and all that we have in common. And you, who are here near me, were all these perceptions and sensations to fail you, you would still have something to tell you that your son is here and that the earth is there stretched all about you; that there is a house here, and trees, and that farther away, much farther away than my hand, there is water,— what do I say? — A lake, perhaps other trees which one cannot touch, and other pebbles that other men are crushing — and others, and others — ah, but I know no more.

Jerome.— My child, don't agitate yourself so.

Bernard.— But if someone were to say to you, you who have everything, that it were possible to give you something extraordinary, something not resembling in any way what you already possess, something that would bring about for you an entirely different knowledge of things, — ah, what would you do, what would you do? You, no doubt, would be troubled, and full of hope and aspirations — but would you not say, you also, “no thank you, I have all I need; I want nothing more”?

Jerome.— It is not for me to demand more from my body than it already gives me; but you, Bernard, are a man, and other men see —

Bernard (interrupting him harshly).— It is very hardy of you to laud a thing that you are not even sure of being able to give me. (*Jerome covers his face with his hands.*) I believe — oh! I feel that I have said something almost cruel. (*Takes his father's hand.*) I certainly did not mean to, I assure you. (*Passes his hands over Jerome's face.*) Oh, do smile again!

Jerome.— Yes, yes, I will smile. It was no more cruel than the truth.

Bernard.— You are smiling again, that is sufficient, and I am happy. (*Gets up and walks again.*) Let the doctor come and let him talk to me. Anything you wish. But if he can do nothing, don't be sad, for I, I will not be disappointed. Such as it is, my life to me seems perfectly organized. Nothing can change it. I realize all the happiness within my reach, and I ask for nothing better. I am happy. I have no need of — (*Strikes against a chair.*)

Jerome.— Bernard, you have not hurt yourself? No, — you have no needs, and yet, my eyes will not always be there to keep from your path the things that hurt — ah, I am sad, Bernard, for I have made you thus and you are good enough to pardon me. It was, perhaps, my fault; there are people who have said so and thought so.

Bernard.— Don't think of that. My brother is of your blood and of my mother's blood, and he is not blind. There is something very strange about human knowledge. The doctor is coming and I will be — I promise you — I will be patient according to his desert. I will do it out of my love for you.

Jerome.— Thank you, my child, thank you! I was sure of it.

Bernard.— I will stay here on the terrace. Attend to your affairs and send me John, I will not be alone here then. (*Exit JEROME.*) I will not be alone, and I will not be tempted to seek, if I don't wish it, that which I don't accept, — and if they can give me what they offer me, if it is right to wish for what they offer me — Who is coming there? Is it you, John, are you there?

John (dancing and jumping).— Ah, I will not tell you, you will never know.

Bernard (drawing the child toward him).— Come near to me, little John. There. Stay here so that I can feel how big you are and how sensible. Your cheeks are as warm as the stones on a summer's day. You have lovely hair; it is finer even than that of our friend Blanche.

John.— Yes. It is finer and more curly than Blanche's, and then, Blanche's is black.

Bernard.— Yes, yes, it is black.

John.— Like yours.

Bernard.— Yes, I know, like mine. Ah, your eyes move about like two balls. I don't touch them much, I hardly touch them at all, but I feel them move almost from a distance. But why do you turn them that way? What do you see there?

John.— There is a man down there coming up the garden path.

Bernard.— Ah, he is coming this way?

John.— Yes, he is carrying a little bag. He is a tall man like father; but he has no beard. He wears glasses.

Bernard.— You are sure that you see the bag and the glasses, John?

John.— Yes.

Bernard.— Very well. I hear him coming up the staircase. You will stay with me, won't you? And you will say nothing to this gentleman, do you hear? nothing, so as not to give me pain. (*Enter the DOCTOR. Fifty years old, very elegantly dressed. When he enters BERNARD puts down the child, who has been on his knee, puts on a free and easy manner, and says, taking off his hat.*) How do you do, Sir.

Doctor.— Good day, to you. Is it here that a physician is expected for a case of blindness?

Bernard.— Doubtless — perhaps — I don't know. But I will send you to the master of the house, he will give you better information. Do you wish to put away your bag, Sir? It is very warm. John, my little John, take the gentleman's bag. (*DOCTOR gives the bag to JOHN who carries it to the bench.*)

Doctor.— Thank you, Sir, I don't want to trouble you. There you are! (*Wipes his forehead.*) I am the specialist who has been sent for to examine the unfortunate invalid. I am in a hurry to see the father and the patient. — I do not require the light of the sun for my examination.

Bernard (with a quick movement).— That is well, the sun having just gone down. (*He walks backward a bit.*) Follow the path that turns round the house. You will see a door — Do you see the door, a brown door, there to the right?

Doctor.—A brown door? Wait ——

Bernard.—The child will lead you, Sir. Perhaps you do not see very well?

Doctor (adjusting his glasses).—Yes, yes, excellently well. Oh, I see the brown door.

Bernard.—The child will show you and you will excuse me, Sir; I will wait here. I have long been waiting for someone, for something that has not yet come, that will not come, never, I believe. Go, go, John, take the gentleman to your father. Good-bye, Sir. (*To the DOCTOR as he is leaving.*) Take care of the flower-pots, they have just been painted green. (*The DOCTOR has gone, led by JOHN.*) Green the flower-pots, brown the door, red the roof, and black my hair, and her hair black, too! Oh, I remember my lessons well. That imbecile has gone to look for the unfortunate patient. (*Finds his hat and cane. JOHN comes back running.*)

John.—The man is with father. They are coming here — they are talking a great deal — they are quite near.

Bernard.—Give me your little hand, my boy. I love this little hand; it does not give too much attention to what it is doing; it hasn't the air of doing a duty. There, that is better, now let us go quickly. (*Go out by the stairway to the left.*)

Doctor (enters from the right with JEROME).—There will be no doubt, Sir, — experience and knowledge allow us to judge of these things very quickly.

Jerome.—You will talk to him, and you will see how sympathetic he is, and what good sense he has. He is a little nervous, perhaps, a little strange, sometimes, but ——

Doctor.—Oh, that is of no account. Our science disposes of all these things; there is a way of questioning that will give judgment and reflection to minds of the least possible poise.

Jerome.—Oh, Sir, he is not wanting there. I merely wished to say that he is susceptible, irritable even, with people he doesn't know. Will you please speak to him in a cordial, simple way, — simple, you understand. He does not like to be pitied, nor does he care to feel himself the object of a continued attention. You must pardon me — all this may seem over-delicate, over-particular — But he is my child, Sir, — I know him well, — I have confidence in anything you may wish to attempt.

Doctor.—Everything then will be for the best. We have, in regard to the sick, a certain gift of presentiment; we acquire that in the course of time. And it becomes easy for us to detect the cause of the trouble, — almost at a distance, — and to judge of its nature. We no longer see humanity as it presents itself to other eyes; we have a deeper insight, that gives us ideas, independent of appearances.

Jerome.— What you say is so reassuring, Sir. Have you no further questions to ask about the case? It is growing dark, I will have the lamps lighted, and will notify my son. He ought to be here. (*Leans over the balustrade.*) Ah, there he is in the garden. Bernard, Bernard, won't you come up, my boy? (*To the DOCTOR.*) He is coming, Sir. (*JEROME goes down to meet BERNARD.*)

Doctor (inspecting the place).— Your home is charming — How old is the young man?

Bernard (who has come in).— Twenty-six years old, Sir.

Jerome.— There is my son.

Doctor (taken aback).— Ah, perfectly, perfectly!

Bernard.— You found the brown door, Sir?

Doctor.— Yes, yes.

Jerome.— What does this mean? You have already met?

Bernard.— I think so, father.

Doctor.— Yes, to be sure. This is how it was. I have tried an experiment that proved most satisfactory and conclusive. I have already seen and observed the afflicted young man. But don't let us speak of it any more. I now know what I wanted to know. If you will permit me, I will now begin my examination, and I should like to ask some questions.

Jerome.— Do what is necessary, and may you be able to take from me a life-long sorrow. (*BERNARD is standing and nervously playing with his cane. The DOCTOR comes up to him.*)

Doctor.— Your father, in his search for a competent person,— a person particularly well informed on the diseases of the eye,— has called upon me to examine you. We do not yet know what we will be able to do, but it is my greatest wish — thanks to my new method — my greatest wish would be, to restore to you —

Bernard (coldly).— To restore to me? Have I lost anything, Sir?

Doctor.— I meant to say, to give you —

Jerome (to the DOCTOR).— Don't be offended with him, I beg of you. I told you. It is the quality of his mind, his manner,— he does not mean to be bitter.

Doctor.— Yes, yes. (*To BERNARD.*) I should like to try a new method which might give you your eyesight.

Bernard.— No more than that?

Doctor (to JEROME).— What is he saying?

Jerome.— I don't know. I will find out. Bernard, my son, this is the doctor of whom I told you; he is a great scientist, and he has kindly consented to come and take care of you. (*In a low tone.*) I beg of you, I beg of you —

Bernard.— Leave me alone, father. You cannot understand. (*To DOCTOR.*) Will you excuse me, Sir, and continue?

Doctor (with a little less self assurance).— I am alluding to a process that has, in a great many cases, been productive of excellent, remarkable results. It is very simple; you will see, you will have only to take a powder daily —

Bernard.— Stop, stop! Touch your nose. (*The physician involuntarily puts his hands to his face.*) What is there on your nose? (*Laughs nervously and walks.*) Why, they are eyeglasses, and I know what they are good for. Throw them away and eat your own powders. You, who have long experience with the blind,— you divine them a hundred feet off, and you know better than anyone that they haven't always the best of characters. Ah (*with a deeper and more agitated voice*), I waited for you; I said nothing; but I did wait for you just the same. It wasn't exactly that I had hopes, for I don't know what it is that you can give, but I waited for you with curiosity, with anxiety. All that is not your fault, nor is it the fault of your science,— but I feel something awkward, something that hurts, and that makes me realize that I desire nothing more, nothing, — do you understand me? You are the ninth celebrity who has come here. I remember all these visits: each time something happened that made me forego for a long time all desire to change my condition. To see, to see! I know what that is! It is to be the empty and unworthy receptacle of a divine grandeur! To see — that means to ignorantly possess a prodigious property. Oh, I don't dare to see — I will never dare to see — I! — I! — Do I deserve to see? To see! — that means to take the right of merely grazing things, with I know not what, without ever embracing and strongly grasping them! Oh, to see! — it seems to me that that were better than just dreaming! But no, no,— you see, you, who are here, and I know what that means, to see. It means to repeat all one's life the words and cries of those who have seen — the door is brown, — the flower-pots are green,— my hair is black. I see, I see, I see!

Doctor (taking his bag).— Sir, I regret deeply. But this patient requires other care than mine.

Jerome.— I beg of you,— I don't know — I don't dare —

Doctor.— Never mind. I will find the way. We will talk things over later. (*Leaves. JEROME goes with him a few steps, then returns and sits down beside BERNARD. A long silence. Night has fallen. The last scene takes place in the dark.*)

Jerome.— Your will be done, my boy. You are a man and you know how to act and what to say. However, this that has now happened has thrown me into trouble and confusion. I don't understand; I am full of

grief and anxiety. I cannot reproach you. Even in anger your words are full of an indisputable wisdom, and your most unreasonable phrases I feel to be reasonable, although I can't explain them. Oh, well, pardon my obstinacy. I want to live for a long time to come — forever — to try again, and again; this thing, then another, and another! All — everything! even to the ceding to you of these my poor eyes. I have had my full share of the light; I should now become blind without sadness, to be able to live in that world where you have always lived. Alas! I can do nothing, Bernard, nothing. No one then will be able to do anything?

Bernard (taking JEROME'S hand).— No one loves me as you love me.

Jerome (after a silence).— One could love you differently. There may be a love stronger than that of a father, — I could not leave you without knowing you surrounded by tenderness and attention. You are a man; things that will change your whole existence may happen. I thought of that, I have thought of other things besides. When I sent for a physician who might be capable of putting a little light into those poor eyes of yours, it was this that was in my thoughts. I still think of it. There are certain forces against which mind alone is helpless. (*With hesitation.*) Ah, Bernard, if love should some day come to you, will you be the proud strong man that you should wish to be?

Bernard.— Don't, I beg of you!

Jerome.— It is impossible to make promises to one's self. You will not be master of your love —

Bernard.— I will be its master! I swear it to you!

Jerome.— But you will not be the master of your pity —

Bernard.— What did you say?

Jerome (repeating slowly).— You will not be the master of your pity. There may be offered you a love so submissive, so pure, — a love that will demand nothing for itself, a love of such fervor that you will have to accept it with open hands.

Bernard.— My father, you take these things too seriously. No, no! There will be no one. (*Walks agitatedly.*) You talk too earnestly about these things. One does not say them unless one carries a secret in one's mind. Ah, what is it you want me to hear now? You are not idly talking. You know it, — words are my greatest boon. I seize them and I empty them of all their meaning before I let go of them. You meant to say something that I ought to know.

Jerome.— Perhaps I meant to say that there is some one near you to whom some day you will not be able to refuse your pity.

Bernard (with great emotion).— It is well, it is well! I could not believe it. — I should never have dared to believe it. You have told me

what I never would have dared to divine even,— probably because I have no sight. It is well. I beg of you, go away, now. I want to be alone. I must be alone. I must reflect. (*JEROME rises and goes away slowly.*)

Bernard (waits, then rushes after JEROME and hurriedly says).— Father, father, send for him! Perhaps there is still time, — send for this doctor, — perhaps he is not too far away. Please, send for this doctor!

CURTAIN

ACT II

A large room in the house. Doors in the back and at the right. In a bay-window, to the left, a little organ. Furniture. When curtain rises the large window to the left is hung over with drapery. The sun barely filters through. Afternoon. BERNARD is seated at the organ and playing. BLANCHE enters carrying a glass. Opens the door gently and advances into the room. She has scarcely made two or three steps when BERNARD stops playing.

Blanche.— It is I, Bernard.

Bernard.— I know it.

Blanche.— Don't mind me.

Bernard.— I never mind you; I mind no one.

Blanche.— I have brought you your potion. You haven't taken it to-day.

Bernard (touching the organ).— I have taken another.

Blanche.— Yes, yes! You take that with great joy and confidence. The one I hold you accept neither with desire nor with pleasure.

Bernard.— I don't say that. But I am still waiting for what yours there has to offer me, while the other here has already given me more than you could believe.

Blanche.— I understand. When you listen you have so meditative an air, that I am overcome with the desire to perceive what you are hearing.

Bernard.— You can't, you never could.

Blanche.— No, I never could; and then, it would not be right.

Bernard.— No, it would not be right.

Blanche.— Here, take the potion.

Bernard.— Put it there on the table. I will take it later. Talk to me — your voice is more precious than all medicines.

Blanche.— Don't say that. I don't weigh my words, and I let my voice say what it will. And even if I paid attention I would not be able to find anything better.

Bernard.— Talk, talk, all the time. You know it well. I understand better; I hear differently from the others; I readily hear more than you say.

Blanche.— Perhaps,— certainly.

Bernard.— I hear beyond your thoughts even.

Blanche.— I don't know,— as to that, I don't believe. (*Silence.*) You can't imagine how poor our ears are. Great noises reach us; the others, the small ones, lose themselves in our sight. I hear better, I understand better in the night. However, there are still too many images of the sun in my mind, and then, all that is not quite true; there are —

Bernard.— There are? You must continue. I follow you very well.

Blanche.— It is difficult. There are sounds that I only understand with my eyes — but I may deceive myself. Oh, yes, I am deceived: my eyes give me an explanation that is more seductive than sufficing; if I turned less to them for advice, I might perhaps understand better.

Bernard.— Don't believe that. You might, not seeing things, make up a more beautiful story of them. But it is not for that that we must live. We should not borrow from nature, we ought to demand all from her. And I, I! — I am compelled always to borrow from her.

Blanche.— But you are so rich, Bernard.

Bernard.— No, I am a borrower, and a poor one. If the most complete, the best armed of those who in the world have a great advantage over me, of all those who see, were to meditate in the midst of beings and things, and were afterward to give to mankind of his richness, he would certainly be one of the strong and the predestined. If he exhausted himself by covering objects with explanations drawn from his own poor brain, he would be puerile and certainly vain; he would be more weak, more miserable even than I —

Blanche.— Ah, but you do not do this, Bernard. Fate has placed you among us, deprived of a power that we all possess. But since I have known you I have dreamed of a world, where all will be arranged to live as you live; where all will know the serenity, the wisdom, that is yours. Let me speak. My words are childish, perhaps; take them, however, as coming from reflection. Nature has imposed herself on us by every means in her power and has put into our heads something terrible, something overwhelming: and that is the light of our eyes. Ah, well, it is but a perpetual mirage, a perpetual play, that hinders our soul from a communing with itself. I am sure of that; it has come to me since I have known you.

Bernard.— Do you know, Blanche, that the ideas that you are bringing up there, are of a most serious, grave nature? You do not amuse yourself enough, you don't enjoy life sufficiently,— life, as it is given to young girls of your age.

Blanche.—I do not know, but I could not speak differently. All those who, like me, see the light born in the morning, preserve during the day a lightness of heart and spirit that prevents them from feeling perfectly either suffering or joy. My friend, pardon me, for daring to express myself on sentiments as serious as these. But you alone can understand me. My eyes are weak; they are always tired; they always hurt me; they force on me all day long an enjoyment that is cruel and above my strength. I fear the sun and I am not always sure that I love it.

Bernard.—No, no, don't say that! You do not know what it is that you must love. (*Goes to the bay-window and takes hold of the curtains.*) Stay there, there on that spot. (*Pulls the curtains aside; the trees, the lake, the mountains, are visible, a flood of sunlight enters and dazzles* *BLANCHE.*) Don't blaspheme any more! It seems to me that if I were you I would fall on my knees. (*BLANCHE slowly goes to the window, sits on the steps of the alcove; she is thus in the full light at BERNARD'S feet.*) What despair you have put me into! What a situation I am in! I have all the habits of a man. I know that behind this curtain there is the summer's heat, I know that there is floating there for you something penetrating, something divine. I have only to lift this curtain, and there is a prodigious change in this room, which doesn't entirely escape even me. If there were birds here they would sing, and you sit there and say nothing. You were prompted by daring, by generous impulses when you spoke to me as you did. Tell me, was it generosity, or was it really a desire for what you call silence, and what I designate as night, that made you speak as you did? And what do you expect from me now? Do you think me mad for talking to you of this great tumultuous, aerial flow that warms my hand and your cheek? Are you only good, or do you not love life? Yes, your head is warm. I will say nothing more. I can divine you there, flooded with light,—the light! But you surely don't expect a blind man to eulogize your sun? What can I tell you? I do not know what would help you, what would be agreeable to you? You,—you know things, but I will ask you nothing. See, there now emanates from your hair so penetrant an odor,—only the light could have done that. They say that you are beautiful,—and, I understand,—and when I happen to feel your face it comes to me with great force. But the others who said it have not touched your face and they express it with words different from mine. (*Goes away from* *BLANCHE.*) You are not worthy of being beautiful. (*Angrily, brusquely.*) Get up! Go away! Don't stay near me any longer! I am speaking lightly, do you hear? These things are not serious. And then I did not have the intention of saying them. It is the surprise, it is the light that is acting on me. I have no right to this intoxication. I must return to my

complete darkness; there I am master of myself. Someone might come,—let me collect myself. If anyone should come, I would have to feign a resignation, a love of the darkness that, at this moment, are not in my heart. (*BLANCHE slowly gets up and goes away.* BERNARD waits, motionless, until she has left; he then goes to the organ, plays a few chords on it; rises with visible discouragement, and goes to the table and gropingly looks for the glass brought by BLANCHE. He takes it, goes to the window, seems to hesitate a moment, then empties it out on the balcony. JEROME enters, coughs. BERNARD turns a bit, but says nothing. He goes to the organ and sits down.

Jerome.— Catherine wishes to know whether you will go to the vineyard with her? The grapes are ripe; Catherine knows that you love the walk, and would like you to hold the basket while she cuts the bunches.

Bernard.— I will not go with Catherine to-day. I was playing, father, and will continue.

Jerome (after a silence).— Why did you throw away the contents of that glass? I saw you as I came in.

Bernard.— Father, why drink this evening a cup of promise? I need a wave of consolation. (*Stops JEROME whom he feels approaching.*) You have divined it, I was going to allay my thirst with music.

Jerome.— You should have taken your potion just the same, Bernard. Your music, yes! He who created this music could see —

Bernard.— Yes, true, he could see, and he has made it for me who do not see, and I feel for him the purest gratitude. I can dispense with seeing because of what he has given me. But, father, you are too kind to force from me useless words. Don't tax my courage too much; I should have to make too great an effort.

Jerome.— This is the first time you have spoken like this, since the coming of the physician. You seemed more than ever calm and at peace. And yet, what are you doing now?

Bernard.— I took the potion yesterday. I shall not take it to-day. I shall not take it hereafter. It is no longer of use. Yesterday it concerned only me. To-day I feel a great sadness. I no longer need to dream of vain attempts. I must collect myself in order to be good, and I am better pleased to be as I am, to do what it behooves me to do.

Jerome.— I know that something is going on. I just met Blanche coming out of the room. She was crying. There are things going on here, before which my eyes, seeing and living as they are, are useless and powerless.

Bernard.— I should like to explain to you, —

Jerome.— Yes, yes,— you must. Has Blanche spoken? What did she say? What I have told you about her puts you in a position that de-

mands all your kindness, all your nobility. That is not all, but that is necessary —

Bernard.— Ah, no! There is no longer question of that. There is no longer question of what she is to me, but there still is time to stop what is going on within her. She must not love me, do you hear? — she must not love what she does, within me.

Jerome.— But what is there? What have you noticed?

Bernard.— Listen! She came awhile ago to bring me my potion. And then she began to talk. How could I have lived near Blanche a whole year as I have done without sooner acquiring the certitude that came to me then? I no longer doubt that she loves me, and not from pity only and to give me that which I have not. No, she loves me fervently because I know things that those who see do not know. She has not the vigor, does not turn toward the fulness of life as do other young girls. She turns to my — darkness; that attracts her, as does the silence, as does death. You are listening, full of anxiety, but perhaps you do not realize the danger. I am a man, used to breathe in fear with the air even that sustains me. I feel something abnormal there,— something decisive.

Jerome.— Yes, yes, explain!

Bernard.— Oh, it is not a question of understanding, it is rather a question of presentiment. I should have allowed her to believe that she might some day be useful to me with her eyes, that this clairvoyance would even be indispensable to me in the world,— a world that I do not know, and where I have never measured, with my steps, the distance of objects, and fixed their form, their outlines in my memory. I did not do that, and it is too late now.

Jerome.— What can we do?

Bernard (continuing).— There is a bitter desire there to be less than she is. Have you never had the sensation of no longer being alive? It seems to me to begin, for those who see, like this. It is nothing new. I now recollect strange words, curious desires that she has had. But the certainty came a little while ago. I spoke harshly to her and shamed her. But nothing will come of that; she really loves this way of thinking that my condition has brought to me. She eagerly listens to all the poor things that are born within me — in the silence of my life. Is it my fault? She supposes a grandeur there, a perfection, where others see but an infirmity. Very well! But how can I accept such a love? There is a desire there for renunciation that I must not allow to grow beside me.

Jerome.— But do you fear?

Bernard.— You love Blanche, but she is not your daughter, and therefore your intuition in regard to her is less sure. If someone were to say:

“Your little John no longer is living the joyous turbulent life of other children; he has withdrawn from his comrades, and has lost himself in a sad revery; he has lost all the impulses and outbursts of his boyish life, and he pleases himself but in the society of an invalid”; you would immediately have the greatest and most positive anxiety.

Jerome (brusquely resolute).— That is true, that is true! The happiness of that child does not lie here! She will leave, she must leave!

Bernard (troubled, rises).— Leave? Leave? Do you think so? What are you going to do about it? Leave? You are not really thinking of it?

Jerome.— Why not? Don’t you think so? After what you just told me?

Bernard.— Ah, it is true! You can’t do very much, perhaps. But perhaps I can help her; I can teach her a better love,— a love of the light and life. Only I must try to tear her out of this solitary existence. I do not know whether this house is the right place for her. But she must stay now. She must be diverted; must be led away from this inner life.

Jerome.— And then?

Bernard.— But you know that better than I do. Take her out, make her walk. Revive the air around her, — change the horizon. Begin by small distractions; take her on the lake, have friends visit her; try travel, take her away! take me away if you wish; finish her education; give her instructors; seek! seek!

Catherine (enters).— I came myself to get him, since you did not succeed. Ah, but I am not? I think —

Bernard.— Stay, Catherine, you are not intruding. But I will go with you. Give me the basket. (*Walks toward the door; CATHERINE comes up to JEROME.*) Well, aren’t you coming?

Catherine.— Here I am, here I am! (*Low to JEROME.*) Blanche is in the house. Go to her; I think she is still crying; what has happened?

Jerome.— I will tell you about it.

Bernard (from outside).— Why don’t you come, Catherine?

Catherine (going out).— Here I am. Wait for me, Bernard. (*Goes.*)

Jerome (walks up and down; a knock).— Come in. (*Enter BLANCHE.*) Ah, it is you? Do you want to join Bernard? He is in the vineyard with Catherine. He would be glad of your arm.

Blanche.— I don’t think so. He knows the way very well and he has never yet wanted to take my arm.

Jerome.— But he asked for you just now when he was leaving.

Blanche.— That surprises me. I can’t give him much help.

Jerome.— Why do you say that? Ah, Blanche, you have been crying and your eyes are still wet. You are not happy? Someone has made you unhappy?

Blanche.— I have been crying; but they are not unhappy tears. Oh, I am happy! I have never been so happy in my life.

Jerome.— Is that true?

Blanche.— Quite true. Everybody is kind. I am happy with a happiness you cannot understand, a happiness (*smiling*), a happiness that, perhaps, you have known a bit, but that you do not fully understand —

Jerome.— Yes, I understand — a little. (*Taking her hands.*) But is that a reason for being sad?

Blanche (smiling).— Oh, doubtless.

Jerome.— Is that a reason for no longer caring for walks? Or sleeping badly, for not playing with the children, and for staying in the dark, — without light, — dreaming? You see, I have noticed all that; you cannot deceive me.

Blanche.— Oh, father, but I never wished to deceive you.

Jerome.— That is right, call me your father, that calls up a future made up of cherished wishes. I will do anything to see you happy and joyous. What is it you wish?

Blanche.— Nothing, nothing for the moment. I need nothing.

Jerome.— Oh, my child, that is the phrase that has been ringing in my ears these twenty years. My poor Bernard has put all his tenderness, his kindness into that phrase, and now you, too! Ah, that my little John were grown up! I need some one near me who does not hide his desires, and does not spare my generosity. It is more trying never to find a use for one's goodness than to have it drained upon unceasingly. Will I never have the joy of giving happiness, and of depriving myself a little? You want nothing, — you need nothing, but that is a crime at your age, little girl, not to wish for anything. Think again! Seek and tell me — what do you wish? What can I invent to give you pleasure?

Blanche (laying her head on his breast).— Nothing, nothing more, my father. I came here without love, without courage, and you have given me everything. Now, I have but one wish, and that is to stay here a long time, — all my life. I don't want to go away from here, I wish for nothing else. I love nothing that is elsewhere.

Jerome.— I had thought of traveling with you, — not very far, — and we would have taken Bernard.

Blanche.— Ah, you know that Bernard would not care to go away. No, no, let me stay here always.

Jerome.— Very well, we will stay here. I will have the boat repainted, and we will go rowing on the lake from time to time — you say nothing? That does not give you much pleasure? Then I will have professors for

you to teach you painting. You will not be able to do much because your eyes are not good,— but you can study music.

Blanche.— Oh, no, I would never dare to play before Bernard.

Jerome.— Oh, the beautiful excuse! You wouldn't dare to play, you would dare to do nothing! You will not go out,— but what will you do? Remain here like a little nut in its shell?

Blanche.— The nut is not unhappy in its shell.

Jerome.— Oh, very well, I understand.

Blanche.— What do you understand?

Jerome.— Nothing, I was talking to myself. Let me see your face, your eyes are still red; you know what Bernard's doctor said about you, and you must be careful of those eyes, you must use them gently; don't work too long and don't read too much.

Blanche.— I hardly read at all.

Jerome.— Don't go out in the wind, and above all, avoid the bright light, the light that hurts, the light of the sun —

Blanche.— The light that hurts,— isn't that so?

Jerome.— Yes, think about it and don't cry any more.

Bernard (*comes, carrying a basket of grapes; puts it on the table and takes a large bunch*).— Here, Blanche! Come and take this beautiful bunch. (*BLANCHE comes nearer; both are in the bright light that comes in from the window; BERNARD takes the bunch and puts it into BLANCHE's extended hands. JEROME waits awhile and softly goes out.*) Do you feel how heavy it is and how beautiful? The beautiful fruit! The stem that supports it is strong and full of sap. And all the different grapes are hung there to get their nourishment. There are small ones that the others have buried — and they are left miserable, not having received their share of the warmth. They are blind. (*BLANCHE raises the bunch.*) There are those that are full to bursting, feel on their skin the little layer of dust, tiny and damp and almost imperceptible, that comes off easily, that does not prevent them from being,— from being —

Blanche.— Transparent.

Bernard.— Yes, transparent — that is the word. (*BLANCHE puts down the bunch.*) There are words that I often hear; their sense no longer is entirely strange to me; that is why I love to hear you talk, Blanche. There are words that have been of such good service, they have passed so many lips that they possess a personal warmth, and properties that are not merely borrowed. When you put a shell to your ear you hear a noise like that of a cascade or a tempest, and people say that because the shell has lived so long in the sea, it has retained its roar. It is like that with words. They grow polished and hard with time and they take on the quality of

the things they express. I know nothing about the light, yet when you pronounce with your beautiful, flexible voice such words as light, transparency, or sun, there suddenly are born in me all manner of violent images that cause me to tremble as though shaken by thunder. Very well, Blanche, have you nothing to say to me? Because I have told you how much I love to hear your voice?

Blanche.— I prefer to listen to you, Bernard. With a single one of my words you can think so profoundly, and draw from it such beautiful reflections, that I think it better not to speak.

Bernard.— Ah, yes, but I must have that one single word.

Blanche.— You don't always need that to say wonderful things, And then, my words are merely words that I repeat. I draw nothing from them.

Bernard.— You are unjust. I don't understand you to-day. I want to say something affectionate to you, and you surprise me with your answers. Hear me, I draw much from within myself, but I do not always find what I want. (*Silence.*) Will you read to me? Get a book that you like.

Blanche.— Oh, willingly, willingly! You ask that so rarely. (*Goes toward the library.*) You haven't asked that of me twice this whole year.

Bernard.— I think I will need it more hereafter.

Blanche (looking about on the shelves).— I was not unjust to myself, I was merely severe, my friend. No, I draw nothing from within myself. No, I don't even offer nourishment for your reflections. I am indigent, a little sterile,— and now you ask me to read to you, and I am happy to be able to read to you.

Bernard.— Stop, Blanche, stop! Throw down the book you have taken. Come here. I am awkward to-day and unhappy. I say nothing of what I ought to say. Come here. Give me your hands. You will help me a little when I make mistakes, but don't, for pity's sake, take anything I say in ill part. Try to feel the love, the affection, there is in my proposals. Your hands, they are in mine, a little timid, and scarcely warm. The fingers are long. I think they are not very full of life, but they seem to me full of hesitation and astonishment. Won't you put a little more life, a little more energy into them? A little hand that does not seem ever to want to become a fist. Ah, I feel the marks of the needle, a souvenir of that beautiful embroidery. It is precious to me, Blanche, and when those marks will have long disappeared, your present will still be dear to me. You must embroider some more, without too much fatiguing your eyes.

Blanche.— Oh, my eyes!

Bernard.— Your eyes are more useful to me than I can say; through them and you I know a little of what is going on around me. We have

never talked enough about that, but now I want to get through you my knowledge of the world. But we have talked enough now.

Blanche.— It is true, you have never talked to me like this. I do not know what I can do, but I promise you that I will look for you with great zeal.

Bernard.— Yes, for me, and for yourself as well. There was once an ancient fallen king who was thus led by a young girl; but he had himself killed his eyes. He must have been very unhappy, Blanche. They say that those who once saw are more to be pitied than ——

Blanche.— I am not so sure of that.

Bernard.— Oh, yes,— the recollections,— that always torments.

Blanche.— No, that always suffices!

Bernard.— Oh, well, what is the difference. We are going to change our manner of living. We must have more diversion ——

Blanche (astonished).— As you wish.

Bernard.— Yes, I wish it. We must go rowing on the lake. I will tell my father to have the boat repaired.

Blanche.— But why, my friend, these sudden resolutions?

Bernard.— That is my affair. This solitude weighs me down of a sudden. We will receive our friends ——

Blanche.— Yes — I no longer have any.

Bernard.— We will make some then; we will find some; that is easy enough. And I want to travel. We must not stay here in this little corner of the earth. There must be beautiful things all over.

Blanche (deeply moved).— Yes, it would seem so!

Bernard (cordially continuing).— You are not doing anything, my little miss. You don't know very much. You must take lessons from the professors. See, I have taken all these resolutions to-day while I was walking with Catherine in the vineyard. I am going to change my whole existence. (*BLANCHE has begun softly to cry.*) Ah, what is it? (*BLANCHE is crying, and BERNARD draws her to him to console her.*) Oh, I am wrong again! The men who see, do they know better than I what to do — what they want? Blanche, listen, I said nothing to hurt you?

Blanche.— Oh, no! I am sad.

Bernard.— Sad? You are sad? Well, then, come, and I will show you the sun, the glory, the sustenance of us all — even for those who have no sight! It is still here. I feel it around us; I feel it between us! (*Draws her to the window.*)

Blanche.— It is going to set, Bernard,— it is dying out!

Bernard (dragging her on).— Come with me, come to the window! I will make you see! I will finish by making you happy! Look, look, and

talk to me. There rises from the sun an odor, damp and aromatic, a good odor,— what is it?

Blanche.— The hay is being carried to the barns.

Bernard.— And then, what is there? Oh, you who see! overwhelm me, why don't you, with the force of your words? Words that one finds to make one's self understood. Come, there are flowers, no doubt, in the hay?

Blanche.— Yes, there are; but I can see their color only.

Bernard.— But that is enough,— that is enough! I know the form of the flowers, and the delicateness of their flesh. I can tell their odor, and all that seems wonderful to me. Go on, what else is there before us?

Blanche.— There are trees —

Bernard (following with his imagination).— Go on! I smell the bark and the wood. I smell the leaves,— they are all quite fresh?

Blanche.— Yes, green, with a touch of red, however.

Bernard.— Red? Yes, I know. Red, red! That is something startling like a great noise.

Blanche.— Red and gold.

Bernard.— Gold? I divine it! Continue, what do you see?

Blanche.— The trees are moving, there is a little wind. They are swaying softly to that noise that you hear down there. The leaves are all rustling. Each tree is like a whirlwind.

Bernard.— More, more! After the trees, what is there? Look, Blanche, and you will love, you must love all that.

Blanche.— There is the lake —

Bernard.— Yes, I know. I remember the boat. My hands are in the water, and from time to time a long wet herb catches them and pulls them; the water is making a gurgling noise in the back of the boat,— go on!

Blanche.— On the lake there is a slight mist. How can I describe it?

Bernard.— Yes, I can divine it. I have already met the mists. They put a multitude of little tiny drops into my hair. I know. Go on.

Blanche.— Further on, there is the mountain.

Bernard.— And you can grasp it,— from top to bottom, with one look?

Blanche.— Yes, I see it from on high, and down below. It is now a dark blue, it is now darker than anything else.

Bernard.— And what else do you see?

Blanche.— I see the sun that is about to set behind the mountain.

Bernard.— Good,— continue.

Blanche.— There are three clouds, black and long and fine, down there in the sky.

Bernard.— Go on, I think I understand.

Blanche.— The sun is sinking behind the clouds.

Bernard.— Ah, look again,— look well. If you can make me understand, you are saved. You have love enough!

Blanche (dazzled with the light, shades herself with her arm).— Oh, the sun! I cannot look, Bernard!

Bernard.— But you must look. Now, what do you see? Is it beautiful? Is it sublime?

Blanche (looking, sad, with a broken voice).— It is like a feast with a great noise that one doesn't hear.

Bernard.— Yes, that is it, more, more!

Blanche.— I can't — I can't any more!

Bernard.— I beg of you, more, more! Save yourself! Save me!

Blanche (searching for words).— It is like a sacrifice,— dazzling, resplendent; a death,— heartrending,— without regrets —

Bernard.— That is not all.

Blanche.— There it flames on the mountain itself — like a hearth that will never glow again, never like this! Oh, to weep, to be able to weep!

Bernard.— Go, go —

Blanche (face to the sun, looking intently).— Now it is shining,— terrible! It is no longer on the mountain — it is in my head, it is in my heart — I no longer know! I can't any more!

Bernard (as intoxicated).— More, more!

Blanche.— It is, it is — ah! Bernard! — it is a black hole in my head! — a black hole — it is darkness! Bernard, I can't any more! It is the night — (*Falls against BERNARD covering her face; BERNARD roused from his dream receives her in his arms.*)

Bernard.— What is it? What is it? What are you doing, Blanche? Father, father! (*Advances into the room, carrying BLANCHE who has fainted.*) Father, father, something is happening! Something terrible is happening!

CURTAIN

ACT III

A clearing in the park. In the back a stone bench in a semi-circle, in the center of the bench a small statuette; to the left of the bench a path loses itself under bushes; to the right a thicket. A road traverses the stage from left to right; at the entrance of the road, to the left, a fallen tree-trunk.

Catherine (enters with BLANCHE, BERNARD and little JOHN from the

left. BLANCHE is walking between CATHERINE and BERNARD. She has a bandage over her eyes. They slowly advance without speaking).— We can sit down here. (*Leads BLANCHE to the tree-trunk, and seats her.*) You know this part of the park, Bernard?

Bernard.— Yes, I come here sometimes. It is a little far from the house, but I know all the roads that lead up to the little statue. We are near the little statue of the stone bench, are we not?

Catherine.— It is there to your left.

Bernard.— That's it. I love this bench. Its stone is good, the rain dropping from the branches has washed it, and scooped little hollows into it. Sometimes there remains in these hollows a little water from the last rainfall.

Catherine.— Should you prefer to rest on that bench?

Bernard.— No, we are very well here, and we have not yet had all the enjoyment that we can get here. As I am not incessantly drawn away by the light of objects in the distance, I never leave a place without having received from it all the joy that I can.

Catherine.— And as things and beings only give up their secrets after awhile, you always end by receiving their most beautiful confidences.

Bernard.— Yes, yes! Do you feel a little of the freshness here? The foliage is heavy and motionless. Only the branches on high slightly move, but almost inaudibly. The air is still to-day; it is staying on the earth and has gradually become heavy. I felt the autumn already in the gust of wind that announced the last storm. Inhale the vapor of the earth; the odors want to rise, but they fall back to the soil and heavily hang there. (*With a tender soft voice.*) You say nothing, Blanche? Is the weather affecting you?

Blanche.— No, I am listening to you, and am trying to feel what you are saying.

Catherine.— Only eight more days, another week,— no more,— and we will remove your bandage. You will take it off in the evening, just as the light is hesitatingly retiring. Then, little by little, we will let you see more of the light; gradually as your eyes regain their strength.

Bernard.— Be sure not to do it too quickly.

Catherine.— Have no fear. We will follow the advice of the physician, and before a month is over Blanche herself will again lead you.

Bernard.— You will like to, Blanche,— lead me by the hand?

Blanche.— Oh, yes.

Catherine.— You understand, Bernard, it annoys her, this bandage. But it is a salutary experience that will teach her to measure her forces and will seem like a chastisement. Certainly a chastisement. To people

who assume against all prudence, these things that happen are not accidents, but punishments, and when the punishment surpasses the fault, it is nature's intention to set a good example. Then ——

Bernard (softly interrupts her).— Your wisdom, Catherine, is superior and barbarous, but it does not tell how the punishment sometimes fails to come to him who has committed the fault. Blanche, here, is perhaps suffering for the temerity of another.

Catherine.— Go away,— another one of your stories, this!

Bernard.— Nothing,— an idea ——

Catherine.— Carry your bandage with patience, Blanche. Carry it long enough to get cured. And find a sort of happiness in the thought that soon you will be free to see, and all the happier for that.

Blanche.— Yes, I think so.

Bernard.— I hope so, with all my heart. Do you know, Catherine, this is not the same thing as with me. At first, I thought that I myself was going blind, I,— I,— It seemed to me that I had lost something very considerable. And then she suddenly became so sad. Oh, she isn't made for that!

Blanche.— I will see again, I will see very well, I am sure of it. Through the bandage, through the closed pupils, I seem to see red lights, and I feel that if I could use my eyes everything around me would be in the places where I imagine them to be. I wish the week were over.

Catherine.— That will pass, and a week more of prudence and you will find all things in their place. It is true, beings a bit older, perhaps, the foliage of the trees wilted, and a wrinkle or two more on Catherine's face. You will see there is nothing sweeter than a convalescence. You will see the world again and it will seem more beautiful than ever.

Blanche.— Ah, Catherine, when one has thought of dying —— (*Enter JOHN.*)

John.— Catherine, father wants you.

Catherine.— Is it urgent, my boy?

John.— Not for father, perhaps, but for me. Isabelle and Genevieve are coming to get me and I want my good clothes.

Catherine.— Your good clothes? Where are you going?

John.— We are going to take a long walk, and then we will take dinner with Genevieve. I am a man,— I won't be back before night.

Catherine (laughing).— All alone?

John.— Perhaps not. They will come back with me by way of the lake. They will not be afraid because I am a man now.

Catherine.— Very well, we will go to see father, and I will give you

your good clothes. (*To BERNARD.*) I can go away? Don't go away from here. I won't be long, and I will come back for you.

Bernard.— You can go, Catherine. Besides, I know the way to the house. I know this clearing well.

Catherine.— I will be back soon. Wait for me. Come, John. (*CATHERINE and JOHN leave.*)

Bernard.— When you are cured you will always lead me. Now I can lead you myself. I know it all well. Give me your hand. You are going to play at still being sick. I can lead you here, because I am surer of my steps than you are.

Blanche.— Yes, give me your hand. I am not afraid.

Bernard.— That is well. Thank you. I am happy. Think that you are hiding under this bandage two humid bright eyes,— eyes that turn, go in advance of things and apprise you of what moves and of what stands still. You have suddenly become weaker and more astonished than a child, because your sight has been condemned to sleep for awhile. But the light is under your pupils; it is waiting as the sounds wait in the sensitive vibrant pipes of an organ, and it will burst forth powerfully, like the glorious sound when one touches the keys. Come nearer. At this moment your eyes must be like grain that is going to germinate; they are full of promise and expectation. Not a hope but what is permitted them,— and yet, they are quite closed and for the moment there is nothing inside them.

Blanche.— Oh, yes, yes!

Bernard.— Yes, memories. But that is not enough.

Blanche.— No, they make me uneasy. I do not know what would happen if I could never leave off this bandage. But at this moment I am only thinking of my eyes, and I have in my head only images of light.

Bernard.— Yes, yes.

Blanche.— Perhaps it is still weakness, but they defile incessantly before me in the uncertain night. Sometimes, they are feebly luminous,— but so precise. At other times there are discs of fire and very bright points that turn and grow larger. But I do not know why I tell you this. (*Silence.*) I should like to open my eyes and see three little blades of grass that are moving in the wind.

Bernard.— That would give you pleasure, would it not? Tell me; don't be ashamed to answer.

Blanche.— Yes,— it seems to me that at this moment I could not have a greater joy.

Bernard (getting up).— Then, Blanche, I am victorious and relieved of my greatest care. It has taken me ten days of uncertainty and torment

to obtain from you these words. You can never know what anxiety, what remorse I have undergone! Understand me well. When I led you to that window I wanted to hear you find a word, one single word of fervor and of desire. You sought, you drew from yourself fevered cries. Ah, these cries! And I asked more of you than you were capable of, but I understood for a moment that I had touched clearness and light. Then you fell,— I had led you too far. This minute I bought with the greatest distress. But now,— now you are saved, saved forever. You want to see a bit of green on the earth, don't you? It is wonderful. I am proud that you want to see that. But you would like more,— a tree with its fruit,— don't you want to see that as well?

Blanche.— Yes, yes.

Bernard.— A river, a beautiful river descending into the lake between rocks — that must be wonderful,— isn't it?

Blanche.— Yes, yes — a river —

Bernard (searching for words).— And the sky, with — with — I know not what — clouds, stars?

Blanche.— Yes, that too; all, everything. (*Throws herself on BERNARD'S breast with a sob and a laugh.*) I want to see! I want to see!

Bernard.— That is well. Let this beautiful desire grow. Let your eyes still sleep and dream. Wait, and this time recollect yourself as one must to merit the light. Now you are going back to your sun without fear, but with greatest ardor; without weakness, but with humble religiousness. I can taste the happiness of leading you by the hand, as one leads the blind. You have come for a few days to live in the shadow, you have been unhappy and disabled; but before you return to the world that is yours, I can guide you as one guides a stranger in one's native village. Come, walk slowly. Here the grass is thick and vivid. Do you note, that one does not see, that one rather feels that which one kills and crushes? Listen, I just struck a stone, I am going to take it away so that you won't hurt your feet. (*Bends down and picks up the stone.*) Touch it, the moss has made a fresh dress for it with a little odor of humus; on top it is full of earth and quite cold. (*Throws the stone into the bushes.*) I throw it, and now it will stay there, perhaps a hundred years, perhaps a thousand years, in this place where it has fallen. Feel its weight,— one lays so much stress on what a thing weighs when one does not know the qualities by which to recognize it from afar. There is the bench. One step, be careful. Sit down in the curve there. (*BLANCHE feels the stone with great awkwardness and sits down. BERNARD passes behind the bench and sits down.*)

Blanche (fearfully).— Where are you going, Bernard?

Bernard.— I will stay here, I am behind you. (*Leans on the bench*

behind BLANCHE.) We are very well this way, are we not? (*Silence. In the distance prolonged thunder.*)

Blanche.— Do you hear? It seems to me to be thunder.

Bernard.— Yes, a little,— there are storms that travel through the mountains. It is very far. The stone is not too cold?

Blanche.— No. (*Turns toward BERNARD and touches the statuette.*) What is this?

Bernard (*following her hand with his hand*).— It is the little statue. I know it well. I often come here. I have often touched it.

Blanche.— I know it, too, but I have never touched it.

Bernard.— That is natural. I know the little children, who are true clairvoyants, always stretch out their hands to take objects and to assure themselves of their form and consistency: but they don't preserve this instinct very long, for they are called 'touch-alls,' by the grown-ups and are made to feel ashamed. What do you want? You have been a very good child, and that is why you don't ever touch statues. I think, however, that they are not only made to be looked at. Give me your hand. Put it there. There is the head; do you feel this little bent head? (*Thunder in the distance.*)

Blanche.— The thunder again.

Bernard.— Ah, if you listen to the thunder you will not feel anything here. If you do not put all your attention, all your desires into the ends of your fingers you will not get all the joy that you can.

Blanche.— That is true,— I beg your pardon,— but it makes me a little afraid.

Bernard.— Don't think of it any more. Follow the marble with your fingers. I am trying to give you something — of that which I have — while you are blinded. Later you will do the same thing for me; I am happy to be able to give you something. Can you divine it? It is a woman; she is lifting and moving some material with her fingers, you can feel how it rolls out; it is hard, but light at the same time, the marble is in folds; it has been carved, really transformed as if it had changed its nature to give expression to some other material. Do you feel it? You must not fasten your fingers on this thing. They must glide over it, insensibly, they must abandon all will that might make them stiff or awkward,— that is good, — that is good,— softly — like that you contemplate an object; it impresses itself, it is that that raises your hand and lets it fall just in time. It is immovable, but it is that which directs and gives. You,— you are there possessed by its forces, governed by its power. (*Another thunderclap, nearer; neither BLANCHE nor BERNARD seems to pay attention to it.*) The little statue gives you everything. It gives back to you what

the ancient artist who made it confided to it. But it isn't alone the statue that one must approach thus; we must accost with the same humility all things of nature,—the smallest object, a pebble, a fruit, an animal—we must always accept: that is better, is stronger.

Blanche.—Oh, how I will see now! It seems to me that I will for a second time come into contact with the world; that I will come back more worthy— (*A violent clap of thunder cuts short her words.*) I have no fear—don't mind it—continue.

Bernard (continuing).—Very well. You now know this bit of marble.

Blanche.—Yes, it is a refreshing bit in the heaviness of this coming storm. Now, when I shall again be able to see it, it will be with greater joy. How I should love to see it now.

Bernard.—Wait, wait, you will see it later; you have often seen it, and you were in no hurry to touch it; but now that you have felt of it you want immediately to look at it. Wait, and you will understand many things. This woman of stone, seems to me to be dancing. Often young girls have danced near me, on the terrace, on the lawn, and I felt the noise of their feet, their singing, and the rhythm of their breath; they trace gestures in the air that the hand couldn't accompany, but that the eyes must follow and seize continuously in order to grasp entirely. But it was only after having felt under my fingers the grace, the delicacy of that little figure that itself does not move that I understood their dance, the charm of their movement. (*The wind is risen and blows in gusts; the light of day is veiled by great clouds.*) Your hand is trembling, Blanche; you feel the coming of the storm and you are agitated like a bit of wheat in the wind.

Blanche.—I am not very courageous and the wind brings sounds that frighten me. (*Near and nearer comes the thunder.*) A great storm is surely coming. Listen to the rain,—the earth is trembling, and the air is full of sudden chills.

Bernard.—Yes, perhaps we had better go. I don't know where my cane is. Wait, I think I left it on the ground near the tree-trunk. Don't leave the bench. I will go and get it.

Blanche.—Don't go far away, Bernard. I beg of you. When I no longer feel you there, I am not calm.

Bernard.—I am not going away; I am not going far; I am only looking for my cane. Don't leave the bench. Ah, there it is, right near the tree-trunk, I am sure. (*Slowly comes toward BLANCHE.*) You are still there?

Blanche (coming to the step).—There, your hand, give me your hand.

Bernard.—No, take my arm and let us go. (*Storm comes nearer and nearer.*) Let us leave quickly. You are not sufficiently covered. I did

not think of that. (*Takes the road to the left of the bench.*) I think that this is the road.

Blanche (going across).— We are not going very fast. I am a little afraid, Bernard. (*Stage is empty for several minutes, then from the left enter JEROME, CATHERINE, little JOHN, walking rapidly.*)

Catherine.— We left them here.

Jerome.— You see, there is no one. Catherine, that troubles me.

Catherine.— The storm is abating a bit; they can't be far. (*She cries.*) Bernard! (*Her voice is drowned by the thunder.*) They have gone toward the house but they can't have arrived yet,— John, run to the long alley, and tell me, can you see them? (*Little JOHN goes.*)

Jerome.— They shouldn't have been left alone.

Catherine.— But I was gone for such a short time; you asked me —

Jerome.— I am not reproaching you, Catherine.

Catherine.— They seemed so tranquil, seated there on the tree-trunk! But Bernard knows the roads; they are probably near the house.

Jerome.— Listen, — I seem to hear something.

Catherine (uneasy).— Bernard surely knows the roads.

Jerome.— He knows them when he is alone, and when he reflects; but perhaps he will not know how to direct himself when he has a frightened woman to lead. Oh, I am very anxious! What is John doing?

Catherine.— Wait, I think that I too hear something. (*They listen; flashes of lightning and thunder.*)

Jerome.— Ah, we can hear nothing with all this noise. There is John! Well?

John.— They are not on the wide alley. I have seen no one.

Jerome.— In a few minutes there will be a terrible downfall of rain. I will go to the lake. Go in the direction of the orchard. Take the child with you, and hurry. (*All three leave. CATHERINE and JOHN to the left, JEROME to the right. Stage is empty for several minutes, during which the storm reaches its greatest violence. The darkness is lighted up by great flashes of pale lightning. A sound of rustling foliage and BERNARD comes from the bushes, holding BLANCHE by the hand. Their garments are torn and drenched, BERNARD has lost his hat. BLANCHE is trembling visibly.*)

Blanche.— We have lost our way.

Bernard.— We will find it again. Have courage, please!

Blanche.— Oh, I should love to. I am a little cold. The branches must have shaken some rain into my neck.

Bernard (seeking).— This path turns, then loses itself. The ground is firmer there. We must be on a path or in a clearing.

Blanche.— We have not taken the right road. We left the round bench too quickly. But we have taken many steps. (*Thunder.*)

Bernard (taking her hand).— Come, let us go.

Blanche.— Oh, no, no!

Bernard.— What are you going to do here?

Blanche.— Listen, Bernard, if we had gone in the right direction we would have been near the house. But we are now still in the heart of the woods. Do you hear the rustling of the leaves? We are in the midst of the woods. We must have gone far away from the house. (*Thunder.*) If we walk more we will go still farther away. Oh, I am so afraid!

Bernard.— Then we will stay here. (*Leans against a tree. BLANCHE draws close to him. Thunder and lightning.*) Perhaps we will be more sheltered here.

Blanche.— Ah, how I should love to see! I have need to see! (*Instinctively raises her hand to the bandage. BERNARD feels the gesture, and lowers her arm.*) This is surely but a storm like other storms, but it is the first to terrify me like this. Oh, it is terrible not to know! I want to see! Do you hear the branches crackle? If the wind breaks one we will be crushed.

Bernard (trying to distract BLANCHE).— Unchained force strikes those who see, as well as those who don't. Stay, and be calm. It does not increase the sadness not to know where the blow comes from. But don't worry; don't be alarmed! We are not in danger. It seems to me that the wind is dying. (*A sudden gust responds.*) One never knows from where the blow comes; with eyes, one can doubtlessly see what it is that wounds, but one can hardly know whence it comes. Come closer to me; you will get less rain; you will be less cold. When your sight will be restored, you will often think of this moment that we are now living through; and you will at other times find yourself in the midst of a tempest,— but it will never again be like this; you will never again experience the same fright. (*While he speaks, slowly, as if to put to sleep BLANCHE's fear, she has raised her hand to the bandage, and draws it off lightly, so as not to attract BERNARD's attention. She suddenly utters a cry, no longer able to restrain herself.*)

Blanche.— Ah, I can see! I see very well. We have turned. Oh, I see very well! We have come back to the same place. There is the bench! There is the statue! There is —

Bernard.— What have you done, Blanche? What have you done? (*Tries to draw her to him, but an intense flash of lightning has dazzled BLANCHE; her eyes are dilated, her face is filled with stupefaction and sorrow. There is a long silence, during which the thunder dies out gradually. BLANCHE puts away BERNARD's hand and sighs heavily.*)

Blanche.— Oh, oh!

Bernard.— What has happened?

Blanche (in a low voice).— Ah, Bernard, ah! (*With anguish.*) This is the end, this is surely the end! Forever, this time, forever!

Bernard.— The end of what? The end of what,— forever?

Blanche.— You understand, Bernard. The lightning, Bernard. Oh, it burns horribly, — the lightning in my eyes!

Bernard (brokenly).— Ah, I understand. I understand. The sadness of it! Oh, the sadness of it! You are then not made for the light, Blanche, not made to preserve it? Try, try, again! Nothing? — you are sure,— nothing?

Blanche (weeps).— No, nothing!

Bernard.— The forces have united themselves against you, against us. We can no longer resist. We must free ourselves now. Let us go! (*He puts forth his cane, seeking his way; draws BLANCHE, sobbing, to him. In the distance, voices calling. BERNARD! BERNARD!*)

Blanche.— There they are,— do you hear them? Wait, you must not tell them yet; they must not know right away. (*Tremblingly replaces the bandage over her dead eyes.*) Let us go now.

Voice of Catherine (very near).— Bernard! Bernard!

Bernard.— Let us go now. (*They leave slowly, to the left; their hands extended, very close to each other.*)

CURTAIN

ACT IV

The edge of a cliff overlooking the lake. The ground gradually mounts toward the back of the stage, and then abruptly stops. An abyss beyond to the left displays a sharp profile. In the darkness one divines the lake. At the horizon silhouettes of mountains of the opposite shore. Bits of starry sky, rocks and stones in the middle of the stage and to the right. A beautiful summer's night — some clouds. The moon appears, then disappears. Stage is empty a moment, then enter BLANCHE and BERNARD, bareheaded, and holding each other by the hand. They walk hesitatingly and fearfully. BERNARD with his cane gropingly searches out obstacles before him. Leads BLANCHE, who has taken off her bandage and is carrying it. They are speaking in a troubled manner; there are long silences.)

Bernard.— Now I do not at all know where we are.

Blanche.— It doesn't matter.

Bernard.— No, it scarcely matters —

Blanche.— We must sit down, I am exhausted —

Bernard.— That is true. It is probably half an hour ago that we left the house.

Blanche.— It seems to me more than an hour.

Bernard.— No, but you cannot judge in the same manner. The time must seem shorter to those who see —

Blanche.— I am so tired!

Bernard.— Wait, I feel a stone. There I am. Come, sit down next to me. (*BLANCHE glides to the ground and leans against BERNARD.*) You are not used to walking like this; have not yet become used to look for the place by putting out your foot and stretching out your hand in advance of your body — are you well?

Blanche.— Yes, I am better.

Bernard.— Let us stay then. And talk, or not talk, as you please. That makes no difference. I no longer have need of courage, you no longer have need of hope. We are well here, we will be well everywhere.

Blanche.— You do not know this spot, do you?

Bernard.— No, for the past five minutes I seem to have lost all knowledge of the roads. We have crossed the orchard, and as the back of it opens out into the country I think we have come out of the park. We walked too quickly. I thought I knew the place, but now I no longer know where we are. I have not clearly felt the paths for several minutes; there are many stones here —

Blanche.— I no longer hear the sighing of the trees.

Bernard.— Neither do I. I divine a great freedom, a largeness in the atmosphere; the least of sounds seems far away, and seems to gain the void without obstacle. One hears feeble rumors come and odors which must have passed over much ground. We must be on the plateau at the end of the park, or —

Blanche.— Or?

Bernard.— No, nothing. I will say nothing. To-day's storm has left the earth damp and fresh. You are cold?

Blanche.— They are not looking for us? I hope they won't be anxious about us.

Bernard.— No. When we left my father was sleeping; he will wake up only in time to go to bed. The poor man is tired. Catherine is working. I said we were going on the terrace. Catherine will come down when Genevieve and Isabelle have brought back John, but it isn't time for that yet; we will try to return before that.

Blanche.— Oh, not yet, not now. I will not have the strength to appear calm. (*Silence.*)

Bernard.— Then, Blanche, you are sure,— you are quite sure this time?

Blanche.— I was sure before the lightning came. It is my fault. Do you hear, Bernard? I am now speaking with great calm. I have never been so calm and so perturbed at the same time, as at this moment. It is my fault. I did not deserve to keep my eyesight. I was not able to resist; I was afraid, terribly so. I knew that I had only to remove the bandage to see again; and I had such a longing to see since that evening of the sunset. I could have resisted this longing, perhaps, but the storm troubled me. I wished to see, and I saw —

Bernard.— What?

Blanche.— A flash of lightning — I cannot explain to you what that is — a flash of lightning. But you will understand later. I will pass my time making you understand, — seeing that I must live a long time.

Bernard.— Live?

Blanche.— Oh, pay no attention. I am no longer sad. I couldn't even cry. I am stunned, as if I had received a blow on the forehead. I don't know what I am saying. But I am better here. I couldn't breathe down there. They were around us, so peaceable — they did not know. They will not realize what I know —

Bernard.— But, perhaps, you do not know anything as yet; one might be able —

Blanche.— Listen. There are times when quite naturally and easily a certitude is born within us. It returns and increases in our breast, and is a thing that is heavy and stifles, and warns us before any other warning can come. When my mother died, I was in a room next to hers, where I could not enter. I had been told nothing. No one had spoken to me frankly. But the moment she died this same thing that I now feel commenced to swell in my throat, and I think I knew of her end before those even who were leaning over her bedside. Now this takes hold of me so strongly! And then, awhile ago, after dinner, I went into the lower room where I know that there is always light. I was certainly alone. I removed my bandage — Ah, Bernard, you understand! You see, I can think of it with a heart quite calm,— but I saw nothing, nothing, nothing! I took the torch; the air agitated the candles and sent warmth to my face. I wanted to be sure; I did not tremble. I put my fingers into it, I burnt my fingers. Nothing, always nothing! Then I replaced my bandage and came back to you all.

Bernard.— I have nothing to say to you, then. There are in us,

over us, around us strange forces against which we are powerless, against which I believe no one can do anything. We did what we could; now we have finished, and we must wait. But stay near me and give me your hand. (*The moon comes out and all is bathed in its light.*)

Blanche (illuminated by the light).— Bernard, don't you feel it? I think something is happening. I don't breathe in the same manner. What is happening? There certainly is something in the air.

Bernard.— I don't know, I don't know! I have always felt the things that I did not understand come and go in the air. You are uneasy? Do you want to walk? Do you want to try to get back to the house?

Blanche.— Oh, no, not yet. I have removed the bandage, and will not have courage to put it back just yet. Since noon they have taken such pains; they talk so hopefully. I shall never know how to explain to them— when they know, it will seem to me that I have become blind for a second time. You heard what your father said to me? 'You haven't your ordinary manner; the storm has frightened you very much,' and then he said, 'This bandage must be warm. We will soon remove it,— and it will be time for us, too, who are less happy here, since we no longer see your eyes.' Poor father! He will see them again! I do not know how to explain to him — to him —

Bernard.— That is true. Let us reflect. Be strong; we will have to replace the bandage and wait.

Blanche.— We will not go back now. I will never be able to kiss him this evening without trembling. He always said to me: 'Your eyes will be useful here when mine are closed.'

Bernard (quickly).— He said that to you?

Blanche.— Yes — but — but — he said it when we were alone. It was an idea that he loved. He repeated it often and I loved to hear it; I also loved the idea that I had eyes,— and now, now I have nothing — Bernard, I will never be good for anything —

Bernard (interrupting her).— Come, let us leave; I will try to find the way.

Blanche.— No, please, not yet! I ran away with you because I could no longer show them a tranquil countenance. Here, calm comes back to me. Let us stay a bit; I won't speak any more.

Bernard.— Yes, speak — is it true that words are not permitted us at this moment?

Blanche.— I could walk ahead of you and say to you: There is a tree here, there is a stone there, and a brook, and a large branch! But now? Now you draw me along like a little child whose legs are tired. You have brought me here quickly, quickly, because I wanted to fly from the house;

it seems to me that I will be afraid to walk again. Ah, I can no longer be of service to you, Bernard — I hinder you, it is I who am in your way — You say nothing, but you feel that I am ready to cry — no, I don't wish to annoy you. You know enough for yourself, but perhaps you do not know enough for two — and I, I know nothing; leave me here against this stone, and go away. Go away all alone. You will always be strong enough, but leave me here — I am but a poor creature without my eyes — at present I am fit only for dying — ah, leave me, leave me! (*She weeps against BERNARD'S breast and drops the bandage.*)

Bernard.— Yes, yes, cry! Since noon you have been holding back tears that want to be shed.

Blanche.— You feel my tears, Bernard? My eyes no longer will see, but they will still weep. What sad, sad days I will have to live through —

Bernard.— You do not know. Wait, and let this day pass, and other days. You are this minute still suffering from the great blow. You do not yet know that habit lends a bitter sweetness to the deepest agony. Come here, I can soothe you, and I would wish to have the tremendous courage of women who sing, while rocking a suffering child, women who can perform the miracle of gathering the sobs of their heart and of transforming them into songs — listen — listen!

Blanche.— Yes, I hear something.

Bernard.— It is a small voice, a tiny voice — it is singing.

Blanche.— There are several voices now. (*In the distance little JOHN'S voice joined to those of ISABELLE and GENEVIEVE.*)

Bernard.— It is John's voice. The young girls are bringing him home.

Blanche.— Where, then, are we?

Bernard (troubled and anxious).— I do not know,— I do not know what road they are taking, but I can call them.

Blanche.— No, no! Please, don't let them come near us. I haven't the strength to show myself, to smile like a happy convalescent, and to speak. I can't just yet — Bernard, please —

Bernard.— But we must go. I do not know where we are, I am completely lost. I am afraid we are on the wrong side.

Blanche.— Which side?

Bernard.— No, nothing. I must be mistaken. (*The singing comes nearer.*) You hear them? There they are. Let me call. We will return to the house. You will sleep.

Blanche.— Oh, sleep!—

Bernard.— But we must return — I am uneasy here. And then, another thing, they will be at the house before us. My father will awaken,

Catherine will come down and they will look for us on the terrace, they will be uneasy —

Blanche.— Yes, that is true. (*Voices come still nearer.*) Wait, wait! You can call them right away. I must rest my face, I think I will be able to. They are not far now. I must put back the bandage. Oh, where is my bandage? I dropped it a minute ago — it cannot be far. (*She feverishly looks for it on the ground and the stones.* I don't find it, Bernard. It is lost. They will see, they will look at me,— they must notice it. Oh, my God! They will see my eyes. I will not be able to say anything,— to explain anything,— you haven't found it, Bernard?)

Bernard (looking for it).— No, it is not here, on my side.

Blanche.— We have but to let them pass. We will follow right after.

Bernard.— You haven't found it? No? — then give me your hand. Come, they are passing close to us. (*In getting up he strikes against a rock; slowly turns, drawing BLANCHE after him; both stop, hidden by the stones. The moon is behind a cloud. The stage is dark. They are invisible to anyone coming from the right. The voices come nearer and nearer.*)

Blanche.— Do as you wish. Perhaps they will see us immediately,— one can't tell. Let us be quiet and listen. (*GENEVIEVE, ISABELLE, and JOHN come in from the right, singing. The two young girls go arm-in-arm. GENEVIEVE is holding JOHN's hand; he is carrying a lantern. The three cross the stage from right to left without stopping.*)

Isabelle.— Don't swing the lantern, John. The moon is hidden, and we can't see very clearly.

John.— My light won't last until we get to the house.

Genevieve.— Yes,— this way is shorter. We will have but twenty more minutes. (*JOHN comes near the edge of the abyss, and cries: Hou! Hou!*) Don't go there, John! You make me afraid. (*They leave to the left. BERNARD quickly gets up as if to follow them, and to call. BLANCHE holds him back.*)

Blanche.— Don't call them!

Bernard.— Why not?

Blanche.— We will return alone. We will arrive shortly after them; they won't go so fast.

Bernard.— They go faster than we do. (*hesitating.*) Blanche did you understand?

Blanche.— What?

Bernard.— What Genevieve said?

Blanche.— No, no! — Ah, yes! — It seems to me. Wait! She said: "Don't go there, John! You make me afraid!" That is true. What does it mean? It is true! If you were to call? (*The voices are farther and farther away.*)

Bernard.— No, it is too late. They are singing. They wouldn't hear now. It is too late. We will go back alone.

Blanche.— Do you hear? In which direction are their voices? I think they went this way.

Bernard.— Yes, perhaps.

Blanche.— Let us go. (*They don't move.*) Why did she say to him, "Don't go there, John! You make me afraid"?

Bernard.— I don't know. Without doubt — because he was losing himself in the darkness.

Blanche.— No. John himself must have carried the light. No. it was not for that.

Bernard.— Then I don't know.

Blanche.— Let us go — it is time.

Bernard.— You are anxious now. Your hand is trembling. You are afraid, Blanche?

Blanche.— I don't know, but I am tired, broken. I am not used to walking like this — I may fall —

Bernard.— No, never.

Blanche.— Yes, perhaps.

Bernard.— Very well, then we will both fall. Rescue passed so near to us and we let it go by.

Blanche.— It was better so. We will go alone. Let us go now, let us leave quickly. I can no longer stay here, I am no longer quiet.

Bernard.— But you haven't found your bandage yet.

Blanche.— No, but that makes no difference. I will put a handkerchief there,— anything — I will get a bandage at the house, but I am anxious to leave.

Bernard.— Take hold of me — if we fall — one never knows, a stone, a hole — I want us to fall together, both at the same time.

Blanche.— Why do you say that? Of what are you thinking?

Bernard.— Oh, I am thinking of nothing. Merely a habit.

Blanche.— Yes, you are thinking of something. You are thinking of what Genevieve said to little John.

Bernard.— Well, yes. That surprised me. But, please, don't speak of it any more.

Blanche.— We no longer need to speak of it. Nothing comes of it. And then if we arrive without accident, it is nature that accepts us; it is she who does not repulse us, but if not —

Bernard (with authority).— Keep quiet.

Blanche.— No, no! I want to say it. You can feel; my heart is not

beating too quickly, I am calm and collected. I feel, not fear, but a profound emotion —

Bernard.— Yes, a profound emotion. Ever since I have been walking with hands outstretched I have never known the like.

Blanche.— Let us walk now, I wish it.

Bernard.— Wait a bit. Just a minute.

Blanche.— No, no, at once. It is stronger than I. I want to leave.

Bernard.— Good, I will go ahead. You must take hold of my coat.

Blanche.— No, I want to walk at your side — we will go on, holding each other by the hand, and like that —

Bernard.— Like that?

Blanche.— Oh, well, if anything should happen, if there should be a branch across the road, for instance, it will strike us together.

Bernard.— Very well. It seems to me that they went there — let us go, not too fast —

Blanche.— Faster, if you wish, it is all the same to me. (*They both advance toward the left, mounting the stage in the direction of the cliff's edge, and the moon reappearing, its light falls strongly on them.*) Hold my hand tightly, Bernard.

Bernard.— It is trembling a bit,— your hand.

Blanche.— I don't think so, for I am very calm, very firm. (*They still advance and are but a few steps from the side of the cliff.*)

Bernard (stopping).— Listen, Blanche, there is something supreme, something supernatural on this road that we are going and in the words we are saying. I have never yet known my steps, except by my steps themselves, I have never felt the ground except by what it meant under my feet; but I have always been alone. This evening I am no longer alone; for the first time I feel that not only my body was making me advance thus behind my outstretched hands — I should like to tell you something.

Blanche.— Speak, Bernard, but let us advance, just the same — we must go. Hold me fast. (*They advance still more.*)

Bernard.— Listen, listen to me, Blanche. I do not know what may happen, but I feel what I have never felt in walking alone. I think I am afraid. Yes, I will hold you fast,— but listen to me. I will tell you —

Blanche.—Come —

Bernard.— Oh, stop a bit! The moment is serious. My heart is full, but I feel that because my condition has always caused me to divine things —

Blanche.— But we must go back! I want to go away.

Bernard.— Yes, yes, we will go, but I must find words. You said just now that you would have loved to have lent me your eyes. Yes, if

you had had eyes, your good eyes, I would not have wished to attach them to my poor imprisoned flesh. Ah, I don't know how to say it! Just a minute, I beg of you! I know now what I must say, what I must say to you, before we go any further. (*BLANCHE stops.*) If we regain the house this evening, if we reach the house this evening; if we encounter nothing on the way there, would you all your life long stay near me? Blanche, it is a prayer that to-day only do I dare to address to you. (*They have come to the side of the cliff.*)

Blanche.— Oh, Bernard, why do you tell me that? Why does your voice tremble?

Bernard.— Because — stop, — let us stop a bit. I would never have dared to tell you before, — but I am sure of it now, and you can hear it this evening, for we are living through a terrible hour. We are going to die, perhaps, and I have loved you for a long time. You are sad, very sad, to-day. It is but a little thing, — but accept this avowal!

Blanche.— Oh, my God! — Say it again! Say it again! Bernard, let me hear it again!

Bernard.— Yes, for a long time, and I believe I would not have said it, ever — but now it is necessary, and I am happy that I have spoken. (*Draws BLANCHE to him and kisses her.* During this embrace, BERNARD and BLANCHE, without being conscious of it, have turned away from the precipice, toward the opposite direction.)

Blanche (in BERNARD'S arms).— Ah, thank you! I have waited for days! — Did you know it? You loved me — I no longer feel the darkness in my eyes, Bernard! It is the light, — another light!

Bernard.— Yes, the light! Oh, I understand.

Blanche.— You will understand still better. Ah, I will thank you with such fervor — I have waited so long! But we must not stay here, — say no more; we know enough now to continue on our route. (*They have turned toward the right road.*)

Bernard.— Where is the road? Haven't we turned? Oh, if only we hadn't lost the right direction!

Blanche (drawing him little by little toward the exit at the left.)— It is here, I am sure of it! It is here that we must go —

Bernard.— Lean on me as much as you want — I could not speak sooner, but I feel great strength in my arms and something powerful in my heart.

Blanche.— It is the light, Bernard, it is the true light. Feel my hands; formerly you did not want them to lead you; they were awkward, inattentive perhaps. Nothing now will distract them. You did not want to take them: take them now. They no longer will be able to guide you, but they are open, full of a poor love that they wish to offer you.

Bernard.— Give them to me.

Blanche.— They are full of memories —

Bernard.— Mine could wish for no more. Let us go, do you want to?

Blanche.— You have said only one word, and I am happy. Oh, it is wonderful! How one little word suffices sometimes to give happiness — I do not walk in the same manner; it seems to me that we are not walking in the same manner.

Bernard.— Yes, what has happened? I no longer have this fright, this fear of advancing. We are on the road, on the good road, are we not?

Blanche.— All roads now are good for us.

Bernard.— No! no! I don't want to make any more mistakes.

(*They go the left.*)

Blanche.— Yes, that is the way we must go.

Bernard.— I think it is there —

Blanche.— Slowly,— let us go slowly — I am very happy. I am sure now that we will arrive.

CURTAIN

GEORGES DUHAMEL

BY SASHA BEST

GEORGES DUHAMEL belongs to the group of young French writers, who, inspired and directly influenced by Whitman, sing modern man, and are seeking to bring art into closer touch with the masses.

The old art values based on classic love of form have made way for new ideals in which intuition and sensibility are the most important factors. Detail and analysis are no longer sought after, and the harmony to be found in masses is now the poet's aspiration. Only what is general, universal, is of value. The cult of the individual has ceded its place to one that embraces humanity in its entirety. The individual counts only inasmuch as through him the largely human is to be reached.

Old doctrines and tenets of art are overthrown; all that is artificial and arbitrary is cast off to be replaced by more vital truth and unity. The work of art is judged according to its inner truth only, and the old love of form has given way to a love of truth and life. "It is life that counts, not living," may be said to be the *device* of these young reformers.

This striving for truth brings with it a love for the simple and natural. All primitive feeling, every spontaneous sensation are reverently treated; nothing is so humble, unattractive and unassuming but what it can be viewed in the light and an all-encircling, all-comprehending love. To this tendency to exalt the primitive and natural is added the inclination to treat all subjects more abstractly and more generally.

As outer perfection of form has lessened in value, the mere 'impression' comes to be more appreciated and the artist dwells on the intention rather than on the completion. The '*aperception générale*,' the detail that evokes the whole; the nuance that is important enough to create an atmosphere, the touch that is alive enough to arouse a sensation are essential and vital because more delicate and more susceptible to change and motion than that which is finished and perfected. The work of art in its completion is too stark and rigid and because it too perfectly expresses and explains, it no longer permits of a sensation being aroused. That which suggests therefore has larger possibilities. Thus the impressionistic in literature goes hand in hand with the impressionism in painting and music.

Duhamel, though only twenty-seven years old, has published three volumes of poetry, many critical prose essays and three dramas, 'In the

Shadow of Statues,' 'The Combat,' and 'Light.' All of these plays have been produced in Paris. 'The Combat' and 'In the Shadow of Statues' were played in the winter of 1913, the former at the 'Théâtre des Arts,' the latter at the 'Théâtre de l'Odéon.' Blanche Albane, the author's wife, friend and protégée of Sarah Bernhardt, played the leading rôle in all three plays. 'Light,' the play here translated, was presented at the Odéon in 1912, under the direction of Antoine, founder of the 'Théâtre Libre,' and the generous promoter of all that is original and progressive in dramatic art. Duhamel aspires to reform the modern theatre by adding a lyric idealistic element to the realistic. Over realistic scenes of his plays hovers an atmosphere of strange unreality, in which his characters move and act. A large and beautiful symbolism prevails. He rejects the dialogue of everyday conversation that minutely describes and analyzes, and makes his characters speak in large flowing language, the exponents of his original and beautiful ideas. He creates types and abstractions rather than people, and his dramatic effects are the result of a contrasting of situations. His method, like that of Maeterlinck, is the concentrated effort that rather suggests than explains.

He says in his 'Propos Critiques': 'The moment has come when man directly must be addressed. Honor and love to the poet who strives to be man first and then the poet; honor and love to the poet who, filled with his mission, zealously seeks the one word, the one song that will reach all men of all races. The greatest worth in the poet's art lies in his greatest generality. And let it, above all, be a living art! The future of such an art is inexhaustible. It permits of no rules no regulations, and will come under the head of no system. We are in the center of a movement which is at one and the same time a reaction and a continuation. Great writers have conducted classicism, symbolism and naturalism to their end, and already younger poets are thinking, dreaming, living other things. Romanticism has projected into the world women that are perfect and beautiful by description and definition, and men who are naught but noble in principle and action. Naturalism in its mad eccentricities has cinematographed personages in attitudes that logically interpreted reveal nothing of the latent nobility in man. It behooves a new art however to choose among the realities of life those that preserve the individual in all his native grandeur. The eyes of the poet of to-day stray less toward the clouds, but he seeks with his eyes those of his fellow-men. He no longer dwells in towers, but desires to step out and give affectionate greeting to his fellow creatures. The result is a poetry which may be called cordial, and from which all ceremonial and all artifice are banished.'

THE MAID'S PROLOGUE

TO E. L. M.

BY ARTHUR KETCHUM

The scene represents a hillside above Domremy: At the back it rises high against the sky. At one side it dips and permits a portion of the valley to be seen, a few red-roofed cottages, a pointed church steeple and a shining bit of river bordered by poplars and green meadows. On the hillside are scattered a few grazing sheep. At the other side is a thick clump of willow trees, and before them are three crumbling stone steps and three quarters; facing the spectator a large cross of black, weather-stained wood. On the lowest step, gazing down into the valley, her distaff in her lap, sits the MAID. The time is a late summer afternoon when the light has grown faint and the sky pale. There is a long silence. The MAID sits motionless.

Maid.— So still! so still, it is as though the world
Were hushed with wonder at some blessed thing
That God had sent it and was thanking Him!
So still, I almost hear upon the grass
The shadows of the little drifting clouds
That mingle with my sheep and fade and die!
So still! so still! (*A pause, she rises, stretching out her arms.*)
O, God has made it all! And it is good!
The dear green world — so warm, so sure, so safe
Within His keeping! made for men to love,
Made for my feet to press, mine eyes to see.
And all within His care! Why did I fear
And wait and tremble all this long still day
To hear the voice again and see once more
The great fierce angel with the shining sword,
Who took my breath at noontime yesterday,
And woke a frightened tumult in my heart!
All day I've waited and it has not come!
All day I've listened and I have not heard!
Now evening comes and all the steadfast stars
Above my honest hilltop — I did dream
The radiant angel and the awful voice — A dream! A dream!

My mother kissed me when I went to-day
 Forth with the sheep: 'Dream, little maid,' she said,
 'White dreams of maidenhood — I dreamed them too!
 See now, it was a dream: all girls do dream,
 My mother said so: it was all a dream,
 I have been fearful all day for a dream!
 I've shrunk with terror from a thing of air!
 The willow trees are real — the sun, the sky,
 The grazing sheep, my mother's kiss — all real —
 And I have dreamed the mighty angel's face
 The out-stretched sword, the fearful word that cried,
 'France must be saved, and saved by thine own hand!
 Ah, this fair France is all the world, and I
 A maiden with a distaff in mine hand!
 Whose longest journey never was so far
 I could not see the cross upon the church
 And find the steep red roof of mine own home
 And bring my sheep back with the first white star —
 Surely, amid His thousands — wise and great
 And brave and mighty — God hath many a one
 To save this splendid France, not I, not I,
 Joan, the shepherdess — whose only world
 Is but these still green hills in sight of home,
 Whose only followers the foolish sheep
 Grazing on their own shadows all day long!
 And Theophile ——
 And yet — the angel! Nay, I will forget
 Just as I would forget a dream of yesternight!
 A shadow of the night — a loitering star!
 My flax is all unspun — another idle day!
 (*She begins to spin, and sings.*)

Came three Saints to me last night,
 All day long I see them yet.
 St. Michael and St. Catherine
 And St. Margaret!

Two bore palms within their hands,
 St. Catherine and Margaret.
 Two bent down to smile on me,
 Tho' their eyes were wet.

THE MAID'S PROLOGUE

Came three Saints to me last night,
 Shod with light, with crownèd head
 Yet St. Michael bore no palm —
 But a sword instead.

(A bell rings in the valley; the MAID's distaff falls from her hands and she listens with wide, solemn eyes.)

Maid.— It is the Angel! the day is done!

O God! the dark — the dark is near at hand!

(She falls upon her knees — the great cross towering above her.)

Ave Maria, gratia plena Dominus tecum!

Ora pro nobis!

(The light darkens; in the shadow of the willows before her there emerge the three shining figures of ST. MICHAEL, ST. CATHERINE, ST. MARGARET. JOAN watches them motionless as they grow brilliantly distinct.)

St. Michael.— Joan! *(She does not stir.)*

Joan! *(She covers her face with her hands.)*

Maid (brokenly).— My mother said all maids do dream;

This is a dream, I know, but oh, I am afraid, afraid.

St. Michael.— Joan!

Maid.— I hear my name said! Yea, I hear a voice!

St. Michael.— Joan! *(She uncovers her face and makes the sign of the cross.)*

St. Michael.— France must be saved!

St. Catherine and St. Margaret (she bends close, their voices seem like far-off echoes).— France must be saved!

St. Michael.— And saved by thine own hand.

St. Catherine.— Saved by thine own hand.

St. Margaret.— It is the will of God!

St. Michael and St. Catherine.— The will of God.

(ST. MICHAEL holds out toward her a sword, and the other saints cross it with the palms they carry — the vision fades, all save the sword and crossed palms; the MAID kneels motionless, there is silence. From behind the trees comes THEOPHILE, the shepherd.)

Theophile.— So, here thou art! I've sought thee everywhere,

But here I find thee — thou art late to-night!

My sheep are folded safe an hour ago,

Come, let's be going! I will help thee find —

Joan! Joan! Can'st thou not speak?

Hast thou no word — for me who came so far

To find thee in the dusk, knowing you fear the dark?

Why wilt thou only kneel and kneel with
Eyes that seem to listen — (*He comes close to her, awkwardly.*)
See, here is a rose I pulled
And kept for thee a red, red rose —
No common wilding thing — but garden-grown and fair.
Wilt thou not take it — Joan?

(*The vision of MICHAEL appears, holding out the sword.*)

Maid (*still with unseeing eyes*).— It is God's will! Aye, give it me!

(*The vision brightens.*)

Theophile.— Here, wilt thou have my rose?

Maid.— Nay, not the rose, the sword. (*The dark falls suddenly.*)

THE MANCHESTER PLAYERS

BY A. E. F. HORNIMAN

IN London a great many people had done a great deal of talking. They had talked very much about drama in all sorts of theatres,—national theatres and Shakespeare memorial theatres and municipal theatres and endowed theatres. They had lectured and they had written long articles in extremely well-paying magazines, but nothing had been done. This grew so wearisome that I started to do something myself. It was in 1894 when we undertook the Avenue Theatre venture, which was a failure. I say it explicitly, but it was a fruitful failure. Never mind failures. Everything that has ever been done always has been and always will be founded on failures. We can only learn through failure, and I can tell you what came through this failure. One of the things was this. We produced a small one-act play; it was the author's first attempt as a dramatist. That man was Mr. W. B. Yeats, and his play was *The Land of Heart's Desire*. Another playwright whom we introduced to the public was Mr. Louis N. Parker. A third man claims that he owes his success to the Avenue Theatre venture. At least I gave him the excuse for saying so in the preface to *John Bull's Other Island*, and he draws royalties for his plays. I never said that he is a dramatist; it is still a matter for futile discussion. He calls himself one and gets a great deal of advertisement in the papers, but I do not know whether that affects the point. His name is George Bernard Shaw. When *Arms and the Man* at the Avenue Theatre came to an end, gentlemen went on talking as before; they did nothing.

Some years later I heard of a little company in Dublin, struggling along desperately, who styled themselves the Irish National Theatre Society. Mr. Yeats, who is an old friend of mine, read me his play, *The King's Threshold*, and I offered to make the costumes for it. I did not know anything about making stage clothes, but I bought a sewing machine and learned to work it and took the garments to Dublin. The society was struggling under difficult circumstances, so I promised help and gave it, to the best of my ability, for several years. Now they no longer require my help, and doubtless they are thankful to be independent of English assistance.

The Abbey at Dublin is what may be called an experimental theatre, where but one class of work can be done satisfactorily. But this is not the wide dramatic work, the kind of plays and real acting that I had always desired to see in a theatre of my own. I gained a good deal of experience

in touring with the Abbey company. You learn a great deal when you sit in the vestibule and try to sell books. You find people are curious and ask many questions when you are selling them something, as I have found in many towns of England. The result was that Manchester was chosen for the scheme.

You should be told that I have never acted a part on the stage in my life. I have never even dressed up as 'Little Red Riding Hood' in the back drawing-room, nor written nor produced a play. If you had read as many plays as I have in the past twenty years, you would be too terrified ever to venture to write one. I knew a little too much of the complications of the theatre to interfere on its technical side.

Fortunately, a man was at hand who had a natural genius for theatrical work, and to that man, Mr. Iden Payne, was due all the credit for the artistic merit of our productions in the beginning. He fought in the struggles of those years of foundation-laying.

Now here is a piece of advice to every one of you. When a man or a woman is producing a play, let him or her be a tyrant. If you had a valuable watch, you would not interfere with the jeweler who is cleaning it; yet the spoiling of a watch cannot be compared to the loss incurred by the spoiling of a play. The artist must work undisturbed and he cannot do anything if he be interfered with.

At Manchester we started in a hall (this was not necessary) as a beginning. Never ask any one to act in a hall. It is an awful place artistically. The man who buys a cheap seat does not get his money's worth; and the people in the cheap seats are the backbone of the theatre. They have few dinner and social engagements to interfere with their going to the play. *And they are not overfed.* I have heard a great deal about 'the over-tired business man.' When anyone says to me, 'I have worked so hard all day long that I require relaxation,' I say, 'There are plenty of music halls for you.'

Now I am going to tell you what I mean by a Civilized Theatre. That is a rather unusual phrase, but I use it because in England, when you say stock company, you make all the old gentlemen say, 'I remember what it was like when I was young,' and then they talk an hour or so about what happened before 1870. The principals in those days were people who came down from London by stagecoach, or at a later period by train, and who had to go on and play their parts at short notice with a strange company, and without any rehearsals to speak of. Think what that meant. A company of people rehearsing *Othello* at a local theatre, then *Desdemona*, *Iago* and *The Moor*, arriving in the town the night before, playing after only one rehearsal. What would that be like to *our* eyes and ears? Here, when you

speaking of a stock company, in many cases you mean a company that puts up good plays with few and hurried rehearsals, and neither plays nor actors get a fair chance.

When I say 'civilized,' I don't mean the antithesis to 'Red Indian.' I mean something that has to do with a city, something for a city to boast of, just as Londoners may boast of the catalogue of the British Museum Library. Any cultivated Frenchman will acknowledge the importance of the Théâtre Français in Paris and he will expect you to acknowledge that it is the most important in the world, and if you do not agree he will be sorry for your ignorance.

To return to the subject of a Civilized Theatre. It does not matter whether it is paid for by the state, or the King's privy purse, or the city, or a well-off man. A Civilized Theatre means that a city has something of cultivation in it, something to make literature grow; a real theatre, not a mere amusing toy. What we want is the opportunity for our men and women, our boys and girls to get a chance to see the works of the greatest dramatists of modern times, as well as the classics for their pleasure as well as their cultivation.

I hope English-speaking people won't disagree with me too strongly when I say that the best performances of Shakespeare I have ever seen were done in Germany. I hate to say it, and I wish that some one could truthfully tell me that it is not so. Certainly, we have splendid individual performances of Shakespearean rôles, and we have beautiful stage productions. Yes, we have *wonderful* stage productions. I won't say where or under whose management it was presented, but I will go so far as to say that I have seen *Twelfth Night* turned into a comic opera, and every song from the whole of the Shakespearian comedies brought into it. The greater part of the play was cut for want of time, a mere detail of that sort is of trifling consequence in certain managerial minds.

Handsome scenery does not matter much, nor do the costumes, but the actors must hypnotize you so that your eyes and ears bring to you the beautiful thoughts intended for your mind by the dramatist.

I was asked the other day if I had 'stars' in my company, and I said, 'There is no room for them at the Gaiety, neither is there room for "sticks."' A 'stick' is a dreadful thing, and when I say a 'stick,' I am not blaming any man or woman who is earning a livelihood; I am blaming the public for putting up with the conditions which permit his existence.

Some well-known person has called the drama the Cinderella of the Arts, but I believe that she is going soon to the ball in other cities as she has already gone in Manchester. Gentlemen, I have always encouraged you to talk, and when you talk about the drama it is *so* interesting, yet, I

pray you, do not go on for too long. Twenty or thirty years has been a long time for London. Things get into the English newspapers as well as in the American newspapers, and I think you Bostonians have talked long enough, too, and might now *do* something for a change. I am not advocating that one man should throw down a lot of money in a heap. That is n't what you need. First of all, you must have the people, the audience; and by an audience I mean a public that really wants such a theatre. It is not the building, the acting, nor the drama alone, which is required, but it is also the audience.

An audience is justifying its existence when it reasons and sympathizes and thereby gives its help to the actors. When you pay for your seat in a theatre to be amused passively, you are not doing your full share of the bargain, for what you pay at the box office is only the material side. More is wanting. It is the sympathy given to the play and the players by each individual that is needed,—your own critical feelings as to what is good and what is bad about the play, and what could or should be better, make the kind of sympathetic interest which gives the actor a fair chance. It is a curious thing that no matter how hard the performers try, they cannot do their best at a dress rehearsal. They make up their minds if it is a good audience, and if so they can give it their best work. You get far more enjoyment out of a play by showing your sympathies than if you all sit in rows like sacks of potatoes. Don't hesitate to laugh when you want to and don't hesitate to cry when you want to. You have no doubt seen some one on the stage die very nicely. The actress may not see that pocket-handkerchief, but she hears your little cough, or hears you blowing your nose when the tears come. All these things are noticed and are of help to the actors and actresses, and make their work easier for them.

Experiments are excellent things, yet experiments are only experiments all the world over, and they are performed with the view of learning something beyond what can be done at the moment. If you want an art gallery, you do not make it by having a school of art only.

Young dramatists should have a theatre where they can see the ripe works of the masters and see them well acted at a moderate price. There should be in every city a theatre where we can see the best drama worthily treated.

'Why don't you change your play every night?' A young man asked me that one night, and I said, 'Where you have a theatre changing the play every night, you must necessarily have fifty men and women to do that amount of work.' That is the important point, you cannot have cheap prices and change your bill every night, unless the government, the munic-

ipality, the state or some one will pay for it. If some one will give the theatre a high endowment each year, that is another matter.

A Civilized Theatre is not foolishness. It adds to the culture of a city, and furthermore it adds to its wealth and prosperity. Why do you spend the winter in Dresden? Because of the opera and the theatre and the art galleries. All this is not a luxury for the rich taken by taxing the poor. It is a business proposition that benefits every inhabitant. France spends great sums every year on its theatres and opera houses, as well as on works of art; hence, we go to Paris for our fashions.

If you make such a theatre here, make it a good one; never do anything by halves. Get the best man to be had for a director. Never mind if you don't understand what he wants, after you have obtained him. Support him in his mistakes. Through his mistakes he will learn and you will learn. Get the best men and women you can, and go and see them act. Grumble when they do poorly, and praise them when they do good work. The public have a great deal more power than they realize. Tell the management of a theatre what you would like and what you do not like. I always say bully local managers. I am a local manager in Manchester myself. I answer all letters by return of post, and in my own handwriting, so that they will know by their not being typewritten that I give them my personal attention. If the management writes them a nice polite letter in regard to their queries and complaints they come back to the theatre to see if what they suggest has been done.

The public might have a little more enterprise, and go to a play before the young men from the newspapers write it up, instead of waiting for the papers next day to learn whether it is fit for them to see or not.

Last of all, I want to tell you to determine to do better here in an American city than we have done in Manchester. It is within your power. And if you do better than Manchester, then I will tell you so gladly when I find it to be so. But I do not think that you will surpass my Gaiety Company.

TO THE PINES

BY LUCILE PRICE LEONARD

O giant Harpers on a thousand hills,
Touching your harps in mighty minstrelsy,
Sonorous cadences your great song thrills
Along the wind-swept spaces, wild and free!
You know a song for every heart to sing;
Chanting in harmony, you fling
Your golden chords on all the winds that blow,
Pealing a triumph song that all the world may know.

When winds of dawn come gaily from the east,
As little children rollic in their play,
You answer them — a spirit just released,
And going on a gladsome holiday.
Tossing your shining branches in the sun,
Your melodies in liquid music run,
And high and clear, like fairy trumpets, blow,
Chiming a welcome song that all the world may know.

When terrors of the north wind storm the night
In black and thunderous tempests breathing fire,
You stand courageously to join the fight.
Raising your faces to the stars, you quire
Defiance to the sky, and shout and moan
In overtone and undertone —
'Blow, storms; and north winds all, I dare ye blow!
I shout so brave a song that all the world may know.'

The west wind sighs along its lonesome way,
Sobbing itself to sleep within your arms,—
'Where are the joys that promised when the day
Dawned in its splendor? With bewitching charms
I sought them in each wood; nor any place
Has seen their shadowy mocking face.'
Like tender mothers, rocking to and fro,
You sing a song of hope that all the world may know.

TO THE PINES

When Day, in all her glow of rose and gold,
Is softly, slowly stepping from the hills;
And mists of gray are trailing, fold on fold,
Where far the river winds; when twilight stills
The heart to peace ineffable, on high
You weave a magic music from the sky
And breathe to breezes from the south that blow,
Lifting a song of love that all the world may know.

ARIEL

BY CHARLOTTE PORTER

Sky Breath and Fire Breath and Heave of the Ocean,
Wind Stir inspiriting shoreless space,—
Ariel! Master of measureless motion
Through the Blue tracked by the starry trace,—
Lord of all lordships of air;— of mysterious
Fuming vibrations exhaled in fire,
Magical glancings of lightning delirious,
Aimed as the arrow of blind Desire,—
Ariel! thou in the Wind's forehead riding,
Suns in their circuits embosoming, guiding,
Sky-path of planet from planet dividing,
Folding this Earth in thy breath,
Like to a word her God saith,

*Oh, is it true? Dost thou call? Shall Man follow
Impulse and breathing of measureless life?
Marry with thine in the Worlds' dread hollow,
Breath of the human will, bloom of its strife?
Bodiless Genius for framing worlds fair,
Man, O, attune thou, his Vision to dare!*

Lift us to life in thy realms of pure power,
Liberal, large and pervading Air!
Secrets of spiriting, make thou our dower,
Matter to move, nor its grossness share!
Call us from greed and from grudge of the earth-gold,
Slaving us, driving us,— make us free —
Brotherly free from its heap-goad or dearth-hold,—
Wings of soul-magic, uplift us to thee!
Ariel! Lightnings round Man art thou wreathing,
Sun-paths of movement and musical breathing,
Harmonies out of the Heavens bequeathing,—
Folding Man, too, in thy breath,
Like to a Word his God saith.

*Oh, it is true! Thou dost call. Man shall follow
Impulse and breathing of measureless life,
Marry with thine in the Worlds' dread hollow,
Breath of the human will, bloom of its strife!
Bodiless Genius, our Earth framing fair,
Man, thou art tuning his Vision to dare!*

ARTHUR UPSON

BY EDWARD J. O'BRIEN

THE late Arthur Upson once summed up his life and his message in a single line. 'Faith in the glory of living; the ultimate pure aspiration'; these few words tell us all that we need to know of one whose feet ever held to the narrow path which is straight. He burnt the hard white flame at the altar of truth; he never sacrificed incense to the idols of the market-place. Many have climbed the little peaks, and felt that the summit of all was gained; it has been given to few of this generation to climb patiently in humility with unfaltering step, and to be wrapt thus early into the vineyard on the upper slopes silently and alone.

In one of his earlier poems, Arthur Upson has contrasted the virtuoso who sacrificed the finer shades to meet with the approval of an applauding audience, with the second fiddle of equal, perhaps greater, genius, who reserved the exercise of his gift for the silences of thought. The parable is clear,—perhaps the reader will say trite,—but it drives home the lesson which Arthur Upson preached by word and deed. Fame is attained after arduous but humble climbing, and when it comes we find that it is 'an issue of the journey, not its aim.' This is neither more nor less than the simple gospel of Christian endeavor. 'Work is the Master's measure and not years.'

Arthur Upson's poetry, judged by this standard, is a valuable criticism of life, a definite message and legacy to his generation. Conceived and wrought out spiritually, it is high and sane and pure. Arthur Upson is one of the horizon-makers, one of the men to whom an inward law ever speaks, and from whom the vision of beauty and truth emanates clearly, though often subtly, and with a strength that moves the mind while it convinces the heart. Of how few among his fellows may this be said! We are all of us following will-o'-the-wisps, measuring truth by a continually changing standard. Arthur Upson does not measure truth, he proclaims it. He is the unlaureled seer, with heart of flame passionately voicing the truth which burns within him.

'Wear is better than rust, and happiness than wisdom.' So runs the old Scottish proverb which the poet puts into the mouth of *Comnall*, and earlier, in 'The Tides of Spring,' *Malcolm*, or perhaps rather the voice speaking within and through him, says:

'Somehow, blind struggle for it seems the best!
Wise hearts are full of ashes: better flame!'

So speaks the striver. But there is a message too for the weak at heart. Lose yourself that you may find yourself. That is the secret of Fate, and Arthur Upson voices it insistently.

They tell a story of Paganini which, if true, is illuminating. It is said that the great violinist cast his peculiar spell over an audience by a curiously insistent use of the G-string of his violin, which he could coax to express or suggest almost any mood. I am not sure but that part of Arthur Upson's secret too lies in his singular ability to play upon the hearts of his listeners through the insistent voicing of a single strain, sometimes bitter sweet, sometimes intoxicating in its sheer beauty, sometimes austere true and final. No poem of his reveals the subtle secret more plangently than the richly tapestried verses entitled 'The Tragic Winds.'

'I lay in a rich chamber candle-dim
And nightlong dreamt awake. The ancient winds
Like remote music made a dusk of sound:

Viols throbbing out some earth-impassioned hymn
From halls of kingly revels and bright sins —
Far voices as of love-mad women crowned,

Star-gemmed Despairs, the queens of legend lands,
Seated within the gateways of their towers,
Eyes full of smiles forgotten, unfelt tears

Uncounted falling in their idle hands
Which whitely drooped upon their laps like flowers.
Anteia's sisters, these, and Phædra's feres.

Methought their murmurs gathered in the night,
And all these wretched queens of ancient care
Joined faintly their involuntary moan,

Till pale Aurora passioned toward the light,
Slight Cynthia fled adown her brightening stair,
And day brought other worlds to rule my own.'

Such poetry as this is indeed a dusk of sound. What wonderful lines

there are here,—‘Viols throbbing out some earth-impassioned hymn,’ ‘Star-gemmed Despairs, the queens of legend lands.’ Here is the final beauty of perfect statement. This is violin music of the rarer kind, the music that Verlaine had heard in dream.

On this rich and novel music, literature and the arts have a strong contributing influence, which exalts the spirit and transfigures the subject. It would be interesting and also valuable to trace, for example, the subtle influence of music on the poet’s work, especially on that symphonic poem in dramatic form, ‘The Tides of Spring.’ To me, as I look back over the body of Arthur Upson’s poetic achievement, this seems the most beautiful, if not the most significant, outpouring of the poet’s genius. A dream of beauty painted in colors of spring-light, glistening with prismatic radiance, and withal so simple, it is flawless in conception and imaginative treatment. This poem is no tapestry woven of dream and shadow, but a vitally real presentment of romantic truth in an historical setting whose antiquity lends added enchantment to a beauty which needs it not. It is a reverent picture of spring and youth and sunshine bathed in a light higher than that of the sun, which transmutes it spiritually into a symbol of eternal beauty.

Arthur Upson completed two other dramatic poems. One of them, ‘The City,’ was published several years ago. The other, ‘Gauvaine of Retz,’ a story of Brittany, based on a favorable judgment of *Gold Hair* in Browning’s ‘Story of Pornie,’ was completed on the evening before the poet’s sad death on the waters of a Minnesota lake, and the poet carried it with him across the tide.

‘The City’ is undoubtedly the most significant poem which Arthur Upson has given us. Others have more of charm in them, but none a deeper spiritual insight. The balance of contrast is held strictly even, and out of the two opposing elements is drawn a vital, sounding truth, prophetic in its intensity and seership. There is no time here in which to outline the plot or to study the characters and their psychological truth in development. Fault may be found, perhaps, from a dramatic point of view, with the handling of the material toward the close, but such comment, in view of what we are given, would be hypercritical. What I should like to call attention to, especially, are the lyrics scattered here and there throughout the drama, particularly that tender symbol of mortality, the song of Agamède,—‘Grow, grow, thou little tree,’ wherein growth and bloom and change are merged in a sobbing song of beauty.

In one of the ‘Octaves in an Oxford Garden,’ this beauty is sublimely touched to strange and wonderful issues.

'This is my lost inheritance. I look
 With brotherliest affection yearning forth
 To the flower-bearing sod. Oh, what is worth
 The strange estate of flesh I strangely took?
 In the soft soil the garden breezes shook
 From the wall chink but now, there's measure of earth
 To match my body's dust when its re-birth
 To sod restores old functions I forsook.'

Once heard, these lines can never die in memory. Here is where the symbol becomes universal, and takes on the wistful truth of immortal beauty finely tuned.

The 'Octaves in an Oxford Garden' as a whole comprise thirty-three stanzas on various themes subtly and almost imperceptibly linked, and composed in an autumn mist of memory. They are high examples of the poetry of reflection, noble in their calm, restful old-world loveliness, and vivified by the pulsations of a heart buried deep in the ancient beauties of time and place. Composed at Oxford in the month of September, they reproduce the still and solemn atmosphere of quiet afternoon, and make it the spiritual repository of old forgotten truth and beauty. I wish it were possible to quote from them freely, and interpret in the light of their Light the philosophy of the poet. Suffice it to point out that the beautiful thing has here been finely phrased and finally said. In the nobility and perfection of this utterance, Arthur Upson has bequeathed to us his final testament.

It remains for us to consider Arthur Upson's lyrics. His first volume of poems, 'At the Sign of the Harp,' is finely phrased, as we should expect, and betrays few signs of immaturity. That it should body forth a definite message and prophecy was not to be supposed, yet readers familiar with the poet's habit and current of thought will recognize in many of these earlier poems the germ of what he was so soon to set forth with a living tongue. In the volume of 'Poems,' which he wrote and published in collaboration with George Norton Northrop, a classmate in the University of Minnesota, we see a certain widening of technical resources, and also a subtle use of grayish light which grows more marked in the 'Westwind Songs,' published in the same year.

The influence of books and travel is very noticeable in these lyrics. Somewhat akin to this influence is a reminiscent sense of the life in history, a sense which clothes his dramas, especially, with more than a semblance of reality.

History, however, is only one of the many forces which combine to shape the graceful form and expression of the poet's lyrics. Of other forces

there is no place here to speak. What I must call attention to is the restraint and abnegation with which the poet takes in hand the materials of his art, and models them in beautiful forms of severe simplicity. He is of those who glorify the craftsman, and his own work is the example which he sets. Withal he studies delicate rhythmic effects, and conceals them so subtly that when we hear their sound, it recalls nothing so nearly as the note of Japanese wind-bells.

He is very susceptible to the influences of nature, though he does not make them the end and aim and single topic of his verse. Rather does he use them as symbols to convey a general message, or, if he employs them directly, it is to convey the personal message which they bring. Thus he delivers and interprets for us now and then the message of the rain or of the tapping leaf against the window-pane, but all with a subtle artistic restraint which hints far more than it directly tells.

This restraint is far from being a conscious factor in Arthur Upson's work. The truth is that it proceeds from an unconscious calm born of an upper and rarer ether, where the breath of life comes quickly and without effort only to the chosen ones. For this reason all attempts to analyze the secret must be futile, and the reader must be content with gathering what crumbs of 'Sultan's bread' the poet may have let fall on to this earth of common men.

As one pauses a moment to collect his impressions of this high poetry, the first thought that arises is that here is the work of one who worshipped beauty, and saw her reflection in life clear and inviolate. To be able to say this without qualification is high praise. To be able to add further that the poet apprehended beauty through the medium of living men is the highest tribute possible.

It is often useful to detach a man from his background, and so I have sometimes endeavored to picture Arthur Upson in an Elizabethan setting. Would he have been an active or a silent influence? That he would have influenced strongly goes without saying. That his silent influence would have been great had he never penned a line is also true. But I think that we may go a step further and say that he would have been in the foremost rank of the strivers,— among those who led with banners. I do not mean to claim him as an Elizabethan. Far from it. Few of his generation are less so. But what I am trying to bring out is that if he had been born in the first full days of English poetry, he would have striven with all his might, and conquered surely and without hesitation.

For one gift he has that they had not,— the gift of sympathy. 'A frail man talking to frail men,' Newman says of St. Paul, but conscious that he is a man, and full of love for his kinsmen. This is Arthur Upson's

secret. He has, too, the sympathy of nature and the sympathy of history which mean so much, and which have played so large a part in the inspiration of the 'Octaves in an Oxford Garden.' Indeed, if I were asked to choose the eight lines from Arthur Upson's poetry which were most thoroughly characteristic of his many-sided genius, I should select the octave entitled, 'Roman Glassware Preserved in the Ashmolean.'

'Fair crystal cups are dug from earth's old crust,
Shattered but lovely; for, at price of all
Their shameful exile from the banquet-hall,
They have been bargaining beauties from the dust.
So, dig my life but deep enough, you must
Find broken friendships round its inner wall —
Which once my careless hand let slip and fall —
Brave with faint memories, rich in rainbow-rust.'

The 'Octaves in an Oxford Garden,' 'The City,' and the half-blown little play entitled 'The Tides of Spring,' represent the power of Arthur Upson at its highest, yet there are two poems which represent his genius almost as fully, and which for that reason I am tempted to quote. Both have a wistful appeal in the light of memory. The sonnet 'Ex Libris,' so fragrant with hidden sanctities, speaks loud in the silences of its immortal assumption.

'In an old book at even as I read
Fast fading words adown my shadowy page,
I crossed a tale of how, in other age
At Arqua, with his books around him, sped
The word to Petrarch, and with noble head
Bowed gently o'er his volume, that sweet sage
To silence paid his willing seigniorage,
And they who found him whispered, "He is dead!"
Thus timely from old comradeships would I
To Silence also rise. Let there be night,
Stillness and only these staid watchers by,
And no light shine save my low study light —
Lest of his kind intent some human cry
Interpret not the Messenger aright.'

And fittingly to close this tribute I set down now the words which all should hold in reverence:

When the song is done,
And his heart is ashes,

Never praise the singer
Whom you, silent, heard.
What to him the sound?
What your eyes' fond flashes?
When the singing's over,
Say no word!

Ye who darkling stood,
Think, your noon of praises,
Can it glimmer down
To his deepset bower?
Never round him shone
Once your garden mazes;
Now his wandering's over,
Bring no flower!

FROM AN UNPUBLISHED SEQUENCE

BY FREDERIC HUNTER

I

Dear Lady, sing unto my sweet content
The little burden of your heart to-day,
And then will Love, who knoweth all things, say,
How I who sought thee never shall repent
The days of idlesse and of singing spent
Within thy bower where all the graces play
And dance unto the sound of roundelay
To which no voice of satyr e'er was lent.

Thus singing will my heart go out to thee
In dream of wonder and delight of joy,
Wherein shall be no taint of misery
Or baser feelings that the sense alloy,
But only life and love within a tent
Whose very base is thy arbitrament.

II

A slender sweetness filled the silent air
The while my vessel out to Barbary bound
Went gliding over wavelets of sweet sound
Under the guidance of a pilot fair
Whose songs did ever issue in a prayer
That never by the rustling wind was drowned.
When lo! there hovered over us a crowned
And wingèd angel wreathed in golden hair.

The wonder vanished when the wind died down,
God slept upon the surface of the deep,
And Cecily, clad in a silver gown,
Lay crooning sorrow that the spirits keep
Within their realm of beauty close confined
To soothe the weary and to heal the blind.

III

I knew thee first e'er dawned the cuckoo's call,
And then was rapture first to be discerned.
From thwarted rapture was a lesson learned
Whose meaning never driveth to the wall.
But in the sadness lay a mighty thrall
Of wondrous meaning unto beauty turned,
Whose meed of honor never nobly earned
Did fright the shepherd as he sang to Saul.

Thus drew I ever nearer unto God
And life made glorious in its own despite
Was never less than kindred to the sod,
Though never more than nurse to lowly plight,
And dream, made human in the dawn of day,
Knew nought more noble than to fly away.

THE GREAT WHITE BIRD

BY CHARLES VILDRAC

Translated from the French by Sasha Best

The Great White Bird spreads his wings to the wind,
His wings so white, his wings so new,
That smile to the skies like sails unfurled,
And like these gaily flap in the wind.

With all his candor, with all his might,
He leaves behind the trees and flowers,
And the peace of their sweet bowers,
For the distant country in the heights.

When he neared the plains of life,
The great white bird in first transport
Bravely received
The volley of stones,
Violent and brisk,
Of life.

He faltered a bit, he fell a bit,
And the people from below
Saw fall from on high the soft white down,
And of his plumes, as well — of his plumes, a few.
But the great white bird came not to ground.

But the great white bird never touched the ground
Even though there continued to hail on him
The minute shower
Of life's petty cares.

When lo! a sharp and violent stone,
Steeped in the deepest mud from below,
Struck a wing and pierced it.

And there made a hole,
A hole, red and round and dark, in this wing
Which was so pure, which was so new.

And the great white bird flew on, but lower,
And leaned to one side like a ship
Which is sinking and seeking the water.

And the hole in the wing grew larger and larger,
And gangrene corroded the wound,
And the wind whistled through it at each flap of the wing,
Like the breathing of a lung diseas'd.

The longer he went and the farther he went,
The wider grew the wound,
And the nearer came he to the ground.

In despair the great white bird
Beat the air with his broken wing,
Beat the air with his helpless body,
As one who vainly strikes with the sword
The hostile waters beneath him.

Alas! now he has touched the dust with his beak,
But resumes with irregular, infirm bounds,
With all his candor, all his might,
His obstinate voyage towards the heights.

When he quitted the plains of life
The great white bird was trailing behind him
A dying and decaying wing.

But high up in the air of the morn
He spread out one wing filled with golden hopes —
The wing so white, the wing so new.

HE IS COMING

A Play in One Act

BY ALVILDE PRYDZ

Translated from the Norwegian by Hester Coddington

CHARACTERS

GUNDEL, a young girl of seventeen.

FRU JENSEN, her foster-mother.

AUNT ANNA.

REJDAR BRANDT, a young engineer.

FRU PEDERSEN.

STINA, an old servant.

A plainly furnished, old-fashioned sitting-room in a small country town. In front of each of two low windows, filled with flower-pots, stands an old arm-chair. In one of them sits FRU JENSEN, in the other, AUNT ANNA, each with a cat in her lap. STINA, the old servant, moves about the room, dusting and watering the plants, and talking to herself the whole time. It is a bright summer day.

Stina.— Who'd a said that such a flower as this'd grow on that stalk! (*Looks at the clock.*) But, heavens, here is this son-in-law of ours putting in his appearance just as if this was any ordinary place! But all the same, I'm not so sure if he's our Lord's best masterpiece. Heaven help my poor soul, for I remember him just as plain as can be, from the time he was a tiny little fellow. But anyway, the Lord is sending him here now, just as he might to any other place — here where there has n't been a man person to smoke or do anything else wicked for this many a year, as I might say.

Fru Jensen (wakes up, half frightened).— Stina! Has he come, Stina?

Stina (shakes her head).— Did you ever see the like! (*Looks out.*) I declare, if the Lord has n't sent a head-wind now, though I don't see how He can possibly have anything against his coming! Anyway, we can be nice to him.

Fru Jensen (with feeling).— Why, Stina, the Lord does everything for the best! Just think, how twenty years ago He took my two boys away from me! He took them to Himself where He has kept them safe from harm, and now He gives me a son in their place, a son-in-law. But, Stina, you'd

better be thinking about dinner. He'll soon be here, I tell you, even if there is a head-wind. Love has wings, I tell you, Stina. (*STINA goes out.*)

Aunt Anna (wakes up, looks around and asks in a manner peculiar to herself).— Huh? What did you say, Otilie? Has our son-in-law come?

Fru Jensen (who never hears what AUNT ANNA says, but with raised voice always asks her to repeat).— What did you say, auntie? I just said that love has wings, so I said.

Auntie (placidly).— Huh? Yes, I know that he is an engineer now. I always knew he'd make a fine man. I always knew that. Has Stina taken the covers off the furniture. I have always noticed that has to be done on such occasions.

Fru Jensen.— What did you say, auntie? Don't you think the Lord has been most kind to us all? Now that he is coming back — heaven be praised, it is just as if He were sending back to me one of my own blessed boys.

Auntie (turning toward her, somewhat irritated).— Huh? I never said that. I don't see how you can accuse me of such things, Otilie. For heaven knows I never said or even thought that she would ever take a Pedersen. Pedersen's son shall never come here!

Fru Jensen.— What did you say, auntie? I just meant that he must soon be here, thank heaven! Just think how homelike it will seem to have a man in the house again! Stina has everything in fine shape for him upstairs. It is really all quite wonderful, don't you think so? We surely ought to thank God, it seems to me.

Auntie (drops her knitting and begins to stroke the cat).— Huh? Indeed, you may be sure I know all that. I should think so. But you always do misunderstand me, Otilie, for I never said a word about seventeen being too young for anyone to be engaged. I myself might have been, you may rest assured. For that matter, there is no need of your keeping it so secret, Otilie. Indeed, I noticed there was something between them as much as two years ago, at the time he went away to Germany. You evidently think I can't see anything, or hear either!

Fru Jensen (smiling, nods and beckons eagerly toward the street).— There comes Fru Pedersen. I wonder if she is coming in. Do you see how she is hurrying? That is certainly something new for her. What if she should go by without stopping? But there is the postman, auntie! He has something for us; I can see it. (*Hurries to the door and takes a letter.*) It is for him! Auntie, listen, here is a letter for him! So he must be coming right away. Don't you think so?

Auntie (reaches eagerly for the letter, takes out her spectacles and begins to study the address).— For him? Yes, it certainly is for him. I can see that.

Gundel (comes rushing in, looks over her shoulder, laughs, and reads again).— Of course it is for him! I also can see that. I must go, for I must meet him. But read it out loud first, auntie, the name! For I want to hear it. It is like music. Rejdar! Is it not? Rejdar Brandt — big, strong, like the sunlight on the mountains! I must go to meet him! (*Runs into FRU PEDERSEN in the doorway.*)

Fru Pedersen.— Yes, I am going, too, my dear child; but the steamer won't be here for an hour yet. How-do-you-do, how-do-you-do? Just thought I'd look in for a minute — thought I'd look in for a minute as I happened to be going by.

Fru Jensen.— That was real good of you, Fru Pedersen. Now sit down and have a cup of coffee, won't you? For we were just going to have a drop. (*STINA comes in with the coffee.*)

Auntie (pours out a cup and offers it ceremoniously).— Won't you have a cup, Fru Pedersen? I think you must be thirsty — in any case —

Fru Pedersen.— Yes, I am indeed. I am always ready for coffee, I am indeed — and your coffee, especially, Fru Jensen, makes one's mouth water and braces one right up, it does — although you might not expect it. (*Looks about.*) But do you know it already? I just learned the news this minute, and I have always prided myself on being the first, I can assure you.

Gundel (angrily).— You know it? How in the world could you know it? I have only recently learned it myself. You certainly do not know it, Fru Pedersen, for it is our own secret. I have n't even told the cat!

Fru Pedersen.— Listen, dear! I have known it just nine minutes. But in half an hour's time the whole town will know it, I can tell you.

Gundel (sulkily).— I will not share it with the whole town, I can tell you — not even with you, Fru Pedersen. (*Smiling suddenly.*) Although if you really do know it, well, yes, perhaps it is n't so strange after all. For it must indeed be in the air, I think. Yes, I think it is in the air, for I hear it all about me: *He is coming!* Oh, are n't you glad, Fru Pedersen? You will have a chance to see him, too!

Fru Pedersen (with dignity).— See him! My dear friend, as if my own husband had not been asked to take charge — to speak plainly, to drive him right up to the apothecary's stable!

Gundel (with emphasis).— What are you talking about, Fru Pedersen?

Fru Pedersen.— What am I talking about? Heavens, child, don't be affected! What should I be talking about except Lord Ruffy, the apothecary's new blooded horse! Pure English stock, says Pedersen. Yes, here comes real nobility to town — in a few minutes people will be thinking of nothing else. Let us all turn out, I am going to say. Let us have a magnificent reception, an ovation for the only nobleman of the town.

Gundel (full of scorn).— The only nobleman of the town! Yes, he is coming also, you are quite right; but — great heavens, to sit here chattering about the apothecary's horse, when one might so easily guess that — yes, is it not ridiculous?

Fru Pedersen (to AUNTIE, who offers more coffee).— Thanks, no more this time, for goodness knows I must hurry home and get Pedersen into shape. His Highness must not be kept waiting — that would never do. Pure English blood, Pedersen says; but then, my husband has the gift of language, if I may be allowed to say so. He will know how to receive him. (*Says good-bye and goes out.*)

Gundel (calling after her).— Give his Highness greetings from me, if you have the gift of language. (*Laughs.*) But I wonder if you are such a genius, Fru Pedersen. Think of sitting here chattering about the apothecary's horse, when she certainly ought to know that Rejdar Brandt is coming to town! My dear Fru Pedersen, you *are* idiotic, for you hear nothing, although it is sung all around you — you understand nothing, although it is whispered in every corner — but no, mother, I don't think I *can* wait any longer!

(*AUNTIE, who has been examining the letter again, puts it carefully aside, goes over and opens the door and looks out. Walks about rubbing the furniture with her finger to see if it is free from dust. Shakes her head and goes out.*)

Gundel (gets up on a stool the better to see herself in a little mirror that hangs high on the wall. Arranges her dress).— But, mother, you don't say a word about how nice I look — and here I've put on the very nicest things I have. (*Goes over in front of the mirror and adjusts her dress.*) One can see what one looks like here. The looking-glass upstairs, it is over two years since Stina stuck the dust-brush through it; but then, I have had no use for it until to-day. (*Turns around and surveys herself carefully.*) Tell me, mother, do you think I look nice?

Fru Jensen.— You are the Lord's masterpiece, child, you and he. (*Dries her eyes.*) You do not understand, child, what it means for me to have a son again. It is as if God — yes, for he is so fine, so clever and so pious. His own mother told me that. So it is a great joy for me.

Gundel (smiling in a superior way).— Clever and pious — yes, indeed, I know he is. But that is not all, mother. He is much more, something quite peculiar to himself. For that reason it is remarkable that he can think so much of me. Don't you think it quite remarkable, very remarkable, indeed? Oh — it seems as if I had already lived a long and beautiful life! Is it true that I am only seventeen? (*Sits down on a stool at her mother's feet. FRU JENSEN strokes her hair.*)

Fru Jensen.— You also are clever for your age, child, clever and pious. He surely understands that, too.

Gundel (confidentially).— Mother, he writes poetry, also. He thinks he'll be a poet, he says. It is wonderful what he can do!

Fru Jensen (rises).— Yes, thank God, child, that he is so clever — and so pious. But now I must go out into the kitchen and look after dinner. Have you set the table so it looks nice?

Gundel.— Yes, I have decorated it with flowers, and the flask of wine that uncle gave me. I have put on a lot of flowers, mostly roses. I think he will enjoy them. But I must go now, mother! (*FRU JENSEN goes out into the kitchen while GUNDEL runs out into the hall and comes back with two hats.*) Which one shall I wear? The old one with the forget-me-nots, which I wore when I went down to the boat to see him off two years ago? (*Tries it on.*) Or shall I take the new one? It has roses on it — I am so frightfully happy I think I'll have to take this. (*Puts it on, nods to herself in a satisfied way and runs out.*)

Aunt Anna (comes in cautiously with a dust cloth and begins dusting).— These girls, they never can dust, they never can dust at all. I have always noticed that. And I want him to see that he is coming to a clean house.

(*Laughter and noise out on the steps and in the hall. After a moment the door bursts open and GUNDEL comes in, drawing after her with both hands REJDAR BRANDT, a tall, well-built young man with boisterous manners and confident air.*)

Gundel (out of breath and with eyes beaming).— Auntie, just think, I had n't gotten farther than the garden when I met him! Just think, auntie, the steamer came in an hour ago, Rejdar says, and he says he has already eaten at the hotel, and he does n't want anything more to eat, he says. And has n't he grown, don't you think? Grown stout, I mean! And I really hardly knew you at all with that beard. To think that you can grow such a beard! Mother! Here is mother, and here is Rejdar! Don't you think he has grown? And he has had his dinner, says he can't eat anything more. But you *must* go in and see the roses that I picked for you — but we'll let the table stand just as it is until evening. I can't eat anything either. I'm not a bit hungry.

Fru Jensen (who has come in while GUNDEL was talking, greets REJDAR with emotion).— My dear son-in-law, my son!

Rejdar (red in the face, somewhat heated with wine and inclined to be boisterous, impatiently draws the one hand from FRU JENSEN, the other from AUNTIE).— Well, how are you? How do you do? I am glad to see you all looking so well, very glad! Thanks, I am very well, remarkably so. I have come just at dinner-time, I see. Thanks, I have really eaten, dined at the

hotel with some of the fellows. So don't disturb yourselves for me. Go right ahead and eat. Gundel is not hungry, she says, which seems to fit in quite conveniently, does it not?

Gundel.— Very conveniently! (*Runs out into the hall with her hat and comes back again laughing.*) Now listen, mother and auntie, the soup is really getting cold! Then we can have our coffee together afterward, out in the garden. That will be real cosy.

Fru Jensen.— Well, well, child! Then we'll go in for a little while, auntie. But, dear Rejdar, it is really too bad that you won't eat with us.

Auntie (as they go out).— I cannot understand it. I don't think I ever noticed such a situation as this before, especially when the dinner was so nice.

Gundel (radiantly).— Now listen, Rejdar! While the old folks are eating and taking their nap, let us take a run out into the garden and up the mountain-side to our old lookout — and do you remember the place under the oak, and then down by the river? Oh, how we shall enjoy going about looking for all our old places! And how much we have to talk about! Such a quantity of things I have to tell you, and you me — you must tell me everything, and then you shall hear everything from me.

Rejdar (feeling suddenly tired, looks around for the most comfortable chair and stretches out his hands to her. Speaks more slowly, rather indolently).— Run up on the mountain-side! What are you thinking of, dear creature — and after such a heavy dinner! What? That would be impossible, dear friend!

Gundel (takes a stool, sits down at his feet and gazes up into his eyes in mild surprise).— Have you eaten — too much? Don't you remember, we always used to do that, just after dinner, while the old folks were asleep?

Rejdar.— Yes, but don't you remember — we never used to have such heavy dinners then, and certainly never had in this house. So you see it was a good plan for me to dine at the hotel, only the wine there was not the kind I am accustomed to — it has made me feel stupid.

Gundel (subdued and in a surprised tone).— Wine also — too much? That certainly was a heavy dinner.

Rejdar (laughs).— You may as well acknowledge it. You don't understand such things as wine and heavy dinners. Yet I should n't want you to be different. I don't like to see ladies eat. They — they positively seem to deteriorate when they are eating, I think! But you now, just as you sit there —

Gundel (beaming upon him).— Worshiping you, for that is what I am doing! Just as you are!

Rejdar.— Yes, and I, too! I must worship you just as you are! For listen, Gundel! It has happened just as I thought it would. You have developed so much, do you know it? But I recognized you even then, while

the bud lay dreaming — and now I have come, just as the flower has opened. I am certainly a lucky fellow. Kiss me! (*He settles back somewhat heavily into the chair and strokes her hand and wrist.*)

Gundel (somewhat embarrassed, withdraws her hands from his. There is a moment of silence. She continues to gaze at him, and finally speaks in a tone subdued, but filled with admiration).— And you, you certainly are changed! But you are grand anyway, grander than you were before even! (*Draws closer to him.*) Tell me how things have gone with you — for I want to know everything.

Rejdar (somewhat slowly).— Oh, yes, I'll tell you everything, later, my dear! Not just now. But you sit here and tell me about yourself. Yes, for there is something about you, like the calm, bright light of the sun. And then, when you laugh, you fairly shine. Ah, when you speak, beautiful one — I am borne aloft to airy heights. (*He takes her hand again and covers it with kisses.*) You do not know how you sparkle!

Gundel (embarrassed).— What shall I tell you? I know nothing now, remember nothing — I am too happy, I think. (*Snuggles up to him.*) Do you remember, Rejdar, that last evening we were together, two years ago? We were at the theater, you and I. How beautiful it all was that evening! The people as they sat there, the actors, the play and everything. It seems as if I had been living it over again all this time — I think it has just now become a part of the past, now that you have come back again.

Rejdar (gaily, suddenly on the alert).— Oh, now, that evening! That wretched theater, that miserable little provincial audience; and, to put it mildly, those impossible actors with their milk-and-water repertoire! Listen, Gundel, you must still be dreaming!

Gundel (confused).— Was it so bad? Then it must have been — just because I was with you! Yes, for whenever I went anywhere with you, I always thought everything was so magnificent and wonderful — quite different from the ordinary.

Rejdar (kisses her hands again).— You are charming, but you need to get out of this little box here. And I can read it in your eyes, that you also long to enter the glorious kingdom of life. Gundel, I have come to take you in!

Gundel (enraptured).— Yes, if you are only with me. Then it will be grand, I think!

Rejdar (again somewhat drowsily).— What did you have for your treat to-day?

Gundel.— Lovely sweet soup, you may just believe. And after that, such delicious baked fish — and then, a bottle of wine that uncle gave me some time ago when I was sick. I had saved it for you.

Rejdar (rises and draws her to him).— Good gracious, Gundel, you are

getting me wide-awake with your sweet soup — and your wine, was it delicious, too?

Gundel (freeing herself).— I don't know. It has n't been opened yet, you know; but wine is always good, is n't it?

Rejdar.— You are charming! (*Rises and begins to walk up and down.*) But, goodness gracious, this town is altogether too small to live in. Have you never thought of that, Gundel?

Gundel (slowly).— No, I never have. (*Looks around, somewhat surprised.*)

Rejdar.— There is n't room enough to breathe here, everything is so small! The very heavens are contracted, for the horizon shuts one in like closed doors — and the rooms here, they are so small, too, can't you see that?

Gundel (looks about in a surprised and anxious way).— Yes, I don't know, but I do see it — yes, I certainly do; but — (*Falls into thought.*)

Rejdar (as before).— And your foster-mother and old auntie, and Stina — one must admit that you have a most remarkable set of women folks here in this house. Have you never thought of that, either?

Gundel (as before, slowly).— About mother and auntie? No, I have never thought of that either. Are n't they all right? (*Looks uneasily at him.*) Mother, who is so fond of you — and auntie, too!

Rejdar.— Pshaw! Just as if I did n't have enough of that sort of thing with my own mother. Humph! All these weepy eyes that are forever asking questions. Now, my dear, don't look so scared. Evidently you don't understand me.

Gundel (timidly).— No, for — you certainly are changed — and that is the reason that I don't — but can't you explain it to me a little better? (*Looks thoughtfully about again.*)

Rejdar (again drawing her to him).— Gundel, you shall learn to understand, you shall learn to live — if you will only trust to me, believe in me.

Gundel (reassured and again radiant).— Yes! But tell me about yourself. Please don't ask me anything more. It is very stupid, but I have never had time to think about anything. I have thought only of you.

Rejdar.— Then you must try to understand me, Gundel. Do you know what it means to be a free human being, a free spirit? Have you never heard of those great minds that give utterance to grand, new thoughts, those prophetic souls who solve great problems and teach one to live?

Gundel (timidly).— Is it so difficult, then — to live?

Rejdar (begins to walk up and down with great strides, while GUNDEL follows him with her eyes).— You understand, it is these great beings who give form to life. They are the starting-point, you understand — it is a

great thing to become such a starting-point, you understand — it is ——

Gundel (with firm conviction).— Yes, of course!

Rejdar (enthusiastically).— Yes, that is life, you see, to be able to follow these great, creative spirits as closely as possible. And it is this very fact that is going to free humanity, the fact that they are so great ——

Gundel (impressed).— Oh, are they so great? I do believe I understand!

Rejdar.— And then you must understand also, that if one is searching for these higher things, one has no longer any use for, can no longer make use of, all this narrow commonplaceness which marks life, for example, here in this town. Now you can understand why I cannot remain here, and why I only came to take you away with me.

Gundel (with an anxious, thoughtful air).— Yes, I think I certainly understand that also — but just explain it a little more.

Rejdar (continues).— During all the time that I was here at home, I had an uneasy conscience most of the time. I am ashamed of it now. It was simply a condition of the mind. But now I have systematized my thoughts, and in there where my uneasy conscience sat in darkness and restraint, now it is like the open sea, with billows of light and fire. Life should be like a romance, you understand. One must not bind himself too closely to anything. All these old customs — indeed, everything connected with the ancestral home, these never-ending family connections and such things — they don't fit in when one wants to take part in the great development.

Gundel (anxiously).— What do you really mean, anyway, Rejdar? *(She grows thoughtful. After a moment she looks at him.)* Do you know, it seems so wonderful to me that you could go about as you have done, and even think of me at all in the midst of all those — great things out there!

Rejdar (starting suddenly, as if he had just remembered something).— Even think of you? Listen, Gundel! Sit down here with me while I tell you something.

Gundel (again happy and content, sits down beside him).— Oh, yes, tell me!

Rejdar.— For you ought to begin to learn a little about life. It will do you good, will be a fine thing for you, just to get a glimpse through the door — and you will learn to set still greater store by me — will love me more than ever because I have come back.

Gundel (shakes her head).— More? That is impossible, Rejdar! Because you have come back? Dear, you had to do that. Come back to me, dear? Why, you had to come back. *(Laughs.)*

Rejdar (in declamatory style, again exhilarated by the wine).— Yes, but Gundel, I lived out there — lived like the young god of day, drank the great

joy of the sun, culled flowers, red flowers! Ah, Gundel, you, a delicate, dreamy young girl, you cannot understand what it is to feel like a young god come down to earth — and you do not need to — just keep on dreaming — just love me!

Gundel (laughs again).— Oh, yes, I understand that all right! You have had a great time with the gods and such things, it seems to me. But go on and tell me something more. It is so delightful when you are talking. Everything seems to shine. (*Curiously.*) Did you yourself compose what you have been saying?

Rejdar (without listening, taken up with his own thoughts).— Last summer, you know, at one time during vacation — yes, I was in such a state of youthful intoxication, it seemed as if great forces were surging within me. I was filled with intense yearning, such a longing for you. I felt as though I must come home —

Gundel (interrupting).— Why did n't you come, then? Oh, why did n't you?

Rejdar.— Well, I went off on a trip, you see — and then, as it happened, I stayed for a time with a friend — a friend who had a magnificent estate. Ah, you should have felt the warmth and glow of life as it was there!

Gundel (in suspense).— And it was — so nice there, that you —

Rejdar.— It was a world of sunshine. There were voices, there were melodies, which loosed the forces that lay bound within me — I wrote a whole volume of poems down there.

Gundel (relieved).— How delightful that was — charming, I think!

Rejdar.— We forgot all living beings, you see. I mean disagreeable beings, such as ghosts and sprites, creeping things and such like.

Gundel.— Oh, how delightful, Rejdar! How glad I am then that you did n't come home!

Rejdar (again declaiming, smiling mysteriously).— We lived for days where roses burned, where flowers thronged, where a magnificent storm-wind swirled — and all else was forgotten —

Gundel (still secure in her happiness, imitating his declamatory tone).— All else — except me!

Rejdar (again in his ordinary, every-day voice).— You were not really forgotten, but — in any case, not for long, you can see that! Gundel, you wanted me to tell you everything, and anyway, I think it will be a good thing for you. You will be better able to understand how much more you are to me than all the others.

Gundel (again uneasy).— Are there others?

Rejdar (smiling).— Gundel, my charming friend, there are many others. From this narrow little street you have not been able to see how full of

flowers and fragrance the world is. There was a gardener's daughter there, barefooted, and wonderful to behold in her short Tyrolese skirt. Every single morning she was out in the park.

Gundel (looks at him, first curiously, then with gradually changing expression. At last, softly and uncertainly).— But I don't understand what the girl has to do with this.

Rejdar (quickly).— With what?

Gundel (begins to weep).— Oh, I don't know! (*After a moment, with sudden firmness.*) Do you know, I don't understand one bit of all these grand things you are talking about — so there is certainly no use in my going out into the world!

Rejdar (explaining slowly).— Gundel, do you not understand that this young girl — that it was on her account that I stayed there? Among the guests there was another Norwegian also — you know Birger Pedersen, who was down here last year — a stupid idler of a fellow, who still holds fast to all his old-time plebeianism. If you will believe it, he was troubled with an uneasy conscience on my account (*laughs*), and he told me that when he got home he should consider it his duty to tell the whole thing. That is the reason I wanted to tell you the story beforehand, so as to give it to you in its true light.

Gundel (rising slowly).— Birger Pedersen? Who is so fine? Yes, I know who he is! (*Goes tremblingly around behind a chair.*)

Rejdar (surprised).— What is the matter, Gundel? You are n't sick, are you?

Gundel (helplessly).— I don't know — I feel so strange. If — if I only knew what you meant, Rejdar — that young girl —

Rejdar.— Dearest, that is long past, that story. It is all over for me now.

Gundel.— And for her, also?

Rejdar (with a start).— For her? Well, really, I don't know! Of course it is over for her also, if she is at all sensible. But you look so pale, Gundel! What is the matter? Are you sick? Ah, now, surely you must be just a little bit glad that I have come back to you! At any rate, you ought to appreciate the fact that it has all been forgotten for your sake. And I protest that it is a good thing for you to get even such a slight glimpse of life, to get an idea that there are other things going on, quite different from what goes on in these rooms, where your mother and auntie potter around year in and year out, afraid even to have a window open. Such a dreamy little girl as you are needs to be waked up and taught to look about a little. It is a very good thing for such dreamy little girls.

Gundel (struggling to control herself).— Oh, I don't know — if it is such

a good thing for me! Perhaps it is! Then let me thank you for waking me up!

Rejdar (drawing her to him).— What is the matter, Gundel?

Gundel (breaking away).— What is the matter? Oh, it has all grown so ugly — everything! (*With sudden vehemence.*) You must tell me that it is not true, that all this you have told me is not true — I want you to say that, for — (*softly*) yes, for the whole affair seems so ugly to me.

Rejdar.— If you will just stop to reflect, Gundel, you must surely be thankful that I am back here again. This fact ought to make you understand how much I love you. And how could you imagine that I could lead such an existence as Birger Pedersen, for example? Listen, Gundel, you shall no longer sit here amid the gloom of these petty surroundings — you shall go out into the daylight with me and drink from the golden bowl of life.

(GUNDEL, who has again broken away from him, goes quietly over and sits down in a corner of the room.)

Rejdar (looking over at her, laughing).— You are not going to reproach me for this, are you? You cannot mean that — you surely will not reproach me for coming back to wake you up and take you out with me, out where people live! Listen, Gundel, you are belittling yourself by taking this so seriously. It — it is such a small way of looking at it!

(GUNDEL turns slowly toward him and looks at him timidly, wonderingly, as if for the first time.)

Aunt Anna (comes in, sets a pitcher and glasses down on the table, pours out something, looks from one to the other, then speaks in a mild, cautious tone).— It is just a little something to refresh you, for it seems to me I have noticed that young people need so much nowadays. (*REJDAR glances impatiently at her. She looks at him again silently, gently, then shakes her head and goes out.*) Yes, I have, indeed, always noticed that.

Rejdar (looking at the glasses).— Auntie's lemonade! The Lord preserve us from it! Anything like an honest highball certainly could never find its way into this house!

Gundel.— No, indeed, for that must be something horrid, I suppose.

Rejdar (laughs).— Dear Gundel, let us have done with this. If I had known that my confidence would be so misplaced — but it is a good thing that you are no more than seventeen! For at that age one is not incurable.

Gundel (slowly and thoughtfully).— That was before — that I was so young; yesterday, and to-day, before you came. (*Puts both hands to her head.*) I have indeed gone about like a girl in a dream, as you say — I have not once thought of God, have almost forgotten mother, too — all for your sake! And all this that I did not understand — because it was you

who told it — I thought at first it was so charming and so grand — but now, since you have awakened me, I no longer think so.

Rejdar (impressively).— Gundel, it was high time that I should come to take you away. And since I have awakened you, now try to look at this matter a little differently.

Gundel (as before).— Oh, yes! I do look at it — differently. And I will do as you say. Now, I also will go out into the world and look about, and reflect, now that you have — awakened me. So let me thank you, Rejdar — for I certainly needed waking up. But we can go no farther together — you do not know the road that I shall travel. For there certainly must be something greater than all this which seems so great to you! (*Clasps her hands with emotion.*) There *must* be something else, something that is greater!

Rejdar (uneasily).— Gundel! You do not yet understand! Gundel, don't bother yourself about all this. Just trust to me, love me as you did before, and close your eyes, my sweet, dreamy girl. (*Moves toward her in an ingratiating way.*) Ah, you *must* believe in me. I will bear you away and open for you the door to life's gay festival.

Gundel (heavily).— Everything has grown so dark — (*Sinks down into a chair.*)

Rejdar (trying to draw her to him).— Ah, now, forbear! Do not quench the burning ardor of my soul! How could you defend yourself for doing me such an injury? Heaven knows how I love you, and how my heart swells with longing to bathe itself in the dreamy sweetness of your love. For your sake I could — I could scale mountains to reach you. Gundel, come!

Gundel (who throughout the foregoing has been gradually moving farther from him, shakes her head).— I have n't time. (*Repelling him with her hands.*) No, no, do not touch me! I do not want to go where you would take me.

Rejdar.— You surely are not awake! My own, you are dreaming. (*In an injured tone.*) Or can it be that I have come too late, after all, and you have grown rooted here amid all these petty —

Gundel (quietly).— No, I long to get away — out where everything is great.

Rejdar (in agitation).— They have spoiled you for me completely. Gundel, you have marred your soul!

Gundel (slowly and decidedly, though with broken voice).— While I went about here dreaming, yes — and thinking that everyone was just what he should be, but that you were better than everyone — Rejdar! Now I want you to go. *And you must never come here again!*

Rejdar (as before).— Yes, I think I'll go out and look around a little — for I have no time for such things, either, Gundel. (*At the door he turns and looks at her.*) When you have become more reasonable again will you just send me word?

Gundel (softly and firmly, but in muffled tones).— I said, go! Did I not? (*He goes. She stands immovable as if turned to stone, then throws herself down in a chair.*)

Fru Jensen (comes in a moment after).— Now, children, we really cannot leave you alone any longer. We old folks must have a little enjoyment. For that matter, I have not been asleep at all. (*Represses a yawn.*) But where has he gone? What have you done with him, child?

Gundel (who has risen again, struggles to control herself).— He — he has gone out — to look around a little — I think.

Stina (comes in with the coffee, looks around astonished, then glancing out of the window points down the street).— Well, would you believe it, if there isn't our son-in-law going off down the street! Heavens, but he's going it fast! As I am a sinner, if he has n't already made a pretty mess of things here. Well, I never did think any good 'd come of such a fellow. (*Picks up a cigar stump from one of the flower-pots, looks anxiously at GUNDEL, then goes slowly out.*)

Aunt Anna (comes in with her knitting, goes over to see if they have drunk the lemonade, looks at GUNDEL and her mother, nods gently, and says quietly, as she goes out).— Yes, I think I have indeed always noticed that.

Fru Jensen (who has taken her chair and picked up her knitting).— What is it, child? What has become of him? Have you not been out for your walk together?

Gundel (swaying as she goes toward her mother).— Oh, yes — we have indeed been out together — I ought to look around a little, Rejdar said — and when we came back again, then — (*whispering*) it was not the same as it was before!

Fru Jensen (without understanding her and not hearing her last words).— And I had thought we should have such a pleasant time here together this evening. Come, sit down here beside me.

Gundel (struggling to control herself, rises and walks aimlessly about the room).— Yes, I am coming. I just want to —

Fru Jensen.— Are you looking for something, child?

Gundel (with forced calm).— Yes, there is something — (*With suddenly assumed indifference.*) Do you remember what uncle said, mother? He was so opposed to it. 'You are not prepared for it,' he said. He wanted me to go to the city to school. 'It would be better for you,' he said. (*Her voice growing fainter.*) Now I want to do as uncle said. (*Laughs.*) I, who

thought that everyone was just what he should be, but that he was better than everyone.

Fru Jensen (who has heard a little of what she has said, laughs also, then turns in surprise).— But, child, what is this that you have gotten into your head? Now, listen to me. What has become of Rejdar? Was there something urgent about that letter?

Gundel (goes over and places herself behind her mother's chair).— I don't know about that. (*Without expression, and in a subdued voice, as if speaking to herself.*) There was such a halo about him, but now it is gone. It is as if death had passed over me —

Fru Jensen (has not heard her words, but drops her knitting, turns and looks up at her, frightened).— Gundel, my child, you are feverish. Come, sit down here beside me and rest your head. (*Pulls her down on the stool beside her and strokes her hair.*) And you are so young, my child. You see, it is only a little thing — it will soon be all right again, it will all pass over. And he will soon come back, you will see. Where did he go?

Gundel (with rising emotion).— I don't know. But — *he will never come again.* (*Throws herself into her mother's arms, and hiding her face, sobs convulsively.*)

Fru Jensen (in deep sympathy).— Gundel, my child — perhaps that would be a fortunate thing for you — after all!

CURTAIN FALLS

ALVILDE PRYDZ

BY HESTER CODDINGTON

IF the average American reader were asked to name any Scandinavian authors, he would probably mention the names of Björnson and Ibsen, giving them in the reverse order if he were interested in drama rather than fiction, and then stop. The more up-to-date reader would possibly add the names of Selma Lagerlöf or Ellen Key, and more recently, that of August Strindberg.

But the great American public would probably be found to be completely ignorant of the author whom both Björnson and Ibsen acknowledged to be the greatest woman writer of their country, and whose reputation has been steadily growing, until now her works are being translated into Swedish, Dutch, French and German, and even into Russian. That Norway, progressive as she is, should number a woman among her foremost literary representatives, seems quite in keeping with the times,—this day of the new woman.

Alvilde Prydz, whose name, to American ears, is in itself delicately suggestive of the North, was born on her father's estate of Tosterød, in southern Norway. Here she spent her early childhood, and began that intimate life with nature which has since found expression in her writings.

A later residence in Christiania was followed by several years on the western coast, which brought her in touch with the people of her country and gave her the inspiration for her life work. She began to study both nature and human nature as she found it round about her.

But Miss Prydz has not been limited to study of Norway and the Norwegian people. She has at different times been honored by public grants of money, which have enabled her to travel and study in foreign countries. A life of several years in France and Italy, England and Germany, has left its impress on her work. There is a breadth of thought which comes only from mingling with the outer world. Although local in coloring, her works are permeated with the spirit of humanity, and are cosmopolitan in their application. Universal in theme, they deal with the inner life, the development of the soul, the feelings and emotions common to all mankind. Yet more than this, they are thoroughly enveloped in that northern atmosphere which is one of the charms of Scandinavian writers. They possess that quality which cannot be described, that indefinable something which, like a draught of pure, fresh ozone from the North, brings

such a glow to the blood and a thrill to the heart, — such a thrill as one feels when listening to Grieg.

And with all this there is that faint tinge of melancholy which is so often to be met with in Scandinavian thought. It is the hint of approaching winter which seems to lurk beneath the radiance of the short northern summer.

But best of all, she pictures for us that intense longing, that yearning for a broader life which seems so typical of the northern races. It is but another phase of the spirit which actuated the Vikings in their search for adventure, and which to-day fills the soul of the emigrant in his desire to break away from his narrow and limited surroundings — to see what lies beyond, to penetrate the unknown.

From an American point of view, possibly, Miss Prydz might be said to be lacking in a sense of humor. There is certainly nothing of the Bret Harte or Mark Twain element in her work, for, like others of her race, she takes life seriously. She feels not only the beauty, but the dignity and nobility of life. There is always an ideal, something higher to be striven for. Yet with all this idealism, that she possesses a keen sense of the ridiculous is shown in the delicate sarcasm with which she points out the foibles and weaknesses of humanity. It is in this line that she does some of her cleverest work, for she has the knack of painting her characters, not as they are seen by the casual observer, but as they appear in the eyes of those who are taking part in the scene.

Descended on her father's side from an old German family of nobility, through her mother Miss Prydz comes from a Danish family noted for its artistic gifts, which it is quite evident she has inherited. At the early age of fourteen she began to express her thoughts in poetry, and in preparing herself for the work of teaching, which circumstances compelled her to take up, she made a specialty of music and the languages. Having taken her work so strenuously that her health became impaired, she was obliged to give up teaching, and for a number of years kept house for her father, who was a government official, at that time stationed in Ödemark. It was during this period that she published her first book, 'Agnar,' the beginning of a long list of works which are in themselves an index to the growth and development of their author.

Among other writings which followed 'Agnar,' came a series of four works in which she pictured Norwegian life as she had observed it in the small provincial town, and in the little fishing hamlet on the wild northern coast. This she did so successfully that it won for her a position in the front rank of Scandinavian writers.

The one among these four works which first brought her international

fame was 'Gunvor, Daughter of Thor at Hærö,* which came out in 1896. It was of this novel that Björnson said: ' . . . I think that a picture such as we have in this book, of a refined and cultured man, representative of an old official generation, in the grasp of degeneracy, and yet with an aching desire for strength of character and a wholesome life, and then the picture of a strong and noble woman who possesses what he longs for, and who at the same time is greatly attracted by the cultured superiority of intellect, taste and refinement which she here encounters for the first time . . . are unique in our literature and would do honor to anyone. . . . Oh, take this strong book and read it, on top of all this baying-at-the-moon of sick love! Here, then, at last, are pictured human beings quite different from the Gabriele d'Annunzio jelly-fish creatures . . . , which are now being served in literature with such great art and so much seasoning that they remind one of boneless herring on the breakfast table, with the same result that one is so intolerably thirsty afterward. But there is no fear of that in Norway, so long as the woman goes forward with the man's strength when the man becomes too weak.'

There is reason for Björnson's enthusiasm. One cannot read 'Gunvor' without feeling most vividly the call of the North. The author has made a study of the simple fisher folk of this region, and has made their thoughts and feelings her own. The prologue, which is a key to the work itself, is full of the music of wind and wave, full of the majesty and pathos of life. Alone it would be sufficient to rank the author among the world's great writers. It is a gloria and a requiem in one.

The characters in 'Gunvor' are real, the feeling for nature is real; and like the author herself, the reader shares the life of the people with its common, everyday cares, its few joys and its great sorrows. For life up there is hard. Yet, in spite of that fact, these simple folk are seen to possess a majesty and beauty of soul which is here revealed in all its strength. The valiant and sturdy Viking evidently did not live in vain. His better and nobler traits were passed on and are to be found to-day even among the humblest of his descendants.

Quite in contrast to 'Gunvor,' in 1898 came 'Sylvia,' an idyl of youth, which proved very popular both at home and abroad, being translated into various languages in a very short time.

This work depicts the development of a young girl, who, from her earliest childhood, was starved for love, the one thing she craved most. Left motherless at an early age, and practically ignored by her father and brothers, 'because she is only a girl,' her affectionate nature has had but little opportunity for expression. So it is no wonder that her heart grasps

* Published in England under the title: 'The Heart of the Northern Sea.'

at the first occasion that offers. And when the rude awakening comes, and she discovers that what she has thought to be love is but its semblance, for the moment it seems too much to bear. Yet the inherent strength of her nature, aided by the wise counsel of the dear old grandmother, the one being who has given to her freely of her love, enables her to win through. She emerges from the ordeal, a woman, triumphant in heart and soul. It is a pleasing story, sweet and pure, and filled with the charm of fresh young girlhood.

Somewhat allied to 'Sylvia,' from the fact that it also traces the development of a young girl, is 'The Children of Hærö,' which is, in a way, a sequel to 'Gunvor.' But in this case the interest is divided between the boy and girl who begin life together as comrades in early childhood.

The treatment, however, is far more elemental and vigorous than in 'Sylvia,' and shows the growth which must have taken place in the author herself during the eight years that elapsed between the two productions. There is a more realistic treatment of the agony of a soul under great temptation, a temptation which has come gradually and almost unawares, but which is finally met and overcome.

The author herself feels that in this work she has done some of her finest psychological portraiture. And the reader cannot but agree with her. It is a study in the elemental which, once read, can never be forgotten.

In such studies as this Miss Prydz is at her best. She seems to be able to look far down into the depths of the human soul. Whether it be the soul of a young girl, as in the case of 'Sylvia,' or that of an experienced man of the world, like Judge Falck in 'Gunvor,' she has the faculty of searching out the bad spots along with the good, and laying them bare for inspection. Yet this is done in such a masterly way, and with such delicacy, that one is not repelled. No matter what weaknesses may be discovered, one still feels the author's faith in the greatness of the human soul, which must some time triumph over all these sordid details of life.

Nowhere does one feel this more strongly than in 'Sanpriel,'* or 'The Promised Land,' which came out in 1903. It is in this work, possibly, that Miss Prydz gives greatest evidence of her insight into human nature. If 'The Children of Hærö' may be characterized as a study of the elemental, 'Sanpriel' is most assuredly a study in temperament — temperament the most dramatic and intense in kind.

It is the life history of a dreamy, imaginative soul, starting in life with the highest ideals, but early thwarted and checked in its growth, and finding itself only after years of suffering and disappointment. Yet the author has known how most skilfully to relieve the tension which at times accompanies

* 'Det Lovede Land' in the original.

the main theme, by introducing a charming little idyl that runs in and out like a golden thread through the more sober fabric of the story.

As a background for the characters, she has sketched, in light but most effective lines, one phase of Norwegian life — life at a mountain summer resort — in such a way as to reveal to us that all human nature is akin, and that people are the same wherever we find them.

Here also, the author has given us one of the most perfect tributes to a mother's love that can be found in all literature. It is a man's lament and a man's eulogy. It embodies in most exquisite form the grief of a strong man for the loss of a mother who, to him, was all in all.

In the matter of style, Miss Prydz may be said to have reached the high-water mark in 'Sanpriel.' It is difficult to imagine anything more perfect of their kind than the prose poems which are scattered throughout the work. In fact the entire work might be called a symphony in prose. Its theme is life in its struggle to attain the ideal, with nature as a grand orchestral accompaniment. We find here the Norwegian language at its best. And at its best, as all who are familiar with the language know, the Norwegian is marked by a simplicity and dignity of style which cannot be surpassed.

As in all her works, but here perhaps to a more intense degree than usual, the author shows herself to be in the closest touch with nature. For nature is to her a living, sentient being, full of moods, yet tender and sympathetic withal. Does man rejoice? Then nature rejoices with him. Is he filled with sorrow? Then she, too, is sorrowful, not to the point of despair, but to the end that she may comfort, and bring to him that balm of healing which it is hers to bestow.

Taken together, 'Sanpriel' and 'The Children of Hærø' may be considered as representative of Miss Prydz's great versatility and wide range of thought. The one thing that characterizes her work aside from the love of nature which is evidenced throughout, is the feeling of reality and genuineness which her characters awaken.

One does not need to be told, as is the actual fact, that when a new work is in the process of construction, she withdraws, as it were, from herself and the world, and lives for the time being the life which she is portraying. This explains why so many of her characters seem to the reader to be autobiographical. In this way she bears out the theory that a writer, in order to be convincing, must first experience for himself, either in actual fact or in his mental life, that which he would give to others. Her own personality goes into the character, and the result is a living human being, whom we learn to know, not because of what the author says about him, but because of what he himself reveals to us through his own words and actions.

In quite a different tone from 'Sanpriel' is her latest novel, 'While It

Was Summer.' Although modern and up-to-date in its setting, the spirit of fatalism and gloom which seems to hover over all, is very suggestive of the days of Odin.

It is in reality a drama in narrative form. Few in number, the characters stand out in bold relief against the somber background. Fore-ordained to tragedy, they are pursued by destiny in the shape of a beautiful woman whose influence is fatal to all who come within her reach. The situation is intensely dramatic. The reader feels the electricity in the air, and is not surprised when the lightning strikes. It is a powerful portrayal of the havoc which may be wrought by a thoroughly selfish and unprincipled character. Yet, in spite of the tragedy, the reader is left with the feeling that there is a sweetness in life, and that it is, after all, worth living.

At the present time Miss Prydz is known chiefly as a novelist, for she has made comparatively little effort in the dramatic field. Yet what she has done in that line has been well received and shows ability in that direction. 'Aino,' a three-act play, which came out in 1900, has been presented at the National Theater in Christiania.

Besides 'Aino,' her dramatic work includes 'Undine,' and two one-act plays (published under one cover in 1911), one of which is here given in translation. It is of 'Undine' that one critic says: 'Undine' gives a powerful picture of that supple, living quality of youthfulness which Alvilde Prydz's genius still retains.'

It is still to be hoped, therefore, that the pen which can depict such strong situations as are to be found in 'While It Was Summer,' will yet bring forth, in true dramatic form, a work worthy of being placed beside 'Gunvor' and 'Sanpriël.'

FROM THE BOOK OF VISIONS

BY JOHN CASEY

I

SHAUN THE TINKER

Old Shaun the Tinker climbed the hills
And found a field of daffodils
Where angels waved and danced and sang,
And Heaven's bells in silence rang.
There happy children holding hands
And weaving naked sarabands
In streams of golden, singing light
Came humming to his heart's delight
A song of bubbling silver joy,
And then he knew he was a boy.
He broke his crutch and tore his clothes.
His lucent morning body rose
In every little glowing limb,
A brother of the cherubim.
A shout of glee and off he pranced.
From Heaven's floor to God he danced,
And climbed to Mary's shining breast
And made of it a cuddling nest,
Where in a glowing dream of light
He saw the smiling of Delight.
He took the hand of Mary's Son
And down into the stars did run
On streaming planets to the earth.
He came unto another birth.

Upon a dark and sodden hill,
He heard the song of whistling Phil,
The ploughman, calling to their work
All tramps and tinkers bound to shirk.
The sunset grieved into his eyes,
He gazed aloft in awed surprise.
A golden Baby smiled benign.

He walked in joy while light did shine,
 And lying in the ditch that night,
 He watched with angels on the height
 Till Mary Byrne came up the road,
 Then sighed a bit and took his load
 Of pots and pans and tinker's tools
 To Puck Fair's crowd of merry fools.

II

CRAZY MARY

I heard the cry of Crazy Mary
 Who ran in light and saw a fairy
 Along the road from here to Coole.
 (We all knew Mary was a fool.)
 The fools of God they walk the roads
 And many fools bear heavy loads.
 The fools of God see many a wonder,
 They sing His Glory in the thunder,
 And whistle to the stormy wind,
 And chase the legions of the blind
 Who run through life in a chime of bells.
 Now Mary beamed at nothing else.

And so it was she saw her fairy,
 A winsome wonder light and airy,
 Upon a wisp of misty cloud.
 The fairy clapped and laughed aloud.

'I'll rain on you and all the flowers,
 You ragged scrap of Nature's powers,
 Unless you cross your heart and die
 To fairyland and learn to fly.'

'I'll fly,' called Mary, 'to the moon.'
 'I'll die,' she shouted, 'to the womb
 Of dusty earth and grow again
 A sister to the little men
 In every little blowing flower

Caressed by every little shower,
 Until I loose my wingèd seed
 And turn my singing into deed.'

'We'll turn your singing into stars
 That ring from Sirius to Mars.
 Upon the down of eider cloud
 Your fairy heart will cry aloud
 In tinkling windy faëry air
 And weave a Heaven-climbing stair
 To shine in little children's eyes
 And beauty-troubled hearts too wise.'

Old Mary Casey gave a yell.
 It was a potent magic spell.
 Her heart it widened to the world,
 And all the starry scroll unfurled
 Came rolling down the Milky Way,
 And then she knew that she was fëy.
 The morning stars they sang in tune
 A ringing, hidden, silent rune,
 Where angels in the heart of light
 Bow down before a Baby's sight.
 Within her heart the Eden grew
 And starlight wove a nest for two,

And Mary rested shining-glad
 To nurse the Boy she never had.
 The little Christ He crowed with mirth,
 Within His hands He held the earth.
 He dropped the little glowing ball
 And laughed to see it gaily fall.
 Then Mary ran down Heaven's stair
 And jumped adown the windy air
 To catch her Baby's shining ball. . . .

She woke beside the garden wall.
 Her Baby laughed in the April sun.
 A spider's web was on her spun.—
 The fairies gave her to the Lord.
 May Heaven be our glad reward!

FOUR LYRICS

BY WILLIAM STANLEY BRAITHWAITE

I

A DEAD FRIEND

Yes, my friend is lying where
Hidden from the rain and sun
Will he ever learn to bear
The peace he won!

Strange to catch my sudden thought
Dwelling on the way he spoke
This and that the hour brought,
Ere silence broke.

No, I can hardly believe
There is less of him than wind;
And I hardly dare to grieve—
And vex his mind.

II

THEY 'LL NOT RETURN!

They'll not return! how can you think
There are no ways unseen,
From dawn's brink to eve's brink
And more worlds between.

They journey to the stars and back,
One starting place and home;
In their own memory lies the track
Where they hidden roam.

What if the earth be full of graves
From centuries of man—
The sea rolls round with all its waves
Since the world began.

III

A CHRONICLE


All about the blown wind's ways,
Never unbelieving,
With a mellow, antique grace,
And triumphant grieving,

Came across the meadow,
Went beyond the hill,
Thin as any shadow
Passed my chronicle.

Earth writes the epitaph,
Rain and leaves wear it:
Eyes to see, lips to laugh
Are my shadows near it.

IV

THE SECRETING

I, who see the breaking
Of green tender leaves,
Forth from brown boughs shaking,
While the wind is making 
Shapes, the sunlight weaves,

Sit and watch before me
Come again to birth,
With immortal glory,
Out of that which bore me—
Re-enchanted earth—

Feel my mystic being
Worshipping the sod,
Touch the secret fleeing
Substance that is freeing
From the heart of God.

FOUR LYRICS

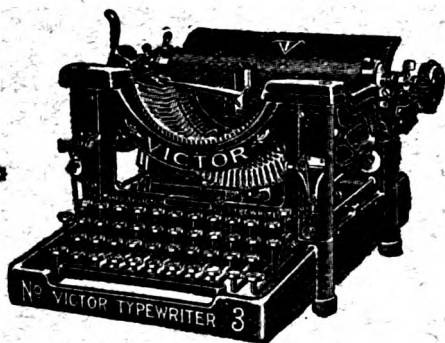
I, who am a seed, too,
Holding seed in me,
Am I but a weed, too,
Earth has only need to
Hold in secret fee?

In the world's nocturnal
Ancientest of hours,
Was the Will supernal
Wrought, the flame eternal
Blown in flesh and flowers?

I, who see the blooming
Apple-blossoms white,
See the flesh assuming
What the dust is dooming
To the infinite.

Something in me deeper
Than a dusty sense,
Safe from Death the reaper,
Like a dreaming sleeper,
Lives in the immense,

Chartless and resurgent
Miracle of spring!
O, the sap is urgent,
To the very verge bent
With the secreting.



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A play in five acts

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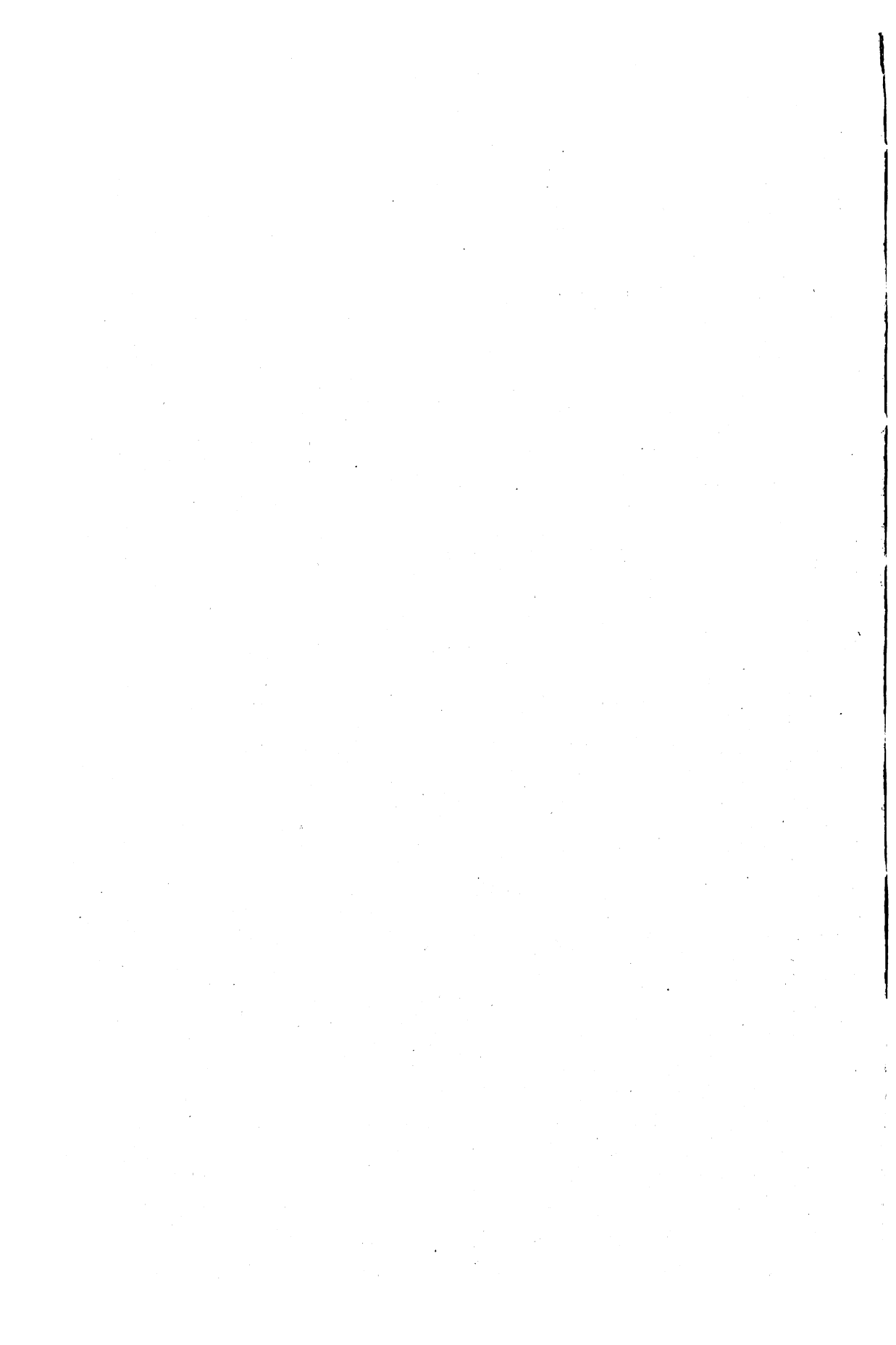
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JUDITH

A Tragedy in Five Acts

BY FRIEDRICH HEBBEL

Translated from the German by Carl Van Doren

CHARACTERS

JUDITH.

HOLOFERNES.

CAPTAINS OF HOLOFERNES.

CHAMBERLAIN OF HOLOFERNES.

AMBASSADORS FROM LIBYA.

AMBASSADORS FROM MESOPOTAMIA.

SOLDIERS AND HALBERDIERS.

MIRZA, *Judith's maid.*

EPHRAIM.

THE ELDERS OF BETHULIA.

PRIESTS OF BETHULIA.

CITIZENS OF BETHULIA, *among them:*

AMMON.

HOSEA.

BEN.

ASSAD AND HIS BROTHER.

DANIEL, *dumb and blind, God-inspired.*

SAMAJA, *Assad's friend.*

JOSHUA.

DELIA, *Samaja's wife.*

ACHIOR, *the captain of the Moabites.*

ASSYRIAN PRIESTS.

WOMEN, CHILDREN.

SAMUEL, *a very old man, and his grandson.*

The action takes place before and in the city of Bethulia.

ACT I

(*The camp of HOLOFERNES. In the foreground, at the right, the pavilion of the commander-in-chief. Tents. Armed forces and tumult. In the background, a range of mountains, in which a city is visible. The commander-in-chief, HOLOFERNES, comes forward with his captains from the open pavilion. Music. After a little he makes a sign, and the music ceases.*)

Holofernes.— Sacrifice!

High Priest.— To what god?

Holofernes.— To whom was the sacrifice made yesterday?

High Priest.— We drew lots at thy command, and the choice fell to Baal.

Holofernes.— Then Baal is not hungry to-day. Sacrifice to one that you all know and yet know not.

High Priest (in a loud voice).— Holofernes commands us to sacrifice to a god that we all know and yet know not.

Holofernes (laughing).— That is the god I honor most.

(*The sacrifice is made.*)

Holofernes.— Halberdier!

Halberdier.— What is the will of Holofernes?

Holofernes.— Whoever among my warriors has a complaint to make of his captain, let him stand forth. Proclaim it.

Halberdier (going through the files of soldiers).— Whoever has a complaint to make of his captain, let him stand forth. Holofernes will hear him.

A Warrior.— I complain of my captain.

Holofernes.— Wherefore?

The Warrior.— In yesterday's assault I captured a slave, so beautiful that I grew fearful before her and dared not touch her. The captain came into my tent about evening, when I was absent, saw the girl, and hewed her down because she resisted him.

Holofernes.— The accused captain must die. (*To a trooper.*) Be quick. And the complainant, too. Take him with thee. But the captain shall die first.

The Warrior.— Wilt thou have me slain with him?

Holofernes.— Because thou art too forward. I made the offer but to try thee. Were I to permit such as thou to utter grievances against your captains, who would insure me against the complaints of the captains?

The Warrior.— For thy sake I spared the maiden; I would have brought her to thee.

Holofernes.— When the beggar finds a crown, he knows certainly that it belongs to the king. The king does not thank him with many words when he brings it. However, I shall reward thee for thy good intention, for I am gracious this morning. Thou mayst make thyself drunk with my best wine before they kill thee. Hence!

(The soldier is led off at the rear by the trooper.)

Holofernes (to one of the captains).— Have the camels bridled.

Captain.— It is already done.

Holofernes.— Had I commanded it?

Captain.— No, but I thought thou wouldst presently command it.

Holofernes.— Who art thou, that thou darest to steal my thoughts from out my head? I will not have it, this officious, presumptuous conduct. My will is One, and thy deed is Two, not the other way round. Mark thou that!

Captain.— Pardon! *(Goes off.)*

Holofernes (alone).— That is the art of not being fathomed — to remain eternally a secret. The water does not understand this art; they build a dyke for the sea and a bed for the river. The fire, too, does not understand it. It has fallen so low that scullions have discovered its nature, and now it must cook every ragamuffin's cabbage. Not even the sun understands it. His course has been spied out, and cobblers and tailors measure off the time by his shadow. But I understand it. Here they skulk around me and peep into the cracks and crevices of my soul, and out of every word from my mouth seek to forge a picklock for the inner chamber of my heart; but my to-day is never like yesterday. I am not one of the dolts who fall down like worthless cowards before themselves, and make one day always the fool of another.

I hack the Holofernes of to-day merrily into pieces and give him to the Holofernes of to-morrow to eat. I see in life not a mere tedious gorge, but a never ending birth and re-birth of existence. Why, at times it seems to me among all these stupid people that I am alone, that they can become conscious of themselves only as I hew off their arms and legs. They, too, notice it, more and more, but instead of coming nearer and climbing up to me, they draw miserably away and flee me as the hare the flame that might singe its beard. Oh, if I had but one enemy, but one, who dared to stand against me! I would kiss him, I would throw myself upon him, when after a fierce battle I had hurled him to the dust, and die with him. Nebuchadnezzar, alas, is nothing but an arrogant figure that beguiles the time by multiplying itself forever by itself. If I should withdraw with the Assyrians, nothing would be left of him but a human skin stuffed with fat. I will conquer the world for him, and when he has it, take it from him again!

A Captain.—A messenger from our great king has just arrived.

Holofernes.—Bring him to me at once. (*Aside.*) Neck, art thou pliant enough now to bend? Nebuchadnezzar takes care that thou dost not unlearn it.

Messenger.—Nebuchadnezzar, before whom the earth cringes, to whom is given glory and power from the rising of the sun to its setting, sends his captain Holofernes a master's greeting.

Holofernes.—In humility I await his command.

Messenger.—Nebuchadnezzar wills it that henceforward no other god beside him shall be worshipped.

Holofernes (proudly).—Probably he came to this decision when he received the news of my latest victories.

Messenger.—Nebuchadnezzar commands that to him alone shall offerings be made, and the altars and temples of other gods shall be consumed with fire and flame.

Holofernes (aside).—One instead of so many! Indeed, that is most pleasant, but for no one more pleasant than for the king.

He takes his shining helmet in his hand and pays his devotions to his own image. He has nothing to guard against but colic, that he may not make wry faces and frighten himself. (*Aloud.*) Surely Nebuchadnezzar has not had the toothache again the last month?

Messenger.— We thank the gods for it.

Holofernes.— Himself thou meanest?

Messenger.— Nebuchadnezzar commands that a sacrifice shall be made to him every morning at sunrise.

Holofernes.— To-day, unfortunately, it is too late. We shall think of it at sunset.

Messenger.— Finally, Nebuchadnezzar commands thee, Holofernes, to spare thyself and to expose thy life to no mischance.

Holofernes.— Yes, friend, if swords could only achieve remarkable things without men. And then— hark thou, I endanger my life by nothing more than by drinking the king's health, and that I cannot possibly leave off.

Messenger.— Nebuchadnezzar said that none of his servants could take thy place, and he has yet much for thee to do.

Holofernes.— Good, I shall love myself, because my king commands it. I kiss his footstool. (*The messenger goes out.*) Halberdier!

Halberdier.— What is the will of Holofernes?

Holofernes.— There is no god but Nebuchadnezzar. Proclaim it.

Halberdier (goes through the files of soldiers).— There is no god but Nebuchadnezzar!

(*A high priest passes.*)

Holofernes.— Priest, thou hast heard what I have had proclaimed?

Priest.— Yes.

Holofernes.— Then go and destroy that Baal we are dragging with us. I will give thee the wood.

Priest.— How can I destroy that to which I have prayed?

Holofernes.— Baal can defend himself. One of two things, thou destroyest the god or thou hangest thyself.

Priest.— I destroy it. (*Aside*) Baal wears golden arm-bands.

Holofernes (alone).— Cursed be Nebuchadnezzar! Cursed be he, because he had a great idea, an idea which he cannot dignify, which he can only bungle and make ridiculous. I have long felt it. Mankind has but one great purpose, to bring forth a god. And this god that they bring forth, how will he show that it is he, if he does not set himself in eternal strife against them, if he does not crush all the foolish emotions of pity, awe of himself, repugnance to his horrible demands; if he does not grind them into the dust and even in the hour of death wrest from them an exultant song? Nebuchadnezzar knows how to do it more easily. The herald will declare him god, and I am to prove to the world that he is.

(*The HIGH PRIEST passes.*)

Holofernes.— Is Baal destroyed?

Priest.— He is in flames. May he forgive it!

Holofernes.— There is no god but Nebuchadnezzar. I command thee to seek out the reasons therefor. For every reason I will reward thee with an ounce of gold, and thou hast three days' time.

Priest.— I hope to fulfil thy command. (*Goes off.*)

A Captain.— Ambassadors from some king beg an audience.

Holofernes.— From what king?

Captain.— Pardon. No one can possibly remember the names of all the kings who humble themselves before thee.

Holofernes (throws him a golden chain).— The first impossibility that ever pleased me! Bring them in.

Ambassadors (prostrate themselves).— Thus will the king of Libya throw himself in the dust before thee, if thou wilt do him the honor to enter his capital.

Holofernes.— Why did you not come yesterday, the day before yesterday?

Ambassadors.— Lord!

Holofernes.— Was the distance too great, or your respect too small?

Ambassadors.— Woe to us!

Holofernes (aside).— Wrath fills my soul, wrath toward Nebuchadnezzar. I must be gracious that this race of worms may not be exalted and consider itself the source of my wrath. (*Aloud.*) Arise and tell your king ——

Captain (enters).— Ambassadors from Mesopotamia.

Holofernes.— Bring them hither.

Mesopotamian Ambassadors (prostrate themselves).— Mesopotamia offers submission to the great Holofernes, if it may thus obtain his favor.

Holofernes.— I bestow my favor, I do not sell it.

A Mesopotamian Ambassador.— No. Mesopotamia submits under any condition, and merely hopes for favor.

Holofernes.— I know not whether I may realize this hope. You have delayed long.

A Mesopotamian Ambassador.— No more than the long journey required.

Holofernes.— It is all one. I have sworn to annihilate the people that offered submission last. I must keep my oath.

A Mesopotamian Ambassador.— We are not the last. On the way we heard that the Hebrews, and they only, will defy thee, and have fortified themselves.

Holofernes.— Then take word to your king that I accept your submission. On what conditions he will learn from one of my captains whom I shall despatch to him to arrange the matter. (*To the Libyan ambassadors.*) Tell your king the same. (*To the Mesopotamian ambassadors.*) Who are the Hebrews?

A Mesopotamian Ambassador.— Lord, they are a race of madmen. Thou perceivest it already, since they dare to withstand thee. Still more wilt thou know it by this, that they pray to a god whom they cannot see or hear, of whom no one knows where he lives, and to whom they yet bring sacrifices as though, fierce and threatening even as our gods, he looked down from the altar upon them. They live in the mountains.

Holofernes.— What cities do they hold? How powerful are

they? What king rules over them? How many warriors are at his command?

A Mesopotamian Ambassador.— Lord, these people are reserved and suspicious. We know no more of them than they themselves know of their invisible god. They avoid contact with strangers. They eat and drink not with us; at best, they fight with us.

Holofernes.— Wherefore speakest thou if thou canst not answer my question? (*Makes a sign with his hand; the ambassadors, bowing and prostrating themselves, go out.*) Let the captains of the Moabites and the Ammonites appear before me. (*The HALBERDIER goes out.*) I respect a people that will oppose me. Alas, that all I respect, I must destroy! (*The captains enter, among them ACHIOR.*) What kind of people are those that live in the mountains?

Achior.— Lord, I know them well, these people, and I will tell thee how matters stand with them. They are contemptible when they go forth with spears and swords; their weapons are useless toys in their hands which their own god breaks in pieces, for it is not his will that they should fight and stain themselves with blood. He alone will undo their enemies. But fearful are these people when they humble themselves before their god as he demands; when they fall upon their knees and cover their heads with ashes; when they cry out in lamentation and curse themselves. Then it seems as if the world becomes another world, as if nature forgets her own laws; the impossible becomes real, the sea divides so that the waters stand fast on both sides like walls along a highway, bread falls down from heaven, and out of the desert sand wells a draught of fresh water.

Holofernes.— What is the name of their god?

Achior.— They think they take something from him by the mere utterance of his name, and would surely slay the stranger who should utter it.

Holofernes.— What kind of cities have they?

Achior (points to the city in the mountains).— The city which lies nearest us, and which thou seest there is called Bethulia.

This one they have fortified. Their capital, however, is Jerusalem. I was there and saw the temple of their god. There is nothing like it upon earth. It seemed to me, as I stood in wonder before it, that something laid itself upon my neck and forced me to the ground. Suddenly I was upon my knees and knew not myself how it came. They came near to stoning me, for when I arose I felt an irresistible impulse to enter the sanctuary, and the penalty thereof is death. A beautiful maiden barred my passage and told me, I know not whether out of pity for my youth or fear of the profanation of the temple by a Gentile. Now hear me, O king, and despise not my words. Inquire whether the people have sinned against their god. If they have, let us come upon them; then will their god surely give them into thy hands, and thou wilt bring them easily under thy feet. If, however, they have not sinned against their god, then turn back, for their god will protect them, and we shall become a jest to the whole land. Thou art a mighty hero, but their god is too powerful. If he can oppose to thee none who equals thee, he can force thee to strive against thyself and put thyself out of the way with thine own hands.

Holofernes.— Dost thou prophesy to me out of fear or guile? I could punish thee, because thou presumest to fear another beside me, but I will not do it. Thou shalt have spoken judgment upon thyself. What awaits the Hebrews awaits thee. Seize him and take him safe hence. (*It is done.*) And whoever at the capture of the city shall slay him and bring me his head, to him will I give its weight in gold. (*Raising his voice.*) Now on to Bethulia!

(*The column is set in motion.*)

ACT II

(*JUDITH'S chamber. JUDITH and MIRZA at the loom.*)

Judith.— What sayest thou to this dream?

Mirza.— Ah, listen rather to what I said to thee.

Judith.— I went on and on, and I was in great haste, and yet I knew not whither I was impelled. At times I stood still and reflected; then it seemed to me that I was committing a great sin. 'On, on!' I said to myself, and went more swiftly than before.

Mirza.— Ephraim just passed. He was very sad.

Judith (without listening to her).— Suddenly I stood upon a high mountain; I was dizzy; then I grew proud, the sun was so near me; I bowed to it and looked steadily upward. At once I marked a chasm at my feet, a few steps from me, dark, immeasurable, full of smoke and vapor. And I was powerless to retreat or to stay — I reeled forward. ‘God! God!’ I cried in my anguish. ‘Here am I,’ echoed a voice from the abyss, gentle, sweet — I sprang — tender arms caught me — I thought I was resting upon the breast of one whom I could not see, and I was unspeakably happy. But I was too heavy, he could not sustain me; I sank, sank — I heard him weeping, and burning tears seemed to fall upon my cheek.

Mirza.— I know a soothsayer. Shall I call him for thee?

Judith.— Alas, it is against the law. But this I know, such dreams are not to be held lightly. Behold, I believe this concerning them. When men lie in slumber, relaxed, no longer bound by the consciousness of themselves, a sense of the future displaces all the thoughts and images of the present, and the things which are to come glide like shadows through the soul, preparing, warning, consoling. Thence comes it that the truth so seldom or never takes us unawares, that we hope so confidently for good long before it comes, and forebode, though unwittingly, every ill. Often have I wondered whether one dreams just before death.

Mirza.— Why dost thou not listen when I speak to thee of Ephraim?

Judith.— Because I shudder at men.

Mirza.— And yet thou hast had a husband.

Judith.— I must confide a secret to thee. My husband was mad.

Mirza.— Impossible! How could that have escaped me?

Judith.— He was mad. I must call it so if I am not to feel horror of myself, if I am not to believe that I am a terrible, a fearful being. Behold, I was not yet fourteen years old when I was brought to Manasses as his bride. Thou wilt remember the evening, for thou didst follow me. With every step I took I grew

more disquieted. Now, I thought I should cease to live; again, that I was just to begin living. Ah, and the evening was so charming, so seductive, none could resist it! The warm air lifted my veil as if it would say, 'Now it is time.' But I held it fast, for I felt that my face was glowing and I was ashamed. My father walked beside me. He was very solemn and spoke much that I did not hear. At times I looked up at him and then I thought: 'Surely Manasses will not be like him.' Didst thou not notice all this? Thou too wast there.

Mirza.— I was ashamed with thee.

Judith.— At last I entered his house and his old mother came toward me with solemn mien. It cost me an effort to call her mother; I thought that my mother must feel it in her grave and be grieved by it. Then thou didst anoint me with spikenard and oil, and truly I had a feeling that I had died and was being anointed as one dead. Thou saidst also that I grew pale. Now Manasses came, and when he looked upon me, first hesitating, then bolder and still bolder, when at last he grasped my hand and wished to speak, but could not, then did it seem indeed to me as if I were on fire, as if I were bursting forth in furious flames. Pardon, that I tell thee this.

Mirza.— Thou didst first hide thy face in thy hands a few moments, then thou sprangst quickly up and fell upon his neck. I was confounded.

Judith.— I saw it and laughed at thee; all at once I thought myself much wiser than thou. Now, hear me further, Mirza. We went into the chamber; the old woman did sundry strange things and spoke something like a blessing. I was again troubled and anxious when I found myself alone with Manasses. Three candles were burning there; he went to extinguish them. 'No, no!' said I, pleading. 'Foolish girl,' he said, and sought to lay hold on me. One of the lights went out — we hardly noticed it. He kissed me — the second was extinguished. He shuddered and I after him; then he laughed and spoke: 'I will put out the third one myself.' 'Quick, quick!' I said, then turned cold. He did it. The moon shone brightly into the room. I slipped

into bed. The moon shone directly into my face. Manasses called out: 'I see thee as clearly as if it were day,' and came toward me. All at once he stopped; it seemed as if the black earth had thrust out a hand and clutched him with it. I was uneasy. 'Come, come,' I cried, and was not at all ashamed to do it. 'But I cannot,' he answered dully. 'I cannot,' he repeated and stared at me in terror, with wide eyes. Then he staggered to the window and said at least ten times in succession, 'I cannot.' He seemed to see, not me, but something strange, monstrous.

Mirza.— O, wretched woman!

Judith.— I began to weep violently; I believed I was defiled, I hated and loathed myself. He spoke tenderly to me. I stretched my arms out toward him, but instead of coming, he commenced to pray softly. My heart ceased to beat, my blood seemed frozen. Inwardly I raged against myself as against something foreign, and when at last I lost myself gradually in sleep, I felt that I was yet awake. The next morning Manasses stood beside my bed. He looked at me with boundless pity. I was oppressed, almost suffocated. Then something seemed to give way within me. I broke out into wild laughter and could breathe again. His mother scrutinized me, gloomy and scornful. I perceived that she had listened. She said not a word to me and walked, whispering with her son, into a corner. 'Fie!' he cried aloud suddenly and angrily; 'Judith is an angel,' he added, and would have kissed me. I refused him my lips. He nodded his head strangely, as though it seemed right to him. (*After a long pause.*) Six months was I his wife — he never knew me.

Mirza.— And ——?

Judith.— Thus we lived on side by side. We felt that we belonged to each other, but something seemed to stand between us, something dark, unknown. At times his eyes would rest upon me with an expression that made me shudder. In such moments I could have strangled him, out of terror, in self-defense. His gaze pierced me like a poisoned arrow. Thou knowest it was three years ago at the time of the barley harvest, when he came back from the field sick, and on the third day lay dead. I

felt that he would steal away something from my inmost self. I hated him because of his sickness; it seemed that he threatened me with his death as with a crime. 'He must not die,' I cried out in my heart, 'he cannot bear his secret with him into the grave. Thou must take courage and question him at last. 'Manasses,' I said, and bent over him, 'what was it on our wedding night?' His dark eyes were already closed; he opened them wearily. I shuddered, for he seemed to lift himself out of his body as out of a coffin. He looked at me a long time, then he said: 'Yes, yes, now I may tell thee. Thou—' but suddenly, as if I might never know it, death strode between me and him and closed his lips forever. (*After a long silence.*) Speak, Mirza, must I not be mad myself, if I cease to think Manasses mad?

Mirza.— I shudder.

Judith.— Thou hast often seen me, when I seem to be sitting quietly at the loom or some other kind of work, suddenly collapse and begin to pray. Therefore am I called pious and God-fearing. I tell thee, Mirza, if I do that, it is because I no longer know how to save myself from my thoughts. My prayer is then a plunge into God, it is only another kind of suicide. I spring into the infinite as desperate men into deep water —

Mirza (changing the subject suddenly). — In such moments thou shouldst step before a mirror. Those spectres, fearful and blinded, would flee before the radiance of thy youth and beauty.

Judith.— Foolish! Knowest thou the fruit that can feed upon itself? Thou wert better not young and not fair, if thou must be so for thyself alone. A woman is nothing; through man only can she become something; through him can she become a mother. The child that she bears is the only thanks she can offer nature for her existence. Unblessed are the unfruitful; doubly unblessed am I, not a maid, nor yet a wife!

Mirza.—Who forbids thee to be young and fair for others, even for a beloved husband? Canst thou not choose among the noblest?

Judith (very solemnly). — Thou hast not in the least understood me. My beauty is that of the deadly nightshade; enjoyment of it brings madness and death.

Ephraim (enters hastily).— Ha! You are so calm while Holofernes stands before the city?

Mirza.— Now God have mercy upon us!

Ephraim.— Verily, Judith, if thou hadst seen what I saw, thou wouldst tremble. One might swear that all that can inspire fear and terror is in the service of the Gentile: this multitude of camels and horses, of chariots and battering rams. It is fortunate that walls and gates have no eyes. They would fall down for very dread, if they could behold all those horrors.

Judith.— I think thou sawest more than others.

Ephraim.— I tell thee, Judith, there is none in all Bethulia who does not look as if he had the fever. Thou appearest to know little of Holofernes; I know so much more about him. Each word from his mouth is a beast of prey. When the twilight falls —

Judith.— He has the candles lighted.

Ephraim.— That is what we do, I and thou. He has villages and towns set on fire and says: 'These are my torches; they cost me less than others.' And he thinks himself very merciful when he has his sword furbished and his meat broiled by the flames of one and the same city. When he beheld Bethulia, they say he laughed and asked his cook in jest: 'Thinkest thou that thou couldst roast an ostrich egg by that?'

Judith.— Would I could see him! (*Aside.*) What did I say then?

Ephraim.— Woe to thee if thou wert seen by him! Holofernes kills women with his kisses and embraces, as he does men with spear and sword. Had he known thee to be within the walls of the city he would have come for the sake of thee alone.

Judith (smiling).— Might it be so! Then I should need only to go out to him, and the city and land were saved!

Ephraim.— Thou alone hast the right to think such a thought.

Judith.— And why not? One for all, and one who ever asked herself vainly, 'Wherefore art thou here?' Ah, and even if he did not come for my sake, could he not be brought to think that he had done so? If the giant's head towers so high into the clouds

that you cannot reach it, why, then throw a jewel at his feet. He will stoop to pick it up, and then you can overcome him with ease.

Ephraim (aside).— My plan was simple. What I thought would strike terror into her soul and drive her into my arms, emboldens her. I feel myself judged when I look into her eyes. I hoped that in this general need she would cast about for a protector, and who was nearer than I? (*Aloud.*) Judith, thou art so bold that thou ceasest to be beautiful.

Judith.— Being a man, thou darest to tell me that!

Ephraim.— I am a man and may tell thee more. Behold, Judith, evil times approach, times when none are safe but those who dwell in tombs. How wilt thou endure them who hast neither father nor brother nor husband?

Judith.— Thou wilt not, then, have Holofernes woo for thee?

Ephraim.— Jest not, but hear me. I know that thou disdainest me, and had the world about us not changed so threateningly, I should never again have come before thy eyes. Seest thou this knife?

Judith.— It is so bright I can see my own likeness in it.

Ephraim.— I sharpened it on the day when thou didst drive me scornfully from thee, and, verily, if the Assyrians stood not this hour before the gate, it would now be thrust into my heart. Then thou couldst not have used it for a mirror, for my blood would have rusted it.

Judith.— Give it to me. (*She strikes at his hand, which he draws back.*) Fie! Thou darest to speak of suicide, and yet shrinkest from a prick in the hand!

Ephraim.— Thou standest before me, I see thee, I hear thee; now I love myself, for I seem myself no longer. I am full of thee. Such things can be only in the deep night, when only pain is awake in the heart, when death presses upon the soul as sleep upon the eyes, and one seems to carry out involuntarily what an invisible power commands. Oh, I know it, for I was so far that I myself knew not why I went no further. It is no matter of courage or cowardice; it is like bolting the door at bedtime. (*JUDITH holds out her hand to him.*) Judith, I love thee; thou dost not love me.

Thou canst do nothing for the one, I nothing for the other. But knowest thou what it means to love and be disdained? It is like no other pain. If something is taken from me, the next day I learn that I can dispense with it. If I am wounded, I have the opportunity to seek a cure. But when my love is treated as folly, then the holiest passion of my heart is made a lie. For if the emotion that draws me to thee betrays me, what assurance have I that the one which bows me down before God is genuine?

Mirza.— Dost thou not feel it, Judith?

Judith.— Can love be duty? Must I give my hand to this man so that he will let fall his dagger? I almost believe it.

Ephraim.— Judith, once more I sue for thee. That is, I sue for permission to die for thee. I wish to be nothing but the shield on which the swords that threaten thee may hack in vain.

Judith.— Is this the same man whom one look upon the camp of the enemy seemed to have disheartened, who appeared before me like one to whom I must lend a petticoat? His eyes flash, his fists clench! O God, I respect so gladly; it is like cutting into my own flesh, for me to despise anyone. Ephraim, I have wounded thee. It grieves me. I wished to cease being lovely in thine eyes, for I could give thee nothing; therefore I mocked at thee. I will reward thee! I can do it! But woe to thee if now thou dost not comprehend me, if, as soon as I utter the word, the deed, as imperative as necessity itself, does not stand before thy soul, if it shall not seem to thee that thou livest only to fulfil it! Go hence and slay Holofernes! Then — then ask of me whatever reward thou wilt.

Ephraim.— Thou ravest! Slay Holofernes in the midst of his host? How were it possible?

Judith.— How is it possible? Do I know? Then I should do it myself. I know only that it must be done.

Ephraim.— I have never seen him, and yet I see him!

Judith.— And I, too, with a countenance that is all an eye, an imperious eye, and with a foot from which the world which he treads upon seems to shrink. But there was a time when he was not; therefore one can come when he will be no more.

Ephraim.— Give him the thunder and take away his host and I will dare it, but now —

Judith.— Only will it! And up out of the depths of the abyss, and down from the firmament thou wilt call the holy protecting powers, and they will bless and guard thy work, if not thee. For thou wilt do the will of the world, that which the godhead broods in his first wrath, and that with which nature, which trembles at the giant birth of her own womb and will not create a second man, or only that he may destroy the first, wrestles in her tortured dream.

Ephraim.— It is only because thou hatest me, because thou wishest to slay me, that thou commandest this unthinkable deed!

Judith (passionately).— I judged thee aright! What! Does not such a thought inspire thee? Does it not make thee drunken? I whom thou lovest, I who would exalt thee above thyself that I might love thee again, I put it into thy heart, and is it nothing to thee but a burden that bows thee only deeper into the dust? Behold, if thou hadst received it with exultation, if thou hadst snatched impetuously at a sword and hadst taken not even the time for a fleeting farewell, then, oh, I feel it, then should I have thrown myself weeping in the way! I should have painted the danger for thee with a heart that trembled for its best beloved; I should have detained thee or followed thee. Now — ha, I am more than justified. Thy love is the penalty of thy paltry nature. It became a curse to undo thee. I should be angry if I detected in myself a stir of pity for thee. I comprehend thee fully, I comprehend even that for thee the loftiest must be as the basest, that thou must smile while I pray!

Ephraim.— Despise me! But first show me him who can make possible the impossible.

Judith.— I will show him to thee. He will come! Ah, he must come! And if thy cowardice is that of thy whole sex, if all men see nothing in danger but a warning to escape it — then has a woman won the right to do a great deed — then, ah, I have demanded it of thee — I must prove that it is possible!

ACT III

(JUDITH'S chamber. JUDITH, crouching in sackcloth and ashes.)

Mirza (enters and looks at her).— There she has been sitting now for three days and nights. She does not eat, she does not drink, she does not speak. She never sighs nor laments. 'The house is on fire,' I cried out to her yesterday evening, and pretended that I had lost my wits. She did not change countenance and sat quite still. I believe she wants some one to pack her into a coffin, nail the lid over her, and carry her away. She hears all that I am saying, and yet she says nothing. Judith, shall I send for the gravedigger? (JUDITH motions her with her hand to go away.) I will go, but only to come back at once. I forget the enemy and all our distress because of thee. If an arrow were aimed at me, I should not notice it so long as I saw thee sitting there like one dead. At first thou hadst so much courage that the men were ashamed, and now — Ephraim was right. He said: 'She defies herself that she may forget her fear.' (Goes out.)

Judith (springs to her knees).— God! God! I feel that I must clutch Thee by the hem of Thy garment, as One who threatens to forsake me forever! I did not wish to pray, but I must pray as I must breathe, if I am not to stifle. God! God! Why dost Thou not incline unto me? I am too weak to ascend to Thee. Behold, here I lie as if out of the world and out of time. Anxiously I await a sign from Thee that will bid me arise and act. When danger drew near us, I saw it with rejoicing, for to me it was but a sign that Thou wouldst glorify Thyself among Thy chosen people. With trembling ecstasy I saw that what uplifted me, abased all the others. Then it seemed that Thy finger pointed graciously toward me, as if from me Thy triumph was to proceed. With rapture I saw that everyone to whom I would have relinquished the great work, to make in humility the greatest sacrifice, groveled, cowardly and trembling, before it like a serpent in its wretched slime. 'It is thou! It is thou!' I cried to myself and fell down before Thee and swore a sacred oath

never again to rise, or only when Thou hadst shown me the way that leads to the heart of Holofernes. I listened within myself, because I believed that a lightning flash of annihilation must burst from my soul; I hearkened to the world without, because I thought, 'Some hero has made thee superfluous'; but both within and without it remained dark. Only one thought came to me, only one, with which I played and which always returned. But it came not from Thee. Or did it come from Thee? (*She springs to her feet.*) It came from Thee! The way to my deed leads through sin! I thank Thee, I thank Thee, Lord! Thou makest clear mine eyes. In Thy sight the impure becomes pure. If Thou didst place a sin between me and my deed, who am I that I should contend with Thee, that I should draw back from Thee? Is not my deed worth as much as it costs me? May I love my honor, my immaculate body more than Thee? Oh, the knot within me is untied! Thou madest me beautiful; now I know wherefore. Thou didst deny me a child; now I feel why and rejoice that I have not to love my own self in another. What I formerly held a curse, now appears to me a blessing! (*She steps before a mirror.*) I greet thee, my likeness! For shame, cheeks, that you do not yet glow! Is the way from you to my heart so long? Eyes, I praise you; you have drunk fire and are intoxicated. Poor mouth, I do not take it ill of thee that thou art pale; thou shalt kiss Horror. (*She turns from the mirror.*) Holofernes, all this is thine; I have no longer a share in it. I have withdrawn to the inmost depths of my soul. Take it, but tremble when thou hast it. I shall emerge at an hour when thou dost not expect it, like a sword from the scabbard, and pay myself with thy life. If I must kiss thee, I will imagine that it is with poisoned lips; if I embrace thee, I will think that I am strangling thee. God, let him commit atrocities before my eyes, bloody atrocities, but save me from seeing aught good in him!

Mirza (comes in).— Didst thou call me, Judith?

Judith.— No — yes. Mirza, thou shalt adorn me.

Mirza.— Wilt thou not eat?

Judith.— No. I will be adorned.

Mirza.— Eat, Judith, I can endure it no longer.

Judith.— Thou?

Mirza.— Behold, when thou wouldst eat and drink nothing whatever, I swore that neither would I. I did it to compel thee; if thou hadst no mercy for thyself, thou shouldst have it for me. I told thee, but thou canst not have heard it. It is three days now.

Judith.— Would that I were worthy of so much love!

Mirza.— Let us eat and drink. It will soon be the last time, at least to drink. The pipes to the fountain are cut down, and no one can get to the little fountains at the wall, for they are guarded by soldiers. Yet there are those who, rather to be killed than to be thirsty, have gone out. They say of one that he crawled, though run through, to the well to refresh himself at last. But before he could raise to his lips the water which he held already in his hand, he gave up the ghost. No one expected this cruelty from the enemy, and so the scarcity of water in the city became thus general at once. Whoever has a little hides it like a treasure.

Judith.— Oh, it is detestable to take, instead of life which cannot be taken, the essential of life! Kill, lay waste, but deprive not men of necessities in the midst of nature's abundance! Oh, I have already delayed too long!

Mirza.— Ephraim has brought me water for thee. Thou mayst know by that the greatness of his love. He denied it to his own brother!

Judith.— Fie! This man is one of those who sin even when they wish to do something good.

Mirza.— That did not please me either, but still thou art too hard toward him.

Judith.— No, I tell thee, no! Every woman has a right to demand of every man that he be a hero. When thou seest one, does it not seem that thou seest what thou wouldst be, shouldst be? A man may forgive cowardice in another; a woman, never. Canst thou pardon the prop for breaking? Thou canst scarce pardon thy need of a prop.

Mirza.— What, couldst thou expect Ephraim to obey thy command?

Judith.— From one who had laid hands upon himself and had thereby turned his life out of doors, I might have expected it. I struck him as I would a flint which I did not know whether to keep or throw away. Had he given back a spark, the spark would have flashed into my heart; now, I spurn the vile stone.

Mirza.— But how could he have carried it out?

Judith.— The archer who asks how to shoot will miss. Mark — eye — hand — it is there! (*Looking toward heaven.*) Oh, I saw it hover above the world like a dove which seeks a nest to brood upon, and the first soul which burst the bonds of its torpor must have conceived the thought of liberation! But, *Mirza*, go and eat, then adorn me.

Mirza.— I will wait as long as thou.

Judith.— Thou lookest so sorrowfully upon me. Well, I will go with thee. But afterwards, get all thy wits together and adorn me as if for my wedding. Smile not! My beauty is now my duty. (*They go out.*)

(*An open place in Bethulia. Many people. A group of young citizens, armed.*)

A citizen (to another).— What sayest thou, *Ammon*?

Ammon.— I ask thee, *Hosea*, which is better, death by the sword, which comes so quickly that it gives thee no time whatever to fear it and feel it, or this tedious withering that confronts us?

Hosea.— If I were to answer thee, my throat would have to be less dry. Speech makes us thirstier.

Ammon.— Thou art right.

Ben (a third citizen).— One can go so far as to grudge one's self the few drops of blood that still trickle in one's veins. I would like to tap myself like a cask. (*Puts a finger in his mouth.*)

Hosea.— The best thing is that thirst makes us forget our hunger.

Ammon.— Well, we still have something to eat.

Hosea.— How long will it last, especially, if people like

thee, who can carry more victuals in their stomachs than on their shoulders, are tolerated among us?

Ammon.— I pay my own way. It is nobody's business.

Hosea.— In time of war all is common. Thou and thy kind ought to be put where the arrows fall thickest. Above all, the gluttons should be thrust out. If they are victorious, thanks will not be due to them, but to the oxen and fatted calves whose marrow rumbles in them; if they fall, that is all the better. (*AMMON gives him a cuff on the ear.*) Do not think that I will give back what I receive, but mark this: if thou art in danger, do not expect me to run to aid thee. I will ask Holofernes to avenge me.

Ammon.— Ingrate! To cudgel a man is to forge him a cuirass out of his own skin. To-day's cuff on the ear makes thee indifferent to the one that awaits thee to-morrow.

Ben.— You are fools. You quarrel and forget that you should be on guard at the walls even now.

Ammon.— No, we are sensible people. As long as we wrangle with each other, we do not think of our want.

Ben.— Come, come, we must go.

Ammon.— I am not sure but that it would be better to open the gate to Holofernes. The one who did it, he would certainly not kill.

Ben.— Then I should kill him. (*They go off.*)

(*Two older citizens in conversation.*)

One.— Hast thou heard any new atrocity of Holofernes?

The Other.— O, yes!

The One.— How thou findest things out! But tell me.

The Other.— He will stand and speak with one of his captains of all kinds of secrets. Suddenly he notices a soldier near by. 'Hast thou heard what I said?' he will ask him. 'No,' answers the man. 'That is lucky for thee,' says the tyrant, 'otherwise I should have had thy head struck off, because there are ears on it.'

The One.— Thou wouldst think a man would fall down lifeless on hearing such a thing. That is the basest thing about fear, that it only half kills, not altogether.

The Other.— I cannot understand God's long suffering. If

He does not hate such a Gentile, whom is He to hate? (*They pass by.*)

(SAMUEL, a very old man, enters, led by his GRANDSON.)

Grandson.— Sing unto the Lord a new song, for His goodness endureth forever!

Samuel.— Forever! (*He sits down on a stone.*) Samuel is thirsty. Grandson, why dost thou not go and bring him fresh water?

Grandson.— Grandfather, the enemy stands before the city. He has forgotten it again.

Samuel.— The psalm! Louder! Why dost thou stammer?

Grandson.— Bear witness unto the Lord, O youth, for thou knowest not whether thou wilt become old; praise Him, O age, for thou grewest not old to conceal what His mercy has done to thee!

Samuel (angrily).— Does the well no longer hold as much water as Samuel needs to drink for the last time? Cannot my grandson draw water, even though the noon be hot?

Grandson (very loudly).— Swords keep the well guarded, spears bristle; the Gentiles have great power over Israel.

Samuel (rising).— Not over Israel! Whom did the Lord seek when He gave the winds and waves power over the boat, so that it was tossed hither and thither? Not him at the helm, but yet another, the defiant Jonah who was sleeping quietly. Out of the security of the ship He thrust him, into the tempestuous waves, out of the waves into the jaws of Leviathan, out of the jaws of the beast, through the threatening teeth into the dark belly. But when Jonah had repented, was the Lord not mighty enough to bring him out of the belly of Leviathan? Arise, you workers of hidden iniquity, who sleep as Jonah slept; wait not until your lot is cast. Stand forth and say, 'It is we,' that the innocent may not be annihilated with the guilty. (*He seizes his beard.*) Samuel smote Aaron — sharp was the nail — tender was the brain — deep was Aaron's slumber in his wife's lap. Samuel took Aaron's wife and begot Ham upon her, but she died of terror when she beheld the child, for his head bore the mark of

the nail, like the head of the dead man, and Samuel withdrew into himself and hid his face from his own soul.

Grandson.— Grandfather! Grandfather! Thou thyself art Samuel, and I am the son of Ham.

Samuel.— Samuel shore his head and placed himself before his door, and awaited vengeance as men await fortune, for seventy years and more, till he could no longer count his days. But the pestilence passed by and its breath smote him not, and affliction passed by and visited him not, and death passed by and touched him not. Vengeance came not of itself — and he had not the courage to call it.

Grandson.— Come, come. (*He leads him to one side.*)

Samuel.— Aaron's son, where art thou, or his son's son, or his brother, that Samuel does not feel the blow of thy hand or the kick of thy foot? An eye for an eye, said the Lord, a tooth for a tooth, blood for blood.

Grandson.— Aaron's son is dead, and his son's son and his brother — the whole race.

Samuel.— Did no avenger remain? Are these the last days, that the Lord lets stand the sin that has sprung up and breaks the reaping-hooks? Woe! Woe! (*His GRANDSON leads him off.*)

(*Two citizens.*)

First.— As I tell thee, water is not lacking everywhere. There are people among us who not only guzzle their fill, but they even wash several times daily.

Second.— Oh, I believe it! I will tell thee a secret. My neighbor, Assaph, has a she-goat that fed cheerfully in his little garden. I look down directly into the garden, and every time I beheld the creature with her full udder I yearned like a pregnant woman. Yesterday I went to Assaph and asked him for a little milk. When he refused me I seized my bow, killed the goat with one quick shot, and sent him what she is worth. I did right, for the goat tempted him to be hard-hearted to his nearest neighbor.

First.— One would expect such a trick from thee. When thou wert but a mere child, thou madest a virgin a mother.

Second.— What?

First.— Yes! Yes! Art thou not the firstborn? (*They pass over.*)

(*One of the elders enters.*)

The Elder.— Hear, hear, men of Bethulia! (*The people gather around him.*) Hear what the holy High Priest Joachim makes known to you through my mouth.

Assad (a citizen who leads by the hand his brother DANIEL, blind and dumb).— Take heed, the High Priest wishes us to be lions. Then he can play the hare all the better.

Another.— Blapheme not.

Assad.— I will accept no arguments to console us, but those I can draw out of the well.

The Elder.— You should remember Moses, the servant of the Lord, who smote the Amalekite not with the sword, but with prayer. You should not tremble before shield and spear, for one word from the saints will put them to shame.

Assad.— Where is Moses? Where are the saints?

The Elder.— You should take courage and remember that the sanctuary of the Lord is in peril.

Assad.— I thought the Lord would help us. Now it turns out that we ought to help Him.

The Elder.— And above all, you should not forget that the Lord, if He lets you perish, can requite your death and your martyrdom to your children and your children's children even unto the tenth generation.

Assad.— Who can tell what my children and children's children will prove to be? May they not be rascals of whom I must be ashamed, who will go about disgracing me? (*To the ELDER.*) Man, thy lips tremble, thy eyes shift restlessly, thy teeth would like to rend the sounding words that conceal thy anxiety. How canst thou demand of us the courage that thou thyself hast not? For once I will speak to thee in the name of all these people. Command the gates of the city to be opened. Submission will find mercy. I say it not for my own sake, I say it for the sake of this poor mute, I say it for the sake of the women and

children. (*The bystanders give signs of approval.*) Command it instantly, or we will do it without thy command.

Daniel (*jerks away from him*).— Stone him! Stone him!

People.— Was not this man dumb?

Assad (*looking at his brother in amazement*).— Dumb and blind. He is my brother, thirty years old, and has never spoken a word.

Daniel.— Yes, that is my brother. He has nourished me with food and drink. He has clothed me and given me shelter in his house. He has cared for me by day and by night. Give me thy hand, thou faithful brother. (*As he grasps it, he dashes it, as if seized with horror, from him.*) Stone him! Stone him!

Assad.— Woe! Woe! The spirit of the Lord speaks out of the mouth of the dumb! Stone me!

(*The people run after him, stoning him.*)

Samaja (*hurrying after them dismayed*).— What will you do? (*Goes out.*)

Daniel (*inspired*).— I come, I come, saith the Lord, but whence you shall not ask. Think you it is time? I alone know when it is time.

People.— A prophet! A prophet!

Daniel.— I let you grow and prosper like corn in summer-time. Think you that I will surrender my harvest to the Gentiles? Verily, I say unto you, that shall never come to pass.

(*JUDITH and MIRZA appear among the people.*)

People (*prostrating themselves*).— Joy! Joy!

Daniel.— And however great your enemy be, I need but a little to overthrow him. Blessing, blessing be upon you! For I will dwell with you and will not forsake you, if you forsake me not. (*After a pause.*) Brother, thy hand!

Samaja (*coming back*).— Thy brother is dead. Thou hast slain him. That was thy thanks for all his love! Oh, how gladly would I have saved him! Why, we were friends from youth up. But what could I do against so many whom thy folly had maddened. ‘Take care of Daniel,’ he cried to me when his dimming

eyes recognized me. I lay these words to thy heart as a burning legacy. (*DANIEL attempts to speak and cannot; he whimpers.*)

(*Samaja to the people*).—Shame upon you that are on your knees! Still more shame upon you that have put to death a noble man who wished you well. Ha! You followed him as furiously as if in him you could stone your own sins to death. All that he uttered here against the elder, not out of cowardice, but out of pity for your affliction, was agreed upon by us this morning. This dumb man sat by, cowering and apathetic, as always. His face betrayed no abhorrence. (*To the ELDER.*) Everything that my friend demanded I still demand: the prompt opening of the gates, submission to favor and disfavor. (*To DANIEL.*) Now, show that the Lord spoke through thee. Curse me as thou didst curse thy brother. (*DANIEL, in the greatest anguish, tries to speak and cannot.*) Do you see the prophet? A demon of the pit that wished to seduce you, unsealed his lips, but God closed them again and closed them forever. Or can ye think that the Lord makes the dumb speak in order that they may become fratricides?

(*DANIEL strikes himself.*)

Judith (comes into the midst of the people).—Attempt it not. Did it not lay hold upon thee like God's presence and bow thee down to the earth in holy annihilation? Now wilt thou permit thy deepest feeling to be given the lie?

Samaja.—Woman, what wilt thou? Dost thou not see that this man is in despair? Dost thou not divine that he must despair if he is a man? (*To DANIEL.*) Tear thy hair! Bruise thy head against the wall, so that the dogs may lick up thy brains. That is the only thing in the world for thee to do now. What is contrary to nature is contrary to God.

Voices among the People.—He is right.

Judith (to SAMAJA).—Wilt thou prescribe the path which the Lord should follow? Does He not cleanse every path by following it?

Samaja.—What is contrary to nature is contrary to God. The Lord wrought miracles among our fathers; our fathers were better than we. If He wishes to work a miracle now, why does

He not send rain? And why does He not work a miracle in the heart of Holofernes and move him to retreat?

A Citizen (pressing upon DANIEL).— Die, sinner, thou who hast misled us to stain our hands with the blood of the righteous!

Samaja (steps between him and DANIEL).— No one may kill Cain. Thus spake the Lord. But Cain may kill himself. Thus speaks a voice within me. And Cain shall do it. Let this be a token: if this man lives till morning, if he can bear his deed a whole day and a whole night, then do according to his words and wait till you sink down dead, or a miracle releases you. If not, do as Assad told you, open the gates and surrender. And if in the heaviness of your sins you dare not hope that the Lord will touch the heart of Holofernes, then lay hand upon yourselves. Kill each other and leave only the children alive. The Assyrians will spare them, for they themselves have children, or wish to have. Make a great slaughter of it, where the son shall stab the father, and where the friend shall show his love to his friend by cutting his throat without first being asked. (*Takes DANIEL by the hand.*) I shall take this dumb man to my house. (*Aside.*) Verily, the city his brother wished to save shall not go to destruction through his raving. I shall lock him in an inner chamber; I shall slip a bare knife into his hand. I shall speak to his very heart till he fulfils what I, in the name of nature and as her prophet, have predicted. Thank God he is only blind and dumb, that he is not deaf as well! (*He goes off with DANIEL.*)

The People (confusedly).— Why were our eyes not opened before? We will wait no longer. Not an hour! We will open the gates. Come!

Joshua (a citizen).— Whose fault was it that we did not submit as the other peoples did? Who led us to lift up our heads, already bowed down? Who bade us look at the clouds and thereby forget the earth?

People.— Who but the priests and the elders?

Judith (aside).— O God, now do the unrighteous quarrel with those who made them from nothing into something. (*Aloud.*) Do

you see in the misfortune which overtakes you only the charge to deserve it by baseness?

Joshua (goes about among the people).— When I heard of the march of Holofernes, it was my first thought that we should go out to meet him and implore his mercy. Who among you thought otherwise? (*All are silent.*) Why did Holofernes come? Only to subdue us. If our submission had met him half way he would not have come the whole distance, but would have turned back, for he has enough to do. Then we should be sitting in peace now, enjoying food and drink. Instead our miserable life leads to nothing but all possible tortures.

People.— Woe! Woe!

Joshua.— And we are guiltless, we have not hardened our hearts, we have always feared God. But Holofernes was still far away, and the elders and priests were near and threatened us. Then we forgot one fear in the other. Do you know what to do? We will drive the elders and priests out of the city and say to Holofernes: ‘These are the rebels.’ If he have mercy upon them, good; if not, we would rather lament for them than for ourselves.

People.— Will that save us?

Judith.— That is just as if one who could not defend himself with his sword, were to murder with it the armorer who gave it to him.

People.— Will it truly help us?

Joshua.— Why not? A head off is not a foot or a hand off.

People.— Thou art right. That is the way!

Joshua (to the ELDER, who has been gravely regarding the scene).— What sayst thou to this?

The Elder.— I should offer counsel myself, if it could avail. I am seventy-three years old to-day and should like well to go unto my fathers. A few breaths more or less matter little. I believe, indeed, that I have earned an honest grave, and should rather rest in the grave than in the maw of a wild beast; but if you think that I can suffice for you all, I am ready. I give you this gray head, but be quick, that death may not anticipate you and hurl the gift scornfully into a ditch. Yet allow me once more

to make use of this head that now belongs to you. It is not a question of me alone, but of all the elders and priests. Will you not take the pains, before you begin to sacrifice, to count the offerings?

Judith (wildly).— Can you listen to that and not beat your breasts and cast yourselves down to kiss the feet of the old man? Now could I seize the hand of Holofernes and lead him hither, and sharpen his sword even, if it grew dull before it had cut off every head here.

Joshua.— The elder spoke wisely, very wisely. He could not resist — that he saw — so he yielded, and in such a way — I wager if the lambs could speak, not one of them would wish to be slaughtered. (*To JUDITH.*) Certainly it is not thee alone he has moved.

Judith.— Resist he could not, but he could put to shame your evil plan; he could kill himself. And he gripped his sword convulsively; I saw it and stepped nearer to hinder him; but straightway something, like inward victory, burst forth upon his face. He drew back his hand as if ashamed and looked upward.

The Elder.— Thou thinkest too nobly of me. It was not my will, but His above.

People.— Thy counsel is bad, Joshua; we will not follow thee.

Judith.— I thank you.

Joshua.— But the opening of the gates, do ye still insist upon that? Remember that an enemy to whom ye open them can never be so cruel as one who is obliged to open them himself. (*To the ELDER.*) Command it! For my proposal I shall ask thy pardon, that is, to-morrow, if I am still alive.

Judith (to the ELDER).— Say no!

The Elder.— I say yes, for I myself see not whence help can come to us.

Achior (advances among the people).— Open the gates, but expect no mercy from Holofernes. He has sworn to exterminate the people who should submit to him last so that no trace of them shall remain. You are the last.

Judith.— He has sworn it!

Achior.— I stood beside him. And whether he will keep his oath, you may know by this: He became enraged at me when I spoke of the might of your God, and his anger is death. But instead of hewing me down, he commanded, as you know, that I should be led to you. You see he doubts your fall so little that he lets the man whom he hates, and for whose head he will pay its weight in gold, out of his hands. He cannot wreak vengeance upon him until he can wreak it at the same time upon you. And any thought of mercy is so far from him that he can conceive of no heavier penalty than the one upon which he has decided for you.

People.— The gates shall not be opened. If we are to die by the sword, we have swords ourselves.

Joshua.— Let us appoint a time. Everything must have an end.

People.— Appoint a time! Appoint a time!

The Elder.— Dear brethren, have patience yet five days and await the aid of the Lord.

Judith.— And if the Lord needs five days more?

The Elder.— Then we shall be dead! If the Lord helps us, it must be in these five days. Otherwise we shall not all live to see the end of them.

Judith (solemnly, as if pronouncing sentence of death).— Therefore in five days he must die.

The Elder.— We must do our utmost to hold out so long. We must divide the Lord's offerings, the sacred wine and oil, among us. Woe is me, that I must give such counsel!

Judith.— Yes, woe to thee! Why dost thou not counsel another extremity? (*To the people.*) Men of Bethulia, venture a sally. The fountains lie close beside the wall. Divide into halves; the one must cover the retreat and guard the door, while the other makes an assault in mass. You cannot fail to bring back water.

The Elder.— Thou seest that none answer.

Judith (to the people).— How am I to understand that? (*After a pause.*) Still, it pleases me. If you have not the heart to undertake it with several hundred soldiers, you will be still less

bold to tempt the vengeance of the Lord, and stretch impious hands toward the food upon the altar.

The Elder.— This is necessary, and it shall be replaced an hundred fold. The other is hazardous; an open gate would be the death wound of the city. Even David ate the sacred bread, and he did not die from the eating.

Judith.— David was the anointed of the Lord. If you will eat as David, first become as David. Eat and drink, but first justify yourselves.

A voice from the crowd.— Why do we listen to her?

Another.— Shame upon him who does not! Is she not an angel?

A Third.— She is the most God-fearing woman in the city. So long as it was well with us, she sat quietly in her chamber. Has anyone seen her in public except when she went to prayer or sacrifice? But now that we are in despair, she leaves her house and comes among us to comfort us.

The Second.— She is rich and has many possessions, but do you know what once she said? ‘I hold these possessions in trust only; they belong to the poor.’ And she does not say it merely, she does it. I believe she does not take a husband again, only because she would then cease to be the mother of the needy. If the Lord helps us, it will be for her sake.

Judith (to ACHIOR).— Thou knowest Holofernes. Tell me of him.

Achior.— I know that he thirsts for my blood; but believe not that I slander him. If he stood before me with uplifted sword and called to me, ‘Kill me, or I will kill thee,’ I know not what I should do.

Judith.— This is thy feeling! He had thee in his power and let thee go free!

Achior.— Oh, it is not that. That would rather make me rebel. The blood rises to my cheek when I think how little he must respect a man whom he himself sends over to his enemy, weapon in hand.

Judith.— He is a tyrant!

Achior.— Yes, but he was born to be one. Whoever is in his presence feels his own self and the world to be nothing. Once I was riding with him through the wildest mountains. We came to a chasm, broad, dizzily deep. He spurred his horse; I seized the reins, pointed at the abyss and said, ‘It is unfathomable.’ ‘Why, I am not going down, I am going over,’ he called and dared the frightful leap. Before I could follow, he had turned and was back beside me. ‘I thought I saw a spring there,’ he said, ‘and wanted a drink but it is nothing. Let us sleep away our thirst.’ He threw me the rein, sprang down from his horse, and went to sleep. I could not restrain myself. I, too, climbed down. I touched his garments with my lips and placed myself between him and the sun that he might have shade. I am so much his slave that I praise him whenever I speak of him.

Judith.— He loves women?

Achior.— Yes, but not otherwise than he does eating and drinking.

Judith.— Curse him!

Achior.— What dost thou expect? I knew a woman of my people who was mad because he disdained her. She stole into his chamber and, just as he had lain down in bed, stepped threateningly before him with drawn dagger.

Judith.— What did he do?

Achior.— He laughed and laughed until she stabbed herself.

Judith.— I thank thee, Holofernes! I need but to think on this and I shall have courage like a man.

Achior.— What meanest thou?

Judith.— Oh, rise up from your graves before me, you whom he has put to death, that I may behold your wounds! Come before me, you whom he has dishonored, and open once more your eyes, now closed forever, that I may read therein how guilty he was! You shall all have reparation. But why do I think of you, why not of the youths whom his sword can yet devour, of the maidens whom he can yet crush in his arms? I will avenge the dead and protect the living. (*To ACHIOR.*) Am I beautiful enough for a sacrifice?

Achior.— None ever saw thy equal.

Judith (to the ELDER).— I have business with Holofernes. Wilt thou have the gate opened for me?

The Elder.— What dost thou mean to do?

Judith.— No one may know it save the Lord our God!

The Elder.— May He be with thee! The door stands open.

Ephraim.— Judith, Judith, never wilt thou accomplish it.

Judith (to MIRZA).— Hast thou the courage to accompany me?

Mirza.— Still less should I have the courage to let thee depart alone.

Judith.— And thou hast done what I commanded thee?

Mirza.— Here are wine and bread. It is only a little.

Judith.— It is too much.

Ephraim (aside).— Had I suspected this, I should have followed her counsel! How hideous is my punishment!

Judith (goes a few steps, then turns once more to the people).— Pray for me as for one who is dying. Teach the little children my name and let them pray for me.

(She goes to the gate; it is opened. When she is outside, all but EPHRAIM fall upon their knees.)

Ephraim.— I will not pray for God to protect her; I will protect her myself. She is going into the lion's den — I believe she does it only because she expects that all the men will follow her. I will follow; if I die, I shall die only but a little before the others. Perhaps she will turn back! *(Goes out.)*

Delia (comes among the people in the greatest agitation).— Woe! Woe!

One of the Elders.— What ails thee?

Delia.— The dumb man — the terrible dumb man! He has throttled my husband!

A voice from the crowd.— That is Samaja's wife.

The Elder (to DELIA).— How could that happen?

Delia.— Samaja came home with the dumb man. He went with him into the rear chamber and barred the door behind. I heard Samaja speaking loudly and the dumb man groaning and

sobbing. 'What is it?' I thought and crept to the chamber door and listened through a crack. The dumb man sat holding a sharp knife in his hands, while Samaja stood beside him and severely reproached him. The dumb man turned the knife against his own heart. I uttered a cry, aghast, for I saw that Samaja made no attempt to prevent his mad deed. But suddenly the dumb man threw the knife away and fell upon Samaja. He dragged him, as if with superhuman power, to the floor, and seized him by the throat. Samaja could not defend himself; he wrestled with him. I called for help. Neighbors rushed in; the door, barred on the inside, was broken down. Too late. The dumb man had already strangled Samaja. Like a beast he was still raging against the corpse, and laughed when he heard us enter. When he recognized my voice, he became quiet and crawled to me upon his knees. 'Murderer,' I cried. At that he pointed his finger toward heaven, then searched for the knife on the floor, picked it up, handed it to me, and indicated his breast, as if he wished me to thrust it into his heart.

A Priest.— Daniel is a prophet. The Lord has made the dumb to speak. He has wrought a miracle in order that you may believe upon the miracles that He will yet do. Samaja, with his prophesying, is brought to shame. He wronged Daniel; at Daniel's hand has he received his reward.

Voices among the people.— Away to Daniel, that no harm come to him!

The Priest.— The Lord has sent him, the Lord will protect him. Go hence and pray.

(The people disperse in different directions.)

Delia.— They have no further consolation for me than to say that he whom I loved was a sinner. *(She goes off)*

ACT IV

(Pavilion of HOLOFERNES. HOLOFERNES and two of his CAPTAINS.)

One of the Captains.— The commander looks like a fire about to go out.

The Second.— One must beware of such a fire. All that come near it, it swallows up that it may nourish itself.

The First.— Knowest thou that Holofernes came near to killing himself last night?

The Second.— That cannot be true!

The First.— But it is. A nightmare haunted him, and he thought in his sleep that some one leaped upon him and strove to throttle him. Caught in a net of dreams, he seized his dagger and, thinking to run the enemy through from behind, he thrust it into his own breast. Fortunately the steel glanced from his rib. He awoke and saw it, and called out laughing, when the chamberlain went to bind up the wound: 'Let it run. It cools me — I have too much blood.'

The Second.— It sounds incredible.

The First.— Ask the chamberlain.

Holofernes (turning quickly).— Ask me myself. (*They are terrified.*) I call out to you because I am fond of you, and do not like to have two heroes I can use prate away their lives, from mere tedium, in mean speculations and comparisons. (*Aside.*) They wonder that I could hear their conversation. Shame enough for me, that I had time and attention for it! A head which cannot fill itself with thoughts, which has room for the whims and crochets of others, is not worth its keep. Ears collect alms for the mind. Only beggars and slaves need them, and whoever uses them becomes one or the other. (*To the CAPTAINS.*) I quarrel not with you. It is my fault that you have nothing to do, and that you must chatter to cram yourselves with lies. You shall live. What was food yesterday, is filth to-day; woe to us that we must muddle in it! But tell me what would you have done, if you had actually found me dead in bed this morning?

The Captains.— Lord, what should we have done?

Holofernes.— If I knew, I should not tell it. He who can think himself out of the world and name his successor, belongs there no longer. I am thankful that my ribs are of iron. Such a death would have been a very jest! And this error of my hand would surely have fattened some lean god, for example, him of the

Hebrews. How Achior would have swelled up, with pride in his prophecy, and respect for himself! One thing I would know: what is death?

One of the Captains.— A thing wherefore we love our lives.

Holofernes.— That is the best answer. Ah, indeed, only because we can lose it hourly, do we hold it fast, and squeeze it and suck it, until it bursts in pieces. If it went ever on as yesterday and to-day, we should see in the opposite of life its worth and aim; we should rest and sleep and in our dreams fear nothing so much as awakening. Now we seek by eating to protect ourselves from being eaten and strive with our teeth against the teeth of the world. Wherefore is it so matchless sweet to die of life itself, to let the stream so swell that the vein which should contain it bursts, to mingle the extreme of bliss with the shudder of extinction. Often it seems to me that I once said unto myself: 'Now I will live.' Then I was released, as from the tenderest embraces, it grew bright around me, I shivered, a start, and I was alive. So also would I say some time to myself: 'Now I will die.' And if, as soon as the word is spoken, I do not vanish and be sucked up by all the thirsty lips of creation, then shall I be ashamed and confess to myself that I have made roots out of fetters. Is it possible one may be slain by his bare thought?

One of the Captains.— Holofernes!

Holofernes.— Thou wouldst say one must not become intoxicated. True, for who knows not intoxication, knows nothing, therefore, of how stale abstinence is. And yet is intoxication the riches of our poverty, and I like it well so, when it bursts from me like a sea and overflows all that bears the name of dam or boundary. And if it once so drives and rushes through all that lives, then should it not break through and come together, and like a mighty storm in thunder and lightning, be able to triumph over all the cold, wet, tattered clouds which the wind hunts at its own sweet will? Surely, surely! (*To the CAPTAINS.*) You wonder at me that I make of my head a spindle and wind thread after thread from its ball of dreams as from a bundle of flax. Indeed, thought is the thief of life. | The seed dragged from the

earth into the light will not sprout. That I know right well, but to-day, after the loss of blood, let it pass. Even now we have time, for the people there in Bethulia seem not to know that the soldier sharpens his sword as long as they prevent him from using it.

A Captain (entering).— Lord, a Hebrew woman whom we took upon the mountain stands before the door.

Holofernes.— What kind of a woman?

The Captain.— Lord, each moment in which thou seest her not is a lost moment. Were she not so beautiful I should not have led her to thee. We lay at the fountain, waiting for any one who dared approach. Then we saw her coming, her maid behind her like her shadow. She was veiled and at first went so rapidly that the maid could scarcely follow her. Then suddenly she paused as if she would turn back, faced toward the city, and threw herself upon the ground and seemed to be praying. Then she came toward us and went to the fountain. One of the guards went to meet her. I thought he would even lay violent hands upon her, for the soldiers are fierce from long idleness, but he bowed, drew water, and handed her the vessel. She took it without thanks and raised it to her lips, but before she had drunk, she put it away and poured it out slowly. This vexed the watchman; he threatened her with his sword. Then she threw back her veil and looked at him. He all but cast himself at her feet. She, however, spoke: ‘Lead me to Holofernes. I come because I wish to humble myself before him and lay bare the secrets of my people.’

Holofernes.— Bring her in. (*The CAPTAIN goes out.*) All the women of the world I am glad to see except one, and her I have never seen and will never see.

One of the Captains.— Who is that?

Holofernes.— My mother. I have as small wish to see her as to see my grave. The thing that pleases me best is that I know not whence I came. Hunters picked me up, a sturdy lad, in a lion’s den. A lioness suckled me. So it is no wonder that I once crushed a lion itself in these my arms. But what is a

mother for her son? The mirror of his weakness of yesterday or to-morrow. He cannot look upon her without thinking of the time when he was a pitiful brat that paid for the few drops of milk he swallowed with smacking kisses. And if he forgets this, he sees in her a spectre that juggles age and death before him and makes his own person, his flesh and blood, repugnant to him.

Judith (enters. She is accompanied by MIRZA and the CAPTAIN, who both stop at the door. At first she is confused, but quickly gets possession of herself, goes toward HOLOFERNES, and falls at his feet).—Thou art he whom I seek. Thou art Holofernes.

Holofernes.—Thou thinkest he must be lord here on whose garments glitters the most gold.

Judith.—Only one has such a countenance.

Holofernes.—Were I to find a second, I should lay his head at his feet, for to my countenance, I think, I alone have the right.

One of the Captains (to the other).—A race that has such women is not to be despised.

The Second.—The women alone would be fit cause for war. Now Holofernes has a diversion. Perhaps she will smother his whole wrath with kisses.

Holofernes (lost in contemplating her).—As long as one looks upon her, is it not as if one were taking a costly bath? What a man sees, he becomes! The great rich world did not enter the bit of distended skin in which we live; we received eyes that we might gulp it down piecemeal. None but the blind are miserable; I swear that never again will I have anyone blinded. (*To JUDITH.*) Thou art yet upon thy knees? Arise. (*She rises. He seats himself upon his throne under the canopy.*) What is thy name?

Judith.—My name is Judith.

Holofernes.—Fear not, Judith. Thou pleasest me as none has ever pleased me.

Judith.—That is the goal of all my wishes.

Holofernes.—Now acknowledge wherefore thou hast left those in the city and come to me.

Judith.— Because I know that none can escape thee! Because our own God will give my people into thy hands.

Holofernes (laughing).— Because thou art a woman, because thou dost rely upon thyself, because thou knowest that Holofernes has eyes; am I not right?

Judith.— Hear me graciously. The wrath of our God is kindled against us. Long has He made known through his prophets that He will punish my people for their sin.

Holofernes.— What is sin?

Judith (after a pause).— A child once asked me that. The child I kissed. What I should answer thee, I know not.

Holofernes.— Speak further.

Judith.— Now they stand between God's wrath and thy wrath and tremble sorely. Withal they are suffering of hunger and dying of thirst. And their great need misguides them to new offense. They wish to eat the holy offering, which even to touch is forbidden. It will become as fire in their entrails.

Holofernes.— Why do they not yield?

Judith.— They have not the courage. They know that they have deserved the worst. How could they believe that God would turn it from them? (*Aside.*) I will try him. (*Aloud.*) In their anxiety they go further than thou canst go in thy fury. Thy vengeance would grind me to pieces if I were to say how much their fear dares to sully the hero and the man in thee. I look up at thee, I descry in thy countenance the noble bounds of thy wrath, I find the point beyond which in its mightiest passion it will not flare. Then must I blush, for I remember that they presume to expect from thee every horror which only a guilty conscience, in cowardly self-torture, can conceive, that they venture to see in thee a hangman, because they themselves are worthy of death. (*She falls down before him.*) Upon my knees I beg of thee forgiveness for this affront from my deluded people.

Holofernes.— What dost thou? I will not have thee kneel before me.

Judith (rises).— They believe that thou wilt slay them all. Thou smilest instead of being indignant? Oh, I forgot who thou

art! Thou knowest the natures of men; nothing can surprise thee. It excites thee only to scorn when thy image appears in a clouded mirror, deformed and distorted. But this must I say in praise of my people: they of themselves would never have conceived such a thought. They desired to open the gate unto thee, when Achior, the Moabite, came among them and terrified them. 'What are you doing,' he cried. 'Know you not that Holofernes has sworn the ruin of all of you?' I know thou didst bestow upon him life and liberty. Thou didst send him over to us, because thou wouldst not wreak vengeance upon an unworthy object. Magnanimously didst thou place him in the ranks of thine enemy. He thanks thee for it by painting thy picture in blood and estranging every heart from thee. Is not my little race full of conceit when it thinks itself worthy of thy rage? How couldst thou hate those whom thou knewest not at all, whom thou didst encounter upon thy way only by accident, and who shun thee not, only because terror benumbs them and robs them of life and senses? And if indeed something like courage had inspired them, could that move thee to become less than thyself? Could Holofernes himself persecute and malign in others all that makes him great and peerless? That is unnatural and will never come to pass. (*She looks at him. He is silent.*) Oh, would I were thou! Only for a day, for an hour! Then should I, by sheathing my sword, celebrate a triumph such as none has ever celebrated with the sword. Thousands are trembling before thee now in that city. 'You have defied me,' I would call out to them, 'yet even because you have insulted me, will I give you your lives. I will avenge myself upon you but through yourselves. I will let you go free, that you may be wholly my slaves.'

Holofernes.—Woman, dost thou not surmise that thou makest this all impossible for me, because thou dost prompt me to it? Had the thought arisen in me, perhaps I should have executed it. Now it is thine and can never become my own. It grieves me that Achior is right.

Judith (breaks out in wild laughter).—Forgive me! Give me leave to scoff at myself. There are children in the city so inno-

cent that they will laugh when they see the gleaming steel that is to spit them. There are maidens in the city that tremble at the sunbeam that would penetrate their veils. I was thinking of the death which awaits these children; I was thinking of the shame which threatens these maidens. I pictured this horror to myself and thought that no one could be so strong as not to recoil from such scenes. Pardon me for having ascribed to thee mine own weakness.

Holofernes.—Thou wouldst adorn me, and that deserves my thanks, even if the manner becomes me not. Judith, we must not reason with each other. I am destined to inflict wounds, thou to heal wounds. Were I negligent of my calling, thou wouldst have no pastime. (And thou must make allowance for my warriors. People who know not to-day whether they will live till to-morrow, must reach out bold hands and surfeit their bellies, if they would have their share of the world.)

Judith.—Lord, thou surpassest me in wisdom even as in valor and strength. I had gone astray within myself, and now I owe it to thee that I have found myself again. Ah, how foolish I was! I know that they have all deserved death, that it was long since foretold them. I know that the Lord my God has appointed thee His avenger, and yet I throw myself, overpowered by mercy and pity, between them and thee. Happy for me that thy hand held fast its sword, that thou didst not let it fall to dry a woman's tears! How they would be confirmed in their arrogance! What would remain for them to fear, if Holofernes passed by them like a storm that does not break? Who knows but that they would see cowardice in thy magnanimity, and make mocking songs to thy mercy? Now they sit in sackcloth and ashes and do penance, but for every hour of abstinence would they reconcile themselves perhaps with a day of wild lust and frenzy. And all their sins would be added to my reckoning, and I should be forced to perish of remorse and shame. No, lord, remember thy oath and annihilate them. Thus speaketh the Lord my God through my mouth: He will be thy friend even as thou art their foe.

Holofernes.— Woman, I feel that thou art playing with me. But no, I insult myself when I think that possible. (*After a pause.*) Harshly dost thou accuse thy people.

Judith.— Thinkest thou I do it with a light heart? It is the penalty of my own sins that I must accuse them of theirs. Believe not that I have fled from them merely to escape the general ruin that I saw before my eyes. Who would feel himself so pure as to dare, when the Lord sits in mighty judgment, to withdraw from it? I came to thee because my God commanded it, commanded me to lead thee to Jerusalem, to deliver my people into thy hands like a flock that has no shepherd. This did He bid me do one night when I knelt before Him in despairing prayer, when I implored of Him thousandfold destruction of thee and thine, when each of my thoughts sought to bind and throttle thee. His voice resounded, and I cried aloud in triumph, but He had rejected my prayer. He pronounced sentence of death upon my people; He laid upon my soul the hangman's office. Oh, what a change was that! I grew numb, but I obeyed. Hurriedly I left the city and shook the dust from my feet. I came before thee and admonished thee to annihilate them for whose rescue I would so shortly before have offered up flesh and blood. Lo, they will revile me and set a brand upon my name forever. That is more than death, yet am I steadfast and waver not.

Holofernes.— They will not do it. Can anyone revile thee if I leave none alive? Verily, if thy God will perform what thou hast said, he shall become my god, and I will make thee great as woman never was. (*To the CHAMBERLAIN.*) Lead her to the treasure-house, and give her food from my table.

Judith.— Lord, I may not yet eat of thy food, for I should sin. I came to thee, not to be recreant to my God, but to serve Him aright. I have brought something with me; of that I shall eat.

Holofernes.— And when that is gone?

Judith.— Be assured that before I can consume this little, my God will perform through me what He intends. For five days I have enough, and in five days will He fulfil it. Still I

know not the hour, and my God will not tell me before it is come. Therefore give order that I, without hindrance from thy people, may go out into the mountains before the city to pray and await the revelation.

Holofernes.—Thou hast permission. Never yet did I set watch upon a woman's steps. And so in five days, Judith.

Judith (throws herself at his feet and then goes to the door).—In five days, Holofernes.

Mirza (who for a long time has been showing by gestures her terror and abhorrence).—Accursed, hast thou come to betray thy people?

Judith.—Speak loudly! It will be well if all hear that even thou believest my words!

Mirza.—Say thyself, Judith, if I must not curse thee?

Judith.—It is well! If thou doubtest not, surely Holofernes cannot doubt.

Mirza.—Art thou weeping?

Judith.—Tears of joy, that I deceived thee. (I shudder at the power of a lie in my mouth.) (*They go off.*)

ACT V

(*Evening. HOLOFERNES' pavilion lighted up. In the rear a curtain that conceals the sleeping apartment. HOLOFERNES, CAPTAINS, CHAMBERLAIN.*)

Holofernes (to one of the captains).—Thou hast reconnoitered? How is it in the city?

The Captain.—It is as if all there had buried themselves. Those who keep the gates seem to have risen from the grave. I took aim at one, but before I could let fly he fell to the ground dead.

Holofernes.—Victory without strife, then. Were I younger, that would displease me. Then I thought I was stealing my life if I did not conquer it anew every day. What was bestowed upon me I did not think I possessed.

The Captain.—Priests are seen slinking through the streets,

mute and solemn — long white garments, such as among us the dead wear — hollow eyes which seek to pierce the heavens — cramp in their fingers whenever they fold their hands.

Holofernes.— May no one kill such priests! The despair upon their faces is my confederate.

The Captain.— When they raise their eyes toward heaven it is not god they seek there, but a rain-cloud. But the sun consumes the thin clouds that promise a drop of refreshment, and upon their cracking lips falls his hot beams. Then hands are clenched, eyes roll, heads are dashed against the walls so that blood and brains flow down.

Holofernes.— We have seen that often. (*Laughing.*) We ourselves have lived through a famine, when one would draw back afraid from another's kiss for very fear of a bite on the cheek. Holloa! Prepare the meal, let us be merry! (*It is done.*) Is not to-morrow the fifth day?

The Captain.— Yes.

Holofernes.— Then it will be decided. If Bethulia surrenders, as this Hebrew woman foretold, she will come groveling of her own will, this stiff-necked city, and lay herself at my feet —

The Captain.— Holofernes doubts?

Holofernes.— All things that he cannot command. But if it comes to pass as the woman promised, if it is opened to me so that I need not knock with my sword, then —

The Captain.— Then?

Holofernes.— Then shall we receive a new god. Verily, I have sworn that the god of Israel, if he favors me, shall become likewise my god, and by all that are my gods already, by Bel at Babel, and by great Baal, I will keep it. Here, this beaker with its wine will I offer to him, to Je — J — (To the CHAMBERLAIN.) What saidst thou he is called?

The Chamberlain.— Jehovah.

Holofernes.— May the offering please thee, Jehovah! A man offers it, and such an one as would not need to do it.

The Captain.— And if Bethulia does not yield?

Holofernes.— Oath against oath. Then will I have Jehovah scourged, and the city — but I will not yet mark off the limits of my wrath. That would be to play schoolmaster with the lightning. What is the Hebrew woman doing?

The Captain.— Oh, she is beautiful! But she is also coy.

Holofernes.— Hast thou attempted her? (*The CAPTAIN stands in confused silence.*) Thou didst dare and yet knewest that she was pleasing to me? (*With a savage look.*) Take that, dog. (*He hews him down.*) Take him away and bring the woman hither. It is a shame that she goes about among us Assyrians untouched. (*The body is carried out.*) A woman is a woman and yet one imagines that there is a difference. Truly a man feels his worth nowhere so much as on a woman's breast. Ah, when they strive, trembling, against his embraces, in a struggle between lust and shame; when they make feints at flight, and then, all at once mastered by nature, hurl themselves upon his neck; when their last bit of independence and consciousness rallies and impels them, since they can no longer bid defiance, to voluntary complaisance; when their desire, awakened in every drop of blood by treacherous kisses, vies with the desire of the man, and they urge him where they should offer resistance — yes, that is life; then one learns why the gods took the pains to make men, then one has abundance, overflowing measure! And it is complete, if their little souls were filled but a moment before with hate and cowardly rancor, if the eye that now grows dim with rapture, closed darkly when the victor entered; if the hand that now caresses would gladly have mixed poison with his wine! That is the triumph of triumphs, and often have I celebrated it. And this Judith — indeed, her glance is kindly and her cheeks smile like sunshine, but in her heart dwells none but her god, and him will I now dislodge. In the days of my youth when I met an enemy, instead of drawing my own sword, I would wrest his from his hand and hew him down with it. So will I undo this woman. She shall fall before me through her own emotion, through the perfidy of her own desire.

Judith (enters with MIRZA).—Thou hast commanded, mighty lord, and thy handmaid obeys.

Holofernes.—Sit down, Judith, and eat and drink, for thou hast found favor in my sight.

Judith.—That will I do, my lord. I will be merry, for all my life long I have never been so honored.

Holofernes.—Wherefore dost thou hesitate?

Judith (shuddering, and pointing to the fresh blood).—My lord, I am a woman.

Holofernes.—Consider it well, this blood. It must flatter thy vanity, for it flowed because it was kindled with passion for thee.

Judith.—Woe!

Holofernes (to the CHAMBERLAIN).—More carpets here. (*To the CAPTAINS.*) Away with you! (*The carpets are brought. The CAPTAINS go out.*)

Judith (aside).—My hair rises, but yet I thank Thee, O God, that Thou hast shown me horror, and in this form. The slayer can I more easily slay.

Holofernes.—Now sit down. Thou hast become pale, thy bosom flutters. Do I terrify thee?

Judith.—Lord, thou wert gracious unto me.

Holofernes.—Be honest, woman.

Judith.—Lord, surely thou wouldst despise me, if I ——

Holofernes.—Well?

Judith.—If I could love thee.

Holofernes.—Woman, thou darest much. Forgive me. Thou darest nothing. Such a word I never heard before. Take this golden chain for that word.

Judith (confused).—My lord, I understand thee not.

Holofernes.—Woe to thee if thou didst understand me! The lion looks kindly upon the child who plucks boldly at his mane, because he does not know him. Were the child, grown larger and wiser, to attempt the same thing the lion would tear him to pieces. Sit beside me, we will talk together. Tell me, what didst thou think when thou didst first hear that I threatened thy fatherland with my hosts?

Judith.— I thought nothing.

Holofernes.— Woman, they think of much who hear of Holofernes.

Judith.— I thought of the God of my fathers.

Holofernes.— And cursed me?

Judith.— No, I hoped my God would do it.

Holofernes.— Give me the first kiss. (*He kisses her.*)

Judith (aside).— Oh, why am I a woman!

Holofernes.— And then when thou heardst the rumbling of my chariots and the trample of my camels and the clatter of my swords, what didst thou think then?

Judith.— I thought thou wert not the only man in the world, and that out of Israel would arise one who should be equal to thee.

Holofernes.— When thou sawest that my name alone sufficed to humble thy people to the dust, that your God forgot to work miracles, and that your men wished for the garments of women —

Judith.— Then I cried out, fie, and hid my face as soon as I saw a man, and when I wished to pray, my thoughts rose up against me, and lacerated one another, and wound themselves like serpents about the image of my God. Oh, since I experienced that, I shudder at my own breast! It appears to me a cave into which the sun shines, and which nevertheless harbors in its secret corners the foulest reptiles.

Holofernes (looking sideways at her).— How she glows! She reminds me of a fiery meteor I once saw climbing up the heavens on a gloomy night. Be welcome, lust, distilled at the flames of hate. Kiss me, Judith. (*She does it.*) Thy lips bore like leeches and yet are cold. Drink wine, Judith. In wine is all we lack.

Judith (drinks, after MIRZA has poured it out for her).— Yes, in wine is courage, courage.

Holofernes.— And so thou hast need of courage to sit with me at my table, to sustain my glances and meet my kisses? Poor creature!

Judith.— O thou — (*Controlling herself.*) Pardon. (*She weeps.*)

Holofernes.— Judith, I look into thy heart. Thou hatest me. Give me thy hand and tell me of thy hate.

Judith.— My hand? O scorn, that lays the axe to the roots of my humanity!

Holofernes.— Truly, truly, this woman is to be desired.

Judith.— Arise, my heart! Restrain thyself no longer. (*She stands up.*) Yes, I hate thee, I curse thee, and I must tell thee, thou must know how I hate thee, how I curse thee, if I am not to grow frantic! Now kill me.

Holofernes.— Kill thee? To-morrow, perhaps; to-day we shall first go to bed together.

Judith (aside).— How easy for me on a sudden! Now may I do it.

Chamberlain (enters).— My lord, a Hebrew waits without, before the tent. He implores urgently to be admitted to thy presence. Things of the greatest importance —

Holofernes (rises).— From the devil? Bring him in. (*To JUDITH.*) Are they going to surrender? Then tell me at once the names of thy kindred and friends. Them will I spare.

Ephraim (falls at his feet).— My lord, dost thou assure me of my life?

Holofernes.— I assure it.

Ephraim.— Well! Then — (*Approaches him, draws his sword suddenly and strikes at him. HOLOFERNES gives back.*)

Chamberlain (rushes in).— Knave, I will show thee how men are hewn down. (*Is going to hew EPHRAIM down.*)

Holofernes.— Hold!

Ephraim (tries to fall upon his sword).— Judith saw that. Shame upon me forever?

Holofernes (prevents him).— Venture not a second time. Wilt thou make the keeping of my word impossible? I assured thee thy life and so I must protect thee against thyself. Seize him. Is not my favorite ape dead? Put him into its cage and teach him the tricks of his waggish predecessor. The man is a curiosity; he is the only one who can boast of having struck at Holofernes and come off with a whole skin. I shall show him at

court. (*CHAMBERLAIN goes off with EPHRAIM. To JUDITH.*) Are there many snakes in Bethulia?

Judith.—No, but many mad men.

Holofernes.—To kill Holofernes; to quench the lightning that threatens to consume the world; to crush the seed of an immortality, to give a wide-mouthed braggart a brave beginning, and at the same time hasten his end—Oh, how alluring that! That is to seize upon the reins of destiny. To that I could mislead myself, were I not what I am. But to seek to do great things in a small way; first to spin the lion a net out of his generosity and then attack him, murder in heart; to dare the deed and to buy off the danger beforehand, cowardly and prudent: is that not, Judith, making gods out of dung? Surely thou must cry fie upon it, even though thy best friend attempts it upon thy bitterest foe.

Judith.—Thou art great and others are small. (*Softly.*) God of my fathers, save me from myself, that I may not honor what I abhor! He is a man.

Holofernes (to the CHAMBERLAIN) Make my couch ready. (*CHAMBERLAIN goes off.*) Behold, woman, these arms of mine have been plunged to the elbows in blood; my every thought brings forth horror and devastation; my word is death. The world seems wretched to me; methinks I was born to destroy it that something better may come. Men curse me, but their curses cling not to my soul; she spreads her pinions and shakes off their curse like a mere nothing. So I must be in the right! 'Oh, Holofernes, thou knowest not what this means!' a man once groaned, whom I was roasting upon a grate. 'Truly, I do not know it,' I said, and lay down at his side. Wonder not; it was folly.

Judith (aside).—Cease, cease! I must slay him, if I am not to kneel before him!

Holofernes.—Power! Power! That it is. Let him come who will oppose me, who will overthrow me! I long for him. It is dull to be able to respect no one but myself. He may bray me in a mortar if it please him, and with the pulp fill up the hole

that I have torn in the world. I bore deeper and yet deeper with my sword; if the cry of murder awake no rescuer, there is none. The hurricane roars through the air in search of a brother; but the oaks which seem to defy him he uproots, the towers he topples over, and the globe he wrests from its hinges. Then he sees clearly that he has no equal, and in disgust falls asleep. Nebuchadnezzar my brother! My lord he is, of a truth. Perhaps he will throw my head yet to the dogs. Much good may such fare do them! Perhaps I shall yet feed his entrails to the tigers of Assyria. Then — yes, then I shall know that I am the measure of humanity, and through an eternity I shall stand before their dizzy eyes — an unattainable divinity, girt round about with terror. Oh, the last moment! the last! Would it were already here! ‘Come hither, all to whom I have given pain,’ I shall cry out, ‘you whom I have maimed, you from whose arms I have wrested wives, and from whose sides, daughters, come and devise tortures for me. Draw off my blood and let me drink it; cut flesh from my loins and give it to me to eat.’ And when they think they have done their worst to me, and I tell them of something yet worse, and ask them graciously not to deny it to me; when they stand around in shuddering astonishment, and I, in spite of all my agony, in death and frenzy, smile upon them, then shall I thunder forth: ‘Kneel down, for I am your god,’ and close my lips and eyes and die quietly and unseen.

Judith (trembling).— And if the heavens hurl the lightning at thee to dash thee to pieces?

Holofernes.— (Then shall I stretch out my hand as if I myself had commanded it, and the flash of death will clothe me with somber majesty.)

Judith.— Monstrous! Appalling! My senses and my thoughts whirl like dry leaves. Man, monster, thou forcest thyself between me and my God! I must pray at this moment, and I cannot.

Holofernes.— Fall down and worship me.

Judith.— Ha, now do I see clearly again. Thee! Thou

presumest upon thy power. Hast thou no foreboding that it has gone astray, that it has become thy foe?

Holofernes.— I rejoice to hear something new.

Judith.— Thou believest thou hast thy power to storm the world; what if it were given thee to master thyself? But thou hast made it the food of thy passion; thou art the rider whom his horses devour.

Holofernes.— Yes, yes, power is fated to kill itself, says wisdom, which is not power. To struggle with myself, to make my left leg a stumbling block for the right, that it may not tread down neighboring ant hills! That fool in the desert, who fought with his shadow, and at nightfall cried out, 'Now am I beaten, for my enemy is as large as the world,' that fool was really sensible, was he not? Oh, show me the fire that quenches itself! Do you find it not? Then show me that which feeds upon itself. Do you find it neither? Then tell me, does the sentence pronounced upon the fire rest also upon the tree consumed by it?

Judith.— I know not whether thou canst be answered. Where the seat of my thoughts was, are now desolation and gloom. Even my heart I no longer understand.

Holofernes.— Thou hast a right to laugh at me. One must not wish to make anything comprehensible to a woman.

Judith.— Learn to respect woman! A woman stands before thee to murder thee, and she tells thee of it!

Holofernes.— And tells me so as to make the deed impossible! Oh, cowardice which thinks itself greatness! But truly thou desirest it only because I go not with thee to bed. To protect myself from thee I need only to give thee a child.

Judith.— Thou knowest not a Hebrew woman! Thou knowest only creatures who in their deepest degradation feel themselves happiest.

Holofernes.— Come, Judith, I will know thee. Struggle as thou wilt, for awhile — I will tell thee how long. Another beaker! (*He drinks.*) Now leave off struggling, it is enough. (*To the CHAMBERLAIN.*) Away with thee! And whoever disturbs

me this night, he shall pay for it with his head. (*He forces JUDITH off.*)

Judith (going out).— I must — I will — shame upon me now and forever if I cannot!

Chamberlain (to MIRZA).— Thou wilt remain here?

Mirza.— I must await my mistress.

Chamberlain.— Why art thou not such a woman as Judith? Then I could be as fortunate as my master.

Mirza.— Why art thou not such a man as Holofernes?

Chamberlain.— I am what I am for Holofernes' convenience; that the great hero himself may not need to serve up his food and pour his wine; that he may have some one to put him to bed when he is drunk. Now assure me in turn, why are there ugly women in the world?

Mirza.— So that a fool can scoff at them.

Chamberlain.— Truly, and that one may spit in their faces by daylight, if one has had the misfortune to kiss them in the dark. Holofernes once cut down a woman who came before him in an unseasonable time, because he did not find her beautiful enough. He always strikes aright. Crawl into a corner, thou Hebrew spider, and be quiet. (*He goes off.*)

Mirza (alone).— Quiet, yes, quiet! I believe that there (*she points toward the sleeping apartment*) someone is being murdered, whether Judith or Holofernes I do not know. Quiet, quiet! I once stood upon the shore and watched a man who was drowning. Anxiety urged me to spring in after him; anxiety held me back. Then I screamed as loud as I could, and I screamed only that I might not hear his screams. So I speak now! O Judith, Judith! When thou camest to Holofernes and madest him a deceitful promise I did not understand, to deliver thy people into his hands, then I held thee for a moment a traitress. I did thee injustice and felt it at once. Oh, might I do thee an injustice now! Might thy half-spoken words, thy looks and gestures deceive me now as before! I have no courage, I am only afraid; but it is not fear that speaks from me now, not a dread of failure. A woman should bear men; never should she kill men!

Judith (rushes in with loosened hair, reeling. A second curtain is drawn back. HOLOFERNES is seen asleep. At his bed's head hangs his sword).— It is too light here, too light! Put out the candles, Mirza; they are shameless!

Mirza (leaping up).— She lives and he lives! (To JUDITH.) How with thee, Judith? Thy cheeks glow as if the blood would burst from them. Thy eyes are afraid.

Judith.— Look not upon me, Mirza. No one shall behold me. (*She reels.*)

Mirza.— Lean upon me; thou art faint.

Judith.— What! I so weak? Away from me! I can stand, oh, I can more than stand! I can do infinitely more!

Mirza.— Come, let us fly from here.

Judith.— What, art thou in his pay? He dragged me off, he pulled me down upon his shameful couch, he stifled my soul. Wouldst thou endure all this? And now that I will be repaid for the annihilation which I suffered in his arms; now that I will avenge myself for his brutal attack upon my humanity; now that I will wash off with his heart's blood the degrading kisses which still burn upon my lips—now dost thou not blush to draw me away?

Mirza.— Wretched woman, what wilt thou do?

Judith.— Miserable creature, dost thou not know? Does thy heart not tell thee? I will do murder. (*MIRZA draws back.*) Is there the least choice? Tell me that, Mirza. I would not choose murder, if I—what am I saying? Speak no word further, maid. The world spins about me!

Mirza.— Come.

Judith.— Never! I will teach thee thy duty. See, Mirza, I am a woman. Oh, I should not feel that now! Hear me, and do as I bid thee. If my strength should fail, if I should sink down unconscious, do not sprinkle me with water. That will avail nothing. Cry into my ear: 'Thou art a harlot!' Then will I spring up, perhaps seize upon thee and try to strangle thee. Then be not afraid, but cry to me: 'Holofernes made thee a

harlot, and Holofernes yet lives.' Oh, Mirza, then shall I be a hero, such a hero as Holofernes!

Mirza.— Thy thoughts grow too mighty for thee.

Judith.— Thou dost not understand me, but thou must, thou shalt understand. Mirza, thou art a maiden. Let me bring light into the sanctuary of thy virgin soul. A maiden is a silly being, who trembles at her own dreams, because a dream can wound her mortally, and who yet lives only by the hope that she will not always remain a maiden. For a maiden there is no greater moment than when she ceases to be one, and every bound of the pulse which she subdued before, every sigh which she has repressed, exalts the worth of the sacrifice which she has to offer in that moment. She brings her all — is it too haughty a demand, if she wishes to inspire, with that all, ecstasy and bliss? Mirza, hearest thou me?

Mirza.— How should I not hear thee?

Judith.— Now think of it in its entire naked hideousness; now picture it to thyself even to the point where shame throws itself with upraised hands between thee and the figures of thy imagination, and when thou cursest a world in which the greatest atrocity is possible.

Mirza.— What then? What shall I picture to myself?

Judith.— What picture to thyself? Thyself in thy deepest humiliation — the moment when thou art crushed body and soul like grapes that come to a scene of drunken revelry and help to close a coarse debauch with a coarser one — when sleeping desire borrows from thy own lips as much fire as it needs to commit murder of the thing most sacred to thee — when even thy senses, made drunk like slaves who no longer recognize their lord, arise against thee — when thou beginnest to think thy whole former life, all thy thought and feeling, a mere insolent revery, and thy shame thy true existence.

Mirza.— Thank God, I am not beautiful!

Judith.— I overlooked that when I came hither, but how plainly did it rise up before me when I (*she points toward the chamber*) entered there, when my first glance fell upon the couch

made ready. I threw myself down upon my knees before the monster and groaned, 'Spare me!' Had he listened to the cry of my anguished soul, never, never would I — but his answer was to tear off my neckerchief and praise my breasts. I bit his lips when he kissed me. 'Temper thy rapture; thou goest too far,' he laughed in scorn and — oh, I was nearly unconscious, all a convulsion, when something bright glittered before my eyes! It was his sword. Upon that sword my reeling senses seized. If I have forfeited in my degradation the right to exist, I will win it back with this sword. Pray for me; now will I do it. (*She rushes into the chamber and snatches down the sword.*)

Mirza (upon her knees).— Awaken him, O God!

Judith (sinks to her knees).— What, Mirza, what prayest thou?

Mirza.— God be praised, she cannot do it!

Judith.— Mirza, is not sleep God himself, Who embraces weary men? Whoever sleeps must be secure. (*She rises and looks at HOLOFERNES.*) And he sleeps quietly, he has no foreboding that murder draws his own sword upon him! He sleeps quietly — ha, cowardly woman, does what should arouse thee make thee merciful? This quiet sleep after such an hour, is it not the bitterest offence? Am I a worm that one may tread upon me, and then, as if nothing had happened, go quietly to sleep? I am no worm. (*She draws the sword from the scabbard.*) He is smiling. I recognize it, that hellish smile. Thus he smiled when he drew me down to him, when he — kill him, Judith, he deflowers thee a second time in his dream; his sleep is only a beastly chewing of the cud of thy dishonor. He stirs. Wilt thou delay till desire, hungry again, awakes him, till he clutches thee anew and — (*She strikes off HOLOFERNES' head.*) See, Mirza, there lies his head. Ha, Holofernes, dost thou respect me now?

Mirza (swoons).— Help!

Judith (shaken with horror).— She swoons. What, is my deed so heinous that it congeals the blood in her veins and flings her down as if dead? (*Vehemently.*) Wake from thy swoon, fool; thy swoon accuses me, and that I will not endure.

Mirza (waking).— Throw a cloth over it!

Judith.— Be strong, Mirza, I implore thee, be strong. Each shudder of thine costs me a part of myself. This shrinking of thine, this fearful turning away of thine eyes, this pallor of thy countenance, might declare to me that I have done something inhuman, and then must I — (*She seizes the sword. MIRZA throws herself upon her breast.*) Rejoice, my heart, Mirza can still embrace me! But woe to me, she took refuge in my breast, only because she cannot look upon the dead, because she trembles at the thought of a second swoon. Or will the embrace cost thee a second swoon? (*Thrusts her away.*)

Mirza.— Thou art unjust to me, and more to thyself.

Judith (catches her hand, speaking softly).— If it were an outrage, Mirza, if I had really committed a crime, thou wouldst not let me feel it, wouldst thou? Thou wouldst say to me kindly, if I sought to sit in judgment and condemn myself, ‘Thou art unjust; it was an heroic deed.’ (*MIRZA is silent.*) Ha, fancy not that I stand as a beggar before thee, that I have already condemned myself and await thy pardon. It is an heroic deed, for that was Holofernes, and I — I am such a thing as thou. It is more than an heroic deed. I would fain see the hero whom his greatest deed cost half as much as mine has cost me.

Mirza.— Thou speakest of revenge. One question I must ask thee. Why didst thou come in the splendor of thy beauty to this Gentile camp? If thou hadst never set foot in it, thou wouldst have had nothing to avenge.

Judith.— Why did I come? The misery of my people scourged me hither, the menacing famine, the thought of that mother who tore open her own veins to suckle her languishing child. Oh, now am I once more reconciled with myself! All this I had forgotten.

Mirza.— Thou hadst forgotten it. Then it was not that which impelled thee to plunge thy hand in blood?

Judith (slowly, crushed).— No — no — thou art right — it was not that — nothing impelled me save thought of myself. Oh, what a swirl is here! My people are delivered, but if a stone

had beaten Holofernes down — they would have owed more thanks to the stone than now to me. Thanks! Who wishes that? But now I must bear my deed alone, and it bruises me.

Mirza.— Holofernes embraced thee. If thou bearest him a son, what wilt thou answer if he asks thee of his father?

Judith.— Oh, Mirza, I must die, and I will! Ha, I shall hurry through the sleeping camp, I shall raise aloft the head of Holofernes, I shall proclaim the murder, so that thousands will arise and tear me to pieces. (*Is going out.*)

Mirza (softly).— Then they will tear me also to pieces.

Judith (stops).— What shall I do? My brain is dissolved into smoke, my heart is like a mortal wound. And yet I can think of nothing but myself. Oh, were it otherwise! I seem an eye that is directed inward. And no matter how sharply I watch myself, I become smaller, ever smaller, yet smaller. I must cease, or I shall disappear into blank nothing.

Mirza (listening).— Hark, some one comes!

Judith (confused).— Be quiet, quiet! No one can come. I have stabbed the world to the heart (*laughing*), and I did it well. Now it will stop. What will God say to that, when he looks down early in the morning and sees that the sun can go no more, and that the stars have grown lame? Will He punish me? Oh, no! I am the only one who is still alive. Whence could life come again? How could He slay me?

Mirza.— Judith!

Judith.— Oh, my name hurts me!

Mirza.— Judith!

Judith (indignantly).— Let me sleep. Dreams are dreams. Is it not ridiculous? Now I could weep. Oh, that I had some one to tell me wherefore!

Mirza.— There is no hope for her. Judith, thou art a child.

Judith.— Yes, yes, God be praised! Only think, I did not know that any more; I had deceived myself into intelligence, as into a prison, and something fell to behind me, terrible, fast as a brazen door. (*Laughing.*) I shall not be old yet to-morrow, or even the day after, shall I? Come, we will play again, but some-

thing better. Just now I was a wicked woman who had done a murder. Ha! Tell me what I shall be now!

Mirza (with averted face).— God! She is going mad.

Judith.— Tell me, what shall I be? Quick! Quick! Else I shall be again what I was.

Mirza (pointing to HOLOFERNES).— See!

Judith.— Thinkest thou I do not know that still? Oh, yes, yes! I beg for madness even, and it grows, now and then, gloomy within me, but not dark. In my head are a thousand holes, but they are all too small for my great thick understanding; it seeks in vain to creep in.

Mirza (in greatest anguish).— The morning is no longer distant. They will torture me and thee to death, if they find us here; they will tear us limb from limb.

Judith.— Believest thou truly that one can die? I know, indeed, that all believe it, and that one should believe it. Once I, too, believed it; now death seems to me a nonentity, an impossibility. To die. Ha! What gnaws in me now will gnaw forever. It is not toothache or fever, it is already one with me, and it will suffice eternally. Oh, we learn something in pain! (*Indicating HOLOFERNES.*) He, too, is not dead. Who knows that it is not he who tells me all this, that he does not avenge himself by making known to my shuddering spirit the secret of its immortality?

Mirza.— Judith, have mercy and come!

Judith.— Yes, yes, I beg of thee, Mirza, tell me what I shall do. I am anxious even yet to do something.

Mirza.— Then follow me.

Judith.— Ah, but thou must not forget the most important thing. Put the head there into a sack; I will not leave it behind. Thou wilt not? Then I will not go a step. (*MIRZA does it, shuddering.*) See, the head is my possession; I must take it with me, that the people in Bethulia may believe I— woe, woe! they will praise and extol me, when I make it known. And woe, woe again, I feel that I thought of that before.

Mirza (going).— Now?

Judith.— My way grows clear. Listen, Mirza, I shall say that thou hast done it.

Mirza.— I?

Judith.— Yes, Mirza, I shall say that in the moment of decision my courage grew recreant, but the spirit of thy God came upon thee, and thou didst deliver thy people from their greatest adversary. Then they will despise me as an instrument the Lord cast aside, and for thee will be glory and praise in Israel.

Mirza.— Never!

Judith.— Oh, thou art right! It was cowardice. Their joyful cries, their clanging cymbals and rolling drums will crush me, and then shall I have my reward. Come. (*Both go off.*)

(*The city of Bethulia, as in the third act. An open place looking toward the gate. A watch at the gate. Many people, lying and sitting down in various groups. It is growing dawn. TWO PRIESTS, surrounded by a group of WOMEN, MOTHERS, etc.*)

A Woman.— Did you deceive us when you said God is almighty? Is He like a man, that He cannot fulfil what He promises?

Priest.— He is almighty. But you yourselves have bound his hands. He can help you only as you deserve it.

Women.— Woe, woe! What will become of us?

Priest.— Look behind you, and you shall know what awaits you.

A Mother.— Can a mother sin so much that her innocent child must die of thirst? (*Holds up her child.*)

Priest.— Vengeance has no bounds, for sin has none.

Mother.— I tell thee, priest, a mother cannot sin so much. In her womb, the Lord may, if He is angry, smother the child; if it is born, it should live. We bear children that we may have a double self, that we may be able to love that self in the child when it laughs at us so pure and innocent, when we must hate and despise that self in ourselves.

Priest.— Thou flatterest thyself. God lets thee bear children that He may chastise thee in thy own flesh and blood, that He may pursue thee yet beyond the grave.

The Second Priest (to the first).— Are there not enough desperate people in the city already?

First Priest.— Wilt thou be idle when thou shouldst sow? Strike root while the ground is soft.

Mother.— My child shall not suffer for me. Take it away! I shall shut myself in my chamber and meditate upon all my sins, and for each I shall visit upon myself two-fold torture. I shall punish myself until I die, or until God Himself calls down from heaven, 'Cease.'

Second Priest.— Receive thy child and nurse it. Thus wills the Lord thy God.

The Mother (presses it to her breast).— Yes, I shall watch it until it grows pale, until its whimpering is stifled and its breath stops. I shall not turn away from it, not even if anguish makes its childish eye expressive before its time, and it looks up at me as if from an abyss of misery. I shall do it, to do unequalled penance. But if it becomes still more expressive and looks upward and clenches its fist?

First Priest.— Then shalt thou close them, and thou shalt learn with horror that a child, too, can rebel against God.

The Mother.— Moses' staff smote the rocks and a cool spring gushed forth. That was a stone! (*She strikes her breast.*) Accursed breast, what art thou? From within the most passionate love urges; from without, hot innocent lips press thee, yet thou givest not a drop. Give! Give! Draw each vein dry and give the little one to drink again.

Second Priest (to the first).— Does it not move thee?

First Priest.— Yes. (But I never see in emotion aught but an assault upon my faith, and I repress it.) With thee the man is dissolved into water. Thou canst catch him up in a handkerchief or freshen a violet with him.

Second Priest.— Tears whereof we ourselves know nothing are allowed.

Another Woman (pointing to the other).— Hast thou no consolation for her?

First Priest (coldly).— No.

The Woman.—Then thy God sits nowhere but on thy lips.

First Priest.—This word alone is enough to make Bethulia fall into the hand of Holofernes. Upon thy soul I lay the downfall of the city. Thou askest wherefore she suffers. It is because thou art her sister. (*The group passes by.*)

(*Two citizens who have seen the incident come forward.*)

First.—Through my whole body I feel this woman's suffering. Oh, this is fearful!

Second.—It is not yet most fearful. That will not be until it occurs to this woman that she can eat her own child. (*He strikes his forehead.*) I fear that has occurred to my wife already.

First.—Thou art mad!

Second.—That I might not be obliged to slay her I fled from my house. Lie not! I ran forth because I shuddered at this inhuman fare for which she seemed to lust, and because I feared that I could partake of it. Our little son lay dying; she, in boundless sorrow, had fallen to the floor. Suddenly she raised herself and said softly: 'Is it indeed a misfortune that the boy is dying?' Then she bent down to him and murmured, as if indignant: 'Still life in him!' It grew hideously clear to me; she saw in her child only a morsel of flesh.

First.—I could go thither and strike down thy wife, even though she is my sister!

Second.—Thou wouldst come either too soon or too late. If she had not killed herself before eating, certainly she would do it as soon as she had eaten.

A Third Citizen (enters).—Perhaps rescue will come. This is the day set for Judith's return.

Second.—Rescue now! Now! God, God! I withdraw all my prayers. That Thou couldst hear them, now it is too late, that is a thought I have not had, that I cannot endure. I will praise thee and glorify thee, if thou canst prove thy infiniteness even in increasing misery, if thou canst drive my numbing spirit beyond its bounds, if thou canst place before my eyes a horror which can make the horror I have already beheld, forgotten and

ludicrous. But I shall curse thee, if thou comest now between me and my grave, if I must bury my wife and child and cover them with earth instead of with the clay and mould of my own body. (*The group goes off.*)

Mirza (before the gate).— Open the gate, open the gate.

Watch.— Who is there?

Mirza.— It is Judith, Judith, with the head of Holofernes.

Watch (calling out to the city, while opening the gate).— Holloa! Holloa! Judith is come back!

(*The people gather. Elders and priests come in. JUDITH and MIRZA enter the gate.*)

Mirza (throws down the head).— Know you this?

People.— We know it not.

Achior (comes forward and falls upon his knees).— Great art Thou, God of Irsael, and there is no God beside Thee! (*He rises.*) That is the head of Holofernes. (*He catches JUDITH by the hand.*) And this is the hand into which it was given? Woman, my brain reels to look upon thee.

The Elders.— Judith has set her people free! Praise her name!

People (gather about JUDITH).— Judith! Judith!

Judith.— Yes, I have killed the first and the last man of this earth, in order that thou (*to one*) mayst tend thy sheep in peace; that thou (*to a second*) mayst plant thy cabbage; and that thou (*to a third*) mayst ply thy craft and beget children which shall be like thee.

Voices among the People.— Forward! Out to the camp! Now they are without a master.

Achior.— Hold! As yet they know not what has happened in the night. Wait until they themselves give the signal for attack. When their outcry is heard, then shall we sally forth among them.

Judith.— You owe me gratitude, gratitude which you cannot discharge with the firstlings of your flocks and of your gardens. I was impelled to do the deed; it is for you to justify it. Become

holy and pure; then can I be vindicated. (*A wild, confused outcry is heard.*)

Achior.—Hark, now it is time.

A Priest (points at the head).—Set it upon a pike and bear it before you.

Judith (steps in front of it).—The head shall be buried straightway.

Watch (crying down from the walls).—The guards at the fountain flee in wild disorder. One of the captains stands before them — they draw their swords upon him. One of our people comes running toward them. It is Ephraim. They do not see him at all.

Ephraim (before the gate).—Open! Open! (*The gate is opened. EPHRAIM rushes in. The gate remaining open, Assyrians are seen flying past.*) They might have spitted me, roasted me upon the grate. All that I escaped. Now that Holofernes is headless, so are they all. Come, come! A fool who still fears!

Achior.—Away! Away!

(*They swarm out of the gate. Voices are heard crying, 'In Judith's name!'*)

Judith (turns away in disgust).—That is butcher's courage.

(*The PRIESTS and ELDERS form a circle about her.*)

One of the Elders.—Thou hast blotted out the names of heroes, and set thine own in their place.

The First Priest.—Thou hast put people and church deeply in thy debt. No more to the dark past, but to thee may I point henceforth, when I wish to show how great is the Lord our God.

Priests and Elders.—Demand thy reward.

Judith.—Do you jest at me? (*To the ELDERS.*) If it were not a holy duty, if I might have left it undone, is it not then pride and crime? (*To the PRIESTS.*) When the sacrifice falls with rattling throat at the altar, do you torture it with questions what price it sets upon its blood and life? (*After a pause, as if seized by a sudden thought.*) And yet, I demand my reward. Pledge me first that you will not deny it.

Elders and Priests.—We pledge it in the name of all Israel.

Judith.— Then you must kill me, when I ask you to do it.

All (astounded).— Kill thee?

Judith.— Yes, and I have your word.

All (shuddering).— Thou hast our word.

Mirza (seizes JUDITH by the arm and leads her forward, out of the circle).— Judith! Judith!

Judith.— I will not bear Holofernes a son. Pray God that my womb be unfruitful! Perhaps He will be gracious unto me.

NICOLAS BEAUDUIN*

BY F. JEAN-DESTHIEUX

FROM now on it is necessary to distinguish two parts in the work of Nicolas Beauduin.

The first — so far the longest, but which is not likely to remain the most important — includes the majority of his works from *The Ascending Road* to *The Sisters of Silence*. Such a production would be enough to occupy the lifetime of an ordinary poet. Many would pay dear, I imagine, to be able to leave behind them a monument as imposing as that of which this man, who is still quite young, happily bears the weight. For it is a real monument now, this collection of poems full of grace and life, of youth and pride, of hope and the future. And yet, considerable as it is, the work erected so far by Nicolas Beauduin forms only the foundation for the palace of his dreams.

For I do not believe that he cares to see, in these first volumes, anything but harmonious and skilful preludes. They have nothing in common with what he will give us, although it is difficult to foresee what his definitive work will be: it has scarcely begun.

The Ascending Road leads to the *Triumphs*. Nicolas Beauduin has followed it; for he knew well that these *Triumphs* alone would procure for him that *Divine Folly* which gave him *Two Kingdoms*. And when there passed, in *The Cities of the World*, the *Nocturnal Review* of *The Princesses of His Dream* and of *The Sisters of Silence*, how have we not understood that he was

*We take particular pleasure in introducing to our readers the work of M. Nicolas Beauduin, the distinguished founder of the Paroxyst school in French poetry, and the founder and editor of the important French quarterly review of modernist art and literature, 'La Vie des Lettres.' M. F. Jean-Desthieux, who sends us this careful study of M. Beauduin's work, is a well-known French critic of the advance guard, and associate editor of the review, 'La Flora.' We publish M. Beauduin's article on 'The Poetry of the Epoch' in conjunction and coöperation with the *Mercur de France*, to whom we tender our best thanks, and M. Beauduin has personally selected the poem which seems to him to be most representative of his aims, and the dynamic tendency of the school he represents. — THE EDITORS.

preparing the marvelous expedition whose return we shall presently see, charged with glory and trophies?

These are but a preparation; they are the preludes full of promise for the titan music that he is going to offer us.

For this poet is a wise man. Before rushing upon the waves of the infinite ocean, he wished to sound these depths and to have knowledge of these voices. It is thus that he knew how to charm us. To the cold Parnassian mouldings and the mystic fogs of symbolism, he opposed — a living and specifically modern song — the symphony of his heart.

Nicolas Beauduin has written: 'The poet is of all time; he contains in him the past, the present, and the future.' From his explorations in the Past, he has brought back to us rich and ripe harvests. It is there that he conquered that *Divine Folly* which makes true poets and which has permitted him to understand all the great mythic figures of Legend and History.

M. Gaston Picard very well defined the dominant idea of this volume which is, at the same time, a lofty philosophic sum, when he wrote: 'In *The Divine Folly*, the poems keep a singly unity. This unity is Love regenerating the World. . . . In these poems which follow one another in the giant frescoes of a unique epic, the idea of Love the regenerator appears incessantly. . . .' Such, in fact, is the general theme of this series of dramatic songs which do not form *poems*, but a single poem of remarkable unity. Prometheus, Samson, Michelangelo, the Christ Himself, all cry out their sublime lamentations; the same destiny bows them and the same God imposes on them His Will.

If we had the time to delay longer on this book, I should like to show how great the art of Nicolas Beauduin already was, how sure he was of himself, writing a very pure tongue, speaking everyday words and yet expressing himself with an amplitude and a force of which few great poets were capable.

Some have wished to compare *The Divine Folly* to the *Legende des Siecles*, even to the *Sovereign Rhythms* of Verhæren. I can scarcely understand why. It is true that such comparisons are

always impulsive and rarely explicable. But I ought to confess that, in the design of the book, I see nothing comparable to these, except the fact of setting before us heroes we know and making them utter words of eternal truth. One must admit that the system, excellent and perilous as it is, has served others besides Nicolas Beauduin, Victor Hugo and Verhæren. Now, in the expression, I see nothing else which could make a person think especially of Hugo. I believe that Nicolas Beauduin possesses lyric faculties of which Victor Hugo has given an example in our national literature. But is this enough to warrant comparisons?

Nicolas Beauduin is powerfully original enough, I think, for a man to take the trouble to see it. But if it is absolutely necessary to make some sort of a comparison, then it does not seem to me impossible, and I am willing to say that *The Divine Folly* seems to me more like a series of new *Destinies* than a paraphrase of the *Legende des Siecles*. For to what end are the magnificent discourses of heroes in this book, if not to reveal to us in some sort the real enigma of their destinies?

As I am unable to pause at all the steps successively traveled by the poetic genius of the author of *The Two Kingdoms*, I shall be pardoned for proceeding at once to *The Cities of the World*. Moreover, has not one critic contended that *The Two Kingdoms* is the logical complement to *The Divine Folly*? I willingly agree with him. On the other hand the importance of Nicolas Beauduin's *The Nocturnal Review* is such that one cannot, in a general study of this kind, pass over the poem in silence with the design of enlarging longer on another.

Onorate l'altissimo Poeta. . . .

*Sovra gli altri com'aquila vola.**

The epigraph of Nicolas Beauduin's poem confesses to us his desire: to sing the poet and to honor him. From the heights on which he had set our admiration, he rushes forth to mount still higher; he attains then a lyricism of an intensity hitherto un-

*Honor the Sublime Poet . . . Over the rest like the eagle he fieth.

known and which makes us say that he has attained *paroxysm*. From this point dates the beginning of the new school of poets of modern life, called *paroxysts*. But this is not exact, for he has shown us since that he was capable of a still greater pathos and of a still more living vision of the world.

I consider as marking a single resting-place in the evolution of Nicolas Beauduin's art *The Cities of the World*, *The Princesses of My Dream*, and *The Sisters of Silence*. Very little time separates them; and I am almost certain that, later, when the poet will publish his works in a definitive edition, he will reunite in a single volume these three short poems. And he will have reason. For by them he wishes to prove — first to himself and then to us — that he was capable of equalling by the extraordinary force of his lyricism the most powerful poets that France has had before him. The critics who have spoken with some intelligence of these poems have thoroughly understood this; and it is comforting for us to perceive that true talents do not pass altogether unnoticed in a time when, although her priests are numerous (much too numerous!), poetry is not often understood and sought out.

It is the custom for the critics to be silent about the works of a young author. And we are sensible of a certain consolation when we think, that if he knew others, Nicolas Beauduin did not know this injustice at least. From his first appearance this will attest the rare worth of his talent — he was taken into consideration by the critics of the vanguard. The three poems which occupy me at present brought him numerous articles. I shall not pass these articles here in review; this is not the place; but I have pleasure in averring that their authors have, most often, nobly endeavored to enter into the poet's design. M. G. F. Tautain, for example, merits particular praise. It seems to me that he was blessed with a rare clairvoyance when he wrote in *Le Parthenon*:

"The occultists recognize in things a triple and single significance: positive, symbolic, analogical. Nicolas Beauduin has in like manner given to *The Princesses of My Dream* a literal sense, Woman; a comparative sense, Nature; and a superlative sense, Truth or God. Thus, across the mystics and the theosophists, the

poet knows how to arrive again at the conclusions of Dante and Goethe, on the Eternal Feminine. . . .”

Perhaps Nicolas Beauduin in composing *The Princesses of My Dream* did not imagine that his work would be considered from this point of view. M. Paul Bourget has admirably said that the artist can no more measure the extent of his work than a father the energies of the son sprung from him. There is a phenomenon here which I cannot consider, but of which Nicolas Beauduin is certainly an illustration. Never, I am sure, would he have dared to believe that in composing, for his pleasure and to satisfy his natural need of expansion, a poem such as *The Princesses*, he would realize a work which is only comparable to the *Vita Nuova*. And I exaggerate nothing. Long before me, M. Roger Devigne has marked this glorious distinction. And when, in speaking of one of the poet's very first works, M. Maurice Gauchez cried: ‘Ideas, thoughts, philosophies crowd, heap up, entangle and interlace in the most voluptuous windings of his imaginative flight . . .’, he justly noted what should lead Nicolas Beauduin to the most elevated realms, sometimes of the subjective and the unconscious. For, with M. Beauduin, the instinct for synthesis is innate. He synthetises as rapidly as others conceive. And it is, I suspect, a peculiarity in every way worthy of remark. I shall make no more of it for the moment; I speak only of the poet, and not of the æsthete nor the philosopher. Moreover, of the philosopher in himself, I shall say no more. There is in this connection a phenomenon of subjective order which must be taken into account. So fine a critic and psychologist as M. Abel Hermant recently exclaimed: ‘O such depth! Shakespeare comprehends all Shakespeare.’ This reflection seems to me most acute. And I would wager that Nicolas Beauduin does not understand all that, later, one will be apt to read into his words — and even now, that which one reads into them. And so we return to M. Paul Bourget's expression.

In his metre, as well as in his ideas, Nicolas Beauduin has

evolved a great deal, has evolved incessantly, increasing his acquisitions, fortifying his art. The verses of *The Divine Folly* always followed one another by strophes or by leashes when the poem was not uniformly composed; and each leash or strophe was written in verse with the same number of feet. As he evolves, Nicolas Beauduin introduces more variety in his works. The three poems of which I am speaking are almost composed in rhymes, or at least assonanced, *vers libres*, which recall the methods of a *La Fontaine*, but which mark a very clear step toward a dynamic poetry of new expression.

'In Nicolas Beauduin,' M. Romain Rolland has written lately, 'there is enough stuff to make ten poets, of which only one is of the first rank. Let this one kill the others. Otherwise the rest will be in danger of stifling him.' There is a certain pessimism in this assertion. But I do not think that, at bottom, M. Rolland is much mistaken: now that Nicolas Beauduin has fulfilled the thousand deeds of prowess of which he had to show us that he was capable; now that he has let the stream overflow in order that the neighborhood might be beneficently watered it is necessary that he decide to choose at the crossroads from the highways which call him,—that the poet in him which predominates should discipline the other nine (but not kill them!) and the future will be his!

It is interesting to study in detail the new phase which Nicolas Beauduin's work assumes, representative as it is of what we call *the new poetry*. No one of the poets in the generation of 1900 to which the author of *The Cities of the World* belongs, has made proof of as much activity as he. And by his rare power of assimilation, by his extraordinary faculties of synthesis, he has managed to set himself up among his brethren as a true prophet.

Nicolas Beauduin wished to become the poet of virile and modern humanity. Far from him are the amorous poets who seek in Woman the beguiler and fondler, priests of luxury! On the other side of the mazes of the decadents, he plunges desperately into the great modern light.

Pioneer poet, we see him now advance, iron wand in hand, 'to the encounter of his brethren.' He has breathed into art the principle of action. To death, to regret for yesteryear, to sterile lamentation of a world which perishes, he has preferred modern beauty. She has appeared to him renewing the whole inspiration of lyric poetry. He has drawn the muse from her solitude and from her house of cards, to project her into the midst of social life, into the tumult of 'laborious days,' into this great sonorous workshop of a world, among living men. Far from your wan lovers, says he:

'In the midst of thy formidable modern activity,
Thou shalt dance on the steamer and the æroplane,
Thou shalt be in the lighthouse with its multiple rays,
And thou the tardy, and thou the soft and the passive,
Free, thou shalt skip on the locomotive.'

It is the 'new beauty' that he sings! And he is one of those who, by strength of lyricism, has, in a manner, created it: has made it at least nearly undeniable.

No doubt, we may say that the railroad is no longer so new; in fact, it is an old story. And I cannot forbear smiling when I say that, notwithstanding, the poets of our day,— those who seek what is new,— each claim the honor of having been the first to express the poetry of the express train and of the country which flows by its windows.

It is a bit childish, as a matter of fact. The modern world is not wholly summed up in the railroad, and I shall even reproach M. Beauduin for having called the railway station the 'modern temple': this enthusiasm for the railroads is rather astonishing. Was it not De Vigny who, a long time ago, first sang of the railroad?

The railroad is by no means the newest thing in the world, and the pioneers in the poetic art of to-morrow are mistaken who pretend to see nowhere but in the railroad the 'new beauty.' To understand this new beauty, one must be 'born anew,' feel an extraordinary power to render it concrete by images, to trans-

pose it into the realm of reality on the plane of enthusiasm, and to breathe into it the spontaneous illumination of the lyric creator. Nicolas Beauduin, by his power of expression, by the vertiginosity of his images, by the dynamic force of his rhythms, has found himself at the summit of such a task. His knowledge of modern philosophic systems has served him well. It would be easy to trace the affinities existing between his lyrical attitude and the mystic personalism, the pathetic suggestion, the introspectiveness of Lipps, and all that refers to monism, to Bergson and to Bazailas.

He is the singer of the mechanical applications of science:

‘Beauty of movement, beauty
Of capitals radiant in the light,
Of neighing autos, of fluid lights
And of peoples rearing in their immense effort.
Dynamic beauty of many faces,
Sometimes of blood, sometimes of fire, sometimes of iron.’

He sings wholly of magnified modern effort:

‘In place of Parthenons under blue olive-trees
.
.
.
We shall name the beauty of factory flame,
The palpitation of artisan suburbs,
The fever of steamers lashing toward America,
The dry docks, the wharves and the dockyards.’

This is the beauty that Nicolas Beauduin sings in many poems of *The City of Men* and of *The Cosmogonic Man*:

‘Ah! the New Beauty. . . .
Inclined toward conquest and the vastest life,
She was indeed the goddess whom nothing resists,
Dynamic beauty of swiftness and hope,
Thrusting always more afar, out of black spaces
Dancing and paroxyst humanity.
Beauty of brass, beauty of fire,

Beauty of steam, geometric beauty,
 Modern beauty having for temple and for landscape
 Blast furnaces casqued with purple and gold,
 Cities mad under their electric lamps,
 Hurling at conquered Heaven in spirals of pride
 The roar of dynamos and the tumult of windlasses,

 And dominating the night of silence and hate
 The terrible flight of Hertzian waves.'

This 'new beauty,' free, active, and dynamic, is opposed to the ancient æsthetic which abhorred 'the movement which displaces lines.' . . . The old divorce of art and science ceases; art and science are now not only united, but confounded; the whole social life is sung in its plenitude; the whole formidable modern machinery which, to the eyes of poets, enamored with forms of the past and idyllic reveries, seems to offer nothing but ugliness, is magnified at last in odes to the modern powers, to the vastest life, and to the solidarity of human efforts.

The muse is no longer the grief-stricken dolorous creature of yesterday, but

'The red goddess, on a galloping courser,
 Shouting over the cities with their vertebræ of steel
 The hymn of gold to the modern world.'

She is no longer

'The elegiac muse with eyes in tears
 But the dancer who bounds on the heights
 In the flight of the æroplanes.'

More social, more human, she comes nearer to the toilers of the globe. She sings them. In the effort of men, Nicolas Beauduin magnifies the conquerors, the builders, the sailors on the anguish of waters, masons on scaffoldings, the labor of scientists in laboratories, engineers on locomotives, layers of cables,

‘To sing them all, yearning toward what is new,
 To sing the hard muscle and ardent thought,
 And the eyes exalted with faith toward the heights,
 And the desires urging like motors
 The flying planets in infinite space.’

Nicolas Beauvuin is therefore the real poet of this scientific, industrial, and commercial epoch, the poet of total life, of the whole world. He inhales the struggle, audacious life, grand and brutal, savage even. He tends toward ‘an hegemony of the powers of his being.’ By it he maintains in their integrity against dilettantism, dissolving dreams, and *cui bono* negations, his living forces which he magnifies for the full blossom of his lyric mistress. It is a kind of discipline freely accepted, exalted to enthusiasm. On the other side of positivist serenity and experimental realism, he attains to supreme plenitude. As in the poem *Action of Grace* from *The City of Men*, which begins thus:

‘O this morning of ardor I bind all life.
 I possess the world in my pious arms.
 The Only One is in me.
 I am God Himself
 Since I have the joy
 To possess Him.’

One sees that this ‘daily’ inspiration does not exclude lyricism.

And this lyricism is eminently representative of our multiple and contrasted epoch, which tries to make its escape from scientific materialism toward a transcendent belief.

Not only does serene immobility, amorphism repel him, but this poet wishes to escape from determinism, to surpass his destiny, to attain to the vastest life, to paroxysm, to exaltation, ‘that rich state of the person,’ as Bazailles puts it.

‘Toward the most formidable and the reddest target
 I direct my bold will,

Which goes there below in a passionate rut,
Toward the summits of the world, to the impossible.'

This active lyricism thus escapes narrow methods and purely objective exactitude. It is nearer to life. Moreover, in place of flight, instead of shutting himself up in his room away from the noise outside, the poet hears the roar of the factories ascend to his side.

'All shows me action, ardor and conquest,
All the sounds of labor are for me sounds of feasting.

All enkindles and intoxicates me,
The song of the dynamos with copper wings,
The roar of ardent æroplanes,
All excites my courage,
And forces me, joyous, to feel even more
With the audacious life of my time.'

This is wholly a lyricism in direct communion with our epoch, a lyricism which is its product, and whose profound roots plunge deep in the living heart of crowds.

This living art cannot but sing life, and faith. That is why in these fervent poems are exalted our trembling civilization, the modern metropolises, the industrial cities, the era of machines, all human toil.

Moreover, the poet is a prophet. He feels truly the apparition of something new, the apparition of that God whom he will also sing in *The Cosmogonic Man!* He hears him come in the roar of crowds; something palpitates and is exalted,

'Trains whistle in shadow and forges pant,
Steamers sail on the seas of the planet,
Harbors are full of cries, of sails and masts,
Something is coming to birth. . . .'

The new sense of the œcumenical, of the universal, takes possession of it, in hours of faith

‘The universe pants in its being’;

a conscience, that which we have called ‘cosmogonic,’ brings to birth

‘Something greater than our Ego.’

The advent of this new God is hailed by Nicolas Beauduin in *The Cosmogonic Man*. He is the man who, not finding God outside himself, deifies himself in turn, ideally, unanimously:

‘We wish for him: well we need to see Him born;
And if he comes not, this vast god, this god
Hewn of a single block, and with a gesture of fire,
We shall take his place, implacable, for being.
We wish for a God!’

Rich with such enthusiasm and such profound truth, the inspiration of the poet withdraws from the circle of personal sensation, attaining to intuitive, œcumenical life:

‘And the exaltation of a mysterious fire
Made me equal the whole infinity of the world!’

And it is for this very thing that we must praise the poet. In an epoch of atheism, he seeks a new God. He seeks him in the most humble manifestations of life. He wishes a human God, if we may say so! And this God he not only seeks, but he knows how to find, in the whole colossal new flight of our century.

‘A tremendous hope renews the old world,
Wrings the fiery towns and the iron cities,
And the globe thence more lively and arrogant
Expands from day to day her fertile powers.
The peoples are passionate with the utmost will.
At every hour a more violent pride is born.
Humanity thence erects from out of the blackness
Her huge face.

Something rumbles and rises

And it is then more than a desire and more than a dream.'

Such are the elements of this original poetry, so truly modern in its dynamism, in its paroxysm!

The poet has realized this admirable synthesis in his *Cosmogonic Man*. The importance of this work is very great, for that very reason, and also because it must count among the few durable works which have been produced by Nicolas Beauduin's generation, which promises more than it has yet fulfilled.

'*The City of Men*,' writes the critic, Paul Desanges, 'is not yet his masterpiece. It is, if you like, an aspiration toward his masterpiece, a sign that one foresees will be huge, but that is not yet half-finished, a beautiful effort which remains incomplete. All the same, it reveals already a clear consciousness of the poet's greatness, of his true mission. He is on the point of discovering the law, his law. And this law he will very soon express in a really beautiful poem, which will be a sort of *Ars Poetica* . . . very poetic, and which the author will call by the expressive title, '*The Cosmogonic Man*.'

The Cosmogonic Man! Such will be the God of the future, of whom I have just spoken.

And what more can I say of this poetic work? No more than the many others, who have written of him before me, can I pretend to be complete. If I have wished to speak of this poet, it is because already his influence has been considerable and decisive upon his disciples. Under the glorious standard of paroxysm many of us are already grouped. We have even now a group of young poets who have arrived placing themselves under his protection. And this is especially significant.

Moreover, it is a new poetic art, scientific, social, and how modern and alive! that this poet thus realizes, to whom new realities have appeared. Nicolas Beauduin has seen all lyricism contained in power in the cinematographic vision of contemporary life, in the mechanical transfiguration of the world. He has

sought to realize a living art, rooted in the unique epoch wherein we live, an art weighty with significance and human meaning.

By all these merits, and many more, the work of Nicolas Beauduin deserves henceforth to be known to every one. For my feeble part, I have wished to introduce him to a somewhat wider circle than knows him now. For this poet is great.

I shall not attempt to say what place he occupies beside Emile Verhæren, Walt Whitman, Zola, Hugo. Such speculation is idle and fatally unjust. Let Hugo remain Hugo. Render to Verhæren the things that are his. Without blaspheming others, let us hail the work of Nicolas Beauduin and not trouble to inquire in what respect he has been an innovator, and in what a disciple. An artist's originality is not measured in feet or pints, but by the power of his lyricism and by Poetry.

Because I have thought it better to let the dead rest in peace and to venerate them, and to hail worthily those amongst the living whom we wish to glorify and to await the future with patience and surety, I have wished to hail Nicolas Beauduin, who is one of the most representative, one of the most powerful revealers of the modern epoch.

The foreigner reads him passionately, and tries to translate him. The two Americas pulsate to the rhythm of his heart. If it is by the lyric power of her poets that the strength of a nation is measured, France owes to Nicolas Beauduin the distinction that no man could have more magnificently exalted her power.

THE POETRY OF THE EPOCH

BY NICOLAS BEAUDUIN

A YOUNG thinker, M. Gaston Riou, proved quite recently in a volume which made some stir, the anarchy, the intellectual chaos of our epoch. Literature appeared to him multiple, contradictory. He found in it no directions, no precise aims. It appeared to him without unison, a sort of 'symphony of the King of Siam,' as the excellent Emile Faguet would say. One man, he wrote, lives in the eighteenth century, another is inspired by Rabelais, another by the Middle Ages, another by the Greek and Latin classics; this man returns to naturalism, that man to symbolism, this other man to the Parnassians, and so on.

Indeed one could prove in the younger groups the same cacophony, the same opposed attitudes. We find intellectuals and psychologists, in whom the critical spirit has not only destroyed all creative spontaneity, but killed the man's individuality. Then there are those who remain pure mystics plunged in dreams and without any bonds with the real world. And some are only 'philosophising' pedagogues, shut up forever in the pillory of their narrow formulæ. Finally, you find others, and these above all are the men who interest us, rushing forth on the roads of life to the conquest of the truths of their epoch. And it is with these that we shall occupy ourselves particularly.

Has not this diversity of tendencies which our critic has remarked existed in all literary epochs? Has not each of them presented at first this disparate and anarchic aspect? It seems as if it has always been so. And this is exclusively true in the fact that among the incalculable number of those who write, very few really represent something; — I mean to say, respond to their epoch, know how to see it by grasping the motives of living and

aspiration, and are capable of revealing these motives in noble works.

Indeed, noisy chaos, little by little under the influence of Time, are directed by the demiurge. And works without real significance, without representative value, sink into oblivion.

If we are still plunged too deeply in the whirl of ephemeral manifestations to see the true figure of our literary age clearly outlined, it seems possible nevertheless to define certain details, and by their aid, to trace it as a prefiguration.

While the poets do not think in flocks, and while never more than in our days, as all inquiries have confirmed, have they been more thoroughly individualists (so that not one of the recent literary schools has been able to hold its ground, so great is their will not to submit to any intellectual constraint), the result none the less is that certain works, a very small number, reveal what literary historians call 'the general spirit of the time.'

What is this spirit? From now on, an exercised intelligence has the power to discern — what official criticism will not register for a good twenty years at least — the principal lines, perhaps also the unity, and even the principle of unity.

Evidently there have been, and truly there will be always, passive poets, those who are called contemplatives, of Buddhist spirit, who live plunged in self-annihilation, outside of time. These poets, who are not all poetry, are all the same a very large part, the most 'habitual,' the most 'fitting,' considering that the poet has not been considered till now except under the aspect of a sort of dehumanized mystic, a crazy dreamer, a sentimental degenerate, unfit for social life. Now what justly differentiates our literary epoch and characterizes it, is that its most representative poets (I mean those who express it, reveal it in its highest significance) are essentially 'active lyrics,' who oppose to the conception of the 'poet-child' that of the 'conscientious poet,' according to Goethe.

In poetry, so to speak, nothing is ever old-fashioned. Repe-

titions are rare indeed: is not poetry an ideal view of the world in which the personal equation is the decisive factor? Indeed it is sufficient for a gifted poet to breathe new life into three or four general themes — nature, love, death — to give them an appearance of novelty.

All the same there exists, at the present moment, a poetry which draws from 'actuality' at the time its inspirations, its reason for existence, and its profound truth. And this actuality, which is the cinematographic vision of contemporary life, the mechanical transfiguration of the world, is most propitious in creating the least expressed and the greatest active lyricism which exists.

It is evident that the new poetry — and it is easy to discern the reasons why — is as remote from whining sentimentalism as it is from equivocal skepticism, elegant dilettantism, and other sorts of profoundly inhuman ankylosis with a 'tower of ivory' attitude. In full sympathy and communion with what surrounds it, it is a call to action, a call to life. To be sure, it has affirmations which are sometimes contradictory, but it affirms, it creates its faith untiringly, and it goes forward.

To art for art's sake, that social nonsense, born of a transcendent contempt for active and productive humanity; to art for truth's sake, which is and can be only a utopia, generous like all utopias and always deceptive, the present lyric generation opposes art for life's sake, and not art for the sake of the life of art, as is now proposed in what is still, it seems to us, the attitude of an æsthete and a dilettante. It finds itself thus in perfect conformity with the contemporary anti-intellectualist philosophy, which is a return to life as well, and the other innovating arts, which, by their dynamic æsthetic of movement, also seek a more direct and profound reconciliation with the real.

The new poets therefore no longer divorce art from life. For them, art is not on one side, life on the other. No, the two penetrate each other. An art which intrenches itself apart from the life of its time is a dead art, lacking any links with the real.

Literature must plunge its roots in palpitating life: a literature uprooted from its epoch has no excuse for existence, it is meaningless, without human value.

Otherwise it is no more than the plaything of dehumanized æsthetes.

From this sterile art some poets are violently detached. To be sure their number is not yet great. And the number is yet slighter of those who not only express the life of their epoch, but (recalling on this important matter the doctrine of Hegel on the unity of the subject and the object of its development *pari passu*), put themselves into their creations, thus communicating to them that truth and passion which are the revealers of all true work.

This vision of the modern world which I have personally exalted in *The City of Men* and more recently still in *The Cosmogonic Man*, and of which we find the beginnings in Whitman, whose influence with us increases from day to day, in Zola, Paul Adam, Rosny *aine*, Verhæren and Richard Dehmel, others also have understood and expressed,— Alexander Mercereau, in his *Words Before Life*; Henri Guilbeaux, in his *Modern Berlin*; Louis Piérard, in his book, *Flames and Smoke*; Lebesgue, Canudo, Jules Le Roux, Guerber, Divoire, Mandin, Parmentier in some of their poems; as well as Pierre Hamp, in his novel, *The Rail*. In England, in the United States, some poets perceive the same revelation; and in the countries of German speech, one must specially mention, among the newcomers, Paul Friedrich, Ernst Lissauer, Alfons Paquet, Wilhelm Schmidtbonn, Paul Zech and Stefan Zweig.

If it is true that poetry is in its highest — or at least in its most suitable — acceptation an ‘evasion of the real,’ an aspiration, a bridge, just like prayer, between the finite and the infinite, it is not less true any more that the chanter of modern life — and it is in this that the true poet, always a creator of the infinite, is recognized — instinctively transposes his creation, attains to a superior plane of beauty and transfigures, illumines, projects it in a supra-real world. The religious sentiment is not absent from

his living synthesis, an organism into which he has breathed a soul, his own. On the contrary, it seems that metaphysical preoccupations have never been greater than at the present hour.

Not only does the lyric revealer wish to live with intensity his individual existence, to participate in the vastest life, to raise himself always more in the reality of Being, but to live with the global life of the world, with the universal and omnipresent existence of a God. He wishes to integrate the universe, not to disappear, to annihilate himself, as certain adept poets do who are more or less conscious of monistic theories; he wishes to be incarnate in nature, to rule her, to be her supreme manifestation and consciousness.

It is like the advent of a new God; it is man who, not having found God 'sensible' elsewhere than in himself, deifies himself ideally.

Who does not see the new fact, heavy with religious consequence, in such a philosophical literary conception? Who does not discern here a new phase of the infinite aspiration, inalienable in man, who forces it to wish to exhaust in the paroxyst plenitude of a moment of his existence all that eternal and conscious life in which he once believed?

It seems useless to insist longer on the eminently religious character of modern inspiration.

Rich with such fervor and power of life, poetry is self-delivered from the circle of personal sensation, wherein the first symbolism takes exclusive delight. It attains to œcumenical, intuitive, divine, and continued life. It has emerged from the labyrinths of decadent obscurantism to plunge into the modern light. Like its epoch, greedy for athletic sports, travel, dangerous action, it has taken a taste for lyricism, which is active joy, bounding and reeling, with muscular phrase, powerful expression, true, concrete and brutal imagery, and salient metaphor, disengaged from swathings or rhetoric.

Poets no longer wish to slumber 'under the Buddhist cedar,' examining minutely the magic litanies of human despair, but,

iron wand in hand, advance on the great highway to the meeting-place of the living. For if our epoch is that of divining intuition and delirious clairvoyance — not that of vague dreaming and unformulated aspiration — it is above all that of ‘the act.’ And the new poets have thoroughly understood this, who have preferred to the bizarre, the incomprehensible, the inorganic, and the inarticulate, lucid realizations, rich with significance and human worth.

Formerly, almost always, the poets, detached from the rest of the world, lacking any real contact with their surroundings, warbled for their own satisfaction egotistical and vain songs. They refined upon their spiritual crises, delighting in the esoteric auscultation of their Egos. No doubt it is sometimes great to isolate one’s self from others, to assume a superior pedestal and disdain them — yet it would be easy to prove the contrary. It presents some advantages, and also some bad disadvantages, of which the least is to take from things a conception so high that it is chimerical. ‘There are summits where the contemplator loses sight of infinitesimal men and embraces no more than his own dream.’ That is generally what happens. We may admire this category of minds; but we need not follow them. And there are excellent reasons for this, among which it seems well to prefer creative life to sterile analysis and distorted dreams, active sympathy to Buddhist immobility, beneficent co-operation to indifference, however high it may be.

The evolution of poetry has been rapid and terrible, like material evolution. Under an estate of marvelous scientific discoveries allied to audacity, the thirst for danger, the contempt for death of those who applied them, in a few years the moral and intellectual overthrow has been accomplished. And the revelation of a new man, the man-machine, the multiplied man, the man-bird has been apparent to the least clairvoyant.

It is visibly evident that the rapidity of mechanical evolution has put us in a state of anxious frenzy, of incessant movement, of hope renewed without cease, of continued childbirth, of

sharpened faculties, of permanent enthusiasm which places our epoch at the antipodes of 'the point of repose,' which mechanics call 'stable equilibrium.' The rhythm of the world is considerably accelerated, at the same time that life is enriched with new splendors.

The great press of information, thanks to the telephone and wireless telegraphy, has transformed our mentality. In us now stir and live the most diverse worlds. And one can hear and hail already the advent of a new consciousness of omnipresence, of the cosmogonic conscience, of the modern man, who 'lives' simultaneously in himself, daily, all the multiple 'facts' of the globe.

Only a few ages ago, man remained confined in a narrow frame, without rapid communications with the rest of the universe; to-day thought goes round the world with the speed of lightning. Humanity lives in each of us, is integrate there day by day, I may say hour by hour, second by second, in the uninterrupted flow of events transmitted by cablegrams and wireless telegraphy and in an interval next seen and understood, caught alive, by the instantaneous phonocinematograph.

The ancient conceptions of multiple, time, space, are profoundly modified in our spirit. The human fluid encompasses the world, captures it and tames it to its will. And the field of vision and thought has been so immeasurably and suddenly aggrandised, that it creates in man a constant emotional state which steels his faculties and creates a considerable increase of vital power. Moreover, we must add to this anguished plenitude, born of the mechanical transformation of the world, the moral and social preoccupations created by the strife of classes, so terrible and so violent, by the unchaining of individual appetites, by national imperialisms opposing, face to face, their millions of men in arms; all this in an inflamed atmosphere already furrowed by purple lightning-flashes of the storm. And then you will agree that never in any past era has man lived in such an explosive furnace.

In this terrible fury of adverse forces, it seems that he feels instinctively the vital, imperious necessity for violent motives

of faith. More and more he is seeking ardent certitudes, superior reasons for striving and living, 'categorical imperatives.' In the absence of a God, he needs his gods; in the absence of the old disaffected cathedrals, he needs his temples. For his gods, he has fashioned them willingly with his hands, he possesses them; as for his temples, he finds them in those 'points of concentration,' which are the great thundering metropolises, where so many furious energies, wills and human appetites are agglomerated. A recent passion, blind as an elementary force, drives men toward the town. Everybody rushes to increase it, to swell monstrously this titanic mother in labor with a new god.

The passion of the towns is one of the most characteristic facts of the modern age. To be sure, superficial minds will not discover its consequences. But those who possess some sense of the future see already prefigured the unimaginable civilizations of to-morrow. There is a whole world there in germ, a whole sketch of colossal, scientific cities of the future, where, all dynamism and movement, the terrible architecture of iron, will reign.

That these coming realities should already take life in the ardent soul of some poet, is nothing to cause astonishment. What is called the 'gift of prophecy' is generally nothing more than a simple clairvoyance.

That the new poets, who try to express all this, break with the æsthetic conceptions of their predecessors, is readily seen. Does not each epoch possess its own adequate expression, its special technique, as it has its own methods of feeling and thought and its motives of inspiration? Ours cannot disregard this; after innumerable gropings, it has come to realize its own techniques as well. I say its techniques, for they are many and incessantly renewed. They are purely dynamic. They are opposed to the ancients, who all, indifferently, abhorred 'the movement which displaces lines.' Now — and here is 'the new fact' — 'actual' æsthetic is not only a change from its predecessors, but a fundamental opposition, a complete reverse of essential principles. To

the dogma of impassibility, to the hieratic attitude, to immobile serenity, to mathematical metrics, to conventional rhythms, in short to a static æsthetic, it substitutes, in every domain, an æsthetic of movement, a dynamic necessity, truer than the other, while plunged more in the real, more identical with the life of things. An æsthetic of the intuitive and continuous, it flees from the art of 'concept,' of 'notion,' of 'abstract knowledge,' of 'syllogism,' to attain, beyond a background of ideas, and with the aid of an appropriated pragmatism, the multiform and active life and the new splendors of our epoch — in a word, the New Beauty.

In the works of those who sing, express, reveal, endow with infinity and artistic truth this New Beauty, this passionate, active, and free Beauty, born of that action which is life, one feels a trembling, a harmony of vibrations, a quickened rhythm, and an impulse really unknown until now. Words, images, metaphors, sonorities, intuitive analogies, bound, intermingle, give an impression of the whirling, audacious and overheated life of our epoch, which possesses, included in herself, in her lights, in her roars, in her hasty crowds, as no epoch has ever possessed, the divine fire of paroxysm, that sublime faculty and manifestation of a God.

It is well here to note the confirmations that the contemporary philosophy of mobility brings to the new æsthetic.

In fact, since the abandoning of Spencer's system, which reduced to unity the psychological and biological facts, a whole philosophy, that of Bergson, has been substituted, the philosophy of 'dynamic notions of qualitative duration, of heterogeneous continuity, of multiple and mobile states of consciousness.' As it is easy to account for, these are opposed to notions of homogeneous and quantitative space, 'of a *real* broken, static, and deprived of life.' This is the justification of the new æsthetic; we find it a contribution to the conception of the New Beauty and of dynamism in poetry, this incessant creation of ourselves. It is no longer a sign, an attitude, a state of soul isolated from the surrounding reality. It is life itself manifested in its continuity, in

touch with what surrounds it and which consequently becomes a part of it. That is why we wrote above that the new poem, as we conceive it, is no other than a movement of life in relation with all the other movements of universal life. That is why, to the old definitions of 'verse,' of the 'strophe,' of the 'leash,' of '*vers libre*,' and so on, recent theorists have substituted the term 'dynamic rhythm,' indispensable to 'the polyphonic orchestration' of the new poem, the rhythm which gives to the poem its proper movement and the form of its architecture.

In every domain we find confirmations of this æsthetic, showing thus the profound truth, the vital and ineluctable necessity of an art in such perfect concordance with the epoch. It would be very interesting indeed to show all the existing parallelisms; but the time and the place are wanting, and we content ourselves with indicating the points of contact which unite it to Rodin's sculpture, which is action; to the new music, which is movement; to the great modern orchestras, which are 'intensity'; and to the dynamism of the architecture of the future, that of steel.

In this epoch of impatient plenitude, in this hour of sharpened life, of tumult, of gestation, where being is trans-humanized, where matter itself seems 'to rise to consciousness,' where a sort of new œcumenical sense is born in men, it seems that lyric poetry, even more than all the other arts, tends violently toward a pathetic as yet unexpressed, toward a paroxyst and very acute expression of this modern world where man, at last delivered from himself, feels that he is potentially a god.

Futurism, so far as there is good in it, is born of this aspiration; but from the very fact that it is called Futurism, it gives too much the impression of being outside our epoch; it appears, right or wrong, to be an abdication of the present.

Romanticism was a flight into the past; Futurism seems a flight into the future. Both meet outside life, in a vague domain, that of death for Romanticism, that of the unforeseeable, of the development not yet arrived, for Futurism. Futurism, therefore,

deserts the living community for the domain of abstractions. It has the figure then of an æsthetic 'cloud,' and appears to be a purely verbal formula.

On the other hand it is to something real and concrete that the effort of the active lyricists corresponds — what matters the label by which we know them? In contrast to the vague and intemporal idea of Futurism, and to the conception of literature as a 'social amusement,' 'the relaxation of clever men,' as the neo-classicists regard it, they see in literature, and more especially in the new poetry, not a pastime, nor a distraction, nor an evasion aside from life and modern efforts, but on the contrary 'the keenest manifestation of that life and effort.' They are united, as we have seen, by no formula, but a first principle of æsthetics is their bond. They wish a new poetry as yet unexpressed and social, which will be above all a new expression of beauty, born of the mechanical applications of science. They perceive the elements of poetry contained in the terrible modern cities, in the locomotives of great express trains, in the extraordinarily rapid evolutions of æroplanes, in a one hundred-horse-power automobile, in the explosive force of a dreadnought, in a fleet of submarines; they perceive the intensity of incalculable life which is agitated in a stock exchange, in a Wall Street, or in the Paris bourse; in the mechanical energy of a Creusot, of an electric power plant, of a coaling dock; in the stock of tools of a great modern port with its lighthouses, its railways, its dry docks, its shipyards, its arsenals, its drawbridges and trans-shipments and its monstrous pack of steamers sailing to the most fabulous countries of the globe. And their dream is widened by every scientific marvel.

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The poets up till now — or almost up till now — only lamented over the ruins, and translated the anguishes and the last upheavals of a world now dead. To-day all the fervor, tumult and violence of 'laborious days,' all the cheerfulness of sonorous shipyards and giant cities in course of construction is sung and exalted in their work.

Every great epoch has been an age of faith. Ours, after having created its affirmations, is exalted and raised in its turn toward a belief weighty with human significance and œcumenical by increase.

We are at the dawn of a new belief. Let us hail it. And let us demand that it be made up of truth in life and of that beauty 'which is beyond the shadow.'

THE TOWN IN ME

BY NICOLAS BEAUDUIN

Translated from the French by E. J. O.

I

O Whirlwinds of fever where everything is gaining!
The Town is insane, the Town is delirious;
The autobuses pass on wings,
The crowds go at random,
And the tramways and the carriages
Hum and seem to fly away.

The hoardings flame, twisting their raw colors
On the golden brow of the immense town.
The cafe-bars offer the length of the streets
Their tipsiness and their madness.

Ha! rushing and whirlings,
Clamors and cries, songs and brawls,
And trepidations of motors foolish with rage
And nightly dazzle!

Ha! the dens and the bazaars and the theaters,
The stores and their millions of eyes;
Odors of attar and petroleum, odors of plaster
And ruts of bodies held toward kisses of fire!

Ha! the squalls of the machines,
The flashes of trolleys on the shadow which scares,
The chugging of motors and the gesture of lighthouses
On the night that their electric sword assassinates!

Ha! the joys, the angers
Vertiginous and darted,

The divine fulguration of Ideas,
And the bonded gambling houses
Where is played on the stroke of a die
The fate of an entire existence!

Ha! the tumult of affairs
In the midst of the jingling of gold!
And all this in scenes
Of flame, of fever and effort,
Of panics and lights!

All this, all this,
Which roars and rolls and turns and goes,
Holds me, clasps me, electrifies me.
Breathes on my soul and stirs it,
And puts in my flesh
All life with its thunders and lightnings!

II

There is come in me an exchange of forces.
Fires re-enter me, fires are born with me,
Shatter their core and their rind
And bound in flights of faith.

It is cries which scourge me
And whirlwinds assail me.
Fierce life pinches me
And fertilizes me without rest.

The desires of the immense town
In jets of fire, as in madness,
Enter and dilate my heart.
All becomes suddenly interior,
Bars, movies, crowds, brawls.
And my heart, and my heart
Is exalted to the rhythm of motors

And beats as a conqueror's tocsin
In the center of the capital.

My being rebounds uplifted
With the streets and the bazaars
And the autos of the boulevards
Whose wheels gnaw the pavement.
My flesh is exalted desperately.
A new soul penetrates me,
And I feel like another being,
Another I, another understanding.
Other senses under the firmament.

I feel my soul identical
With that which shines red in electric flames
'Mid the automobile stands and the rings,
The movies, the public halls,
The theaters, the crazy places
Where the Town kicks and flies away
And dilates
Like a tremendous shell which bursts
And disperses in trails of gold.

Forces are in me, challenges, scenes,
And myriads of lives.
Ho! Is it this evening endlessly pursued
That the whole Town is exasperated and cries aloud
In an explosion of vertigo combining
Violence, desire and folly?

III

Ha! I am like a being in labor!
I feel myself full of a world unequalled.
In my heart are rumbling machines
And whirling suns.

Ha! Ha! torture and joy,
Force which slays, force which grinds,
Light and sounds, cries and brawls,
Beat my soul with blows of rage!

I am afraid this evening when I feel
Every desire haunting my blood.
I am electrified in thy furnace,
O Town, where delirium spreads her jets of lava,
Where iron burns, where air neighs,
Where everything explodes
In a red apotheosis
Which terrifies the infinite.

Ha! my body reigns without bounds.
I augment myself with the world, O Life, and with thy
forms,
I feel in the depths of me pass thy enormous soul;
And my spirit of fire halts in terror
Seeing all at once in myself appear
No more my feeble and personal humanity,
But the terrible face of Being!
Of Being!

THE WINGS*

BY JOSEPHINE PRESTON PEABODY

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ

CERDIC.

ÆLFRIC the King.

BRUN.

EDBURGA.

Northumbria before 700 A.D.

(The scene passes within a wide hut, Saxon-built. At back, open window-spaces, and to the right a doorway, past which the sea-birds fly in a gray light.— Against the right wall, a seat and a shelf with one or two great books, a half-loaf of bread, and a lamp without a light. Near by, a large unlighted lantern.— On the left wall, a rude wooden cross; below it, a bench with a slab of stone upon it, covered over; mallet, chisel and other tools. Also to the left, a low door, now shut, leading to an inner cell.— Twilight of a bleak day.)

Enter BRUN the fisher-boy, doubtfully. He looks from bench to books, and shakes his head. There appears on the threshold behind him the figure of a woman in a long cloak. BRUN, when he turns, waves her back with a gesture of warning entreaty.

Brun.— No more, but wings and wings! And still no light.

He is not here, for all the night be wild.

The wind cries out; — there will be broken wings,

And they do vex him, ever. —

(EDBURGA appears in the doorway.) Nay, forbear!

Gudewife, forbear! Ye may not step within.

He is not here, although the door stood wide;

See you, the holy Cerdic is not here.

Edburga.— Where, then?

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Brun.— God wot! ’Twill be a mickle hap
That holds him fast; and no light litten yet.
The light is wanting.— Do not come within;
Bide yonder.

Edburga.— Wherefore? Wit ye who am I?

(He shakes his head. She draws aside veil and wimple, discovering a young face and long braids of red-gold hair; then she steps in arrogantly, to his dumb distress. While he replies in abashed singsong to her questions, she looks about her with something between scorn and curiosity.)

Deem ye the holy Cerdic hides away?
Or that I come for naught? — What art thou called?

Brun.— Brun, son of Wulfstan. . . .

Edburga.— And what dost thou here?

Brun.— Ye bade me lead you hither from the shore,
See you; — therefore I came. Often I come,
Likewise to bring the holy Cerdic bread,
And tidings from the Abbey. . . . Ye can hear
Our bell, save when the wind will be too high,
At vesper-time and curfew.— He would fast,
Ye wit, till he were like the lanthorn yon,
As ye could see a light through, if let be!
Then I row hither, or across the bar
I come here at low water, and bring bread.—
And if I did not, sure the Angel would.

Edburga.— Sooth!

Brun.— All folks say. Once I lay by to watch
Till nigh I heard it coming. For I dread
Some day the Angel seize me by the hair!
Lady, ye wit no woman can be here,
In holy Cerdic’s cell.

Edburga.— Was this thy dread?—
And dare no townfolk come?

Brun.— Save they be sick
And sore possest, no nigher than the door.
But ye have come within. Pray now, go forth!

Edburga (*stealthily*).— And I, worn weary, I must forth
again

Into the wet, for that I am a Woman!

Brun.— Needs must ye take it ill to be a woman.

But see, there is a tree to shelter by,

A dark tree yonder, hard upon the dune.—

Forsooth, all womankind he should mislike;

And beyond that, men say it was a woman

Drove Cerdic from the King.

Edburga.— Men say? . . . What men?

Brun.— Sooth, did ye never hear?

Edburga.— What do they say?

Brun.— It was for chiding the King's light-o'-love,—

I wot not who, no more than ye;—

Edburga.— Her name

Is called Edburga.

Brun.— Ay, an evil woman!

She was it, brought mislike upon the King,

And Cerdic bade him leave her. — And the King

Would not; but still she wasteth all his days,

And, for her sake, he hath no mind to wed.

And he was wroth; and, likewise, for her sake

He drove the holy Cerdic from the town. —

But Cerdic found our island. And, they tell,

His faring here must bring a blessing down.—

Edburga.— Ay, hath it fallen yet? Methought the isle

Looked bare enough, and starven!

Brun.— Nay, not yet.

But likewise there are curses in the court,

And men cry out on Ælfric! — Wit ye well,

Their longing is for Cerdic home again.

Edburga.— And Cerdic, will he hence? When the King
comes,

With shining gifts! (*Between her teeth.*)

Brun.— If he put *her* away,

It may be . . . See you, Cerdic is so holy,

They tell he will not look upon a woman
 When he must speak with them. But I'm a man:
 I talk with him, and look. And so I too
 Would not have spoke with ye, but that ye came
 To ask the way ——

Edburga.— Unto that holy man.
 Yea, truly! I would see and speak with Cerdic.
 Ye deem he cometh hither soon?

Brun.— God wot!
 He hath a Book here that he reads upon;
 Likewise he knoweth how to grave on stone,
 With pictures like the frost. But oftentime
 All day he standeth on the rocks, adream,
 So stark the sea-birds have no fear of him,
 And graze his face in flying. So, belike,
 It is a Vision that doth keep him now;
 For still the light is ever lit, by now.
 He will be coming. . . . Ye must bide beyond.

Edburga.— Go thou. And I will follow to thy tree,
 There to sit down . . . and pray . . . till I behold
 Thy holy Cerdic coming.— Have no fear!
 See: I will wrap my mantle round my hair,
 As holy men would have us do.— Such peril,—
 And dear enchantment, in a woman's hair!
 So: 'tis my will to stand thus in the wind
 Now, while the sun sets, and until the Fiend
 That rends me, have his own, or Cerdic ——

Brun.— Woe!
 The Fiend! —

Edburga.— That dwells in Woman: thou hast said.

Brun.— Woe that I brought ye here to Cerdic's cell!

Edburga.— Nay, thou wilt never rue it.— Take this scarf
 So, knotted thrice,— unto the farthest rock,
 Where thou shalt bind it to that only bush,—
 The thorn thou shewedst me; and so let hang
 That the sea-winds may sift and winnow it.

This if thou do — and look not back again,—
 And say thy prayer, likewise, for holy Cerdic! —
 There shall no hurt come nigh thee from the Fiend.—
 But I must bide by yonder starven pine,
 Till Cerdic pass, . . . to shrive me.

Brun (terrified).— Ay, go hence!
 There doth he bless the sick.

Edburga.— I follow thee.
 And may the saints forgive it to this — *saint*,
 There stepped upon his threshold one poor woman,
 Seeing he knew not! — I will after thee.

Brun.— Nay, do not! Sooth, I will as ye have said.—

Edburga.— Never look back!

Brun.— By holy Guthlac, never!—
 When ye are shriven . . . take the self-same way
 Back to the shore. . . .

(Running out.)

God shield the holy Cerdic!

Edburga (alone, stretching out her arms with savage relief).

God crush the holy Cerdic, with His shield!

(She looks about her, between curiosity and aversion; then begins to sing with exuberant defiance of the place.)

If the moon were mine
 For a silver cup.
 Ah, but I would fill it up
 With red wine, red wine!
 Then, O love of mine. . . .

(She stops singing as she comes to the bench with the covered stone, and draws near to look, as if it fascinated and repelled her; then she turns away, silent. From the doorway, she seems to listen; then calls through her hands in a soft, high voice, like the wind.)

Ælfric . . . the King!

(Exit EDBURGA. The door blows shut after her. Deep twilight falls. There is a pause, filled with the crying of wind and of sea-gulls. Then the low door in the left wall opens, and CERDIC gropes his way in, carrying a taper. He is a young monk with the

keen face of a mystic, worn white with fatigue. He seems half tranced.)

Cerdic.— The darkness here. . . . Need be, I fell asleep.

Sleep, sleep for me, and in the daytime!— Ah,
The little sleep! Could I not watch one hour?
Yea, Lord, for all the hours of day and night;
Save that in sleep, the wings stoop near to me
I grasp for vainly, waking. . . . Was it sleep?
Or were they here, the voices and the wings?—
Not yours, belovèd birds! Not yours that beat
Gray through the wind and wet, in search of me.—
Lady of Heaven, forgive me that I slept,
Forgetful of thy birds, to call them in
And break my bread with them.—

(He goes to the shelf, and taking the loaf down, breaks and scatters it from the doorway, afterwards closing the door.)

Take all,— take all!

For I have slept; and I am filled indeed,
With manna and with light.

Yet, O thou Blessèd!

If my poor prayer and longing may avail
Like hands of need, dragging thy garment's hem,
Vouchsafe to me here in my wilderness,
One sign, to ease the hunger of my heart
That calls and echoes, prays and hears the prayer,
Echoed and ebbing, till it surge again;
High tide,— low tide,—but never any word.
High tide,— low tide; never a *face* to see.

(He comes down to the bench. From his taper he lights the lanthorn, and sets it by; then reverently he lifts the covering-cloth from the stone, to look upon his work.)

Our Lady of all Comfort. Rose of Heaven!
Could I but make her, here, as in my dream,
That blessèd Face,— the stone should put forth might
Unto blind eyes, and they would look, and see!
Ah, when?— Poor scribbled track, sore pitiful,

Of wingless longing! Here the Face should be,
 With this gray blankness where the eyes would shine,
 More lovely blue than ever twilight sea.
 And here would be her hair; — a golden wave
 Of sunset, ebbing redly in the west . . .
 Her hair. . . . But never can I make her hands,
 Like to those palest roses that did grow
 Close to the Abbey wall. . . . Ah, could I know,
 Even in a dream! Since unto lowlier men
 Than blessèd Luke she hath vouchsafed to see
 Her very face. — Comfort this halting tool,—
 Quicken this stone! Let not the earth go dark
 Of such a likeness for men's hearts to keep,
 Beautiful, on the altar of that temple
 Whose walls be blazoned with the shapes of earth,—
 Scribbled and scarred with basest names and things,
 Foul upon clear! Even as my Dream did fade
 When some voice in my soul, more ware than I,
 Thrust me awake crying, “Ælfric — the King!”
 And I awoke, and heard no more.—

(Lifting his face with shut eyes.) Let be!

There shall no soil come near my dream of thee;
 But I will count a thousand dawning suns,
 Patient, so be that on some dawn of day,
 Thou lean from out of heaven, and I may see
 Thy face like dawn above thy Star-in-the-East,
 Mother of all the motherless,— God's Mother!
 And still, though I should count the thousand years,
 Still shall my heart be ready.

(The wind shakes the door; and the gulls go by.)

— Ah, the wings!

Ever thy birds, the while I hark for thee;
 Never thy word, but only call of birds,
 And waves and wind, and evermore the wings
 Of sea-gulls that I hear with quickened heart
 Of hope: because they knock upon my door,

Knocking and mocking ever! Be it so.
 Lady of Heaven, beside thy flock of stars,
 Who broodest over this mid-world as though
 It were an ailing lamb, I wait for thee.
 I harken, and my heart is at the gate . . .
 My soul doth wait, as a poor vacant chamber
 With the door wide like famine, but for thee;
 Ay, and the torches waiting for a fire
 White from the stars, not breathing, save for thee.
 O Moon of Pity, if this loneliness,
 And the sore heart of man that knows but how
 To seek a home, can ever draw thee down,
 Lean from thy glory with thy mother-looks,
 Lean down to bless,— follow thy pity, down,—
 Down to this solitude. — Let me once look
 On Thee!

(A knocking on the door. CERDIC looks up with fixed eyes. The door swings open, and EDBURGA stands on the threshold, her veil shadowing her face, the two long golden braids hanging below, upon her breast.— She steps in, and stands regarding him for a moment; then speaks in a voice without emotion of any kind.)

Edburga.— Knowest thou me?

(CERDIC, as in a trance, crosses his arms on his breast. His face grows radiant with beatitude. Without giving sign of her bewilderment, EDBURGA comes forward slowly, facing him. Then she loosens the veil from her head and the cloak from her shoulders. They fall about her feet; she stands richly arrayed. CERDIC sinks upon his knees.)

Behold me. . . . Thou art Cerdic.

Cerdic (in a far-off voice).— Lady, thou knowest.

Edburga.— Yea, thou hast well said.

I know thee what thou art. Thou dost not know

What I am.—Dost thou dream?

Cerdic.—

It well may be . . .

I dream.

Edburga.— Awake.— For thou shouldst know me, Cerdic.

(He does not move. She regards him with a closer curiosity.)

Make me some firelight here. For I am cold.

Cerdic.— Lady, have pity that my heart is shamed

And my poor home is witless of the fire,

What warmth may be. I had no thought — of this.

Edburga.— Wake, Cerdic. 'Tis no dream, albeit thine eyes

Never looked yet on mine. Guess, who am I?

Thy lips have used my name. Why art thou dumb

But now?

(He answers in a joyful prayer.)

Cerdic.— Thy grace must needs unseal this mouth.

Thou knowest.— Give me leave to tell of thee,

In words like golden harp-strings; but to tell

How all the air is summer with thy coming,

And morn doth flush the furrows of the sea;

Yea, how thy voice hath fallen, like white manna,

To fill the craving hunger of the soul

That longed for God and thee.

(She recoils with sudden contemptuous laughter.)

Edburga. ———Nay, for us twain!

This, then, is Holy Cerdic, who would look

Upon no woman! . . . Thou, who wouldst have us

Forswear all earth, for heaven somewhere outside,

Tell me, O wise one, of this precious rede,

How to keep both, shut fast in godly hands!

(CERDIC, stricken aghast, reaches towards the fallen mantle and touches it in horror, to make sure. As his vision breaks, he rises and stands back, striving to master his anguish.)

Dreaming, good sooth! You touch it, to make sure,

Dreamer of far-off women? But this dream

Is a true dream; as I am very Woman.

Nor shalt thou bid me hence till I have said.

So mild thou wert, before I made me known!

Cerdic (gravely).— Known, maiden?

(She regards him keenly; then goes to the door, shuts it, and turns towards him, with triumph growing in her looks.)

Edburga.—Nay, then! I will tell thee more.
 How shouldst thou know me? I am the first woman,
 Haply, thine eyes have met; and so, like Eve,
 Older and wiser than thou!—I come to tell,
 First, of the few, far things thou dost not know;
 Then, of thyself, thou knowest less than all; . . .
 Then . . . what a pitiful King's Counsellor
 Thou wert,—too craven to behold a woman!

Cerdic.—No longer give I counsel, well or ill,
 Unto the King. Another counsellor
 He hath preferred before me, for whose sake
 I am an exile, and this place my home.

Edburga.—Haply it was Edburga?

Cerdic.—Even she,—
 The King's Edburga.—If I have been craven,
 Speak out thy hurt. For I will hear, and learn.

(He lights the lamp also, from the lanthorn; then stands with his arms folded, looking at her calmly. She begins with a cold irony that grows passionate.)

Edburga.—Ay, learn.—If that Edburga drave thee here,
 Bethink thee, that Edburga was a woman.
 Learn that there was some strength around her then,
 Stronger than thou, to drive thee from his heart —
 Ælfric the King's — and from the city gate! —
 The woman's strength, the one might that is Woman.
 And though ye give and take us as your own,
 What is it that ye flee from and ye fear? —
 Dreading this . . . Softness, once it be unchained!
 Con thy blank heart. For I will write in it
 The runes that might unriddle thee the world;
 And thou shalt ponder them, one little hour.
 And look upon me.—Nay, I do not come,
 Save but in hatred. Thou art safe from all
 Thy heart can fear, and long for — and despise!
 I hate thee; and I tell thee; and I come
 To speak thee sooth, and at my going hence

To leave full goodly token that I hate.—
 But thou, look back, and be the wiser,— thou!
 When I did enter, ere we came to speech,
 What was it bowed thy knees before me here
 Against thy will? Thou'rt dumb. Why then, poor
 clod,
 What, but this weird which thou couldst never face?
 This little power-and-glory-all-for-naught!
 What save one Woman? And that one, to thee,
 The basest woman-weed in all the world! — Edburga.

Cerdic.— Ah, my God! No, no. —

Edburga.— The King's!—

The King's Edburga!

Cerdic (apart).— Ah, forgive — forgive —

Edburga.— Prayest me now forgiveness?

Cerdic (sternly).— Nay, not thee!

Not thee.

Edburga.— Then haply heaven: that thou wert moved
 By this poor beauty that I wear upon me?—
 Waste not thy prayer. The peril that I bring
 Is nothing strange; 'tis old and grim and free.
 Have I not said, I come to tell thee of it,
 And what I am that reckon with thee?

Cerdic.— Speak.

Edburga.— I am Edburga, and the daughter of Ulf.
 My mother was a slave. For she was sold
 And given in her youth unto Svanfleda,
 Sister of Ulf,— a just and holy woman,
 Who bought and set her free, for Ulf to wed,—
 And had it written in the gospel-book —
 When that his heart clave to her. That, O monk,
 Thou canst but hear, not heed! And I was grown,
 When Ulf came to be made an ealdorman.
 And Bertric would have taken me to wife,
 Save that I came before the eyes of Ælfric
 The King; and so . . .

— What are you, men and monks,
 That you may give us unto such an one
 To bind your lands together? Or to bring
 The sum of twenty spears or more, to follow
 You, at the man-hunt? — Women bring you forth,
 As Darkness cherishes the doomful light
 Of the Sun, that being grown, shakes his bright locks
 And puts all to the sword! — I'll not be given
 To Bertric, would that Bertric have me now: —
 I, a free-woman and the gladlier free,
 That being yet unborn, I was a slave!
 I am a creature rooted in the dark,
 But born to sunlight and the noble air.
 I will to give; and I will not be given.
 I fear not right nor left, nor east, nor west;
 Nor thee! — For that I have is all mine own
 To give or keep. And I am all I have.
 And I am Ælfric's,— for a kingly gift.

(A bugle sounds distantly. Neither hears as they face each other fiercely.)

I reckon no more. But thou, thou shadow-thing,
 Unwitting what or men or shadows be,
 And 'hearing of my name and how time sped',
 And fearing for the council and the peace,
 Thou wouldst have hurled my one gift of myself
 Into the dust; and call all men to see
 And curse and stone me hence: ay, an thou couldst! —
 As there were no degrees 'twixt mire and me.
 O thou wise Cerdic, hear the end of this.
 For thy 'King's Peace,' thou hast so ploughed the state,
 And turned the people's heart against their King,
 That now they clamor for their holy man!
 Like rain and snow, two names make dim the air
 With 'Cerdic' and 'Edburga'!

Cerdic.—

I knew not this.

Edburga.— Quoth he! Thou hast it, now. Yet even so,

Truly, thou wilt not come again, to rule! . . .
 Thou piece of craft, I know thee. Dost thou think
 Cerdic shall win? Or, haply, base Edburga?

The King is here, without . . . and nigh at hand,
 Coming with torches.

(Lifts her hand to listen.)

. . . Ay!

Cerdic (dazed).— The King is come. . . .

Edburga.— Yea, so.— Tho' thou be traitor, he's a King;
 And thou hast been a one-time counsellor.
 He comes to say farewell . . . And I am first,
 To shew thee something of this world, before
 Thou tak'st thy leave for that far other world
 Thou knowst so well;— and liker home for thee,
 Than this warm Earth so full of seas and sun,—
 Too golden—like my hair!

The tide is in.

It was low water when I walked across;
 But I did seal my name upon the shore!

Cerdic.— Ælfric is come . . .

Edburga.— I have said.— And Ælfric's men.

Cerdic.— Thou speakst not truly. Ælfric is a king,
 Though he be young.

Edburga.— But,— Cerdic or Edburga!

Cerdic.— Not thus for Ælfric! He bore love to me.

Edburga.— Ay, long ago. . . . For any of the earls
 He would not so have done.— It was for me.
 Save thyself, Holy Cerdic!—

(She points to the door with ironic invitation. CERDIC turns towards the bench, and grasping his mallet, looks on the carven stone, lifting the cloth from it. She sees with amusement.)

Let us see

How monks may fight! . . .

(He covers the stone and faces her with sudden indignation, still grasping his mallet.)

Stout tools they look: and thou hast need of them.
 If thou wilt cling to such a meagre life,
 Who scants a moment? Surely not the King!
 Yet dost thou look not now, as when I came,
 Kneeling adaze before me! And belike
 I seemed not thus to thee.— What I did seem,
 I wonder yet, O blind man with new eyes! —
 I wonder yet.—

(The Abbey bell sounds faintly far off. It is followed by confused sounds of approach.)

Cerdic.— Hear, then! Thou sayst truth:—
 How much of truth I may have time to tell thee,
 Thou bitter truth, Edburga! — When I kneeled,
 Not knowing,— for my heart was worn with dreams,
 Mine eyes were worn with watching,— I had prayed
 Only to hear one knock upon the door;
 Only to see one Vision, that I strove
 To carve there on the stone. . . . There came a knock,
 There stood one . . . at the door.— And I looked up,
 And saw in thee what I had prayed to see,—
 And knew not what I saw, believing thee —
 God rede to me this day in Paradise
 The meaning of that mock! — believing thee
 The Vision . . . of all pity and all grace,
 The Blessèd One, the Mother of Our Lord! —

Edburga.— Out! Mock me not. — Be still —

Cerdic (with anguish).— The Blessèd One! —

Believing thee . . . the Mother of the Lord! . . .

(EDBURGA gives a strange cry and falls huddled against the door, with her veil gathered over her face, as CERDIC breaks the stone into fragments.— There is a bugle-blast without, and the sound of voices and steel; then a blow upon the door. CERDIC hurls away the mallet.)

Could spears bite out this broken heart of a fool,
 And tear it from me! —

Bid them in.

Voice (without).—

Come forth!

(Enter ÆLFRIC alone. The open door shows the torches outside. CERDIC faces him, sternly motionless. EDBURGA is crouched by the doorway, her face covered. The King looks from one to other in amazement.)

Ælfric.— Where was thy signal? Twice I sounded horn.—
(To CERDIC.)

I bade thee forth. Why cam'st thou not?

Is Cerdic

Afraid to die? —

What makes Edburga here?

Thou wert to give me signal. . . . What befell?

Thou cowering in thy veil? When have I seen

This thing? — Speak! —

Edburga (*faintly*).— Ælfric . . .

Ælfric.— Up! Rise up and speak.

Come forth, out of thy veil!

Edburga.—

I cannot . . .

Ælfric.—

Come.—

Look up.—

Edburga.— Let be. . . . Ah, ah! . . .

Ælfric (*fiercely*).— Out . . . from thy veil!

(*Still she shrinks, covered. He turns on CERDIC, drawing his sword with a cry.*)

Thou diest! —

(EDBURGA flings herself against him and clasps his knees, reaching up towards his arm.)

Edburga.— No, Ælfric, no. But give me time; — not yet.

Let be . . . I do not know . . . I do not know . . .

I cannot tell thee why . . .

Ælfric.—

Thou wilt not speak?

Edburga.— Yea, soon Be patient, . . . hear!

(*In a gasping whisper.*)

Put up thy sword.

Ælfric.— Thou plead for him? Am I become thy fool?

For he it was so called me, on a time! —

Speak.— Hath one hour stricken thy mind from thee?

Art thou Edburga? And am I the King?
 What hath he said? — For whom was ambush set?
 Gods! — I would make all sure, but I am loath
 To shame the King I was, before my thanes.

(He pushes the door shut and stands against it, holding his sword drawn.)

Answer, Edburga.— Was't for me or thee,
 I took this errand on me? Thou hast said
 One of you twain must live, the other die.—
 To death with him.

Edburga.— It shall dishonor thee.

Ælfric.— Bid in the hands to do it.— For that cause
 Thou wouldst have had them hither. Let them be
 Dishonored! So:— was it not all thy deed?

Edburga.— Mine, mine,— not thine! But thou, undo my
 deed,

And cast it from thee.— He hath spoken true . . .
 In part — not all, not all!— 'Tis I have clasped
 This mantle of dishonor round thy neck,
 That is so foul upon thee.— I saw not; —
 But now I do behold . . . and all is strange.
 Yea, I hate Cerdic . . . and I hate myself . . .
 I bade thee do it, and I pray thee now,
 Hear me again, and do it not!

Ælfric (as she clings to him again).— Edburga!

Edburga.— All I have asked of thee, — unto this hour,
 Put it away from thee and me, . . . away!

Ælfric.— Edburga!

(She stands up, with a cry.)

Edburga.— Doubt me not. Thou dost believe!
 I loved thee, and I love thee, and . . . I love thee.—
 I loved thee that thou wert the kingliest man;
 And I have made thee lesser.— Be not . . . less.
 The people love thee yet.— Ah, but they shall!
 I did not know . . . but now . . .

Thou wilt believe? —

Undo me from thy neck.— Cast me away.—
 I love thee, and I know thou didst love me. —
 Cast me away!—

(*CERDIC stretches his arms out to them, suddenly illumined with great joy.*)

Cerdic.— O, woman! — Child. . . . God's Child.

(*They turn to him, perplexed, EDBURGA sobbing at the feet of ÆLFRIC.*)

Wilt thou forgive?

Edburga (doubting).— Forgive thee, *Cerdic*? . . . Ah! . . .

Cerdic.— Then hear me, and forgive when I have done.

I took thee for a bitter mockery

Of my fair dream. Thou wert to me one sent

To bow my pride, who deemed such prayer could win

The blessèd Vision . . .

So I let break the image that I strove

To make of Her; for that it was dishonored.

I brake it . . . and my heart was sore abased.—

Blest be that shame and sharpness!— This thy word

Makes me to know the answer to my prayer,

Now that I see, through all these sevenfold veils . . .

The Likeness! . . .

Edburga.— Nay, . . . to Her?

Cerdic.— Even to Her,

Yea, and to Him who did so love the world:—

Love, the one Likeness. . . .

Ælfric (after a silence).— *Cerdic*, thou shamest me.

(*He puts up his sword. EDBURGA hides her face against his knees.*)

Cerdic.— Lift up her head, and set her by thy side. . . .

Wed her. Whom thou hast humbled, lift her up.—

The gift that thou hast taken, hold it high.

Ælfric.— Come with us, *Cerdic*.— Be at our right hand.

Cerdic.— Not yet. For I have lived within a dream

Too long. . . . Not yet know I enough of God,—

Or men.

(As they turn to go, EDBURGA leaves the King's arms irresolutely. She draws near the bench and gathers up the fragments of the broken stone to lay them together with a half-fearful touch, not looking at CERDIC. Exeunt EDBURGA and the King.—CERDIC follows them to the threshold, looking out, his hands held after them in farewell. There is a sharp command. The torches go, and the footsteps on the pebbles. A gust of wind blows suddenly; and CERDIC re-enters with a hurt sea-gull. There is the faint sound of the Abbey bell once. CERDIC comes slowly down towards the bench and the stone fragments, his face set, and the sea-gull held close to his breast.

Ah, Thou! — Have pity on all broken wings.

THE BURDEN OF LOST PROPHETS

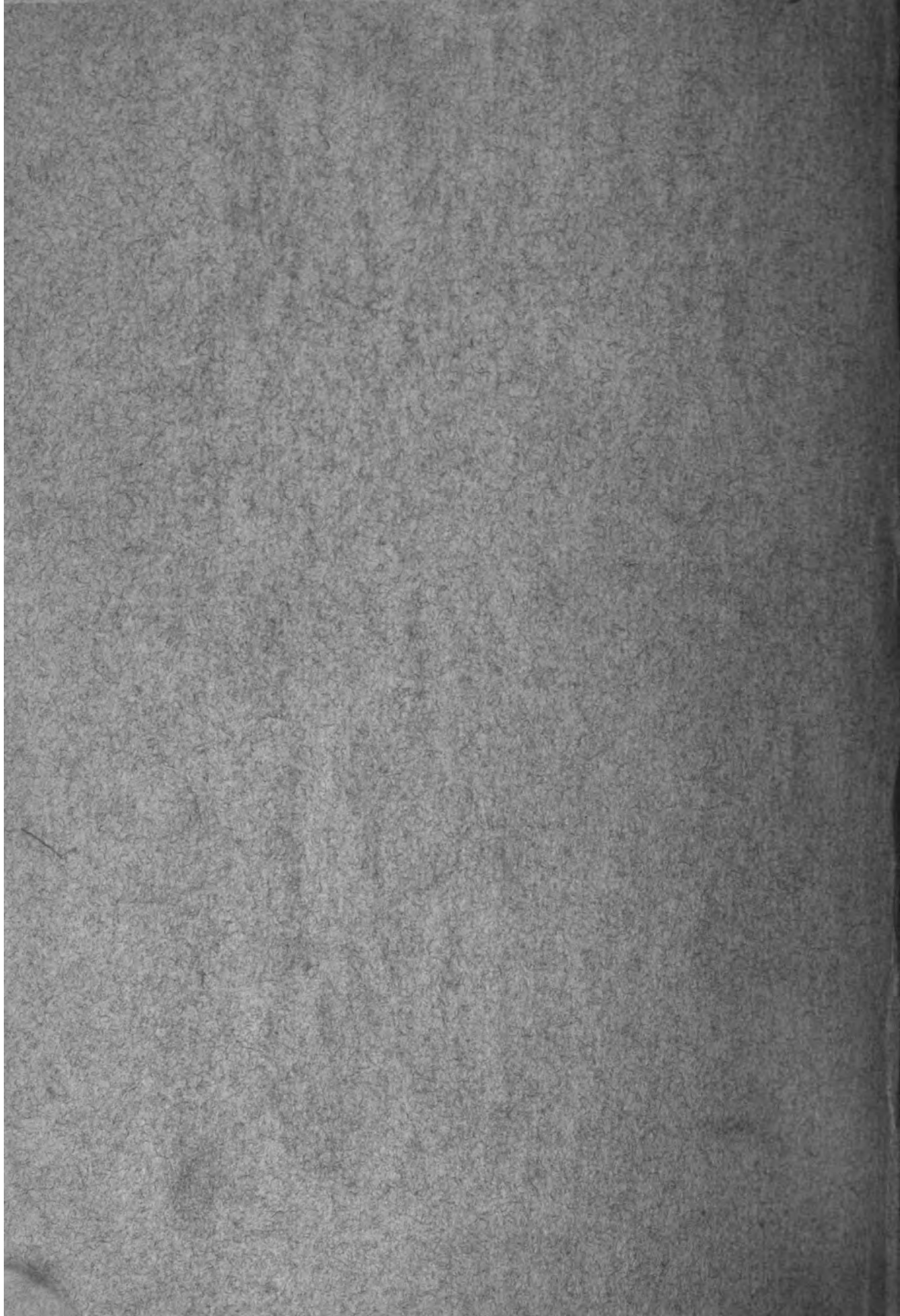
BY EDWARD J. O'BRIEN

Slowly, slowly go the golden horses
Trampling through the dust of prophets dead.
Though they knew the goal of old adventure,
Never shall an echo of their tread
Rouse their souls to gather at the trooping
In living song the deeds of mighty men,
For the swords of many a vigil guard their sleeping,
And the gate of beauty never opes again.

In the harvest of the strife were many wounded,
But their will would have them battle with the foe,
And a host of mighty enemies were singing
The battle hymn that only victors know.
Was it thus in the day before the peril
Leaped to flame upon the altar of the God?
Ah! 'Twas thus ere the worlds had their beginning.—
They were born by this hymn at His nod.

And their dust is the road of our journey
From the womb of life to ever wider lands,
Guiding songs did they make for our knowing,
Dust they shaped for the work of our hands.
Onward ever runs the trail of beauty,
Luring us, the cavalry of song,
To ride through the dust of our fathers
And to fail in the battle of the strong.

Slowly, slowly go our golden horses
Trampling through the dust of prophets dead.
Though we know the end of their adventure
Never shall an echo of the tread
Rouse our souls to gather at the trooping
In living deed the songs of mighty men,
For the swords of many a vigil guard their sleeping,
And the gate of beauty never opes again.



32
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A Magazine of Letters

Autumn Number

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By GEORGES DUHAMEL

TOY THEATRE PLAYS

A Legend of St. Nicholas. A PLAY IN ONE ACT
By BEULAH MARIE DIX

Marinetti, Futurist: An Appreciation.
By ANNE SIMON

Poems.

By MARINETTI, DUHAMEL, PRYDZ AND OTHERS

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Poet Lore

SEPTEMBER-OCTOBER, 1914

In the Shadow of Statues: A Play in Three Acts.	Georges Duhamel	371
	<i>Translated from the French by Sasha Best</i>	
Nocturne	F. T. Marinetti	439
	<i>Translated from the Italian by Anne Simon</i>	
An Appreciation of Marinetti	Anne Simon	453
From the Mountain Top	Alvilde Prydz	459
	<i>Translated from the Norwegian by Hester Coddington</i>	
The Prison in Spring	Georges Duhamel	460
	<i>Translated from the French by Sasha Best</i>	
To Be, or Not to Be	Charles M. Street	461
A Legend of Saint Nicholas: A Play in One Act.	Beulah Marie Dix	473
Invocation	"Humilia"	496
	<i>From the French</i>	
Deus Benignus et Natura	Frederic Hunter	497
A Meeting	Alvilde Prydz	498
	<i>Translated from the Norwegian by Hester Coddington</i>	

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VOLUME XXV

AUTUMN, 1914

NUMBER V

TO ANDRE ANTOINE
IN THE SHADOW OF
STATUES*

Drama in Three Acts

BY GEORGES DUHAMEL

Authorized translation from the French by Sasha Best

CHARACTERS

ROBERT BAILLY.
ALAIN MOSTIER.
HILAIRE.
JUDGE TREUILLEBERT.
ALFRED GUILLERMOZ.
ELOI.
LEVIE, *the delegate.*
PILLET, *the doctor.*
THE EDITOR.
THE OTHER DELEGATES.
MADAME CAROLINE BAILLY.
ALICE.

371

*Presented for the first time at the Théâtre National de l' Odéon, October 26, 1912
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ACT I

The library. In the rear a large door leading, by means of an intermediate gallery, into the large salon. In the rear, to the left, a small door. In the rear, to the right, door leading to the apartments of Mme. CAROLINE BAILLY. On the right, a large window obstructed from the outside by the foliage of the garden. To the left, and surrounded by a special architectural arrangement, the sombre bronze statue of Emanuel Bailly, on a stand of black marble. The walls are entirely covered with books. A gallery, with interior staircases leading to it, extends all around the room. Drapings and carpets of dark material. Armchairs, desks, writing tables. Large working table to the right. Order and majesty.

ELOI, dark livery, enters, carrying a bundle of papers. HILAIRE follows. HILAIRE is a little old man, bald and clean shaven. He is carrying a very small cloth portfolio. Wears a long frock coat that is shiny at the seams. Also carries a very old-fashioned high hat. HILAIRE has a natural tendency to pronounce all the 'e's' broadly.

Eloi.— You can wait here.

Hilaire.— Thank you! Thank you! Ah! How many books there are —

Eloi.— This is the library. There are people in all the rooms to-day. Wait in the library.

Hilaire.— I am very comfortable here.

Eloi (*arranging the papers in large pigeonholes*).— Besides, you will not be received.

Hilaire.— Do you think so, sir? Seriously?

Eloi.— I always think seriously.

Hilaire.— Ah! very well, sir. (*Pause.*) You are still arranging the newspapers?

Eloi.— They are not newspapers, they are reviews.

Hilaire.— That is not the same thing?

Eloi.— That would be too difficult to explain to you.

Hilaire.— Oh, very well, sir. What makes you think that M. Bailly will not want to receive me?

Eloi.— Monsieur cannot receive everybody. Monsieur is working. Monsieur is studying. But there is M. Mostier —

Hilaire.— The fact is, I have something to say to M. Bailly.

Eloi.— Precisely. But everybody has something to say to him!

Hilaire.— I have already come five times —

Eloi.— You are not going to imagine that I am to blame for your not being received?

Hilaire.— Certainly not, sir.

Eloi.— You are unreasonable. You come again to-day! To-day! You know perfectly well that the great monument is to be unveiled to-morrow. For the past month we have n't had a moment's peace, and we don't belong to ourselves here. (*Opening and shutting the folios with violence.*) There, on account of you, I no longer know what I am doing, and I put things where they don't belong. You would do better to go away to-day. You can come back in five or six weeks. No? you don't want to? That is your business! What did I do with your card? There it is! Hilaire, Hilaire, just that? — how singular. Hilaire! that is really a name —

Hilaire.— To tell the truth —

Eloi.— You must write the object of your visit on the card; that is the custom.

Hilaire.— I can't, sir. I can't.

Eloi.— Very well, tell me what it is, and I will see whether it will be necessary to speak to M. Mostier, or to M. Guillermoz, who could, the case demanding it, talk to Madame —

Hilaire (uneasy).— I can't say anything, sir. It is without a doubt a very grave matter, and one that does not concern me personally — I can say nothing.

Eloi.— Go away, I know you. Society of encouragement, eh? Committee of patronage, eh? Honorary member? You need n't hide it from me. And how much the assessment?

Hilaire.— Sir, I assure you —

Eloi.— Oh! well, you know, it is all the same to me. You

know very little about this house to want to see Monsieur in person. I am only acting in your interest. Sit down here in this chair. Only on the chair if it makes no difference to you. (*After awhile.*) Generally, if it is for any affair concerning the father of Monsieur, it is M. Guillermoz who attends to it. If it concerns the festivities and the unveiling of the monument of Emanuel Bailly, it is to M. Mostier that you must turn. Ah! if it is something concerning the family, Madame, perhaps, will receive you, if the case be urgent.

Hilaire.— To tell you the truth it is M. Bailly in person —

Eloi.— But, my dear sir, M. Robert does not see to anything. But where is your card? I never know what I have done with your card.

Hilaire.— You put it on the little gilt bracket beside the window.

Eloi.— Yes, to be sure. Hilaire! just that! Hilaire! M. Hilaire! How singular!

Hilaire.— The cards are engraved. Pass your finger —

Eloi.— Oh! I know! I know!

Hilaire.— I had one hundred made — they are not bad.

Mostier (enters, sixty years old, bald, small chin beard and white moustache; tall, thin, correct and elegant).— Is M. Guillermoz here? (*To ELOI, after having cast a look at HILAIRE.*)

Eloi.— He is in the record room, sir.

Mostier.— Go and get him. Where did you put the delegation?

Eloi (pointing to the door in the rear).— There in the large salon.

Mostier.— Has Judge Treuillebert arrived?

Eloi.— He is talking to the delegates.

Mostier (in low voice, pointing to HILAIRE).— Who is this man?

Eloi.— There is his card. He insists on seeing M. Bailly.

Mostier (with a slight movement of his shoulders).— Oh! but that is impossible.

Mostier.—Hilaire! Hilaire! What is that? Go and fetch M. Guillemoz. I will receive the delegates here.

Eloi.—And — this gentlemen?

Mostier.—Don't worry. Go! Go! (*ELOI goes.*)

Mostier (stiffly, to HILAIRE).—What is it you desire?

Hilaire.—I should like very particularly to speak to M. Bailly.

Mostier.—For what purpose? if you please?

Hilaire.—It is something — something that it is not for me to tell — in truth —

Mostier.—Sir, I am an old friend, the oldest friend of the Bailly family, and I think, in this capacity —

Hilaire.—Oh! but I cannot, I truly cannot.

Mostier.—You astonish me, sir. The confidence shown me during his life, by M. Emanuel Bailly, whose faithful companion, I might almost say, advisor I was,—this confidence should be for you a guaranty of my discretion and if I dare to say it, of my qualification to become acquainted with this matter.

Hilaire.—I am quite confused, but —

Mostier (drily).—I am exceedingly sorry, sir; but you cannot be received, either to-day or to-morrow — very probably not within the coming two weeks. I will ring to have you shown out —

Hilaire.—Sir, it is absolutely necessary that I stay to-day. But I can wait, I am not in too much of a hurry —

Mostier.—Look here, you must know that the monument to Emanuel Bailly, raised by national subscription, is to be unveiled to-morrow. The cares that overwhelm Robert Bailly on the eve of the great day which is to see the genius of his illustrious father the object of so magnificent a manifestation, these cares, understand me well, these cares are of a nature to make me close his door to the importunate. I am — Alain Mostier. You may not know, perhaps, that for thirty years I have been the friend, the collaborator of the great writer whose memory is to be honored to-morrow. You will admit, sir, that I have good reason to

receive you myself, and to spare Robert your visit. (*Stubborn silence.*) Look here, who are you, sir, and what chance brings you here into this library?

Hilaire.— I don't know, sir; the servant told me to come here.

Mostier.— But who are you? I cannot take it upon myself to have you wait without more ample information.

Hilaire (drawing out another card).— Hilaire — I am Hilaire — there is my card.

Mostier.— That is true, I know. Keep your card.

Hilaire.— Oh! I don't mind about one card. I had a hundred made.

Mostier.— Hilaire? — singular!

Hilaire.— You think so, sir — to tell the truth —

(*Enter GUILLERMOZ and ELOI.*)

Mostier (quickly to GUILLERMOZ).— You found the copies of this speech?

Guillermoz.— I have the first ten sheets, all marked by you with red crayon.

Mostier (taking the sheets).— That's it. (*Quickly glances over the papers.*) 'This solitude is the dearest of all conquests —' No, it is further on. 'Dare to say then, to say that you do not owe your most effective certitude——' There it is! Give me your pencil, Guillermoz. 'Dare then to say ——' up to 'Such as you have desired it, and more majestic perhaps.' That is the phrase. Will you put the papers on the table, Alfred, well in evidence?

Guillermoz.— You will need the other sheets?

Mostier.— No. You can pin them together separately and arrange them. Who saw the florists this morning?

Guillermoz.— Miss Alice is receiving them this minute.

Mostier.— Very well. Leave that to my niece. It is as much as done and well done.

Guillermoz.— Do you want Treuillebert and his crowd to come?

Mostier.— It were better, perhaps. Bruechner is in the gallery with the proofs of his cantata; he has been there for eight hours. I don't know what to do with him. Above all don't let him enter the music-room; he would revolutionize the house again!

Guillermoz.— That would distract him —

Mostier.— Yes, but it irritates me. And where may you be going, Eloi?

Eloi (about to go out).— I am going to receive the tailor and tell him to wait.

Mostier.— Go on but don't dawdle. I must feel you near me. (*ELOI out.*) Treuillebert certainly will be good for half an hour; they are going to let him come in.

Guillermoz.— Without losing a moment, then. (*Starts to go, then quickly returns and points out HILAIRE to MOSTIER.*) Do you have to keep this gentleman here any longer?

Mostier.— Which gentleman?

Guillermoz.— That man there with the cloth folio.

Mostier.— True! Oh! what a nuisance he is, that fellow! There is no one in the manuscript cabinet?

Guillermoz.— No, I just passed through there. But you know it is very dark there.

Mostier.— So much the worse! So much the worse! (*To HILAIRE.*) You still wish to wait, sir?

Hilaire.— If it would n't trouble you too much, if it won't put you out —

Mostier.— Not at all! Come here. Come quickly, sir, quickly! Enter and have the goodness to await the moment when it will be possible for M. Bailly to see you.

Hilaire.— Oh! I will wait.

Mostier.— And now it is Treuillebert's turn.

Guillermoz (opening the large door in the rear).— Will you enter, gentlemen? (*Enter the delegation.*)

Mostier.— You will excuse the delay, gentlemen —

A Delegate.— A delay which has permitted us to remain longer under this illustrious roof.

Mostier (taking out his watch).— It is now twenty minutes past nine and M. Bailly will probably be back at half past nine. I believe you told me, M. Treuillebert, that it would be agreeable to you to see M. Bailly this morning?

Treuillebert (fat, out of breath; speech confused and ridiculous).— It would certainly be agreeable to me, for eloquent reasons if I may say so, to see M. Bailly this morning.

Mostier.— Very well, to while away the time would it please your Honor to recite the essential parts of your discourse?

Treuillebert.— A very simply matter. (*Takes a paper from the inner pocket of his coat.*) I can read it all.

Mostier.— We don't want to abuse — in truth — But the very first passages perhaps —

Treuillebert.— Let us see first of all, whether I have well in mind the general plan. The monument is there to my left. (*He removes a chair and pushes it to the left.*) I am on the first step. (*Is looking for something.*) Have you a little bench, — something?

Mostier.— Do you consider that absolutely indispensable?

Treuillebert.— It would be useful. (*Finds a little bench and places it before him.*) These gentlemen of the Society are behind me. (*Gazes over his eye-glasses at the delegates who follow his indications and group themselves.*) Leave a little space — a little more. Dr. Pillet, you keep near me for the silver palm. (*Hands him a folded journal.*) There that is the palm.

Doctor Pillet.— I will pass it to you the moment you say, 'a branch of laurel for this esteemed brow —'

Treuillebert.— At that moment I must already have it. Give it to me at the beginning of my peroration: 'This grand austere visage —' you understand, Doctor, you understand —

Mostier.— Have no fear, your Honor; all the details of the ceremonies are arranged by the general commissary and as to me, I make myself —

Treuillebert.— What I am saying, is all for myself, my friend. We must aid our memory and our eloquence. There at the end

of the hymn, I get up (*gets up on the little stool*) and I speak. (*Silence.*)

Mostier.— Speak, your Honor.

Treuillebert (oratory tone).— ‘It is with profound emotion that I undertake to speak in this place on this day, and on this occasion. Mine has been the honor and task at the same time, to eulogize here a genius, perhaps the greatest and assuredly the most prolific, of all those who have during an entire century honored humanity. Perilous honor! Overwhelming task! What can my feeble voice say when fifty immortal works are there to proclaim the glory of their master? What accents can I find to honor so great a memory after the vigorous, simple, profound words of a minister —’ (*To MOSTIER.*) You know I can’t do otherwise in regard to Le Huquier; it is a personal matter that I will explain to you —

Mostier.— Oh! but all that you say will do very well.

Treuillebert (continuing).— ‘—of a minister to whom the country owes a great artistic soaring and unexampled prosperity. What eloquence can I have recourse to after the learned and admirable discourse of which a master of speech has made us the charmed auditors? I name M. Leopold Grandard, who has spoken in the name of the first and most illustrious company of our state.’ (*To a delegate.*) It is you, Lévié, who have the notes on the discourse of Grandard?

A Delegate.— No, it is I. Coltas gave me the sheets. It is pretty, not very long, a little troublesome —

Treuillebert.— Very well. I will continue.

Mostier.— If you don’t mind, our time is so limited —

Treuillebert.— There now. ‘What chord can I make vibrate after the phrases, so noble and touching, pronounced in this place by the senior of the poets of our day, the admired author of ‘The Bow of Beryl,’ the companion, the friend of the great man whose proud effigy is being raised here to-day?’ (*ELOI has quietly entered, and during TREUILLEBERT’S speech the following remarks pass.*)

Eloi (to GUILLERMOZ).— If you please, sir, silk revers or satin for M. Bailly's coat? The tailor is waiting.

Guillermoz.— Hush, hush. That does n't matter.

Eloi.— Oh! but it does matter. (*Glides toward MOSTIER, and in a low voice.*) Sir! silk revers on M. Bailly's coat?

Mostier (*in a low voice*).— Satin revers, you understand? Satin —

Treuillebert (*interrupting himself*).— But, my dear friend, you are no longer listening!

Mostier.— I beg your pardon, your Honor, you were just saying, 'the great man whose magnificent statue is to be erected on this spot —'

Treuillebert.— No, no! I say 'the proud effigy.' That is quite a different thing, note it well, from your 'magnificent statue.' I continue — (*Suddenly is heard a great tumult on the organ.*) What is that, my friend? I can't hear myself any longer.

(*Murmur of the delegates.*)

Mostier (to GUILLERMOZ).— There it is! Bruechner has entered the music-room. (*To TREUILLEBERT.*) Pay no attention to it! It is Professor Bruechner, who is trying the first measures of his cantata. There is some mistake. We will stop him. (*To GUILLERMOZ, in a low tone.*) Alfred, my friend, go and stop this madman Bruechner. Tell him that there are people here who must have quiet. (*To TREUILLEBERT.*) You will be able to continue, your Honor. You will not forget the few words about Robert that we agreed upon, of M. Robert Bailly — you understand? (*Exit GUILLERMOZ. The noise of the organ ceases.*)

Treuillebert.— I am getting there, I am getting to it. Oh! it is very difficult to find one's thread again. (*Quickly.*) 'I will have this courage, I will have this audacity! Too many illustrious visages are turned toward me, too many well-known eyes are fastened on me, that call me to my duty, my mission. I take care not to forget that the chief of the state has kindly consented

to preside at this solemn occasion, to which his presence lends special gravity and luster. I will seek with my eyes, in order to give the desirable grandeur and serenity to my words, the ever mourning face of her who was the inspiring and admirable companion of the master.' Now, Mr. Mostier, I am there. I will now turn to M. Robert Bailly, who must be there, between His Excellency and Mme. Caroline Emanuel Bailly (*removes a desk and places it before him*), and I will continue in this fashion: 'I will draw sympathetic and salutary encouragement from the sight of a son in whose moral physiognomy we find reproduced the happy imprint of an immortal example — of a son whose every trait recalls the dear and venerated traits; of a son, in fact, who — who (*mixes up his papers and becomes very much agitated*) — of a son — (ROBERT BAILLY *has just entered; he is a frail, nervous young man.*)

Robert (in an icy voice).— Don't look any further, your Honor. If the sheet is lost, you will please me greatly by not again finding it.

Treuilbert.— Ah! there you are, my dear friend. See there, I have found it, I have found it, my dear friend! Listen: 'of a son whose juvenile work is already attracting attention in the world of letters, and forms the rampart of this impregnable citadel hewn out of firm rock by the great, the immortal Emanuel Bailly!'

Robert.— Excuse me, gentlemen, excuse me, M. Treuilbert, for troubling so opportune a reunion on the eve of the day on which you propose to honor the memory of my father with so much eloquence; but I am extremely happy to have arrived at just this minute. Your Honor, will you do me the favor to cut my name out of your discourse?

Mostier.— You astonish me, my dear Robert! M. Treuilbert alone is judge of the arrangement of his discourse. Your modesty is admirable, but I find it entirely out of place!

Treuilbert (getting down from his little stool).— You distress me, M. Bailly. I assure you I am very anxious to retain these few lines on your work.

Robert.— You are too kind. To-morrow is to be consecrated to the memory of my father; very well, that is sufficient. Without excess of modesty I deem it superfluous to give any time to my works, my humble work. It is an honor that I have not solicited, your Honor.

Mostier.— But you are mad, Robert! Everything has already been arranged, everything is already prepared.

Robert (in a low tone to MOSTIER).— I am certainly astonished, my good friend, to see how all things are so regularly arranged, and how difficult it is to arrive at any place whatsoever without finding everything already disposed of. (*To TREUILLEBERT.*) Sincerely, sir, I should be very sorry to annoy you; but I repeat it, my few modest works do not deserve mention on so solemn an occasion.

Treuillebert.— You are disconcerting! Modest works! modest works! But look here, your ‘Eulogy of Solitude’ is an exquisite thing!

Robert.— It is, I believe, of immortal things, that there is to be question, to-morrow, your Honor.

Treuillebert.— Without a doubt, but that is no reason for suppressing the rest. Immortal things are not the only ones in life —

Mostier (intervening).— We can continue, just the same, Mr. Treuillebert. My dear Robert, the time of these gentlemen is limited. Will you provisionally admit terms that can in time be modified?

The Delegate Lévié (stepping forth from the group).— If you please, your Honor?

Treuillebert.— My friend?

Lévié.— Just a word.

Treuillebert.— Speak, speak. (*They both go to the back of the scene.*)

Mostier.— Robert, I beg of you, leave things as they are. Mr. Treuillebert’s intentions are the best in the world. When all is told he is doing you a great honor —

Robert.—Crushing, I assure you, Mostier.

Mostier.—In short, he has composed a remarkable eulogy of your father. You will not be obliged to listen, I assure you. He has in his discourse drawn a very good portrait — there! a very good portrait indeed, to whose harmony and equilibrium —

Robert.—To whose harmony my own eulogy is not indispensable.

Mostier.—My friend, you are mistaken. I beg of you, let it rest at that. It is almost ten o'clock and we have n't a minute to lose.

Robert.—Very well, lose it, Mostier. Twenty-three years now, that I have n't lost a minute.

Mostier.—Be reasonable. We are on the eve of so great an event!

Robert.—I will contradict you no longer. As far back as I can remember, I have always been on the eve of a great event!

Mostier (affectionately).—What is the matter, Robert? I find you nervous, irritable and susceptible as never before. The cares occasioned by this ceremony cannot weigh upon you; it is I who have assumed the greatest part —

Robert.—Excuse me, my good friend. I don't myself understand why the little left upon me should be such a burden to me.

Mostier.—Our common duties toward your father —

Robert.—Yes, no one is less conscious of them than I. Once again, pardon me, Mostier, and then do as you please. But deliver me as quickly as possible from this fat man, who smells of perspiration.

Mostier.—Come now, don't be unjust toward one of the most active admirers of your father, one of those to whom we owe —

Treuillebert (coming back suddenly).—See here, my friend, Lévié just tells me that the proofs of my discourse have been corrected and sent to the *National Bulletin*. By this time the first sheets must be printed. So, that in spite of myself —

Mostier.— Then all is for the best. Then hear, Robert, what M. Treuillebert is saying?

Robert.— M. Treuillebert, it is impossible for me to be modest as I should wish to be. The responsibility is all yours. And permit me to thank you for a sympathy that honors as well as touches me — (*Sits down at a distance.*)

Treuillebert.— Oh! believe me, I am sincere. All goes well! I don't like to cut out from a finished discourse: the general harmony suffers.

Robert.— If you had told me that sooner I would have made it a point not to incommode you.

Treuillebert (to MOSTIER).— Ah! it is late, it is very late now, my friend; I will not be able to read the rest —

A Delegate.— Not even, sir, the beautiful page on Emanuel Bailly's youth?

Treuillebert (surrounded by delegates).— The fact is it would not be bad to look over that page again, to have it better on my tongue.

Lévié.— It is something very welcome and will surely take with the lettered public.

Treuillebert.— Yes, yes, I rather like that page myself — (*Declaims.*) 'It is the hour of poverty, it is the hour of obscurity —

Doctor Pillet.— Go on, your Honor. This whole picture of the adolescence at Boutreville —

A Delegate.— It is of such largeness!

Another Delegate.— We are listening, your Honor.

Treuillebert (declaiming).— 'It is the hour of poverty, it is the hour of obscurity. But in this poverty is fermenting all the coming richness, and this obscurity closely precedes the dawn. Who then could divine, in this eager young man, in this young man subdued by the customs and routine of the little town of Boutreville — Boutreville squatted in the far-off mountains of the center, who could divine the future master of thought, whose voice soon was to resound like thunder, but like a thunder of love all over the continent.'

Doctor Pillet.—‘A thunder of love.’ Gentlemen, did you hear that?

A Delegate.— It is of such largeness!

Another Delegate.— We are listening, your Honor.

Treuillebert.— ‘over all the continent. And from this hour, in the shadow of this great brain —’ note the curious effect of this metaphor.

Doctor Pillet.— It is very daring, but it is an admirable picture; it is easily enough understood!

A Delegate.— And above all, it is of such largeness!

Another Delegate.— We are listening, your Honor, we are listening.

Treuillebert.— ‘In the shadow of this great brain, a fervent friendship is stirring, an intelligent and sympathetic figure, a devoted silhouette, that from this time we will find everywhere at the side of the great man. From this hour indeed, Alain Mostier, the distinguished author of ‘The Writers of To-day,’ forever attaches his name to that of Emanuel Bailly. (*During this harangue MOSTIER has approached ROBERT to the right of the stage.*)

Mostier.— You ought to come nearer, Robert.

Robert.— Why? this man surely speaks loudly enough.

Mostier.— Come, Robert, be more conciliatory. At least give yourself the air of listening.

Robert.— A man capable of saying such things is incapable of believing that one is not listening.

Mostier.— Oh! how exasperating you are to-day, my child!

Robert.— Bah! I am more or less tired —

Mostier.— If you show yourself thus to your mother, she will be greatly grieved. (*Silence.*) Truly, you worry me, Robert.

Robert.— Listen, my good friend, it is your turn now; they are talking about you.

Mostier (getting up quickly).— Oh, but you are really too kind, your Honor.

Robert (behind MOSTIER).— You thank him without having heard him, you have no doubts —

Mostier (to TREUILLEBERT).— I am overcome, and I don't know how to express my emotion — there is so much *finesse*, so much clear-sightedness, such generosity! (*The organ breaks forth anew in the neighboring room, the voice of a man is heard, singing.*)

The Delegates.— Again! Ah! Ah! Really!

Mostier.— What can Guillermoz be doing? Excuse me, gentlemen, some ridiculous error, some mistake in the time —

Treuillebert.— Yes, yes, one can scarcely hear —

Mostier.— I will go to assure myself. (*Enter GUILLERMOZ.*) Alfred, Alfred, what is Professor Bruechner doing?

Guillermoz.— I can't stop him, I assure you, sir. He wanted to make a scene. I tried to explain to him that — but he said to me: 'Go away! go away! First comes the music'!

Treuillebert.— What, what, the music?

Mostier.— Wait for me a minute, gentlemen.

Treuillebert.— Listen, my dear friend, it is getting very late!

Doctor Pillet.— The fact is, your Honor —

Delegate Lévié.— Don't forget, sir, that at half-past ten —

Mostier.— One minute only, gentlemen, and I will be back.

Treuillebert.— You are right, Lévié. Come! don't let us lose another minute. (*About to go out to the left; they all hurry out and begin to push.*)

Guillermoz (opening the door at the back).— This is the way, gentlemen.

Mostier.— I am so sorry! Believe me, my dear Judge, it would have given me great pleasure to have heard all the kind and courteous things —

Treuillebert.— It is I who am happy. (*They all go out by the door in the rear.*)

Robert (who has n't stirred from his chair).— Good-bye, gentlemen, good-bye. (*The voices of the delegates are lost in the distance. The organ ceases to play a few minutes afterward.*)

Mostier (returns and closes the two wings of door in the rear; rubbing his hands).— He is very sympathetic — Judge Treuillebert.

Robert.— He is generous, my friend. Words cost him nothing. All bitterness aside; he is very nice. Yes, every kind of bitterness put aside.

Mostier.— Tell me, Robert, are you sure of your discourse?

Robert.— You made me learn it by heart, did n't you?

Mostier (coming to the table).— Just imagine, I found, in an unknown manuscript of your father, a phrase, a phrase — oh! something quite remarkable and that dates from his first period. It contains almost the whole doctrine in a germ. It is unknown, and that is fortunate, for this is now the occasion to produce it. Take it, Robert, read it. (*Takes sheets from the table.*) See here, from this passage: 'Dare to say, then, that you do not owe your most effective certitude' — up to 'such as you have desired it, and more majestic perhaps.'

Robert.— Thanks, my friend, thanks —

Mostier.— But read, Robert, read. It is of the first order.

Robert.— I believe you. What are you going to do with this page?

Mostier.— But read it all.

Robert.— I am tired, my good friend. (*Rapidly peruses the page.*) Yes, yes, it is very beautiful. What are you going to do with it?

Mostier.— This phrase must be introduced into your preamble. (*Rings.*) You will be sure of a great effect. I have had this text typewritten twenty times and it will be reproduced all over, all over! A veritable unedited manuscript. And it is quite unexpected. I am half inclined to give the sheets to Guillermoz for his theme. He is a clever lad who can make good use of it. (*Enter ELOI.*) Here, take this to Mr. Guillermoz, who knows about it.

Eloi.— We have arranged about the revers. The tailor has gone.

Robert.— What are you saying, Eloi?

Eloi.— It is about the revers of your coat, for to-morrow. I ordered them in satin — that is as you wished, I hope?

Robert.— It is always you who know best, my friend.

Mostier (coming back).— I had a great deal of trouble to get rid of Bruechner.

Robert.— Tell me, why do you want me to introduce this phrase, this famous phrase into my discourse? That annoys me, Mostier. I don't even know whether it is in the spirit of the rest of the discourse —

Mostier.— In the spirit. You mean to say that it lights up the whole!

Robert.— I am not so sure of that. I have n't the slightest desire to change anything whatsoever in this discourse —

Mostier.— You are a child, or rather you are giving me a childish reason. This phrase is just the thing for you to say on this occasion.

Robert.— I don't believe it —

Mostier.— But I assure you. And besides you are telling me this too late. You should have thought of it before the papers were handed in.

Robert.— I believe anything when you assure me.

Mostier.— I told you that I had trouble to get rid of Bruechner, who wanted to play for me the whole first movement of his cantata. He is astonishing, this musician! What do you suppose to-morrow means for him? The unveiling of the monument of Emanuel Bailly, perhaps? Far from it! To-morrow is the day on which the cantata of Bruechner is to be heard for the first time. There you have the musician!

Robert.— Ah! There are many musicians in the world, my good friend. There are nothing but musicians —

Mostier.— Aye, what did you say? Ah, as a matter of fact I have put the manuscript of your discourse back into the drawer of the large table.

Robert.— It will be necessary to make the addition, your addition,— this phrase that you are so anxious for —

Mostier.— By my faith, Robert, I will admit to you that I have already put it in. I thought that you would agree to it—

Robert.— And you were right, my dear good friend. (*Enter MME. BAILLY and ALICE. MME. BAILLY in mourning, severe mien. ALICE, eighteen years old.*)

Mme. Bailly.— Robert, I bring your friend, who is coming to draw a promise from you.

Robert.— Good morning, mother. Good morning, Alice. (*Kisses his mother's hand and shakes that of ALICE.*) In truth, a daring person. And what must I promise?

Alice.— And what is most important, this promise must be carried out to-day. To-morrow will be too late.

Robert.— I am waiting. I am ready.

Alice.— Guess — You can't guess?

Robert.— No, but I have the habit of promising in advance. It is simpler.

Mme. Bailly.— Here it is. Alice wishes to know your discourse before hearing you deliver it to-morrow before all the people. Think of it! The first discourse that it is given you to deliver before a large audience, and on so unique and beautiful an occasion. (*To ALICE.*) Go, ask your big friend to read it to you this morning, Alice, since it has been agreed upon.

Robert.— Ah, it has been agreed upon?

Alice.— Ah! What is the matter? You seem quite disappointed. What then, did you expect?

Robert.— Something quite different, assuredly. Something less easy, certainly, and more agreeable.

Mme. Bailly.— Come, Robert, you are not gallant. Has he come, my dear Mostier — Judge Treuillebert?

Mostier.— He has just gone out.

Mme. Bailly.— And Bruechner?

Mostier.— I just sent him away, dear Madame.

Mme. Bailly.— I saw the general commissary this morning,

and I am waiting for Colonel Berini. We will receive him together, if it so please you, Mostier.

Mostier.— I am entirely at your service. Alice, what have you done with the florists?

Alice.— I have just a word more to say to them, uncle.

Mme. Bailly.— I must congratulate your niece, Mostier. She has shown decided and charming taste. Go, send away your florists, my child. Let us go down, Mostier, it is time: the minutes are rare, to-day. (*MME. BAILLY and MOSTIER go out at the rear. ALICE exit to the right; but on the threshold, she returns and gives ROBERT an affectionate look and smile.*)

(*ROBERT reaches the desk; he looks for and finds the sheet of his discourse. He then walks slowly around the room, and, with suppressed irritation displaces, here and there, the furniture. He finally stops near the window, glances at the papers, that he is holding in his hand, looks outside, and drops the manuscript on the floor where it disperses itself. Stands thus immovable, and it is in this attitude that Alice surprises him. She has come in without noise and begins to regather the sheets scattered on the floor.*)

Robert (suddenly feeling her behind him).— I beg of you, don't take the trouble —

Alice.— You don't wish me to pick up all that?

Robert (taking the papers from her and letting them drop again, then taking her hands and holding them in his).— Leave all that, Alice, leave it. These dear hands, these lovely hands were not made to gather up all these stupid things —

Alice (looking about her).— Oh! Hush! If anyone were to hear you —

Robert.— It is true, they must not hear us! And above all they must not know that I have, in this house, a friend, a true friend to my solitary heart, a dear child who is my pleasure and my torment.

Alice.— I am not your torment! You must not say that I am your torment —

Robert.— Oh, my ambitious one, my rash one! he who

secretly possesses gold draws from the same object both his happiness and his uneasiness. If this beautiful friendship did not give me so many fears do you believe that it so surely would be my great joy? Sit down there, and confess. Who has made you believe that you want to hear me read this idle stuff?

Alice.— Oh! Robert —

Robert.— Alice, Alice, you are not so tired of our minutes of solitude that you would have wished, of your own accord, to have them usurped by these silly trifles?

Alice.— My uncle told me that the discourse was so beautiful, and my godmother has so often spoken to me about it.

Robert.— Ah! very well, very well! I prefer it so. Put aside, will you, a desire that does not come from your own heart. My mother and your uncle, Alice, are not in our secret. There is no one but us in the secret of our friendship, and if you wish to see me look happy promise me to leave even their memory, their image at the threshold of each spot where we can spend a tranquil minute together, so happy at being alone and together.

Alice.— Oh! I only hope that you have nothing against my uncle? And then if you are not going to be pleased with your mother you will tell me all, will you not? I want to know everything.

Robert.— Don't be uneasy. I know how one must love. (*Rises.*)

Alice.— No, no, there is something you are not telling me.

Robert.— Frankly, no! There is nothing. Or, rather, I know so little what I feel, I so little feel what there is the matter with me, that it seems very much as though there were nothing. (*Comes toward ALICE.*) Don't speak of anyone but us, will you, Alice? I beg of you, Alice. Don't knit your brow like that; you won't succeed in even feigning a wrinkle. Ah! ah! you there — who want to understand what even I myself don't comprehend: a great presumption that!

Alice.— Don't laugh! Women don't have to understand — they know without understanding.

Robert.— Oh! I believe that it is impossible for me to explain anything whatsoever of what fills this soul, so irritable and not at all happy! I say not happy — not happy when you don't altogether succeed in appeasing it.

Alice.— Oh! as for me, I want always to appease it altogether—!

Robert.— Let us leave all that, will you? There are troubles, torments that one but augments in troubling one's self about their nature. (*After awhile.*) You have just spoken. You have spoken simple, humble words. I can't cease admiring these words! How they are yours, how naturally they come from you! Between your heart and your words there is nothing strange, nothing that does not belong to you; and it is all happiness and liberty. You speak! Oh! you alone are speaking, no matter what you say! I look at you: I see no one behind you, no one beside you. You are pure; pure and — absolute.

Alice.— But are we not both alike?

Robert.— See! you just bent forward a bit, in speaking. It is a gesture, simple and new, one that you have probably never made before, that no one has ever thus made before you. Oh! I don't want them to spoil you, I don't want it! You are all that I cannot be, that I never will be. Stay here, near me, and don't speak of anything outside. Name for me all the objects that you see. Tell me all the charming, simple things that come across your soul; and you will see, I will be calmer, happier, more patient.

Alice.— Oh! Robert, I don't understand why you are so agitated to-day.

Robert.— Leave it! and be content to be beside me, as you always are. A melancholy sickening smell of books prevails in this room. Come, I will open the window to the garden. The trees are covered with rain. A little freshness will enter into all this majestic dust. (*Passes behind the desk.*) Don't take care! Alice, walk all over those papers, let us both walk over them. Oh! that is nothing ——

Alice.— We are going to spoil it all.

Robert.— Pooh!— my discourse! Listen, it is never I, who have written all that.

Alice.— Not you?

Robert.— Yes, it was I who held the pen; it was I who formed the letters and without a doubt I was alone at the time. But there was, just the same, someone in the room. There was someone near me; and I am not speaking of all those who stand at the doors and listen. Will you smile and not make such an astonished face? I mean that it is not I who have found the words gathered together there. (*Kicks the papers with his foot.*) Do you see I do not often myself form the words and the ideas that serve me to live; but when you are there it sometimes happens to me. (*Opens the window.*) Oh! feel how happy the leaves are! See the leaves, they live freely: they resemble you, Alice! How good it is in the garden —

Alice.— They won't see us together at the window?

Robert.— No, all the foliage is there to hide us. We have accomplices on all the branches, we have true friends all around us.

Alice.— Your forehead is so hot, Robert. Ah! you are making me unhappy, Robert, and how can you want me happy when I feel you so restless and unhappy?

Robert.— There is calm, now. This garden is always empty. That is a great satisfaction. Yes, yes, that is very restful —

Alice.— See the cut grass: they have left it on the lawn since yesterday. It is that that makes it so cool in the shade, and how good its odor is!

Robert.— There are drops of dew on all the flowers and one can see the light across their stalks.

Alice.— The street is not very far, but one hears nothing, not even the noise of the carriages.

Robert.— The ivy on the wall is so thick that for us there are no carriages!

Alice.— This morning the walks are quite empty. Truly it is a deserted garden. Only we are in the garden and how queer,

not even we are there. Look, down there, see, one can see the corner of the green bench and the oval table. (*After a time.*) Is it true that it was on that table that your father wrote his beautiful book, you know: 'The Power of Love.' They say that it was on this garden table, on this queer little stone table —

Robert (his face contracted).— I don't know. (*Draws ALICE away.*) Come, come away! (*Closes the window brusquely.*)

Alice.— Why? We were so happy looking at the empty garden —

Robert (almost hard).— The garden is not empty. I should prefer to go away, — elsewhere.

Alice.— Where do you want us to go? We were so happy.

Robert.— I tell you I want to go away, do you hear me? Come, come with me. Let us get away from here! (*Reaches the door at the rear.*)

Alice.— Don't let us go out that way; my uncle and your mother and all the other people are there in the large salon.

Robert.— It is true, always people! Very well! come this way. (*Opens the door to the left and starts back hastily and angrily in pushing the door.*)

Alice.— What is the matter with you? What did you see?

Robert.— Oh! nothing, but someone is there. There is a man in that room. I don't want to see anyone!

Alice.— Come, we will go away that way. We won't meet anyone. Don't be so angry, don't tremble like that. Don't be unhappy, Robert — (*They go out to the right; the stage is empty for awhile, then the door to the left is opened timorously. HILAIRE appears, still carrying his calico portfolio and his high hat. He advances, looking all about him, sits down finally on a chair and stays there immovable.*)

CURTAIN

ACT II

Afternoon of the same day. Everything just as it was at the

end of the first act. HILAIRE, who has n't moved, is patiently thrumming on the edge of his hat. ROBERT enters from the right without seeing HILAIRE. He is walking, his head lowered, his shoulders bent, and he seems bowed down with weariness. As HILAIRE softly rises ROBERT starts and goes back to the door.

Hilaire.— Sir! Sir! (ROBERT is on the point of going out.)
I should like to speak to Mr. Robert Bailly —

Robert.— I believe — I don't think he is here. (*Opens the door.*)

Hilaire.— Do you think I will be able to see him to-day?

Robert.— I know nothing about it. (*Ready to go out.*)

Hilaire.— Ah! I am very unfortunate —

Robert (coming back).— Of what are you complaining, sir?

Hilaire.— To tell the truth I am not complaining. Only I am unlucky — I have been here since nine o'clock this morning —

Robert (coming still nearer).— Since nine o'clock?

Hilaire.— Yes, sir.

Robert (carefully regarding HILAIRE).— Who received you? Who is the person who asked you to wait?

Hilaire.— To tell the truth no one asked me to wait. Everybody, on the contrary, asked me to go —

Robert.— Where were you this morning? Where did you wait?

Hilaire.— That depends. At first I waited down below; then there (*shows the door in the rear*) — then, by my faith, I was here (*indicating the library itself*) — then after that I was there. (*Points to the door to the left.*) But I was bored there; then I came back here.

Robert.— Ah! it was you who were —

Hilaire.— Sir?

Robert.— Nothing, nothing. And what did the persons who received you this morning tell you?

Hilaire.— They told me — nothing, you know. They told me — oh! I don't remember very well — that I was mistaken in

counting on seeing him — Mr. Bailly; that he was studying, that he received no one; I don't remember very well — that I must first tell them the object of my visit —

Robert.— Very well! (*Goes to close the door that he has left half open and returns to sit down at the desk.*) What do you want to tell me, sir? What do you wish? I am Robert Bailly.

Hilaire (astonished).— Oh! Oh! Oh! Truly! Sir!

Robert.— Very well, what do you want to tell me? I am listening.

Hilaire.— Oh! but I am astonished. I was beginning no longer to believe —

Robert.— In the existence of Robert Bailly, is that it? Yes, that is quite comprehensible. Sit down, sir, I am listening.

Hilaire.— You will excuse me, sir. You must be very busy, on the eve, as they tell me, of an event —

Robert.— Who told you that? (*Gets up and walks up and down.*) No! take your time: I am not busy. I was never less busy than to-day.

Hilaire.— I ought, at first, to say — You have without a doubt received my card. You know — an engraved card?

Robert.— I know nothing. They have given me nothing. Rest assured that I know nothing.

Hilaire.— There it is. (*Drawing out his card.*)

Robert.— Thank you. (*In an undertone.*) Hilaire — ah! ah! That is singular —

Hilaire.— Yes, don't you find it so? To tell the truth —

Robert.— What is it you wish, Mr. Hilaire?

Hilaire.— I must first tell you (*looks about him*) that my name is not Hilaire. There you are!

Robert.— Ah! continue.

Hilaire.— It is a name that I just took, like that. A fictitious name. Not to have to tell anyone my real name before having seen you.

Robert.— You astonish me; a great many precautions for a visit, Mr. Hilaire.

Hilaire.— No, not Hilaire: it is an adopted name, I tell you.

Robert.— Sir, for various reasons that I cannot explain to you, I made up my mind, a minute ago, to receive you myself, no matter what the object of your visit, and to listen to you, to the end. This story about the assumed name is, to say the least, a strange one; but let that pass, if you please. I prefer not to interrupt you again. Be assured of my entire attention and of my good-will, sir

Hilaire.— Sir, my right name is Louis Bouche —

Robert.— Yes.

Hilaire.— Do you understand?

Robert.— Yes — no — but that makes no difference.

Hilaire.— Ah! Only when I was entrusted with the commission that I am now about to carry out, I thought it better, more prudent to take another name. On these occasions it is the custom to take an assumed name. And I chose the name Hilaire, because it is the name of one of my brothers-in-law. And before coming here, I had one hundred cards engraved.

Robert.— Yes, I understand perfectly — continue —

Hilaire.— You know Boutreville?

Robert.— Certainly, sir, certainly.

Hilaire.— I come from Boutreville. It is a country, sir, where the memory of your great father —

Robert (getting up).— Are you very sure that it is to me in particular that you wish to speak? All the affairs relating to my father are in the hands of persons who alone take care of them, and in whom I confide blindly.

Hilaire.— But, sir, as far as I know, I don't think it is a question of your father.

Robert.— Very well, continue, then, Mr. Hilaire.

Hilaire.— No, Bouche, I beg your pardon, Louis Bouche — I have always lived in Boutreville, and I never would have believed, a month ago, that it could ever happen to me to find myself face to face with you, as I now am. One can never know these things. Is it not so, sir? Is it long since you have been at Boutreville, sir?

Robert.— Very long, I have but the vaguest remembrance——

Hilaire.— Good, good. Very well, then, I left Boutreville a week ago and I have been here five times trying to see you.

Robert.— Can you now in two words tell me the object of your visit? In two words?

Hilaire.— To tell the truth, I don't quite know myself ——

Robert (jumping up impatiently).— Oh! Oh! but I beg of you.

Hilaire.— I have come on an errand. I have come to bring you a package. (*Opens his folio.*) A small package.

Robert.— To me in person?

Hilaire (seriously).— The person who gave me this package made me swear three times to give it to you only, and to you in particular. And I swore, sir, I swore three times; I am sixty-five ——

Robert.— Very well, give it to me.

Hilaire.— I will explain to you afterward ——

Robert.— Give it to me, sir.

Hilaire.— There it is. Neat and clean, and just as I received it with the seals.

Robert.— Thank you. Sit down, sir. (*Reaches the table, breaks the seals and opens a package from which fall bundles of papers well tied. They are in a large envelope covered with red seals that ROBERT slowly undoes. During this time HILAIRE has risen discreetly and seems to contemplate attentively the statue of E. Bailly. As ROBERT continues to read his letters, an extraordinary emotion seizes him and makes his hands tremble visibly. He snatches the package with the letters, separates and looks at them, then he gets up with a start and approaches HILAIRE.*)

Hilaire (at this moment).— That is a beautiful statue there of your illustrious father ——

Robert (his voice brutal and hoarse).— Come here. Who are you, sir?

Hilaire (overwhelmed).— Louis Bouche, Louis Bouche, former secretary of receipts at Boutreville ——

Robert (drawing HILAIRE toward him).— Come nearer, come nearer, so that I can look at you, Mr. Hilaire.

Hilaire.— No, Bouche, I beg your pardon, sir. I told you Louis Bouche, if it is all the same to you. From you I prefer my true name.

Robert (as though calmed).— Ah! yes. (*Pushes him into a chair.*) Sit down here. (*ROBERT is a prey to the greatest emotion. Returns to the table, removes the papers with absurd haste and feverishly making an effort to control himself, turns to HILAIRE.*) Who gave you that?

Hilaire (frightened and subdued).— A person ——

Robert.— Who? What person? Are you going to speak, confound you?

Hilaire (tears in his voice).— A person who is dead, sir.

Robert.— Dead? When?

Hilaire.— Four weeks ago at Boutreville.

Robert.— Who was this person? Explain yourself, explain yourself.

Hilaire.— A friend: my friend, Florent Lavaud ——

Robert (making a rush at the papers that he again takes).— You said Florent, did you not? Florent?

Hilaire.— Yes, Florent — Florent Lavaud.

Robert (looking about him).— Hush — keep quiet. Not so loud. Keep quiet!

Hilaire.— I said nothing.

Robert (walks up and down, a large letter in his hand. Breathes heavily, and from time to time casts a frightened look at HILAIRE.)— You do not know the contents of these papers? (*There is knocking at the door in the back.*)

Hilaire.— I think some one just knocked. (*ELOI appears at the door. With a bound ROBERT is at the table as if to hide the disorder of the scattered papers.*)

Robert (to ELOI).— What are you doing here?

Eloi.— If you will pardon me, sir ——

Robert.— Will you go away! Get out, get out! (*He flings*

himself against the door that he pushes to with violence and locks with the key, then comes back to HILAIRE. Draws a chair and sits down near the old man.) What is the matter with you? Why do you tremble?

Hilaire.— It is stronger than I.

Robert.— Calm yourself. Come on now! All is going well.

Hilaire.— Ah! All is well? You think so?

Robert.— Yes. Don't have such an amazed air.

Hilaire.— To tell the truth —

Robert.— How old are you?

Hilaire.— Sixty-five years and three months, sir.

Robert.— You are from Boutreville?

Hilaire.— Yes, sir. I was born rue Haute de la Corniche.

Robert.— Ah! You have never left Boutreville?

Hilaire.— Yes. For the journey that had for object an inheritance from my mother. It is not that it brought me very much; because, as I always say, the family of my mother —

Robert.— When did you know this man who just died,— Florent — what did you call him?

Hilaire.— Florent Lavaud? I have always known him.

Robert.— He, too, was from Boutreville, Florent Lavaud?

Hilaire.— Yes, like myself, sir. We were of the same age, he and I. Ten years less at the most.

Robert.— What was he — this man?

Hilaire.— Oh! he was a true artist, sir.

Robert.— An artist? What kind of artist?

Hilaire.— He painted flowers, nothing but flowers, but as no one else knew how to paint them. He could decorate menus or fans for you —

Robert.— Ah! very well! (*Gets up and walks about.*) You remember having seen my parents at Boutreville, my father — Mr. Emanuel Bailly?

Hilaire.— Oh! very well. When they lived on the *esplanade*, I saw Mr. Bailly pass before the windows of the office every day. He had a little spindle leaf on his hat; it appears that that has

become famous since. It was at this time that the journals of the country said a lot of unkind things about him — that they have since greatly regretted.

Robert.— And — your friend, Florent Lavaud, what was he doing during this time?

Hilaire.— Oh! nothing, nothing. He was n't my friend then. He had painted a picture, an oil painting that had been exhibited at the city hall. Everyone thought then that he ought to become a great painter. But he has not always been very fortunate, and he was a man who did not make much of a stir, not he!

Robert (attentive and contained).— Did you ever see him with my father — your friend, Florent Lavaud?

Hilaire.— Sometimes, yes. They met like that from time to time. And then your parents left Boutreville. What a lovely reception they gave your father when he returned a few years after. This time I saw you on the *esplanade*. A little white collar, a little cane like a man. Oh! very pretty! No one knew you at Boutreville.

Robert.— Do you know — do you know whether Mr. Lavaud was at Boutreville, at the time of that last trip of my parents, this journey on which I accompanied them?

Hilaire.— Wait — oh, I know! No, no. He must have been away to paint some pictures in mountains.

Robert.— Listen. When did your friend Florent Lavaud give you the package that you have just brought me?

Hilaire.— About six weeks ago, perhaps more. He had broken his leg two months ago, yes — that is about the time. Surely no one, at the beginning, would have thought that he was going to die of it. We were coming out of the Hotel Savage, where the club meets —

Robert.— Which club?

Hilaire.— The club of Boutreville! And Florent, who was always walking, his eyes up in the air — even though I always told him that it would bring him trouble — Florent did not see the sidewalk. He just fell that was all. Oh! three times, nothing!

But the next day in bed, sir. And just think! the leg broken right here near the hip. What that means to us! and three francs for the doctor's visit each day and the plaster cast; and, finally, the trouble in the kidneys caused by the shock; and he screamed a great part of the day ——

Robert.— He was alone? He had no children, he was not married, this gentleman, your friend Florent Lavaud?

Hilaire.— Oh, no! He was a regular old bachelor! He had a little income and his painting added to his little fortune. Then he asked me to come in the afternoon. I thought he wanted to play a game of piquet, in his bed; he is very strong on piquet. But no! he was very pale and emaciated — then he took this package from under the eiderdown —— (*A knock at the door in the rear, and some one trying to open it.*)

Robert.— Keep quiet — keep quiet! (*Knocking continues.*)

The Voice of Mostier.— Robert! Well, Robert! you are here?

Robert (in a low voice to HILAIRE).— Wait. (*Rushes to the table and pushes the papers into a drawer. Then he comes back to HILAIRE with a dry nervous little laugh.*)

Hilaire.— What is the matter, sir?

Robert.— Not so loud. Follow me. You are coming to my room with me ——

Hilaire.— To do what, sir?

Robert.— You will not move; I am going to lock you in and later I will rejoin you. We have n't finished: I must speak to you again. (*Draws HILAIRE to the left.*) Ah! to be sure, you have had nothing to eat since this morning!

Mostier (outside).— If you are there, this is a singular pleasantry ——

Robert (goes on his tiptoes to turn the key in door of the rear; then he rejoins HILAIRE at the door to the left).— Well, I myself will bring you something to eat in my room, Hilaire.

Hilaire.— I would rather you would call me Bouche, Louis Bouche; Hilaire is an assumed name, you know it well —— (*They have both gone out.*)

Voice of Mostier.—No, but really, I know you are there, Robert, and you are crazy, my friend. (*The door suddenly yields and MOSTIER enters the empty room.*) *Looking around in utter astonishment.*) There is no one. Robert! Robert! (*Sees the sheets of Robert's manuscript scattered around the window. Begins to pick them up. ROBERT enters meanwhile and drops into a chair.*) (*MOSTIER, turning around.*) Eh! eh! My friend! What then are you doing?

Robert.—As you see,— nothing, nothing.

Mostier.—I have knocked at your door for five good minutes.

Robert.—Truly? You knocked full five minutes?

Mostier.—I give you my word, Robert.

Robert.—It is possible, my good friend. But it is a wrong and thankless proceeding to knock at a door more than once, at a door that refuses to open!

Mostier (astonished).—Who has so mixed up your sheets here? And what is still worse, they have been walked over! But, Robert, someone has stamped on your manuscript.

Robert.—Oh! come my friend that is of the slightest importance. I beg of you, don't worry; I will have the whole mess swept away.

Mostier.—You will have it swept away? (*Puts the papers on the table and quickly moves up to ROBERT.*) Robert! Robert! Your face is quite changed! I don't understand either your attitude or your language.

Robert.—I would disown my visage if it were stupid enough to betray the resolutions of my soul. Don't deceive yourself, Mostier. My head is that of a man who is very warm and who has no care to hide it. As to my language, as to my attitude, I grant them to be voluntary and quite as I wish them to be.

Mostier.—Admit that this manuscript —

Robert.—What would you say if I spoke to you thus: dear friend, absolve me from pronouncing this discourse to-morrow; I no longer care to pronounce this discourse.

Mostier.— I would answer, my child, in a moment like this, the duty of a son of Emanuel Bailly is above a caprice.

Robert.— You speak of duty, of caprice. You call my wishes caprices ——

Mostier.— No, don't insist. Tell me, rather, and frankly, who is this person with whom you were speaking a minute ago?

Robert.— You are jesting, my good friend. Do you not yourself introduce into my presence all the people whose conversation it is given me to enjoy?

Mostier.— Robert, don't let us play at too fine a game.

Robert.— I would n't dare, my friend.

Mostier.— And what was your motive in chasing Eloi out of this room so brusquely?

Robert.— Ah! ah! Eloi never loses any time.

Mostier.— That is to say I happened to meet him just as I was coming up to see you. Do you know, Robert, upon reflecting, I believe that the face of this man is not entirely unknown to me.

Robert.— Of whom are you speaking?

Mostier.— Why, of the man who was with you ——

Robert.— Ah! ah!

Mostier.— And whom I myself received very shortly this morning. I certainly could not tell where I have seen this face and figure before ——

Robert (attentive).— For you think that you have seen him, don't you?

Mostier.— It is very vague, a long way off. But let us say no more about it, Robert! You receive whom you please ——

Robert.— Of course!

Mostier (offended).— Let us say no more about it. (*Reaches the desk.*) I left the list of the invitations for this evening with you. What did you do with it? (*Starts to open the drawer of the desk.*) Do you remember, Robert?

Robert (gets up with a start).— Wait, wait!

Mostier.— You probably have put it ——

Robert (calm and very pale).— Don't touch that drawer, Mostier.

Mostier.— But which drawer?

Robert (without moving).— I beg of you not to open the drawer of the desk, of *my* desk.

Mostier.— I tell you, you are ill,— ill, my good Robert!

Robert.— I don't deny it.

Mostier.— What has come over you? For the past ten years I have carried the keys of this piece of furniture with me, and we have made use of it in common since you have come to manhood.

Robert (contained).— The sheet you are looking for is not there. (*After awhile.*) And then — open the drawer if you wish.

Mostier.— You quite understand that I would never touch this drawer again, not for anything in this world.

Robert.— Ah! ah! open it, if you care to.

Mostier.— Robert! Robert! If you don't want to see me leave this house this minute you will give me an honest explanation of your conduct. Don't evade me. You have never yet spoken in this tone to the oldest friend of your family. Oh! I well know, I know better than anyone, that it is difficult to build on your character.

Robert.— Blame no one but yourself, Mostier, since it was you who formed this character.

Mostier (good naturedly).— My poor boy, it was I who brought you up almost entirely, I alone bore the responsibilities of your education. I am, therefore, the one to bear with your humors and I will no longer take offense at them. But I expected more in the course of time and from your friendship —

Robert (suddenly softened).— Did I make you feel badly, my friend?

Mostier.— It is n't in my nature to reproach you, Robert. But no one better than you has made me feel how great an abyss can separate a father from his son —

Robert (attentive).— Truly, my friend?

Mostier.— You are a singular young man, but you were a still stranger child. No one knows that as I do; you yourself can have but a mediocre idea of it, for one does not see one's self, one does not judge one's self. Your father was the most expansive, the most generous, open-hearted of men, no man was ever met with who was more prodigal of himself — and yet I have had to struggle during your whole childhood against the most secretive, the most concentrated, the least accessible of characters. Your father thought much of a system of education of which he had every reason to expect sure and striking results. Ah! Robert, the moral teaching of your father has had great success elsewhere since then, but what trouble I had to make you accept it in the beginning! You are listening, my boy, you are listening! Never will you know what torment took possession of your dying father when he realized that you had become a man indeed, but not the cherished inheritor of his ideas — (*A pause. MOSTIER sighs.*)

Robert (almost humble).— Tell me some more, my friend. You said something about torment —

Mostier.— Look here, your father had the impulsive nature of the apostle. Never could he bring his own son to share his enthusiasms, his 'elans —'

Robert.— Never, that is true.

Mostier.— You were still a little child when already we had to engage in veritable combats.

Robert.— Yes, yes!

Mostier.— All our efforts, your mother's and mine, struck against something hard and strange that has sometimes caused your mother tears, Robert.

Robert (with an exaltation, but badly restrained).— Ah! ah!

Mostier.— Ah! how constantly we devoted ourselves to bring you nearer to the great man who died too soon for you, and whom I think you knew but little or understood but badly. You are, without a doubt, a noble nature, and I speak to you as I am now doing only because I feel myself so much older than you. We had to use main force in conquering you.

Robert.— Ah! truly, it took main force to do it? (*Suddenly getting up.*)

Mostier (lost in memories).— Indeed yes, my boy.

Robert.— You had to, you say, use main force to accomplish this conquest?

Mostier.— Oh! I don't know. (*Raises his head.*) But what is the matter with you,— what a face you are making? What a face?

Robert.— Pay no attention to it — a powerful trouble, an unforeseen tumult has come into my heart, I tell you, and I won't be able much longer to contain myself. (*Runs across the room with stormy impatience.*) Come on, don't despair, I am your man! See: I am wearing the uniform, and I have been saying, for the past twenty-three years, words that it would never come to my mind to say myself. So be satisfied, Mostier. But you see crushing truth has taken possession of me — and the time has not yet come for you to know the extent and the savor of it — Ah! there is one thing that you seem not to know, Mostier — children form dreams, good friend, dreams that no one has the right to direct, dreams that are beyond all education and that go where the sight of the pedagogians does not reach. Oh! it was not a very foolish dream believe me: see me here, learned and stiff, all discolored by the odor of libraries; but I have often thought that I could live in a small town in the mountains — I would have had an obscure, fresh life without echo. My father would have been an old man, smiling and laconic. Listen, I seem to see this man: he lives in a tiny house full of charming and puerile objects; he has endless leisure in which to paint flowers on fans and menus. From time to time he copies a bit of the landscape, and three well-meaning friends admire it. When he is tired of his walks on the *esplanade*, he finds old people like himself and they play — at cards — he is strong at cards. Oh! that is a father easy to bear, whom one loves and who is unknown. A father who does not crush you, who does not stifle you. (*ROBERT has stopped before the statue of Emanuel Bailly.*) But you are listening

to very incoherent things are you not, Mostier? There is my father. Tell me, is it true that I look so much like him?

Mostier (pale and disconcerted).— You are talking nonsense a thousand times over, and I really do not know whether you are ungrateful, ill, or weakminded. Look! look, at that beautiful face. You will understand, perhaps, what an honor, what grandeur it would be for a young man of your age to find anything in his features resembling those.

Robert.— My features, my face! Go away! you don't know it. I promise you that you will when the occasion comes to confront my true face with that one there. (*Mounts the statue.*) On the bones of my visage there is a docile and restrained something, and I am very much ashamed to find the imprints of fingers of strangers. Don't look at your hands by chance, Mostier; they don't create what they touch, above all when the material they wish to knead is myself, myself! Do you understand? Eh! you are quite out of countenance, Mostier. It is your fault; it won't do to push a man like myself to extremes. What are you doing here any way? What precious minutes you are losing with this silly individual! Have n't you hidden in the antichamber the weighty M. Treuillebert, this orator for Congress? Have n't you forgotten, in the room of state, some Colonel Berini? See how the statue is looking at you, Mostier. Attention — the secretary of his Excellence — and my tailor, who is going to modify the cut of my coat! What are you doing here, my good friend, what are you doing here with me, on the eve of so great a day?

Mostier (dumbfounded).— Robert! Robert, you are losing your senses. I am going to your mother this minute. I won't stay with you another minute —

Robert.— No! No! You are at home here. Consider as yours the house that I will have left this evening. (*Goes to the door and comes back.*) But, what is there to say, old man? You consider yourself capable of measuring the extent of a single one of my desires? Who makes you judge of a purpose of which

you ignore the cause and the power? Adieu, Mostier! Attention, you are walking on the manuscript of my discourse. Pick it up, pick it up, good friend, hand it over to Guillermoz, who is the man to make good use of it. And then meditate on what gratitude is. (*Goes out slamming the door after him.* MOSTIER, *left alone, violently rings the bell.* Enter ELOI.)

Mostier (nervously walking about the room).— Pick up these papers. Very well; put them on the table. Do you know whether Mme. Bailly is in her room?

Eloi.— I think Madame has gone out.

Mostier.— Go and see. If Mme. Bailly is out, find out where she can be and bring me my hat. (*ELOI leaves.* MOSTIER *throws himself into an easy chair.* Enter ALICE, *dressed as though for a fête.* Comes up to MOSTIER and bows solemnly.)

Alice.— See, my uncle. See a beautiful lady —

Mostier (starting).— You frightened me. What does this mean, this dress?

Alice.— It is my beautiful gown for the *fête* to-morrow. I just tried it on, and I came to show it to you.

Mostier.— Well, very well!

Alice.— Oh! how disturbed you seem! You are not looking at the beautiful material and the pretty color I have chosen.

Mostier.— Is this a time to think of colors, Alice! Have you seen Mme. Bailly?

Alice.— An hour ago my godmother was still working with Guillermoz. Nothing serious has happened, uncle?

Mostier.— No, nothing serious — it is sad. I just had such a stupid scene with Robert, an odious sort of a quarrel.

Alice.— With Robert?

Mostier.— Yes, yes. There is something painfully difficult and incoherent in the mind of this boy. I don't believe him to be either bad or stupid; but he chose to-day of all days to tell me the most ridiculous things — and — and I must tell his mother about it as soon as possible.

Alice.— Oh! uncle, you don't know him well, perhaps —

Mostier.— Whom?

Alice.— Why — why — Robert, uncle.

Mostier.— Oh! as for that! I saw him born and saw him grow up. Robert! I made him the man he is. It is I who made him as he is and what he is.

Alice.— Perhaps you did not quite understand his intention —

Mostier.— Not understand very well! I! I! Go on, you are nothing but a little girl. I not understand — not understand — I evidently did not understand very well, but —

Alice.— What did Robert tell you, uncle?

Mostier.— He said things about his father — there is nothing to understand about it: it is absurd, it is enough to make one despair of all one's opinions, of all discipline. (*ELOI has entered, carrying the high hat of MOSTIER.*) Then Mme. Bailly is not at home —

Eloi.— Madame was obliged to visit Mr. Adolphe Duply-Desmoutiers in his studio.

Mostier.— Ah! yes to be sure. The photographs of the monument! My hat!

Eloi.— I must tell you, sir, that it is half past three, and that the special correspondent of the *National Bulletin* has just arrived; he is in the gallery.

Mostier.— Guillermoz? Where is Guillermoz? Go and tell him to receive the special envoy.

Eloi.— Mr. Guillermoz is at the ministry; he won't be back before half past five.

Mostier.— Oh! but I have n't the time, do you understand, I have n't the time —

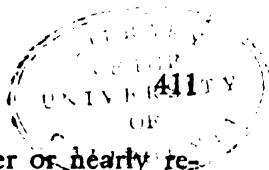
Eloi.— Shall I let Mr. Robert know?

Mostier.— No, no, leave Mr. Robert alone — alone.

Eloi.— Shall I send away the special envoy?

Mostier.— On no account! Listen to me, Eloi: you, yourself, are going to receive the correspondent. Were you present? — to be sure you were present when I received the editor 'Of the

GEORGES DUHAMEL



Lectures for Young Women.' Do you remember or heartily re-member my words? Go on, try to remember the essential things: National Subscription, Homage of the Families — the Genius of Doing Good; Power of Human Love, and don't forget to pronounce the words: The Necessity of an Individual Moral.

Eloi.— Yes, sir! And also: Insufficiency of the Collective Morals — Triumph of Sentiment over Passion —

Mostier.— That's it! very good. You will be perfectly able to receive this special envoy.

Eloi.— I will tell him that Mr. Mostier was in despair —

Mostier.— Yes, in despair.

Eloi (confidential).— And as always, I will say: Mr. Alain Mostier, the friend of early days, the faithful collaborator and tried counsellor —

Mostier.— Hush! hum — look here, Eloi. (*ELOI looks in ALICE's direction, who, her back turned, seems to be inspecting the shelves of the bookcase, and he continues in a lower tone.*) Oh! yes! Say that. Don't forget, don't forget — faithful collaborator, eh? Col-la-bo-ra-tor — yes, yes! (*Louder.*) I am going away. *Au revoir*, Alice. If anyone should ask for me tell them that I am with Mme. Caroline Emanuel Bailly at the studio of Adolphe Duply-Desmoutiers. And then tell them to wait. I will be back, I am going to come back immediately. (*Goes.*)

Eloi.— Miss Alice?

Alice.— What is it, Eloi?

Eloi.— I shall be obliged to go away for a few minutes. If anyone should ask for me, I am — I am about to receive the special envoy of the *National Bulletin*, but I will be back immediately, I am going to return immediately. (*Out.*)

Alice (is about to go out to the right when the door to the left is opened. ROBERT cautiously enters, then not seeing anyone but ALICE he quickly crosses the room.) It is you, Robert?

Robert (preoccupied).— What — Has he gone? (*Comes to the desk.*)

Alice.— Who?

Robert.— Mostier.

Alice.— Yes, my uncle has just gone out. What has happened, Robert?

Robert.— Wait a second. I must take something here, and must go upstairs to my room with it. (*Opens the drawer and hastily gathers together the papers that he has hidden there. Then suddenly.*) You have been here a long time?

Alice.— Five minutes perhaps.

Robert (feverishly).— I hope you have n't seen him open the drawer?

Alice.— Which drawer? No, I saw nothing.

Robert.— That is astonishing just the same. (*Suddenly calmed.*) Ah! no, no! There now! there now! (*Puts it all into his pocket.*) I was very imprudent. (*Gets ready to cross the room and affects a careless tone.*) But how are you dressed?

Alice (placing herself before him).— Pay no attention; that is of no importance.

Robert (trying to talk lightly and getting nearer to the door).— And what a pretty dress. What a charming way of uniting the colors and of arranging the material —

Alice (gravely).— Don't occupy yourself with my dress, Robert.

Robert.— Very well! What must I occupy myself with?

Alice.— Ever since we have been friends, ever since you have talked to me as one does to a true friend; never in all these years have I seen on your face such an expression of tumult and fury.

Robert (stopping).— Of tumult, Alice, you think so?

Alice.— Oh! indeed —

Robert.— And of fury? So be it then, look at me! Have I the carriage, have I the look of an unhappy man? It may be rather that there is in my eyes a vigorous flame and such joy that I can no longer dream of dissembling its violence.

Alice.— You are not going to tell me anything? You have nothing to confide to your friend? What can you have said to my uncle?

Robert.— To Mostier?

Alice.— I found him quite undone, quite disconcerted. What did you say to him? You speak of joy, and it is true perhaps that you are not unhappy; but there is something in this joy that makes me afraid: it does not resemble a good joy, a joy that one would share. Why do you try to go away? You forget that we promised never to hide anything from one another?

Robert.— It is true, but I don't yet quite know what I am to confide to you. I must get used to this idea before I can talk about it — and you will see what astonishing news these are.

Alice.— If they had been good news they would not have come to you in such a temper. You have n't the look of one who is working for his own peace and that of others.

Robert.— What do you know about it? You have never seen the visage of a man who has just faced a truth. Oh! the truth may not always be propitious to universal happiness: it is ugly and magnificent. But it is always the truth! How, how would it be favorable to peace, this truth whose discovery suffices to create among men two unreconcilable parties? But I am not dissatisfied —

Alice.— I am very sure now that you are going to cause great trouble to those about you.

Robert.— Indeed, no. I want nothing but silence about me. Oh! misery! I never have breathed as I do to-day, always carrying with me in my heart, in my breast, there in my pockets, these old secrets, all these lies, all this shame! This evening! I will tell you all this evening. And you will understand too how difficult it is from every point of view! When a man has been robbed you don't blame him for reclaiming his own?

Alice.— But you are not a man who has been robbed of anything —

Robert.— But if this thing that I have been robbed of is not money, not property, not even love. If it is something more interior still. And oh! much more precious? Ah! don't look at me in such astonishment. You are asking yourself whose voice

is this, whose words — It is perhaps to a new man that you are listening —

Alice.— Remember, Robert, it was with another voice, your old voice, and it was with other words, that we were happy formerly.

Robert.— It is not a question of being happy, it is a question of being master of one's self, constantly free, master of the world as one only is, when one is master of one's self!

Alice.— Oh! you speak of being master of yourself, and you are saying it like a man who is not in possession of himself. Your hands are trembling: you can't prevent your hands from trembling; I feel it — I feel them tremble in mine —

Robert.— They won't always tremble. They will get used to everything, even to being the hands of a liberated man. There has been an old lie here, of whom no one knew anything, and that was forgotten by the only person who ought not to have forgotten. I can no longer be the prisoner of this lie. To others the remains of the feast! Thank you! I am not hungry and this nourishment is not my due. I must leave — No I am not the phantom of anyone, be it whom it may. I am a man alone on the road! I am a man obscure and unknown, and all alone on his road.

Alice.— You don't want to go upstairs? You cannot be left alone in this rage.

Robert (mysterious).— I am not alone up there. But in truth, I am learning to be alone once for all.

Alice.— To be alone? Oh! Robert, don't go up!

Robert.— Let me pass, my friend. This evening. I will tell you all this evening. Let me pass.

Alice.— A man can do nothing very happy or very beautiful when he is in such a condition. I am very sure that I am going to be unhappy, and you and all the others —

Robert (overlooking her).— Come, come! I must be myself, cost what it may, that alone is now of importance. (*Pushes ALICE aside and goes out.*)

Alice (her voice full of tears).— Robert! (*Left alone, is about*

to cross the room, but stops and begins to cry nervously. MME. BAILLY and MOSTIER enter.)

Mme. Bailly.— It was fortunate that you met me. You were saying, Mostier?

Mostier (perceiving ALICE).— Wait, dear Madam, wait.

Mme. Bailly.— Well, Alice, what is the matter with you?

Alice.— Oh! nothing, godmother.

Mostier.— But what does all this mean?

Mme. Bailly.— Leave her, Mostier. (*Softly to ALICE.*) What is the matter, my child? Who has given you pain?

Alice (sobbing).— No one —

Mostier.— This is too much!

Mme. Bailly.— Don't, Mostier. Why don't you leave her alone? You don't want to tell me about it, my child? You are not going to tell your godmother?

Alice.— I — I — there is nothing.

Mostier.— You see, Madam, the most incomprehensible things are happening here. It will be absolutely necessary to —

Mme. Bailly.— Be quiet, Mostier, and don't confuse her. We are, as it is, hardly in a position to console this child, and to speak about the serious things that are in our minds.

Mostier.— And of which we must speak without losing a moment — the day is advancing, Madam, and the dinner is at eight o'clock —

Mme. Bailly.— Very good! Never mind about the time! Come, my child. (*Affectionately draws ALICE to her.*) Go to your room, will you? I will rejoin you there presently.

Alice.— Thank you, godmother, don't trouble yourself —

Mostier.— Shall I wait for you here?

Mme. Bailly.— But I am not going away, you see Mostier. I will see you soon, Alice, wait for me in your room. There, that is better! There's a good child. (*Waits until ALICE has gone, closes the door and comes back to MOSTIER.*) Well, what is it?

Mostier.— It is four o'clock, now. I no longer know where my head is!

Mme. Bailly.—What are you complaining of? We still have half an hour at our disposal and we can't do better than to speak of serious matters. (*After a time.*) Do you know whether this man has gone?

Mostier.—No one downstairs has seen him leave, but there is the door of the garden —

Mme. Bailly.—I have the key to that door.

Mostier.—Well, then, the fellow has not left the house.

Mme. Bailly.—Robert, then, has kept his visitor with him in his room? That is possible. (*Lightly.*) That is his business. And what were they talking about when you found them here before your quarrel, before your altercation?

Mostier.—But, my dear Madam, you don't think that I would listen?

Mme. Bailly.—There is nothing in my question to get excited about, my dear Mostier. You are the devoted friend, and you have been the wise instructor of our Robert — and one sometimes hears things without actually listening —

Mostier.—Yes, indeed, and I admit that the few words that I by chance did hear when I was on the point of opening the door did not seem to me to be very serious or very coherent, not even very interesting — the club of Boutreville? I ask of you? It is a question of honorary membership. There is then a club at Boutreville?

Mme. Bailly.—I don't know, Mostier, and it is as you say, without interest.

Mostier.—As to this broken leg — either I did not understand very well or did not hear well —

Mme. Bailly.—Of what broken leg are you speaking?

Mostier.—It is quite vague — just as I was seizing the door-knob, I inadvertently overheard a few words about a certain Florent who had broken his leg at the club at Boutreville. There was also the story about this old bachelor, and wait a minute, of the eiderdown and the package! What do I know? One cannot pay attention to these things — as I had my hand on the

door-knob I heard, 'very strong at piquet'—how do you suppose that would interest me! And I heard something about an income and painting — but what is the matter, dear Madam, are you ill? (MME. BAILLY, *pale and stiff, has fallen into a chair.*)

Mme Bailly (with an effort).— No, indeed, Mostier. I have a right to be tired, you know after this hard week. (*Controlling herself.*) And what did you quarrel about, my dear friend?

Mostier.— Oh! trifles, Madam, but trifles that my age forces me to take notice of. He hotly accused me of all sorts of things; he almost forbade me to put my hand on a drawer of the desk, where for the past ten years we have put things and unimportant papers. He did this and did it so well that I had to call him to order, and tell him what trouble his education has caused, and the care he was to his father and even the tears — that he has not failed to make so superior a person as you shed. I had to shame him with his stubbornness, his fits of temper and his hostility —

Mme. Bailly (in cold anger).— Ah! you reminded him of all that, Mostier? And what did he say?

Mostier.— He listened, dear Madam, with a concentrated calm that is not habitual with him. I have never seen him so attentive. And all of a sudden he became violently angry and spared no one, neither me, nor the memory of his father. He said a thousand foolish things, used absurd words. No, indeed, I will not stay another week, not another year with Robert at my side, if he does not take back all the insulting thing he has said to me. What do you think of it, Madam? (*Silence.*) He chose his moment badly. One does not have these nervous crises on the eve of such a day. Think of it, Madam, he announced emphatically that he did not intend to stay another day in this house — in view of such dissent, I know what I must do, and that is to go away.

Mme. Bailly (rising with affected calm).— Mostier, you are going to stay here. Robert said nothing that was specially intended for you, I can assure you.

Mostier.— But you must admit —

Mme. Bailly.— No, no, Mostier. (*Comes up to MOSTIER, takes his hand and forces him to sit down beside her.*) Stay near me, my friend, for something very serious is taking place now, and I am in need of your affection and your devotion.

Mostier.— You don't doubt ——

Mme. Bailly.— I doubt neither the quality nor the extent of your old friendship. That is why I am going to make known to you what it is that is happening in my house to-day. Robert must not leave, do you hear? I do not want him to commit a folly, which at such a moment would have the most disastrous, the most painful and difficult consequences.

Mostier.— But, Madam, you don't seriously fear?

Mme. Bailly.— I feared nothing this morning and I fear everything now. I beg of you, my friend, don't look so astonished. I must this minute be able to count blindly on you as on myself, more surely than on myself. If Robert leaves the house he will never come back again. He must find you on the threshold before him, because — I myself can't be there. It is you he must find, and you must see that he stays.

Mostier.— Madam, I am listening and you astonish me greatly.

Mme. Bailly.— Robert must have, by means of a cruel play of circumstances, learned something that would cast down any other man and move him to tears, but that has probably carried him on to an exalted and extreme violence. Oh! I know him only too well, this man who is my son. Make my task easier for me; it is a heavy one and a sad one. When you again find yourself in Robert's presence, when you are doing all in your power to appease him and to retain him, you must know the reason of his sorrow and fury. Robert, no doubt, carried away, and in the heat of the discussion, will tell you a million incoherent things: it may be, for instance, that he will tell you that he is going to leave a house that is not his father's ——

Mostier.— Oh! Madam, I will not allow him to pronounce such words! I have brought up Robert in the veneration of a great man ——

Mme. Bailly.— Very well — very well — you will let him say what he will. (*A long pause.*) Come here, my friend. You have witnessed my life. I could fear nothing from you, and at our age the confiding of even a painful secret will bring us only the more closely together. If Robert, in order to turn you aside, tells you that he is not the son of Emanuel Bailly, he is not telling you an untruth, and you must know this. Don't lower your head like that! We have been living for the past twenty years in the sound of glory. We have together devoted our lives to this glory; we have come to be its soldiers — its dazzled servitors. Our own youth now related to us would seem strange to us. It is strange to me, Mostier. I say so with serenity. Here we are both of us standing on the steps of a tribune that is like a throne. Let us consider frankly: do you recognize in me the young beautiful woman that on a summer day one could see crossing the *esplanade*, and who was laughing and idle? No! There is no longer anything in common between the widow of Emanuel Bailly and this charming personage, to whom the certain young man that you then were wrote notes that have since been burned with many others. But, look at me: I am now an old, ugly woman and I have n't worked for nothing these past twenty years. (*A pause.*) I do not want Robert to leave my house, do you hear me, because I ardently desire that he be the son of E. Bailly just the same, and I can live tranquilly only when this wish is satisfied.

Mostier (voice trembling).— Madam —

Mme. Bailly.— I do not wish, Mostier, that Robert speak to you of his father; his father is E. Bailly. (*Lower.*) As for the other, I do not know this man and he does n't interest me. Robert is still but a child and what he has now heard has filled his mind with an agitation that it is for you to dispel. Robert's education is the work of your life, my dear Mostier —

Mostier.— Yes, indeed, Madam —

Mme. Bailly.— And you will never permit that such a work be compromised at the very moment of its achievement. You

must know, Mostier, that I have just passed through a hard trial. I have passed it. What has, by means of solicitude, of constancy, of intelligence and love, been established these twenty years, must stand before the revelation that has come to my son to-day. You can look at me, Mostier. I am not at the age where the women of my race would weep and I cannot say that I have done everything to avoid what is now happening. At various times I have even had occasion to believe that this minute was necessary; one never pays one's authority too dearly. If Robert receives this blow without being too much shaken, the past will be destroyed, destroyed — do you understand me, Mostier? And I ask of you to help my son, because I do not want to do it myself.

Mostier.— Count on my good-will, Madam.

Mme. Bailly (changing her tone).— You will see Robert this evening. He must come to dinner. We still have three hours to convince him. You will arrange it so that he sits opposite me at table — and that I can look into his face.

Mostier.— And you, Madam, what are you going to do now?

Mme. Bailly.— I had counted on going up to see Alice, but I really no longer have the time before receiving the architect and the directors of the patronages for young girls. By the way, I can hand over the architect to you. Come with me; you have only a few minutes at your disposal. We are going to pass through a terrible day to-morrow, Mostier, and I want Robert to be near me, at his place.

Mostier (lost).— My God! my God! You said the architect —

Mme. Bailly.— Come, don't lose your head; we will receive him together and I will leave you after. (*Knocking. Enter ELOI.*)

Eloi.— Sir, the editor of the *Chronicle of Moral Sciences* is there.

Mostier.— Oh! I forgot him, I forgot him completely. What are we going to do, dear Madam? What do you think about it?

Mme. Bailly.— That is very annoying, Mostier, but you actually have not the time —

Eloi.— Must I send this person away?

Mostier.— On no account!

Mme. Bailly.— Come, Mostier, come, come. (MME. BAILLY goes out.)

Mostier.— Very well! Eloi! what am I to do? Receive him yourself, this man, and tell him that I am in despair —

Eloi.— Don't worry, sir. (*Opens the door at the rear and enter a man who immediately takes out of his pocket a pencil and paper.*) Mr. Mostier will be in despair —

The Editor.— Mr. — you say?

Eloi (slowly).— Mr. Alain Mostier, the friend of the early days, the faithful collaborator and tried adviser of the master —

The Editor.— Wait, wait, you said — the f-a-i-th-f-u-l c-o-l-l-a-b-o-r-a-t-o-r — and — and?

CURTAIN

ACT III

Evening of the same day. When the curtain rises the stage is plunged in darkness. MOSTIER enters from the right. He is in evening dress. He feels his way across the room, opens the door at the left and calls in a low voice.

Mostier.— Eloi! Eloi! (*Enter ELOI on tiptoes; closes the door behind him.*) Turn on the light. (*A lamp is lighted and feebly lights up the stage during entire act.*) Mr. Robert is still up there?

Eloi.— Yes, sir.

Mostier.— You still hear him talking?

Eloi.— He talks for awhile, then nothing is heard for a quarter of an hour, then the whole thing begins all over again.

Mostier.— What happened when you knocked at the door during the dinner?

Eloi.— He did n't answer at first. I came nearer to the door and said in a loud voice that the guests had arrived and that all were waiting for Mr. Robert! I then heard him cry inside: 'What do you suppose I care? Leave me alone!'

Mostier (troubled).— Ah! Ah! He has veen very ill indeed, that is true. (*Enter MME. BAILLY in a severe black evening dress.*)

Mme. Bailly (to MOSTIER).— Well?

Mostier.— Go back to your service, Eloi. (*ELOI out.*)

Mme. Bailly.— Well?

Mostier.— Well, he is still up there.

Mme. Bailly.— And always with this — man?

Mostier.— Very probably, Madam. One can hear them talk, from time to time.

Mme. Bailly.— Ah! Let us go down, Mostier, our absence down there is a ridiculous thing and not very courteous —

Mostier.— True, but seeing that Robert is ill — seeing at least, that it is what we told them —

Mme. Bailly.— No matter, let us go down. We are accumulating all sorts of stupid things to-day. I will speak to Robert myself this evening. I must speak to him. (*Enter ALICE.*)

Mostier.— What, you too?

Mme. Bailly (attentively gazing at ALICE).— You are not ill, Alice?

Mostier.— Now, there is no one down there; it is unheard of!

Mme. Bailly.— Keep still, Mostier. You are surely not ill, Alice?

Alice.— To tell the truth, godmother, I am not feeling very well. I beg of you, permit me to stay upstairs this evening.

Mostier.— I like to think that Guillermoz at least is in the smoking-room. Let us hurry down, dear Madam. (*ALICE sits down.*) Well, what are you doing there, little one? If you are ill you must go to bed.

Mme. Bailly.— Mostier, my dear friend, your place is with our guests.

Mostier.— Without a doubt, dear Madam — but what ails you, Alice?

Mme. Bailly.— Leave your niece with me, will you? Go on ahead and I will follow immediately.

Mostier.— It is true: here we are all of us, and these people down there all alone —

Mme. Bailly.— I can't believe that they are bored; but go down to keep them company and I will follow.

Mostier.— I am going. (*Turning around on the threshold.*) As to Robert, you know —

Mme. Bailly (charging him to be silent).— Yes, yes. (*He goes out. MME. BAILLY'S eyes are on ALICE all the time.*) Keep your seat, my child. You were right to leave all those people, since you were tired. Are you merely going to rest a few minutes? or are you going to your room to sleep, to prepare yourself for the fatigues of to-morrow?

Alice.— Oh! I am merely going to rest a bit, godmother.

Mme. Bailly.— Why don't you lie down on the *chaiselongue* in my boudoir?

Alice.— Thank you, godmother, I am very well here, I assure you.

Mme. Bailly.— Ah! you prefer to stay? Very well, very well! (*Gazes at ALICE searchingly, then starts to go out.*) I am going down but I will send some one in a few minutes to find out how you are —

Alice (quickly).— Oh! but that will not be at all necessary, godmother. I am much better already.

Mme. Bailly (coming toward ALICE).— Alice, it may be that, if you stay here, you will see Robert —

Alice.— And if I do, godmother?

Mme. Bailly (insinuating and contained).— It is without importance, to be sure. But we said at dinner that Robert was ill and tired: that is only partly true. Robert is only ill — morally. Robert is passing through a moral crisis at this moment. Oh! I am telling you all this — you are not looking at me very bravely, my child; you are not ill? (*A pause.*) Robert has not told you about his troubles, Alice? Alice, why were you crying awhile ago? Why did you not want to tell your godmother about it? Ah! you do not love your godmother enough, Alice —

don't have such a frightened look. You often talk to my son; you no doubt know him very well, your friend, Robert, and he is a man who does not easily trust himself — he is not very confiding, my Robert. Robert does not happen to have told you anything about what is worrying him?

Alice.— But what do you suppose he would tell me, godmother?

Mme. Bailly.— Oh! the fact is that it is not of the least importance, and that on the eve of such a day we are tired enough without worrying about other things. Rest, my child, and if you can, rejoin us presently. (*Goes, then comes back.*) Ah! I must ask you something. You see how serious I am — it isn't, however, that what I am going to ask you is particularly serious; but — but — you know how I love Robert and how I have his interest at heart — you know my affection for him — well, if Robert were to tell you something — it is hardly probable — but if he were to tell you something very wild and foolish, something very improbable — I don't know — Well! you must come to me immediately, do you hear, immediately to tell me about it.

Alice.— But what is the matter with you, godmother. What do you fear?

Mme. Bailly.— I fear nothing. Don't torment me. Robert will have nothing to say to you. *Au revoir.* (*Reaches the door, then turns again.*) You would come immediately, Alice, immediately, would you not? (*Goes out. After MME. BAILLY has gone out, ALICE has slowly risen and gone to the door to the left. As she opens it ROBERT appears. He steps in and searches the room that is but feebly lighted.*)

Robert.— Alone, are you not? Stay there. (*He turns around.*) Follow me, come this way, Mr. Bouche. (*HILAIRE appears behind him carrying folio and high hat.*)

Hilaire.— There, you see, I like it better when you call me Bouche. To tell you the truth, this name Hilaire, it now weighs me down, you know.

Robert.— Don't talk so loudly, Mr. Bouche. (*Cautiously opens the door at the rear.*) You will not leave your hotel before I come, to-morrow, perhaps to-night. Go on ahead, softly if you please, softly. (*ROBERT signs to ALICE to remain, and goes out. Returns a few seconds later. ALICE waits for him, anxious and immovable. ROBERT takes ALICE by the hand and they both sit down, side by side. A long silence.*) Turn to the light so that I can see you.

Alice.— I don't dream of hiding my face from you. I came here to-night to hear what you have to tell me. I have the face of one resolved but to do one thing, and that is to listen with all my heart —

Robert.— It is now five years that you have been near me. And now when I think of the man I am, I always see you by my side, and our two images seem to me to be inseparable in the future.

Alice (gravely).— Yes, Robert, inseparable.

Robert.— I have had no other friend but you. I do not like to think of the time when you were not here, when there was not your smile across my solitude. Now my solitude resembles you. It is events sometimes that decide us to speak of things, and it is not I who have chosen this minute. But there! what are we going to do, since I must leave, since I must leave this house?

Alice.— Stop, Robert! I have often dreamed that wherever you live I would accompany you. What you have just told me has given me great courage; there is in our friendship something stronger than friendship, perhaps, since I can't bear even the thought of being separated from you —

Robert.— No, there is no question of being separated, no! but I must leave and — and without delay, this house and all the people of this house. I must go away.

Alice.— Don't say "I must go away." It is very long since I have been able to think as do those who can say 'I.' I am a woman, and you are so mingled in my resolutions, Robert, that secretly I say 'we' even when I am thinking only of myself.

Robert.— Then, we must leave this house.

Alice.— I will do what you wish. (*A pause.*)

Robert.— Robert Bailly! Oh! I am going to leave this name and these effects here behind me. I am going away and I will take only you of this past that others have made for me. How ashamed I am of having so long taken my food here! I am going to live the life to which I have a right. Robert Bailly? I am a man, free and unknown. My name is so obscure that I hardly know it myself. My true name is a humble name and without history, but it belongs to me like a humble thing. Bailly! A word that at this moment is in the mouth of thousands of imbeciles, and that is glory! I am going away, I am going away! I have never been the son of this statue —

Alice.— What have they told you that you dare to cry out such things?

Robert.— I have been thrust into a cold and clinging darkness. There is a sorrow that soothes and I suddenly feel bathed in light. I am still too much oppressed by the news that a poor devil has brought me, without even knowing the price of what he was bringing. All those people were there around me, to watch my profile and the movements of my face. When I smiled they all said: there is the smile of Emanuel Bailly! And when I was calm they all thought: it is the same gravity! And when I showed anger, they looked at each other and murmured: it is astonishing, he resembles him also in his violence and his force! There are the women who are always on the watch, stupid, cruel and curious! They listened to my voice as though it were his breath that passed through my lips. A marionette! the prey of all the photographers and the newspapers! (*Approaches the statue of E. Bailly.*) You can see for yourself that I do not resemble this man: the bone formation is entirely different, and the rest they have transformed by means of discourses and examples. I had to cut my beard like his, and my moustache, and I had to draw back my hair as he used to draw back his —

Alice.— Why don't you want to resemble this man?

Robert.— There are ideas that have so early entered the mind and have been there for so long a time, that it is impossible to tear them out without much cruel anger and suffering —

Alice.— You are to confide something to me and you become exalted and irritable, and you speak as though I already knew what you have not yet told me. You must tell me all and explain to me. You know that no one is more worthy than I of knowing what is tormenting you and what is filling your eyes with tears. Your secret seems so terrible to me that I want to be the first to know it, because when you have told me it will have hardly had the time to come from your heart and we will be stronger, being two, to keep it, if it must remain unknown —

Robert.— Unknown, indeed! unknown. Listen, this man who came this morning —

Alice.— Yes, yes, sit down beside me and speak softly, without haste and if you can without anger, and then you will say only what you want to say —

Robert.— This man who came — this man — oh! my God! how difficult it is — (*Stops.*)

Alice.— Calm yourself, Robert. You seem to me to suffer a great deal for a man who has spoken of joy —

Robert.— No, I am not suffering! I have been for the past twenty-three years the son of a great man, and I am the most miserable of beings: my life has neither reason nor savor. I have always been an object of envy and admiration for my companions. Oh! I have been miserable for twenty-three years, and this unhappiness is not even of the kind to inspire pity. Every man has his character, his traits, his visage; I have only had the right to the visage and the gestures of another, and one has only sought in me the image of another and his memory. Only this morning I was resigned, effaced, when someone came who has unfolded for me the cause of this great fatigue and this desire to die that I always feel. I am not the son of Emanuel Bailly. I have grown up in the shadow of this man and he and the world thought that I was the inheritor of his glory! Then I learn to-day that this

man is not my father, and here I am trembling, stumbling like one who has come out of a dark, damp room and who receives the full light on his face — and I ask but for one thing, solitude, far from here, and oblivion.

Alice.— Where are we going to?

Robert.— We are going to leave this city since you say you are willing to live where I live. Look, this whole room is full of E. Bailly's books. No, no, they are not on the walls; they are on my shoulders, I carry them on my shoulders, and they are crushing me! I do not like, I must say it, I do not like the thoughts of this man, I never liked anything he said —

Alice.— But, Robert, it was he who raised you and protected you; it was he who loved —

Robert.— Oh! don't speak for him or I will say that I detest him! I was thirteen years old when he died, and he has never been so much alive as since his death. I don't care about being just: my hour has come to be unjust. No, I have not been loved as I wanted to be loved, as I want to be loved, and I say that I have been enchained and betrayed. I love solitude and I am living in a market. I loved my fellow creatures; I was forced to approach them until I was annoyed by their odor and I now repeat things to them that lacerate my mouth because I don't believe them. I want to live near rough and beautiful nature, but they have made a society creature of me. You say a man has loved me because he has nourished me and has made of me what I did not at all want to be — I would have been a different man if he had loved me!

Alice.— Robert, don't you know that I — I love you.

Robert (on his knees before her).— Oh! it is true! pardon me! I am not bad, but a great anger is agitating my heart and putting into disorder all my faculties, and I cannot contain myself. Yes, I am going to be very happy. We are going away so far away that no one will know us. Don't say no! I want to go away and leave them here with their statue, their glory and their lives of maniacs. You will see how kind I will be, never bitter

any more, and how I will become what it is my destiny to become. You do not know me as yet and you will be amazed to discover the real man that I will be when I will have left behind me Robert Bailly. I am going to take any name, a poor, modest name and one that is obscure, and I will try to make it great according to my own heart and my own powers. You will partake of this name and of my beautiful laborious existence. I have written books, but all that I have written is worth nothing at all. I have never been able to say what I wanted to say; there always has been between my work and my mind the resistant wall raised by him who was my father. I am going to write now what I feel myself capable of writing — Oh! Alice, since you love me, tell me that I am not merely a shadow and that I have perhaps my genius — a genius of my own — (*Hardly can retain a sob and takes ALICE in his arms.*)

Alice.— Yes, yes, Robert! Yes, you deserve to be happy, to be great; but here you are like one ill, and dominated by fever, and it is not thus that one can act and resolve. Now that you know the truth you are certainly going to think differently, and you will feel yourself stronger and more mature; but wait, there will always be time enough to leave the house, when you will have carefully weighed matters and will have chosen what is best for our happiness. Do nothing while in this anger, wait awhile —

Robert (getting up).— No, I can't wait another day, not even another hour. My need for breathing freely is such that it must be satisfied immediately. Perhaps if I wait it will never be satisfied.

Alice.— Yes, Robert, but is there no one to whom you must account before making so grave a decision?

Robert.— Knowing what I know, I have to account to no one. To-morrow no one will know me and everything will be as it should be.

Alice.— You know you will have to go very far indeed, so that in seeing you it be not said —

Robert.— What?

Alice.— There goes the son of Emanuel Bailly —

Robert.— I don't want that said any longer.

Alice.— How can you expect the world to give you a name other than the one you have borne since your childhood, and that the law has given you forever?

Robert.— I no longer want this name!

Alice.— It is a beautiful one and you have borne it with honor.

Robert.— It is n't due me and it annoys me. I denounce it as a garment of parade that hurts and deforms.

Alice.— It was pure when you took it; leave it without violence and without tearing it, for you have not the right.

Robert.— I know those who have worn it genteely and who have betrayed it. But look at me, Alice, you say you love me, and if that is true what matters the name that I give you? Oh! don't turn away your eyes or I will believe that it is not I alone whom you love!

Alice.— I love you, Robert, but no one acts wisely in anger.

Robert (very intensely, without taking his eyes off ALICE).— No, no! you are not speaking your true thought! You are not even thinking your true thought! You love — someone who is the son of E. Bailly, but who is not I. You love — E. Bailly, but that is not I! Oh! it is not your fault if you do not love me. —

Alice.— Robert!

Robert.— No! all that is only too true! Here I can have nothing to myself alone, not even my love. I am going away!

Alice.— You will not go without me!

Robert.— I am going alone! (*Takes a few steps; ALICE throws herself on him. At the door in the rear MOSTIER appears.*)

Mostier (trembling, very gravely to ALICE).— Go upstairs to your room and don't leave it until I or your godmother have authorized you to do so. Stay here, Robert.

Robert (ready to leave).— You were saying?

Mostier.— I ask you to stay here.

Robert.— You have taken habits of authority that no longer

permit you to measure your language. You see, sir, I am going to take my hat and leave; I am not in the humor this evening to listen to you.

Mostier.— Once again, Alice!

Alice (feebly).— Robert! (*ROBERT remains mute and cold. ALICE leaves upon a renewed gesture from MOSTIER.*)

Mostier.— The moment has not come for me to ask you to account for the language you have exchanged with my niece, nor of the tenor of this language. To-day, I must speak to you of other things.

Robert.— Mostier, you listen behind doors, but you never have the courage to listen long enough.

Mostier.— I don't wish to get angry, and I will allow you to insult me as much as you please. The main thing now is that you stay here.

Robert.— No, no. It is necessary to settle this question that you have so stupidly brought up. I wish to leave nothing unachieved behind me. What do you mean — what is it that I have to account to you for? There is a young girl here who is, or has been my friend, but I owe you nothing. As to my heart, you don't, I hope, mean to put hands on that and — I have nothing further to say to you.

Mostier.— So be it! I ask nothing further of you, and the object of our interview is quite a different one. Robert, I know the cause of your great trouble —

Robert.— Truly?

Mostier.— I know that you want to go away from here because you are prey to a great emotion, and it is in the name of your mother that I have come to place myself in opposition to the cruel madness —

Robert.— Don't deceive yourself; you know nothing. Go on! Why are you still interfering?

Mostier.— I will not take notice of a single of your wounding words. I tell you that your mother has just confessed —

Robert.— Confessed! Oh! the ridiculous word! Oh! the

pretentious word! Your manner of choosing your words makes you utter nothing but nonsense. My mother is not a woman who confesses, sir. She is a woman who commands —

Mostier.— I know that you have to-day experienced one of the most cruel sorrows that could strike a young man of your age and your condition. Robert, I understand that a disappointment, a sorrow such as you must feel, must have profoundly disturbed you. But I assure you, you must reflect deeply —

Robert.— What does it mean this tale of disappointment and sorrow? But you are mistaken, my good man. The conflict that interests me is beyond you, believe me, and you are expressing what is obvious to you in words at which I could die laughing. I cannot say that I have a light heart to-day; that, for a surety were a lie. But I am not a disappointed man. Do you think, perhaps, that I am in need of consolation and have you come to give it to me? No, no, I need liberty and solitude, and these are things that I cannot find here. Very well! allow me to pass, sir —

Mostier.— In the name of your mother, I will not allow you to leave to-day!

Robert.— What do I want to do in the name of my mother? My mother must know that there are certain rare occasions on which one cannot permit one's self to be replaced. You are not going to play with me, who am a man, as though I were a baby! Good-bye!

Mostier.— You make one believe that you are not yet a man, Robert. Think of the consequences of a flight this evening, on the eve of such a day, at a moment where the attention of all society is fixed upon you. It is natural that you are ill; it is even admissible that you withdraw yourself because of fatigue from the obligations that the glory of your — your father imposes on us all. But you cannot ostensibly commit an action that by its strangeness, by its unexpectedness, contrary to all that one knows of you and your family, is going to unchain the curiosity of a public only too much inclined to interest itself in the mis-

fortune and the ridicule of great men. Your departure, your absence, on the eve of the day when the glory of E. Bailly is to enter into eternity, all that represents a sort of treason —

Robert.— What have I to do with the glory of E. Bailly? It is truly in the name of my mother that you have come to deliver to me this little discourse as a sort of opening? Step back, Mostier, so that I can look at you and that I can at the same time measure all the stupidity one can put into defending one's cause. Oh! misery! this the message that my mother sends me at the moment when I want to leave her house!

Mostier.— Robert! Robert! I implore you, don't scream so loud. Think that the house is full of people this evening, that there may be people in the salon and that you might be heard —

Robert.— Yes, yes, you fear a scandal. Go along! say the word. You fear a scandal and that is why you ask me not to talk so loud, and that is why you fear everything from a curious untractable soul, and that is why you have undertaken to keep me here until what you call my grief and my disappointment have passed away! Oh! I don't know what is keeping me from opening wide these doors, and from crying —

Mostier (frightened).— I beg of you, Robert, Robert!

Robert.— Are you going to leave me alone! Don't dare to touch me, take your hands off me or I will box your ears —
(*Enter MME. BAILLY, calm and straight.*)

Mme. Bailly.— Let him go, Mostier.

Mostier (out of breath).— Madam, Madam, this is not a rational being, this is a madman, a demented creature.

Mme. Bailly.— Very well, you can retire, my dear friend; and leave us now, my son and myself.

Mostier.— Certainly, Madam, for I can no longer answer for myself. (*Goes.*)

Robert (beside himself and undone).— I want to go away from here! Why did you send this man? Why do you come yourself? Why must I encounter before this door all those whom I don't wish to see? And perhaps it was you also who sent Alice? Come,

since you do not answer me, let me say good-bye to you. (MME. BAILLY *remains immovable, without answering.*) Pardon me, it were perhaps more suitable for me, after the discovery that I have made, to throw myself on your breast, tragic and pale, so that we could weep together. It is not thus, however, that I will act, and I feel myself less crushed than delivered —

Mme. Bailly.— Be quiet!

Robert.— Oh! I do not know whether you can understand me; but why have you constantly crushed me under the glory of this man who is not my father? I have formed the project of being myself hereafter, and I go forth from here to realize this project. Don't look at me with this assurance. You have not raised me to have pity with the weaknesses of others, but simply in the cult of a glory that is all devouring, and which from now on I will thoroughly despise. I would have left secretly, peaceably, if everyone had not opposed my wishes. But you have not a single honest reason for keeping me here — and I am too unhappy after all to hear you speak of affection.

Mme. Bailly.— Be quiet!

Robert.— Oh, no! I will not be quiet. (*Goes to one of the shelves of the bookcase.*) See, there was this in the house that was mine: these three little books that I have written. They are no more mine than the rest. (*Draws out three books and throws them on the floor.*) You know only too well who has dictated them to me. I have said nothing there of what I really want to say, of what I must say. They are but bad copies of all these, of all these — (*Takes out large volumes and throws them on the ground.*) Oh! I bear you ill-will for not having loved me enough to have spared me, either my whole life or this single minute —

Mme. Bailly (*moves toward ROBERT*).— Be quiet!

Robert.— But why do you want me to be quiet? Are you, too, afraid of the noise, afraid of scandal? You fear only frankness, you can tell me so to-day. Your house is full of people, I know it; all these people now have their stomachs filled by you and you are afraid that my voice might reach them, for they

are here below, back there, to the right, to the left, all over! You are afraid that I will lose my reason perhaps at the very minute when you have completed your task, and when the glory of your husband has reached its height. (*He is before the statue.*) Poor man! Poor great man! Served by imbeciles and betrayed by the others! Do you want me to pity him then! How can you expect me to respect the memory of a man whom you have deceived? For it is true, you deceived him and you deceive me more than you did him —

Mme. Bailly (firmly, in a low voice),— I did not deceive you, my child. You are what you had to become, what you could become.

Robert.— You have made a shadow of me. Know that I now will have my soul and my — genius!

Mme. Bailly.— And I, I am your mother and I, who know you, I tell you that your destiny is here, and that your soul can no longer be a stranger to this man's.

Robert.— I no longer know this man.

Mme. Bailly.— If that is true, why are you afraid to look at his image?

Robert.— Well, I am looking at it.

Mme. Bailly.— See how you resemble him just the same.

Robert.— Don't say that or I will pluck out my face.

Mme. Bailly.— You resemble him still more by what is beneath your face.

Robert.— You know that I am capable of daring things!

Mme. Bailly.— I know that you will never be able to forget him.

Robert.— Oh! don't defy me! or I will overthrow it — your statue. (*Precipitates himself toward it.*)

Mme. Bailly (against the statue).— There are others in the world larger than this!

Robert.— You must not defy me!

Mme. Bailly.— Throw it on me, my child! (*ROBERT, overwhelmed, falls on his knees. MME. BAILLY puts her hand on his head.*)

Robert (groaning).—What do you want? What do you want of me?

Mme. Bailly.—To pardon all that you have just said and done.

Robert (sobs furiously).—Oh! I do not want to weep! I do not want, I do not want to —

Mme. Bailly (drawing him to her).—It is n't enough not to want to, and you have never been so much in need of it. Say no more (*kisses him*), it is enough that you are my son. And yet I could not kiss you before. But now you are as when you were small and you will not want to make me unhappy.

Robert (with choked voice).—Tell me that you will let me depart.

Mme. Bailly.—No, no, I will not let you depart. You are my son and you will not go elsewhere. What could I make of you? This man became great, and as I was no longer foolish I wished that you should resemble him and become his son.

Robert.—You should have abandoned me and not have enfolded me in these lies — you should have let me become the man that I would have been all by myself.

Mme. Bailly.—There is no such thing as a destiny missed. Believe me, we become only what we must become. And how could I have abandoned you, Robert, since I — I loved you? I have never seen you cry until this minute, and I am almost happy, because your father (*looks at the statue*) had a large abundant heart and he knew how to cry. And now you resembled him by your tears.

Robert (conquered).—Oh! mother!

Mme. Bailly.—What could I do? What can I do for you, but what I have done? Events have been stronger than the wishes of a single man. I have often thought that a day would come where a storm would break out over you and I feared and I waited for this day, thinking that if I did not lose you in the tempest you would be more entirely mine thereafter. And the storm has passed —

Robert.— Oh! mother!

Mme. Bailly.— Yes, it has passed. And do not say any more that you are going to leave me; you have n't the right. What can you do against this grand figure at a moment, when even we are not going to be able to do anything more for it? It has invaded the world, and the name of E. Bailly is not of those that one can forget; he is already in eternity! I devoted myself to its grandeur with all the more submission, because I had failed to recognize its greatness. Pardon me if I have carried you along in this wish, since you are the only witness of my weakness. Do you not want me to be pardoned? Stay by my side and we will construct a beautiful heroic future; and no one is sacrificed who accepts the sacrifice. I have never begged anyone so long as I have just begged you, my child, and I am ready to go down on my knees if your heart so demands.

Robert.— I demand nothing. What do you want me to do? (*MOSTIER, who has noiselessly entered the room, discreetly gathers up the books to put them back in place. MOSTIER thus will watch over the perfect order of the room, then he gradually turns on first all the lamps, then the entire light.*)

Mme. Bailly.— I wish you to do nothing that is contrary to your own wishes.

Robert.— Very well, mother, let my wishes be yours.

Mme. Bailly.— No, your wishes may go hand in hand with mine, but they are not mine. Look at me, my son; don't turn away your eyes, don't put me to the shame of turning away your eyes. Let me arrange your hair and smooth this visage; put a little peace into it. It is well, I recognize you again; I recognize my son, who will not again wish to torment me, and who will let me grow old honorably. (*MOSTIER has gone to open the door at the rear, then a second door opening into a large salon, whose lights are visible.*)

Mostier (into the ear of MME. BAILLY).— Madam, Mr. Treuillebert and all these other gentlemen insist on talking to you this evening.

Mme. Bailly.— Robert, will you give me your arm to go and rejoin these gentlemen? (ROBERT *submits with a motion of his head.*) Go on, Mostier, we are following you. (MOSTIER *goes out, and a vague noise of conversation is heard soon after. The gallery is filled with groups that go toward the library.* MME. BAILLY, *standing opposite ROBERT, is gazing at him with ardent attention, as though to assure herself of him. Then suddenly resolved she holds out an arm that ROBERT takes. Groups of invited guests invade the room. A murmur of conversation and greeting is heard.*)

CURTAIN

POEMS

BY F. T. MARINETTI—(*Futurista*)

Translated from the Italian by Anne Simon

NOCTURNE

(In three voices)

For us, for us only, in the languor
Of that suave sensual night,
The Wind, weary of eternally traveling and deluded
By its rapidity of phantasm,
With languid hands was crushing
In the profundity of space, the sumptuous velvets
Of a great pillow of shadow, diamonded
With sidereal tears!

For us, for us only, the Wind was fainting with sweetness
Upon the hot and anxious breasts
Of the waves of Spring
Like a lover with his body perfumed with spices,
His forehead crowned with poppies,
In the vast weariness of this sensual night! . . .

Side by side we were going,
The pulse of our hearts beating rhythmically
With the sobs and sighs of the waves of our desires . . .
She had the fragile grace and suppleness of flowers
In the sensuous movement of her walk, light and persuasive,
Amidst her azure veil which seemed to give her wings.
And fright took me by the throat,
As my arm girdled
Her lithe and aërial figure,
Which at each step seemed to want to vanish,
With the soft and languid flight of the dove,
Through clouds edged with gold! . . .

She had in her eyes the humid and attentive silence
 Of the solitary and rare violets,
 Which wrecked sail-boats, driven by the tempest,
 Discover miraculously in evenings of tranquility
 Behind some promontory,
 Along the cursed coast! . . .

I remember the pallor of her face, panting
 Under the weight of her glorious head of hair,
 And the gold mass which fell down her back
 Like a regal crown — scorned! . . .
 I remember her kisses impregnated with the Ideal
 Which slowly ran from her half-opened lips.
 I remember her voice which had the long silken rustling
 Of crushed roses. . . .

THE VOICE OF THE WOMAN

My love, do you see far away the thin stars of gold
 Which go by with light step on the beach,
 Graceful, two by two, in luminous embrace?
 They are half nude, and from time to time
 Their bodies of pearl taper,
 And their rosy flesh, blooming
 Out from the soft mother-of-pearl,
 Drips with bloody rubies! . . .

MY VOICE

My heart trembles to see them so sweet and fragile,
 To see their tender faces clarified by ecstasies
 And lost in the vortexes
 Of their thick hair of turquoise . . .
 My heart trembles to see them swim vagrantly
 With the calm indifference of their arms of rays . . .
 Do you not know, my love, that I could descend
 To the immeasurable abysses of the seas,

Or in the labyrinths of death,
 Only to kiss the poor crushed lips
 Of a drowned Star?
 O dying Stars of my childhood nights!
 Still I sob to hear you agonize
 Like the pallid shipwrecked,
 In the cruel waters of my heart! . . .
 Oh! I will never be able to succor them,
 Because all my Stars are far away,
 Very far away from our human lips! . . .

THE VOICE OF THE WOMAN

Weep no more, my lover, because my heart suffers!
 Has your mouth forgotten the intoxication of my kiss . . .
 Why dost thou wish to consume in that way thy desire
 Upon the chimerical pupils of the Stars? . . .
 Close thine eyes that I may kiss thine eyelids! . . .
 Close thine eyes that I may linger on them
 With my eager lips, deliciously! . . .

MY VOICE

Alas! my love! Thou to me art more sad
 And further away when I have thee in my arms,
 Than an intangible shipwrecked Star! . . .

THE VOICE OF THE WOMAN

Speak not thus . . . I cannot understand thee . . .
 I am all inundated with love, and full of thee! . . .
 Look, bold one! Thy tender mouth
 Enchains all of me . . .
 Let me untie my veil
 That thou mayst be able to caress me as thou wishest,
 My body which is thine! . . .
 Nothing I expect of God, neither of the Stars,

Because thou lovest me! . . . I feel thee . . . I kiss thee,
 And my lips go to sleep, dreaming amidst thy lips,
 And thy kisses remain forever in my veins. . . .

MY VOICE

Oh! how far away is thy mouth from me still! . . .
 I see it open itself a little, like an ardent cloud
 Upon the smiling mother-of-pearl of the moon,
 And thou seemest to me languidly bent
 Over the stern of a chimerical galley which vanishes . . .
 Alas! Thou canst do nothing else but strip thy kisses
 With thy finger-tips and from far away,
 With a pallid gesture which vanishes like a flash! . . .

THE VOICE OF THE SEA

Your burning caresses, your subtle caresses,
 Are like the tragic groping of the blind
 In the corridors of a labyrinth. . . .
 Your kisses always have the insatiable ravenousness
 Of two deaf men in an enraged dispute
 Shut up in the bottom of a dark prison. . . .
 With all your most poignant love
 And with all your caresses
 You shall forever be lost, buried
 In the burning Theban desert of your flesh! . . .
 Thou who persisted in unsatisfied kisses
 Upon the body of a woman who moans in your arms,
 Why do you contemplate with such sadness
 The unapproachable mouth of the far-away Stars?

MY VOICE

O Sea, treacherous Sea, that goest, vagabond, far away
 Amidst the rays of mist, cursed sorcerer . . .
 Knowest thou the joy of tearing off slowly

A heart-rending spasm from this dying flesh,
 And to heap up by force of caresses and tumultuous kisses
 The burning honey of wantonness
 In her open veins? . . .
 I await the supreme thrill
 Of this sensitive, pliant body which dissolves in delight,
 And I want the supreme communion
 Of our agony, because her body
 Finally thanks me, inebriated with joy
 With the cruel slowness of my daggers . . .
 Because, finally, the innumerable lips
 Of all its wounds may kiss fervidly
 The blades which make her weep and die,
 Happy and pierced. . . .
 If I try to go far from her, suddenly her breasts
 Fascinate my look,
 Like banks of vaporous mother-of-pearl
 Ennobled by the dawn,
 Which I saw so many times upon the curve of the horizon
 From the prow of the ship . . .
 Oh! fascinating banks, burning with the Ideal,
 Calm pillows of sand,
 Which shall surpass in rapid flight my great migratory
 dreams! . . .
 And this pure brow shines sometimes in the shadow,
 Like the illuminated window
 In a villa, that seems to us bathed
 In a golden felicity . . .
 Oh! the sweetness of living
 In the intimate warmth of her soul
 Under a brow so transparent! . . .

THE VOICE OF THE SEA

However far thou travelest, galloping, flung towards the unknow,
 Thou canst never see again the clear, illuminated glass

In the evening of calm felicity! . . .
 How far away it is from thy soul,
 This beautiful ideal forehead
 That thy lips touch so tenderly! . . .
 Your kisses shall be always, always illusive,
 Because an infinite heaven separates you both! . . .

MY VOICE

Yes! I feel it, I feel it. . . .
 Profound abysses immensify themselves between our insatiable
 hearts! . . .
 And I know well, great Sea, that thy turquoise waves,
 Like extended arms dripping with precious stones,
 Smile far from me, at the other pole,
 With eyes full of joy much more hallucinating! . . .
 I know that thou runnest with more sweet abandon
 And more sparse perfumes, shelling thy rosy pearls
 Upon the joyful bank, that one great divine Evening
 Bathes all in felicity and immutable azure!
 Also I know that other lovers
 Extend themselves upon the sands, like us,
 Anguished amidst the ardent opening of the stars,
 And desperately inconsolable
 To feel their mouths so far away
 While they exhausted themselves in frenzied kisses! . . .
 And I feel that our caresses, our subtle
 Caresses, are like
 The tragic groping of the blind
 In the corridors of a labyrinth! . . .
 I feel that our kisses have the mad impetuosity
 Of a rabid dialogue between two deaf people
 Shut up in the bottom of a black prison! . . .
 I feel that we shall be always, always buried
 In the burning Theban desert of our flesh . . .
 Alone in the midst of the monotonous sound of voices of the tavern

Which rise from the profundity of wantonness. . . .
 Alone under Destiny and its great rocks
 Of sorrow, suspended over our heads . . .
 Alone, under Destiny which crashes ominously
 Like a colossal flood-gate! . . .

THE VOICE OF THE SEA

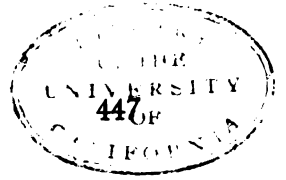
Go then, my child, go then —
 Opening wide thy delirious eyes!
 Scale the black mountains of the night,
 Visit the Stars, one by one . . .
 The Stars, cursed golden city
 With the battlements of diamonds,
 Which you will meet here and there, upon the immense Milky
 Way! . . .
 Thou wilt go in the paths of the sky
 From one firmament to another, following from a distance
 The luminous track of a comet,
 Panting with passion for the One that thou bringest
 In thy heart enchained, but intangible,
 Adhering to thy lips, but forever far away. . . .
 Towards the one that cannot be thine,
 In spite of the horrible spasm which rends you! . . .
 Thou wilt, thou wilt go as far as the confines of the heaven,
 And always, always thou wilt be far away from her,
 As when you pressed her passionately in your arms. . . .

THE SONG OF THE LOVE — MENDICANT

I saw thee one evening, long ago, I know not where,
 And from that time I waited impatiently . . .
 The Night, proud with stars and pale blue perfumes,
 Languished her nudity upon me,
 Dazzled and convulsed with love! . . .
 Desperately, the Night

Opened her constellations
 Like palpitating veins of purple and gold,
 And all the illuminated voluptuousness of her blood
 Filtered through the vast heavens. . . .
 I stood, inebriated, waiting under thy lighted windows,
 Which were the only flames in space
 Immobile, I awaited the supreme marvel
 Of thy love, and the ineffable charity of thy glance!
 For I am the mendicant hungry for the Ideal,
 Who goes along the shores
 Imploring kisses and love to nourish his dream!
 With rancorous covetousness I desired the jewels of the heavens
 To adorn thy queenly nudity
 And towards thee I flashed
 My savage glance, blood-stained in the shadow,
 Like the wasted arms of a dying one!
 Everything seemed to become gigantic from the amplitude of my
 dream!
 Bells rattled in the heavens
 Like monstrous mouths:
 The mouths, perhaps, of Destiny! Bells
 Invisible and savage
 Seemed to open over me in the silence
 Like overturned abysses!
 A great wall erected itself before me,
 Implacable and proud as desperation!
 I waited alone, and a thousand stars,
 Restless stars, seemed to dart
 From thy windows,
 Like a flight of sparks from a furnace of gold!
 Thy sweet shadow appeared before the window,
 Like a terrorized soul
 Which agitates itself in agonized pupils,
 And thou for me became a prey

F. T. MARINETTI



Delirious up there, at the extreme summit
Of the lofty towers of my Dream! . . .
My love (with shining teeth and slanting eyes) grasped
With a great gesture its red swords
And barbarously arose
Towards thy tragic splendor.

For I am the insatiable mendicant who walks
Towards the faint warmth of breasts,
Towards the languor of lips,
The implacable mendicant
Who goes along the shores
Stealing love and kisses
To nourish his Dream! . . .

The gloomy night opened itself at the foot of the wall,
And thou appearedst, suavely blooming
Near me, white and pure in the midst of the shadows,
Trembling like the counsels of the nocturnal breeze! . . .
And everything was annulled around me,
And my dream shattered the world
With just a blow of its wing!

Surely — I thought — in the fabulous gardens
Where my soul exiles itself,
Chimerical peach-trees made
Thy yielding flesh, with the odorous snow
Of their flowers,
Moulded by the sonorous fingers of the wind! . . .
I came to thee, trembling and devout,
As in a temple . . . advancing uncertainly,
As in a damp grotto! . . .
To thee I came, stumbling with each of my timid steps,
Holding my breath
In order not to awaken Sorrow in Passing! . . .
Thy smile disclosed itself
In the serene lake of thy face,

As at the placid falling of a flower . . .
 Thy smile opened itself like a fan,
 Fluctuating in the heavens, and made pallid
 The impetuous face of the Stars in the silence! . . .
 I spoke to thee volubly of strange things,
 Bathed my soul with a disgorged anguish,
 And it seemed to me that I was in the midst
 Of the current of a voluptuous river.
 Avidly, thou sought my soul
 On my lips, like golden honey! . . .

I felt my face become inflamed
 Like a burning castle, pillaged by the enemy.
 I spoke to thee, and my distorted thoughts
 Were reflected, far away and vaporous,
 In the tranquil lake of thy face.

Thou desiredst to respond to me, but knew not what to say,
 Thou demanded of me my anguish, my fears,
 Since thou saw'st me tremble on the threshold
 Like a culprit . . .
 And I was like the wounded vagabonds
 Who go, hoarse,
 From gate to gate in search of refuge,
 Amidst the raised fists of the implacable crowd! . . .
 Thou spoke to me of indifferent things! . . . Thou desiredst to
 know
 Of my past life, my far-away country . . .
 Thou desiredst to know my name,
 And all that is usual to ask
 Of tired travelers who drink at the fountains
 In the evening,
 When all becomes dark . . .

For I am the mendicant, hungry for the Ideal,
 Who comes from nobody knows where,

And goes along the shores . . .
 Begging for love and kisses to nourish his Dream! . . .

I followed thee finally to thy house:
 We were alone, far away from human multitudes,
 Upon the threshold of the Infinite, and I felt
 The suavity of twilight upon the sea,
 When it shelters itself in a violent gulf
 Humid with silence! . . .
 We were alone, and my Dream
 To thy Dream, sang:

‘Oh! Cast languidly down thine eyelids
 Upon the erring foolishness of thy glance.
 Lower thine eyelids mystically and slowly,
 Like the closing of angels’ wings . . .
 Lower thy rosy eyelids,
 In order that the quick flame of thine eyes may creep in,
 Like a sigh of the Moon through half-closed blinds.
 Lower thine eyelids, and then raise them again,
 And I will be able to lose myself in thine eyes,
 In thine eyes, forever,
 Like the evening on drowsy lakes,
 Amidst foliage, placid and dark!

‘Be sweet, because my heart
 Trembles amidst thy fingers . . . Be sweet! . . .
 The Shadow waits to spy on our inebriation, — and Silence
 Bends itself and caresses us
 Like a tender mother . . . Be sweet! . . .
 For the first time I adore
 My own soul, and I admire it
 Because it loves thee so, like a poor madman!
 I adore my lips because they desire thee . . .
 My soul is thine, — my soul
 Is so far away and azure as to seem a stranger to me.
 Before thee my soul humbles itself

Like a dying sheep, and lulled to sleep,
 Shivering under thy fragile feet
 Like a meadow which becomes silvery
 Under the furtive steps of the moon . . .

'Come! . . . My foolish lips will attract
 Thy pensive face and thy great sad eyes
 Towards the dazzling banks of the Dream . . .
 Towards the divine archipelagoes of clouds! . . .
 My lips shall be indefatigable
 Like the one who tows slowly,
 In the rosy freshness of the morning,
 The great barques with the solemn sails
 Through the scintillating pearliness
 Of the far-away sea . . . And I
 Shall be no more than thy breath . . . And my blood
 In its course shall carry the perfume of thy lips
 Like a river in the Spring, inebriated with flowers! . . .

Then thy rosy mouth opened itself.
 Fragile, buzzing sea-conch,
 Murmuring sinuously
 The delirium of space and the febrile song of seas!
 At the rhythm of thy voice, my heart
 Prepared itself to weigh anchor
 Towards gulfs exalted by the sun,
 And through gleaming islands of gold . . .
 Thou told me ingenuously
 That never had any one so sung
 To the gates of thy heart . . .
 That never had any one wept
 His dream and his sorrow
 On thy breast, perfuming it with tears! . . .

For I am the mendicant who weeps and laments,
 The mendicant hungry for the Ideal,
 Who comes from nobody knows where, and goes along the shores

Imploring love and kisses
To nourish his Dream! . . .

Thy soothing and velvety gestures
Had the caressing languor
Which oars have upon the brown water in the evening . . .
The liquid and plaintive hour rippled, shivering, —
Our voices fell . . .
But Lust, alas, spied us,
Searching insiduously in the shadow . . .
Lust, crawling, panting, along the walls! . . .

Through the open window, from time to time,
The wind of the night
Breathed on us
Swelling out obscenely
The purple curtains . . .
We saw the lamp of gold faint
Like a sick child amidst filmy laces,
And sweetly die . . .
We saw the chaste flickerings of the lamp,
Kneeling, fading, along the walls
Like praying angels . . .
And our own dreams bent, melancholy
And resigned in the silence . . .
Then my foolish desire appeared to thee
Unsheathed, like a sword
And, groping along thy pure body,
With a wild gesture sought violently
The absorbing warmth of thy mouth.
Madly, in a black intoxication,
Brutally we united our lips,
As if committing a crime!
My lips infuriated themselves
Upon thine, heavily
And our mouths were as bloody
As two lances!

With a sublime gesture,
 Thou offeredst to me, deliriously, thy sweet nudity,
 Like a flagon to a pilgrim, and
 I quenched my immense thirst
 Upon thy naked body, until I was delirious,
 Seeking there immense Forgetfulness . . .
 Trembling, and with dizziness,
 My Soul inclines itself
 Upon thy radiant beauty,
 Like an abyss which makes one dizzy
 With its perfumes and hot light! . . .

Thine eyes grew languid, sweetly,
 Under thy rosy eyelids,
 — Like lamps veiled with filmy silk, —
 And, bending low over thine unbound hair,
 I took finally thy Soul, all
 Thy Soul, religiously,
 With my eager, waiting lips,
 As one takes the consecrated host.

When I went again on my way
 Through the profundity of the livid night,
 My heart became black, was thirsty,
 And eagerly I drank the black
 Water of the fountains . . .
 . . . Then I fled, precipitating my steps,
 Towards the Unknown . . .
 For I am the mendicant,
 Who goes along the shores
 Imploring love and kisses to nourish his Dream, —
 With the fear in his heart that he may sink forever
 His bloody feet
 In the carnal freshness of the sands, on the shores of the seas,
 In some evening
 Of mortal fatigue and infinite Void! . . .

AN APPRECIATION OF MARINETTI

BY ANNE SIMON

'I love him who worketh and inventeth to build a house for the Superman.'— Nietzsche.

IT would be impossible to find a more appropriate 'motif' for the appreciation of this unique man, Marinetti, the justly celebrated Futuristic poet of Italy, than these words of his giant-brother, Nietzsche. The above words, with their most literal significance, may be used to describe the aims and ideals of this man, the same man who was called a pornographer by some of his own people.

Marinetti was born in Alexandria, Egypt, of Italian parents. No classic institution of learning existing in that city, he entered the Sorbonne in Paris, and won his diploma of Bachelor of Letters. He then entered the University of Paris, and later the University of Genoa, receiving there his degree of Doctor of Law. As far as we know, he has written entirely in the French language, the works being afterwards translated into Italian. And so, Italian in type and style, it is now clear to us that he became a French writer only through force of circumstances. He seems to have divided his literary activities between Paris and Milan.

We believe a more comprehensive presentation of the poet's broad scheme of life, and his idealistic horizon, may be given by a *résumé* of the circumstances connected with his legal censure for having written the much discussed novel, "Mafarka il Futurista," than by any other approach to the subject.

Modernism must have made a more rapid progress than we realize, for as recently as 1910, Marinetti, even then the leading Futurist of Italy, was tried in Milan for writing this novel, considered by the authorities an indecent book. It sounds like an echo of the early Victorian age, when we read of the Public Minis-

ter's demand to have the trial take place behind closed doors. Happily the opposition to this proposal triumphed. Young Italy, that generous, sympathetic and valorous spirit, encouraged him, as shown by the number of Futurists who came from all parts of Italy to be present at the trial, and to fight, if necessary, for their gifted leader.

Marinetti defended himself most ably, and with logic, eloquence and suavity. During the trial he revealed many things hitherto unknown about himself. He is a rich man, through inheritance, and it is typical of him that he has used much of his wealth to advance his audacious (so considered) projects, one of his aims being to re-create and renew the artistic movement in Italy. He publishes in Milan, a magazine called 'Poesia,' to which he has given eight years of indefatigable labor, and an unselfish expenditure of money, using this magazine to spread the Futuristic creed, which was really born in the Paris '*Figaro*.' He is surrounded by a group of young poets and painters, who literally adore him. Like Paul Fort to-day in France, he takes great pleasure in protecting and encouraging the young writer, in protecting him from the avarice and myopic vision of editors and publishers. We should be intensely grateful to these large-hearted men who are so patient with the younger artists. And here we would like to add, that it was this same spirit of sweet patience and sincere interest, which caused Paul Fort to discover Mæterlinck. He not only advanced him, but he kept him before the literary world of Paris, afterward saying, with a humility both unusual and touching, 'I owe more to Mæterlinck than he owes to me.'

In Italy and France they love art. This explains, with a slight modification of the Nietzschean nomenclature, the willingness to seek and reseek, and to re-value and constantly re-value.

We will quote some fragmentary sentences spoken by Marinetti at his trial, which are very indicative of the man:

'Our movement is fatal. The dying await our coming. . . . I shall never weary. . . . Business opportunism, contempt

for youth, moral and physical cowardice, these are the things we combat. You have called me a pornographer! These are the things I have combatted in Italy!

But before allowing ourselves to make any comments on Futurism, we will analyze briefly Marinetti's novel, 'Mafarka.'

Without doubt, some of the images and descriptions in this book would seem grossly revolting to us. His daring disregard of conventional speech cannot be judged by our standards; in Italy there is much greater freedom. In 'Mafarka' is described most impressively the ascent of an African hero, a man of temerity and cunning, who after exhibiting an unbridled desire to live, the desire for victory in battle, who after having had all sorts of experiences and adventures, suddenly raised himself from this vain-glorious military heroism to philosophic and artistic heroism. In this novel he describes the glorious evolution of life, life which was first vegetal, then animal and then human, and which should finally manifest itself in a miraculous being, winged and immortal. With great beauty of idealism, he brings to man unbounded hope for his ultimate physical and spiritual perfection. He wants to liberate man from lust, from that lust which slowly consumes and devours. He wants to assure man of his speedy liberation from sleep, fatigue and death.

And this is the man they call a pornographer!

The prevailing idea in this book is of Nietzschean origin, that man shall surpass himself. It is more a poem than a novel, in which is portrayed the approaching liberty of man through spiritual conquest. It is full of contrasts between brutal instinct and the development of the spiritual nature. It is full of rich and strange images — images of love and of victory — of desire for lust and for chastity — of rebellion and of sacrifice. It is both tragic and lyric, and compels us to realize the author's clairvoyant and exalted vision. Marinetti loved 'Mafarka' more than any of his other books, because he used it to convey his great Futurist dream. He considered it an African poem, illuminated by unbounded fantasy. And it is a poem, utterly incomprehensible

though to the majority of intelligences, so disgracefully unfamiliar with poetry.

In order to be true to African customs and life he found it necessary to lay a certain stress on things regarded as indecent to civilized eyes; for he says that 'Africa may be symbolized in three words: heat, filth and lust.' He did not write of the Africa of Pierre Loti, nor did he try to prettily adjust it for the academic and private salons of Paris. In the one chapter of 'Marfarka' which really led to its incrimination, his motive was ethical. He wanted to suggest that even out of the seething cauldron of lust and brutality, a finer being might emerge. He wanted to prove that man can conquer his carnal instincts. He used the incidents in this chapter to show his violent disgust of man's brutalities and brutishness. It is easy for anyone of even fairly broad vision to see his purpose, through the very crudeness of the vocabulary, through his exactness of vulgar detail. It gives his hero the opportunity to denounce a race that could be so frequently guilty of the crime stated there. One should rather be moved by the artistic power of the representation of that orgy. In defending his book at the trial, Marinetti said: 'I have tried to show, according to the law of contrast, the ascent of the human spirit when freed from the tyranny of love and the obsession of woman; how it detaches itself finally from earth and opens its great wings, which lay folded and asleep in the flesh of man.'— Can man have a finer motive than this?

It is difficult to understand why there should have been legal prosecution for the writing of this book. Italy accepted the "Aphrodite" of Pierre Louys, which was translated into Italian and published in Italy. 'Mafarka' was also written in French, translated into Italian, and we think published by the same firm. And the writings of Boccaccio, are they not recognized as classics in Italy? And then, there is the autobiography of Benvenuto Cellini that remained uncondemned. Capuana, professor of the University of Catania, who defended Marinetti in a long and profound treatise, which shall always remain a precious document

in Italian literature, recalled to the audience an incident connected with San Giroloma, one of the earliest translators of the Bible, who even while in the act of translating this holy book, kept under his pillow the comedies of Aristophanes! He, apparently, was not scandalized by the indecent boldness of this great Athenian. We like to think of some other great men who met the same fate as Marinetti: Baudelaire, Flaubert and Swinburne, for example. The critics who most violently censured Marinetti are those who criticize from the standpoint of popular morality. Our entire scale of moral values should be subjected to criticism first. Some of his critics hate him, and why? Because he disturbs them — that is the unforgivable crime with certain insular mentalities.

Marinetti is an artist, and not a man of sensual vision. In his art, he persistently deals in contrasts, considering it legitimate to use any details which will make the contrasts more prominent. There is a vast difference between a book that incites a person to sensuality, and a book just as repulsive in plot and description, but in which the writer makes evident the repulsion in his heart. A few critics suggested that he at least might have eliminated certain harsh, crude, ugly words, or that he might have used the mask a little more freely. We answer that by saying, when a great writer is in the anguish of creation, he cannot be anything but sincere, and is far removed from word-coquetry.

With Marinetti, the thought is often so colossal, that language can hardly sustain it, and the imagery so subtle, that one feels it cannot be translated into language. He is not polished in his work, but we cannot fail to admire the truly extraordinary force of his creation.

He thinks one of the principles of the highest type of literature is to consider the images not as accessories or decoration, but as really essential elements of expression — unconscious instruments to fix the elusive truth, and to indicate the indefinite and the undefinable.

Marinetti's first epic poem was called '*La Conquête des*

Étoiles,' which was an enormous oceanic vision, in which he depicted the battle between the tempestuous waves, and the inaccessible stars. (The motto of the Futurists might well be, 'The Conquest of the Stars.') In this poem there are no erotic or sentimental details. Woman is excluded, as she is also in his satiric tragedy, '*Re Baldoria*.' As the curtain rises in this last-named play, the women are seen going away, indignant at the low and vulgar sensuality of man, and with an ultra-idealistic protest they leave the men to their destiny. We only mention this as another point in his defense. This work was written in 1910, and received high commendation in France. Many critics who were strongly opposed to Futurism admired this work, and the celebrated critic, Borgese, considered it full of 'the stupendous force of Aristophean conception, and a most subtle phantasmagoria, in which the imaginative fecundity of the poet draws us with him.

Marinetti was the founder of Futurism in Italy. Futurism, like the Nietzschean philosophy, acknowledges no laws, no codes, no magistrates, no police, no 'moral eunuchs,' as Marinetti aptly calls them. It is a scourge for mental cowards. It is a bomb to blow up the Past. Its followers do not believe in building on the ruins of that Past. In the words of its great interpreter, 'we want the work of art to be burned with the corpse of its creator. That which survives Genius, does it not perhaps poison living Genius by a sort of nostalgia?' He believes that it is right to sacrifice the Past and Tradition in order to ensure the growth of a stronger work. The Futurists seek to spread the contagion of courage, and are magnificent in their fearlessness. One must admire this heroism. In their souls is a glorious passion for Art. With indifference to the Past comes an equal indifference to their own immortality. (Marinetti calls this immortality 'a dream of usurious souls, just as contemptible as the Christian idea of Paradise!') It matters not if their traces are effaced by those who follow. To them, the absorbing thought is the ascent to the heights, with the glowing treasure in their uplifted hands, which they have wrested from the depths. Marinetti believes that no

more than talent will spring from building on the Past, and that genius must destroy before it starts to rebuild.

His art is barbaric, impulsive and opulent. His ideal, like that of Novalis, is the search for the transcendental self. The beautiful tribute paid by Swinburne to the Orientalist, Burton, might equally well be said of Marinetti:

'A soul whose eyes were keener than the sun.
A soul whose wings were wider than the world.'

FROM THE MOUNTAIN TOP

BY ALVILDE PRYDZ

Translated from the Norwegian by Hester Coddington

Fair is the earth!

I see light streaming forth — I see joy ascending. . . . I hear it as it seethes and foams, in jubilant exultation. . . .

Fair is the earth!

No, terrible is the earth!

I see gloom — and sorrow and anguish above the storm-black wave. . . . I see the lowest depths of suffering. I hear the wail of distress as it rises, and grief lamenting. . . . I see souls going down into night and death!

Terrible is the earth!

Far out over the earth I look!

I see that men are not brothers . . . that love is not the lord of life — it is not the light along the way!

I see that man has not found the light — that radiant light so full of warmth and glorious strength, which streams out into the great desolation and points the way. . . . He has not yet found it. All is cold and dark about him.

Ah, the earth is full of woe!

But no, the earth is fair!

I see light streaming forth — I see joy ascending . . . I hear it as it seethes and foams, in jubilant exultation! I hear the *all-good* coming — silent, courageous — powerful, victorious. . . .

Lord God, the earth is fair!

THE PRISON IN SPRING

Translated from the French of Georges Duhamel

BY SASHA BEST

The prison of the valley is a beautiful prison,
The prison in the valley where the winter wheat trembles.

Its towers are bare without Clematis or ivy,
It is girt round by fosses fill'd with water waste and clear.

It has walls without visage and smoke on its tops,
A city that would live for itself alone.

All around breathes the valley and does a great work
And feels happiness tremble between its swelling slopes.

It perceives the horizon across the shoots of the vineyards,
Its wild budding wheat recalls the cheeks of a youth.

This valley it is marked by two living veins
Of whom it ignores both destiny and birth.

One a green stream, deep and angry in its time
That the stubborn willows cannot always overcome;

The other the road that quickly transports
All the things we see yet hardly know.

With care for the hamlets that cling to its breasts,
The valley understands but its duty, its attire,

And holds without effort in the midst of its verdure
The prison stranded there like a great silent ark.

The valley knows naught, even when darkness reigns,
Of the thousand brooding prisoners who are gnawing their
fists.

TO BE, OR NOT TO BE

BY CHARLES M. STREET

IN a former article,* the speech of 'To be, or not to be' was analyzed in the light of the 'lawful espials' and the presence of Ophelia. The recent appearance of Dr. Arnold's scholarly study,† moves us to suggest some points not sufficiently emphasized in our article, and not considered at all in Dr. Arnold's fascinating work.

Dr. Arnold divides the overheard soliloquy into two groups: (1) the unconscious entrance. (2) the conscious entrance. In neither of these groups has he mentioned the speech in question. He devotes considerable space to an analysis of the speech in other parts of his book and mentions Joseph Hunter's objection to its setting in the second quarto being inferior to 'its living place and principle of continuity in the play' in the original version. And while it is evident that he does not consider 'Hamlet's Soliloquy' as overheard, his study should have considered the playwright's intention in setting the meditations within sight of Hamlet's suspicious and superstitious enemy. Whether Shakespeare's technique suffered or triumphed here, calls for comment more than any eavesdropping situation in any of the plays. And if any reliability can be accorded the version of the scene that is Hunter's preference, and Dr. Arnold seems to give it credence, attention should be called to the fact that in that version Corambis (Polonius) speaks *after* Hamlet enters, and before the soliloquy is started. As Hamlet enters, Corambis sights him, and asks the Queen to retire, which she does. Corambis then turns to Ophelia and hands her a book, with direction to 'walk aloose.' He tells her that 'the king shall be unseen.' Hamlet then commences his soliloquy, 'pouring

**POET LORE*, Volume 20, page 468.

†'The Soliloquies of Shakespeare,' by Morris LeRoy Arnold, Ph.D. (*Columbian Press*, N. Y., 1911.)

upon a book.' How, with this situation, could Shakespeare, when he constructed his play out of this old one, escape Hamlet's consciousness of being watched? Especially would this be so in our poet's creating of two scenes out of this one, in the new version, in one of which he has Hamlet enter 'pouring upon a book,' and being approached by Polonius, *the king an eavesdropper*, the 'Asides' of Polonius being addressed to the king; and in the other, Hamlet entering and speaking the 'soliloquy' without mention of a book, while 'walk aloose' is changed to 'walk you *here*,' as a command to Ophelia by her obtuse, precise father, the dramatic idea of approaching Hamlet with regard to the subject of Ophelia being followed by one of attracting him by having her cross his path. And while, in the new version, no word is uttered after Hamlet appears, the idea that Hamlet is accustomed to walk where he actually does enter 'pouring upon a book,' in the old version, is in that part of the scene that is put forward into the following act, in the new version, changed to the idea of him being covertly 'sent for' to appear where the 'soliloquy' is delivered. All of this points to the idea that while the creator of the scene in the old version may not have intended Hamlet to be conscious of being watched, and may not have noticed that he had constructed the scene so crudely, the situation suggests this consciousness without Hamlet's own words carrying forward the idea; Shakespeare noticed and felt this, and the idea appealed to him and he reconstructed the two new scenes for the developing and subtilizing of this consciousness, and he also reconstructed the 'soliloquy' with Claudius in his mind, and Hunter's objection to the advancing of the 'soliloquy' into the heart of the court-play development is thus made a highly important reason in favor of such advancement. We must remember that Shakespeare was thoroughly familiar with the old play, as it is known his company played it as early as 1594 — nearly a decade before Shakespeare's quarto appeared.

Here are six points that perhaps we did not make clear and distinct in our other article, and which we would like to see Dr.

Arnold, or some one else equally well qualified, answer, but answer only in the interest of a view that harmonizes all the dramatic elements in the scene and in the characters without undue respect to any array of critics or stage tradition howsoever authoritative, or disrespect to any view howsoever humble:

First — Shakespeare has given us evidence that fully advises the audience of Hamlet's knowledge of the espials *before he enters*. He has also given us lines that focus the attention of the audience on the sensitive condition of Claudius at the instant Hamlet appears. We will state this evidence later.

Second — The soliloquy is superstitious. If there is a hereafter that carries forward the consciousness of this life, only the superstitious dread it.

Third — Wonderful as are the cadences in the speech, harmonizing with the idea of a soliloquy, the sentiment is false to our idea of Hamlet. He is not superstitious. We will state abundant evidence by word and deed that he neither desired to die after his experience with his father's spirit, but also that he had no dread of 'the undiscover'd country.' And even with his father's spirit, he was affected intellectually, not superstitiously. The majestic sense of aroused intellect contained in the lines given Hamlet upon his first vision of the Ghost are lost in the theatrical and superstitious effect given the scene on the stage.

Fourth — Claudius is superstitious. The prayer scene gives abundant evidence of his attitude toward the dreams that come in the sleep of death.

Fifth — Claudius is suspicious and the soliloquy is specially adapted to aggravate his suspicions and to produce in the King a state of being 'dreadfully attended' by Hamlet and 'the undiscover'd country' in connection with his own consciousness of the crime.

Sixth — The dramatic elements in eavesdropping situations were never slighted by Shakespeare. These situations appear in twenty-three of the plays.

Let us consider briefly each of these points, most of our other article having been devoted to the colloquy with Ophelia:

First — What is the evidence of Hamlet's knowledge of

the espials *before he enters?* Of course, if he has n't this knowledge, then we are compelled to ask how could the 'soliloquy' be intended for Claudius? But if there is evidence that he did have this knowledge, then we are equally compelled to take a look at the 'soliloquy' in the light of Hamlet's consciousness that he is being watched and overheard. There are four points of evidence to be considered in this connection: (a) There is the line, 'For we have closely sent for Hamlet hither.' 'Closely' means 'secretly, privately, covertly.' It appears in 'Love's Labour's Lost,' Act IV, scene iii, line 137; 'Richard III,' Act III, scene i, line 159; 'Romeo and Juliet,' Act V, scene iii, line 255; and in 'Hamlet,' Act III, scene i, line 29. The line thus reads, 'For we have covertly sent for Hamlet hither.' Its import must be construed in connection with the words in the preceding scene, 'dreadfully attended' and 'sent for.' Hamlet tells his school-fellows that he is 'most dreadfully attended,' and this suggests the inquiry, 'Were you not sent for?' And so in the line, 'For we have closely sent for Hamlet hither,' the import is clear that this advises the audience that Hamlet is again conscious of being 'most dreadfully attended,' and is thus on the alert for espials when he answers the summons. (b) This effect is heightened by the fact that the day before he has surprised out of his school-fellows their agency to the king. When he receives the 'covert' summons, would he not instantly be reminded of his experience of the day before, and of days before that? (c) And then again, is he to be deceived by the guileless Ophelia under unnatural conditions *after* he has just outwitted two astute young men under natural conditions? Was it not natural that his school-fellows should visit him in his bereavement? Was not the excuse given them by the king an honorable one from their view-point? Did they suspect crime? On the other hand, was it natural for the obedient Ophelia to walk across Hamlet's path with his 'remembrances' in her hands after she had been forbidden to see him, pretending to read on a book? Could the pretense in *her* appear natural? And when her father commands her to 'walk

you *here*,' would not 'here' be the precise point where Hamlet enters? Would not the precise, obtuse court chamberlain have her walk at a point where *he* figures Hamlet cannot miss stumbling into her the instant he enters? And, of course, Hamlet does see her the instant he comes in sight of the place, sees her before any of them see him. His failure to notice her, and her inability to address him, weakens her as the soliloquy progresses, and at its conclusion she has sunk to her knees in prayer, in which attitude she is when he impressively invokes, *not asks*, that she remember his sins in her 'orisons.' (d) Finally, as evidence showing that Hamlet was not only conscious of the presence of espials before he enters to deliver the 'soliloquy,' but that our poet has prepared the king to respond to just such torment in double meanings, subtle hints and picturesque superstitions, all reinforced by rhythmic eloquence, as are contained in the 'soliloquy,' we have the 'aside' of Claudius expressing the effect of a remark of Polonius as his last utterance before Hamlet commences his 'To be, or not to be.' Such a contrast is a Shakespeare characteristic quite as much as the appeal, the delicacy, the spirit, the charm and the *fidelity* contained in all Shakespeare eaves-dropping situations. Polonius has commented on the pious hypocrisy in having Ophelia simulate religious devotion. It has been suggested, on the strength of what Polonius here says, and Ophelia does, that this scene should be set in a chapel, as much on Ophelia's account as an *excuse* for her being where Hamlet is requested to appear, as on account of the 'soliloquy' itself, and it seems to me that the suggestion is not only worthy of consideration, that a chapel-setting would not only reconcile each character to the scene more harmoniously, and give increased impressiveness to the 'soliloquy,' but the view of the 'soliloquy' here suggested would be strengthened, and the discords that Robert Russell Benedict ('The Mystery of Hamlet, Prince of Denmark,' Lippincott, 1909) mentions would turn into arguments in favor of the speech as intended to involve the king.

Second — The 'soliloquy' is superstitious. This is self-evident.

Third — It is false to Hamlet. As we have suggested, the key-note to Hamlet's character is a responsiveness to the intellectual and spiritual element in dramatic situations. The 'gloomy temperament,' 'the sense of being haunted,' that William Winter so unqualifiedly approved in Edwin Booth's Hamlet, and the picturesque study that E. H. Sothorn has developed, do not express that which Forbes Robertson comes nearest reflecting, the aroused intellect free from any taint of morbidness when brought into contact with some great phenomena like the appearance of the Ghost or the rising of the king in the court scene. In the former, the aroused majestic sense is spoiled if Horatio lays a detaining hand on Hamlet when the latter asks, 'Why, what should be the fear?' This inquiry is addressed more to the phenomena and to himself than to Horatio, and the latter should be, *is*, awed by it. Hamlet feels the immortality of his own soul here in a sense too powerful for words. It is 'immortal as itself.' He decides no harm can come to him by entering 'the undiscover'd country.' To sustain the dignity of the scene and avoid the theatrical that so often spoils it on the stage, the superstitious rejoinder of Horatio should be in a weak voice, and when a detaining hand is finally put upon Hamlet, it should be weak. There should be as much awe of Hamlet here as of the unknown, otherwise the dignity of the scene is lost and the Ghost is unreal. And this intellectual *awakening* again appears in the court scene when the king rises. Hamlet should not rush at the king. The climax of soul-suffering has been reached and he should remain riveted to his seat by the sight of a suffering more intense than anything contained in a physical revenge. The thought of a physical revenge has been intellectualized out of Hamlet by the sight of the phenomena. The instinct for revenge has been neutralized. This explains why the revenge is delayed. Only in the passive moods does he desire to kill, except in the final scene where the appeal is purely physical. 'The gloomy temperament' is largely simulated in Hamlet. While he has 'that within which passeth show,' he also carries an 'antic disposition.' He even

appears 'mad.' And yet when he says, 'I have of late — but wherefore I know not — lost all my mirth, foregone all custom of exercise,' he is having fun with the boys he is addressing, for we know he has been 'in continual practice' with the foils since Laertes 'went into France.' And as to being haunted by the Ghost, he doubts it, but *is* haunted by the *king* and his court chamberlain. And above all, there's no dread. He took voyage to England, knowing its purpose before he started. He returned to Denmark, alone, notwithstanding young Fortinbras was his friend, became his choice for the succession to the throne of Denmark. He accepted the challenge for the duel with 'a kind of gain-giving as would perhaps trouble a woman.' And when Horatio wanted to give heed to the feeling, and at least postpone the match, Hamlet gave expression to this comprehensive and sublime statement of his attitude toward the 'something after death':

Not a whit; we defy augury; there is special providence in the fall of a sparrow. If it be now, 'tis not to come; if it be not to come, it will be now; if it be not now, yet it will come: the readiness is all; since no man has aught of what he leaves, what is't to leave betimes? Let be.'

And when Laertes informs him that he has been slain by the treachery of the king and that there is 'not half an hour of life' in him, he first disposes of the king; he then receives the apologies of Laertes; then he makes a request of Horatio to report him and his 'cause aright to the unsatisfied'; then he prevents Horatio from becoming a suicide, and with his latest breath, gives his dying voice to young Fortinbras as the successor to the throne of Denmark, a happy thought of Shakespeare's when it is remembered that young Fortinbras' father had been slain by Hamlet's father. 'The rest is silence.' Is there any dread of the 'undiscover'd country' in all of this?

Fourth — But Claudius is superstitious. He tries to pray, and cannot, because he sees glimpses of himself in 'the undiscover'd country.' He feels there is a punishment awaiting him in the other world. A mortal judge may be bribed, or improperly

influenced, in Shakespeare's day as in ours. But Claudius fears the Eternal Judge, according to this extract from his own soliloquy:

In the corrupted currents of this world
 Offense's gilded hand may shove by justice,
 And oft 'tis seen the wicked prize itself
 Buys out the law: but 'tis not so above;
 There is no shuffling, there the action lies
 In his true nature, and we ourselves compelled
 Even to the teeth and forehead of our faults
 To give in evidence.

There is no danger of him committing suicide. Nor does he think Hamlet means suicide when he refers to taking 'arms against a sea of troubles, and by opposing, end them.' The 'bare bodkin' creates a doubt, but it is a painful doubt. It is the very ebb and flow of doubt and dread, hope and fear, that gives dramatic exquisiteness to this psychological study. It is a striking illustration of Shakespeare's superb intuitions of the secret action of hopes and fears played upon by the thought-suggestions and double meanings conveyed by mere words. And to appreciate the fascination of the study in the mind of one of the 'lawful espials,' we have only to con the soliloquy in the light of Claudius' intense clinging to his earthly possessions as evidenced in his fear of the dreams that come in the sleep of death that took him to his knees in the fruitless effort to pray:

'But O, what form of prayer
 Can serve my turn? "Forgive me my foul murder?"
 That cannot be, since I am still possess'd
 Of those effects for which I did the murder,
 My crown, mine own ambition and my queen.
 May one be pardoned and retain the offense?'

Fifth — Hamlet's soliloquy contains subtle hints peculiarly meaningful to the suspicious mind of Claudius. Claudius does not suspect Hamlet knows he is present till Hamlet refers to 'outrageous fortune.' The espials should at all times be visible to the audience in order that the effect of the 'soliloquy' may be observed by the expression in their respective faces. Their being

visible also helps the audience to keep them in mind in considering the meaning of the 'soliloquy.'

The reference to 'outrageous fortune' is the first intimation in the play Hamlet has given Claudius, or any of his agents, as to his fortune. This, followed by the considering taking 'arms against a sea of troubles, and by opposing, end them,' cannot but suggest to the suspicious mind of Claudius that his own life is in jeopardy. Yet he cannot interrupt, he cannot speak, he is compelled to remain where he is and listen as he never listened before.

There is something soothing in the four lines that follow this seemingly veiled threat to end the life of the king, almost a requiem for the dead, the heart-ache and all shocks ended, 'a consummation devoutly to be wish'd.'

Hamlet then goes back to the beginning of this train of thought and following the 'sleep,' the thought contemplates what follows death instead of what death leaves behind. It is the dread of dreams following death that 'makes calamity of so long life.' In the soliloquy in the first quarto, 'the happy smile, the accursed damn'd.' In the new version only the disagreeable is suggested and it is so subtly done, Claudius cannot say that only the 'accursed' are meant. And what sly digs, what impressive insinuations, what rich cadence are in the lines:

To die, to sleep;
To sleep: perchance to dream: ay, there's the rub;
For in that sleep of death what dreams may come,
When we have shuffled off this mortal coil,
Must give us pause: there's the respect
That makes calamity of so long life;
For who would bear the whips and scorns of time,
The oppressor's wrong,

'The oppressor's wrong'! Does the king picture in his own mind the wrong as well as the oppressor that he thinks is in Hamlet's mind,— a picture of himself in the orchard,— Hamlet's father asleep,— the murder! — Hamlet an unseen witness?

'The proud man's contumely.' Is this a narcotic? Does this unman the king? 'The pangs of disprized love' is the court chamberlain's balm. 'The law's delay'! Has Hamlet any legal

evidence or human proof of the crime? Does the king know his evidence? Does the king know that Hamlet has nothing to do with 'the law's delay' — no cause for complaint against it even in his thought? The king is here compelled to think that Hamlet has just cause for complaint, that he has a legal case for the court to act upon.

The insolence of office, and the spurns
That patient merit of the unworthy takes,
When he himself might his quietus make
With a bare bodkin?

Who would bear any of these 'calamities' when he might end his life with a hatpin or short dagger, or whatever a 'bodkin' is? This is an unexpected conclusion of the train of thought — to the king — although a logical one. The king has n't been thinking of the logic of the talk, and perhaps discovers that he has been thinking of suicide himself as a last resort, in the event the knowledge and subtle tactics of the prince prove too much for him. Perhaps when Hamlet mentions the 'quietus' he has anticipated a thought already in the king's purpose.

But Hamlet goes back and begins over again, ignoring the thought of a soothing 'quietus' afforded by a neat suicide, and reminds us again of the terrible possibility of hell,— the hell of the supersititious mind,— the hell where the cursed are damned, in the minds of superstitious guilt. Here are the exact words:

Who would fardels bear,
To grunt and sweat under a weary life,
But that the dread of something after death,
The undiscover'd country from whose bourn
No traveler returns, puzzles the will,
And makes us rather bear those ills we have,
Than fly to others that we know not of?

Does this not banish the thought of suicide from the king's mind? His conscience makes a coward of him and his resolution is 'sicklied o'er with the pale cast of thought.' Werder here interprets 'conscience' as 'pure reflection.' To my mind, it is the king's own word in the line, 'How smart a lash that speech

doth give my conscience!' He is too weak to repeat it here. It is no wonder that the king's enterprise loses the name of action. He is 'like a man to double-business bound,' as he himself confesses in the soliloquy in the prayer scene.

Sixth — Let us consider briefly Shakespeare's characteristic interest in eaves-dropping situations and the violence that the speech does, considered as a soliloquy, to this characteristic. While eaves-dropping occurs in twenty-three of the plays, in ten of them the plot turns on such situations. These plays are as follows: 'Love's Labour's Lost,' 'Much Ado About Nothing,' 'Midsummer Night's Dream,' 'Romeo and Juliet,' 'Measure for Measure,' 'All's Well That Ends Well' (turns upon knowledge conveyed to the Countess that Helena has in soliloquy spoken of her love for Bertram), 'Cymbeline,' 'Troilus and Cressida,' 'The Tempest' and 'Hamlet.'

In five of the plays, one or more of the characters speak for the benefit of the eaves-dropper: 'Much Ado About Nothing' (Act II, scene iii; Act III, scene i); 'Taming of the Shrew' (Act IV, scene ii); 'Two Gentleman of Verona' (Act IV, scene ii); 'Othello' (Act IV, scene i); and 'Hamlet' (Act II, scene ii, and Act III, scene i).

Soliloquies are overheard in eight of the plays: 'Love's Labour's Lost' (Act IV, scene iii); 'Twelfth Night' (Act II, scene v); 'King Henry IV,' Part I (Act II, scene ii; Act V, scene iv); 'King Henry VI,' Part III (Act II, scene v; Act III, scene i); 'Romeo and Juliet' (Act II, scene ii); 'Antony and Cleopatra' (Act IV, scene ix); 'All's Well That Ends Well' (Act I, scene iii); and 'Hamlet' (Act III, scene i).

In 'A Winter's Tale,' Autolycus soliloquizes at length in the presence of others, and does n't discover the fact till the soliloquy is concluded, and then exclaims, 'If they have overheard me now,— why, hanging.' But these others have been so absorbed in their own conference that they have neither seen nor heard Autolycus.

In the fourth scene of the fourth act of 'Hamlet,' the prince

asks his school-fellows to go a little ahead in order that he can be alone. He desires to soliloquize. Were no other illustration possible, this is sufficient to show Shakespeare's consciousness of a soliloquy being spoken aloud, and that if the soliloquy is not dramatically suitable to be overheard and observed, no one should be within earshot unless, as in the case of Perdita, Florizel and Camillo, they are so absorbed with themselves they can neither see nor hear anything going on around them. This latter situation is more dramatic because the soliloquy is there, just as 'To be, or not to be' intensifies the situation of Claudius.

In the light of all these studies, can we say our playwright was not conscious of the king's presence,—the presence of Hamlet's deadliest enemy,—a suspicious, superstitious mind,—and that our peerless dramatic poet put the soliloquy in sight of Claudius unmindful of what he was doing? To my mind, 'with all its heterogeneousness, the deeper and more synthetic the apprehension of it the surer the sense that it is not careless, but meant.' To my mind, Hamlet in the Ophelia colloquy in this scene, was affected by Ophelia, and the effect, indulged, threatened madness. To my mind, Ophelia and Polonius saw Hamlet clearer in this respect than did Claudius. To my mind, the celebrated monologue is an 'antic disposition' intended to worry the king, while the king spoke real soliloquy in the presence of Polonius when he exclaimed:

Love! his affections do not that way tend;
 Nor what he spake, though it lack'd form a little,
 Was not like madness. There's something in his soul
 O'er which his melancholy sits on board,
 And I do doubt the hatch and the disclose
 Will be some danger, which for to prevent
 I have in quick determination
 Thus set it down: he shall with speed to England
 For the demand of our neglected tribute.

A LEGEND OF SAINT NICHOLAS*

BY BEULAH MARIE DIX

A story of the children's good Saint, for children of all ages, to be enacted upon a bare platform, without drop-curtain or scenery, after the manner of the Ben Greet Company in "Everyman."

The PEOPLE are as follows:

PROLOGUS.

SAINT NICHOLAS.

AZZO, *a mighty lord.*

PIA, *his lady.*

NICCOLO (COLA) *their son.*

MICO, *his playfellow.*

THE SULTAN.

ZOE, *his young daughter.*

ILBRAHIM

ARBACES

MUSTAPHA

} *Paynims.*

TWO ATTENDANTS.

(Upon the bare stage PROLOGUS enters. He is clad in a scholar's long robe of black, with a black cap, and a scroll in his hand. He bows low and speaks to the audience.)

Prologus.— Now lithe and listen, gentles all, to me,
As many as here in presence seated be.
A saintly legend from the Long Ago,
When Paynims fierce held all the coasts in woe,
When ways were rough, and Death stalked ever near,
Shall be set forth this hour, to do you cheer.
Since this our narrow stage scant room doth lend,

* 'A Legend of Saint Nicholas' was produced for the first time at the Toy Theatre, Boston, December 16, 1912. Acting rights, and rights of translation, reserved to the author.

All lapses must your nimble wit amend.
 First, to our aid, we pray you here behold
 The formal greensward of an orchard old
 That 'longeth to good Lord Azzo's fair domain.
 Believe that next you look upon the main
 In a wild spot. Then are you rapt away
 Unto the East, where holdeth cruel sway
 The haughty Sultan. Last, your footsteps wend
 To Azzo's palace, where the tale shall end.
 So is said out, in sooth, my simple say.
 Now find ye fitter matter in our play.
 Come, all ye parents, that have children dear,
 Unto the woes of a young child give ear!
 Come, all ye lads, and pretty maidens, too,
 List to the fortunes of a child like you!

(PROLOGUS goes out.)

(Two ATTENDANTS in long, belted robes, with broad collars, like Bluecoat boys, enter with a little garden bench, which they set upon the stage and go out. Enter Azzo. He wears a belted robe, with slip shoes, and a girdle to which is hung a straight, cross-hilted sword.)

Azzo.— Azzo am I, the lord of this fair land.

In youth I smote the Paynim, sword in hand,

But in mine age at home in peace I bide.

O'er forest, farm and fief my sway is wide.

But out and alas! in this chief thing I'm poor.

One only child have I, to heir my store.

In this one son is all my hope and joy,

Yet he, alas! proves but a knavish boy.

But soft, look yonder! Lo, who cometh here?

(Enter PIA in a trailing robe.)

Welcome, my most sweet wife and lady dear!

Pia.— My honored lord, may fair days still be thine!

Azzo.— What is amiss with thee, good lady mine?

Pia.— Fair husband, at thy hand I crave a boon.

Azzo.— Name it, good lady! It is granted soon.

Pia.— Thy pardon, then, for an unlucky wight,
Who durst not show himself within thy sight.

Azzo.— Aye, by my truth, it is my rascal son!
What mischief now hath our wild Cola done?
The truant played, belike, and run from school,
Or ridden, perchance, and lamed my favorite mule,
Frighted the serving maids. . . .

Pia.— Nay, be thou mild!
When all is said, the boy is but a child.
Yea, and at heart I know him kind and true.

Azzo.— Call him to me, and without more ado!

Pia.— Be not too harsh with the poor lad, I pray.

Azzo.— Cola! What, Cola! Cola! Wilt thou stay?

Cola (*comes in, a gallant, erect little lad of ten or twelve, in a belted kirtle that reaches to the knee and cross-gartered*).— Lo, here am I, good father, at command.

Azzo.— What is yon stain I see upon thine hand?

Cola.— That stain, my lord? 'Tis blood, as I believe.

Azzo.— And stained and rent behold thy doublèt sleeve.
So! Hast thou brawled, and in the open street?
Thy playfellows! Their names!

Cola.— Nay, I entreat!
Thou shalt not harm them, lord, nor do them shame,
For I myself was chief, and most to blame.

Pia.— There spoke mine own dear son, both brave and true.

Azzo.— Peace, good my lady! Truth, I need not sue
To this my son for knowledge. By the sea
Thou hast the truant played, with mates forbidden thee.
That is the truth, which thou dost not deny?

Cola.— No, good my father, for I will not lie.

Azzo.— Amongst these lawless ribalds of the street
Thou hast been fighting, and thou hast been beat.

Cola.— Nay, father, if the truth thou'lt have me tell,
'Twas I that beat them, soundly, too, and well.

Azzo.— Thou malapert. . . .

Pia.— Oh, calm thee, dearest lord!

Azzo.— Thou saucy sirrah, hearken well my word:

Thou shalt not wander from this spot to-day.

Here in this orchard on my pleasure stay,

And sharper punishment await, thou knave.

This is a son would make an angel rave.

(*AZZO goes out, and PIA, very sorrowful, starts to follow him.*)

Cola (speaks defiantly).— Here in the orchard, then, I'll
gayly bide.

Good faith, I care not what shall me betide!

Pia (turns back and comes to COLA).— Cola, my child! Mine
own heart's little lad!

Cola.— O, dear my mother, I have made thee sad.

Mother o' me, indeed thou must not weep.

Lo, I will fall upon my knees and creep

For my lord's pardon, nor will ever rise

Until I shall have seen thee wipe thine eyes.

Pia.— Why wilt thou vex him with thy headlong way?

Cola.— With all my heart I set me to obey,

But then upon the breeze I smell the sea.

I think upon the ships, and woe is me!

In the dull schoolroom then I cannot bide.

I must be ranging, with the wind and tide.

And the brown ship-boys that I know full well . . .

Hey, but the wondrous tales they have to tell!

Pia.— I see thou art thy father's very son.

Cola.— Yea, I would do as my dear lord hath done,

Fare over seas to the far Paynim coast,

And with a good sword smite their cursed host.

Pia.— So shalt thou do, my gallant son, one day,

But yet for a few years must patient stay

Under thy father's roof, as fits thine age,

Yea, and con lessons from the written page.

Modest, and eke obedient, without strife,

Be thou to those that may command thy life.
 For right obedience thou first must learn,
 Ere thou commandest others in thy turn.

Cola.— But, oh! it irks me sore to sit in school,
 And irks me, too, sometimes my father's rule.
 Canst thou not help me, O my mother kind,
 To hold in the right path my wayward mind?

Pia.— My little son, if it is help thou need,
 Then thou must seek them that can help indeed.

Cola.— 'Tis the bright saints thou nam'st? But, great and
 wise,

I doubt for me if they would quit the skies.
 How should they ever leave their heavenly seat
 To help a lad that brawled once in the street?

Pia.— Oh, foolish heart of my dear little son!

Cola.— Then would they list the prayer of such a one?

Pia.— Yea, there is one saint, if thou wilt attend,
 That to young children always help will lend.
 Blessed Saint Nicholas, thy name-saint, boy.
 Call thou on him, whene'er thou hast annoy.

Cola.— And he will make me, as I fain would be?

Pia.— He will not make; instead he will help thee.
 Strive thou thine hardest first, mine own son dear,
 Then, when thou need'st help, thou shalt find him near.

Cola.— Yea, I will ever my dear name-saint seek
 For help, whene'er I find my strength grow weak.
 Yea, I will pray to him in this same hour.

Pia.— And thou shalt find thy saint of mighty power.
 So for a little now my leave I take.

Cola.— Weep thou no more for my most worthless sake!
 For now I have this gracious saint to friend me,
 Thou'lt see, dear mother, how I shall amend me.

(PIA goes out, and COLA kneels and prays, but he speaks hurriedly, without putting his mind on his prayer.)

Cola.— Sweet Nicholas, my saint, so kind and gent . . .

I wonder what it was my father meant?
 Sore punished shall I be, and soon, I trow.
 Sweet Nicholas, my saint, oh! help me now!
 Hey, but the wind smells strongly o' the salt!
 I would amend me of my every fault,
 I would obedient be, and good, and mild,
 All that beseemeth well so young a child.
 Hey, but this hour the tide is setting strong!
 I feel it sweeping all my thoughts along.
 And the great ships go dancing down the strand,
 And o'er the sea is the far Paynim land.
 Great Nicholas, my saint, lo, here I bow . . .

(*Enter MICO, a boy of COLA's own age, but meanly clad.*)

Mico.— Cola! Hey, Cola! Mercy save us now!

Art thou turned priest that thou art set at prayer?

Cola (*springing up from his knees*).— Mock'st thou me,
 Mico? Nay, then, have a care!

Mico.— What! Wouldst thou quarrel, and with me, thy
 friend?

Cola.— Go hence, my Mico, for our love must end.

Back to my books must I, O Mico mine!

Mico.— Wilt thou sit in the schoolroom, then, and pine?

Cola.— After this one day, aye, such is my fate.

Mico.— Then use this one day, ere it be too late.

Come forth with me, for one blithe ramble more.

Come, good my Cola, down to the seashore!

Cola.— Nay, but I must not, for I am forbid.

Mico.— Hark to the child that hath been soundly chid!

Cola.— I am no child.

Mico.— Then boldly come away.

Why in a thousand plagues should we delay?

There is a deep dell by the shore I know,

A sheltered spot, where purple wild grapes grow,

And bread have I, and eke a lump of cheese.

Upon the rocks we'll lean and feast at ease.

Come, good my Cola! For the waves run high.

The clouds scud merrily across the sky.

Come forth this one day more, and gayly roam.

This is no time to mope and pine at home.

Cola.— Oh, blessed Nicholas! I needs must stay.

Mico.— Dost hear the wind? Canst thou not smell the spray?

Cola.— Strong savor o' the sea where tall ships ride,

And brown weed falls and rises with the tide!

Mico.— Come, then, my Cola! Dost thou linger still?

Cola.— Have with thee, Mico, and let come what will!

One more day I will take o' breeze and brine.

One blithe day more of roving shall be mine.

Saint Nicholas, so kind, pray thee, forgive!

I'll serve thee all the other days I live.

(MICO and COLA go out. The ATTENDANTS remove the bench, and in its place put a low screen and go out. Enter the three Paynims, ILBRAHIM, who is lean and subtle, MUSTAPHA, who is fat and fearful, and ARBACES, who is very bloodthirsty. They wear full trousers, short jackets and blouses, with turbans, and sashes stuck full of knives and pistols. They have fierce moustaches. They bring with them a little cask to fetch water.)

Ilbrahim.— Keep wary watch, my comrades! All be yare,

Now that we brave it here in Christian air.

Mustapha.— Back to our ship and safety fain would I.

Arbaces.— From Christian dogs, thou craven, wouldst thou fly?

Let them come on, although they be a score!

Full oft ere this I've bathed in Christian gore.

Ilbrahim.— Arbaces, leave thine empty boasts of slaughter.

We come to do no more than draw fresh water.

So long the voyage our casks are dry and drained.

Seek, if some wholesome spring is to be gained.

Arbaces.— Come, then, Mustapha! Knave, why dost thou stand?

Thou seem'st full loath to budge from the sea-strand.

Mustapha.— Know ye, perchance, whose broad domains are these?

Haply, when known, ye will be less at ease.

Arbaces.— What care I how the Christian dog is hight,

Who holds these shores and forests in his might?

Mustapha.— I doubt me if ye have forgot his name.

'Tis great Lord Azzo called, who wrought us shame.

Ilbrahim.— The haughty Azzo, that long years ago

Had well-nigh worked our Sultan's overthrow?

Arbaces.— May Termagant and Mahound send him harm!

Would I had strength to reach him with this arm!

Ilbrahim.— Could we but work on him some great disaster,

We should rejoice the Sultan's heart, our master.

Mustapha.— Hist! Yonder 'tis a footstep. Dost not hear?

Back to the ship, and swift! I quake with fear.

Arbaces.— Cowardly dog! Nay, but thou shalt not flee.

Come hide thyself behind yon rock with me.

Ilbrahim.— Aye, let's lie close, and let us all be dumb.

Soon we'll discover who are these that come.

(*The Paynims hide themselves behind the screen. COLA and Mico come in. COLA is singing.*)

Cola.— Trip, trip,

Skip, skip,

Pretty pebble-stones!

Hop, hop

The water's top,

Never break your bones!

Mico.— Stay, stay, good Cola! I am wearied well.

Leagues we have trudged since stroke of noontide bell.

Cola.— In truth, this is a spot to me is strange.

Never so far from home I've chanced to range.

Black are the rocks, and wild. The sea is stern.

Mico.— Belike 'tis fitting, Cola, we should turn.

Cola.— What! Turn back, Mico, hast thou heart to say?

Art thou a coward that thou 'dst run away?

Mico.— Nay, but I'm wearied, and the hour draws late.

Cola.— First sit and eat! Come then, old Grumble-pate!

(They sit, and Mico takes from his wallet bread, which they share.)

Mico.— The bread I pledged, and thus I will it break.

Cola.— And here my share, that I will blithely take.

The spray of the salt sea shall serve for wine.

How good it is, this last free day of mine!

Soft is the air, though all the sky is gloom,

And kind the savor of the salty spume.

(He sings.) Flower o' the foam!

My father's a sailor; the sea is my home.

Flower o' the tide!

My good ship's the steed where I safely shall ride.

Flower o' the wave!

When I shall die, let the sea be my grave!

Mico.— Canst thou not sing us, lad, a stave more gay?

That is a chant fit for a burial day.

Cola.— Mico, the grudging grumbler, still thou art!

Listen! Is this more welcome to thine heart?

(He sings) Pipe, pretty bird, on the top o' the tree!

Pipe, pretty bird, when I whistle to thee!

A cage all of gold thou shalt have to thy fee.

Pipe, pretty bird, when I whistle to thee!

(The two boys begin blithely to repeat the song together, when the three Paynims rush from behind the screen and fall upon them.)

Mico.— Out! Out! Run, Cola!

(ARBACES seizes MICO, who is too frightened to struggle.

ILBRAHIM and MUSTAPHA seize COLA, who resists with all his might.)

Cola.— Villain! Let me free!

Ilbrahim.— A humbler mien shall soon be taught to thee.

(MUSTAPHA binds COLA's hands.)

Mico.— Cola! Dear Cola! They will work us woe.

Cola.— Where do you lead us? Whither must we go?

Ilbrahim.— Ye shall fare with us over the salt waves.

The faithful can find use for Christian slaves.

Mico.— Cola! They'll sell us in their heathen mart.

Cola.— I hear. And it will break my mother's heart.

Arbaces.— Quickly! March on, thou little Christian whelp!
(*He strikes MICO, who bursts into tears.*)

Mico.— Oh, pitying saints! Oh, is there nowhere help?

Cola.— Peace, Mico! Wouldst thou shame our fathers' faith?

Mico.— Good gentles! Oh, forbear to work us scathe!
Our friends will ransom us from your dread hands.

Arbaces.— We seek not ransom.

Mico.— Into heathen lands,
Oh, do not sell us! 'Tis a great lord's heir,
My comrade, mark you.

Cola.— Prithee, friend, take care!

Ilbrahim (to COLA).— Peace, knave! Or quickly I shall
make thee peace!

Mustapha.— Were it not well we let them buy release?

Arbaces.— Money is good, aye, true.

Ilbrahim.— First let us know
Who is this lord that ransom shall bestow.

Who is thy father? Speak! Art silent still?

Mico.— Oh, answer, Cola! Thou must do their will.

Cola.— That I am come to this is blame of mine.
I'll not declare my father, nor my line.

Arbaces.— Nay, but thou wilt, by great Mahound I swear!
Answer, if for thy safety thou dost care!

Mustapha (*seizing MICO roughly*).— Nay, answer thou!
Methinks this mouse will squeak.

Mico.— Good sirs! Oh, be not rough, for I will speak.
Yon lad is Cola, son to a great lord,
The valiant Azzo.

Mustapha.— May we believe this word?

Ilbrahim.— Art thou the son to Azzo?

Cola.— Yea, his son.

Ilbrahim.— It is a master-stroke that we have done.

Mustapha.— Our fortunes are established, firm and fast.

Arbaces.— We'll have the Sultan's grace while life shall last.

Mico.— Cola! They whisper. What should they intend?

I thought to speak would help thee, dear my friend.

Ilbrahim.— Thou, sirrah, this same moment shalt go clear.

Mico.— Free am I, say'st thou? Cola, be of cheer!

Ilbrahim.— Speed to thine home, and as thou hopest to live,
Speak truthfully the message that I give.

Mico.— Touching the ransom? What's the sum ye've set?

Ilbrahim.— Say to Lord Azzo: We do not forget!

Say to the Christian dog that his sole heir

Shall quit to us the wrongs he made us bear.

Say that we lead him to the Sultan's hall,

Where he shall serve the Sultan as his thrall,

Humbly and basely.

Arbaces.— Such shall be his fate.

Not all the gold and pomp of Azzo's state

May buy his freedom. This to Azzo give:

He ne'er shall see his son while he shall live.

Mico.— Oh, Cola! Cola! Out and woe is me!

What shall I say when they ask news of thee?

Cola.— Oh, Mico, bid my mother not to weep.

Mico.— Our Lady shield thee! All the kind saints keep!

Arbaces.— Off with thee, slave, else thou shalt rue this stay!

Mico.— Ah, Cola! Cola! Oh, alas the day!

(*Mico goes out, sobbing.*)

Mustapha.— Swift to the ship, lest he return with aid!

Ilbrahim.— And still, young lording, thou art not afraid?

Cola.— Sweet Nicholas!

Arbaces.— I'll soon amend thy speed.

Cola.— I must obey thee, in my bitter need.

Ilbrahim.— Proud Azzo's son full soon shall learn to bow.

Cola.— Sweet Nicholas, my saint! Oh, help me now!

(*The Paynims go out, leading COLA captive. The ATTENDANTS remove the screen and in its place set a stool and a table and*

go out. Enter the SULTAN, a very fierce, proud Paynim, in royal robes, with a plume and jewel in his turban.)

Sultan.— He who doth love his life, let him now be still!
 Death is his portion who grudgeth at my will.
 Wide is the land that my rough rule doth sway.
 Many are the men that must my law obey.
 Whoso withstandeth me, better were he dead.
 Straight shall my minions smite me off his head.
 Fell are the fierce gods to the which I kneel . . .
 Termagant and Mahound, sharper than the steel.
 Cruel unto Christians am I ever foe.
 Deep my delight, whenever I work 'em woe.
 Down, all ye people! To my bidding bend!
 Render me homage, or your days shall end!

(Enter ZOE, the SULTAN'S little daughter, eight or ten years old. She wears full trousers that reach to the ankle, turned-up red slippers, a white blouse, a little embroidered jacket, and many bangles and chains.)

Zoe.— Dread father and my lord, a boon I crave.

Sultan.— Approach, my daughter Zoe, and my slave!

Zoe (kneeling).— Lo, my dread lord, this favor do I seek,
 That the young Christian thrall with me may speak.
 In this vast palace must I lonely stray.
 There are no children here with whom to play.
 The little Christian thrall, 'tis but a boy.
 Let me speak with him, lord. 'Twould give me joy.

Sultan.— What say'st thou, foolish prattler? Peace, be still!

Zoe.— Oh, be not angered, for I'll do thy will!

Sultan.— Well do I know thy foolish heart is soft.

Womanish-pitiful I've seen thee oft.

Now would'st thou to this slave some comfort take,
 Since I misuse him, for his father's sake.

Zoe.— Ah, good my lord, no more than child is he.

Sultan.— Right soon a sorrier child he'll learn to be.

Ah, proud Lord Azzo, all the wrong thou'st wrought

For thy dear son heaped misery hath bought.
 Lo, deeming thus, my heart hath waxed full glad.
 I'll praise the gods that gave to me this lad.
 Come, my young daughter, come, and incense sweet
 We will burn yonder, at great Mahound's feet!

(The SULTAN and ZOE go out.)

(Then come in ARBACES and COLA, in a ragged kirtle, who carries a great drinking goblet of metal.)

Arbaces.— Get to thy task, thou little Christian dog,
 Or else right soundly straight we shall thee flog.

Cola.— Am I not ever swift at thy commands?

Arbaces.— Aye, since thou knowest the weight of our fell
 hands.

Cleanse thou yon cup!

Cola.— Thou seest that I obey.

Arbaces.— Fail thou therein, and thou shalt rue the day!

(ARBACES goes out. COLA kneels and polishes the cup. Presently he speaks.)

Cola.— Scarce have I eaten, lo, this many an hour.
 Always new tasks, and far beyond my power.
 Once would I not obey my father kind.
 Now have I masters of a sterner mind.
 Sweet Nicholas, my saint, all this I've earned.
 May I go home, now that my lesson's learned?
 All my life long I'll bear me as I should.
 Kind Nicholas! Dear Saint! I'll be so good.

(COLA sobs, and at that moment ZOE comes in.)

Zoe.— Cola! Ho, little Christian! It is I.

What is amiss? Why, Cola, dost thou cry?

Cola.— Cry? Art thou crazed, thou little silly maid?

Boys do not cry, nor are they e'er afraid.

Zoe.— Thou must not call me little silly girl!

I am a princess, and thou but a churl.

Cola.— A lord was I once, in my father's hall.

Zoe.— Here thou art nothing but my father's thrall.

Cola.— Aye, but a slave. Go hence! Leave me alone!

Canst thou not see my task is to be done?

Zoe.— Cola! Nay, Cola! Wilt thou force me seek thee?

Cola.— How should thy father's thrall dare to bespeak thee?

Zoe.— Wilt thou be angered then against me still?

I am — right sorry that I spoke thee ill.

Cola.— Mine only friend!

Zoe.— Thou wilt forgive me, please?

Cola.— Forgive? I kiss thine hands, upon my knees.

Zoe.— Soft now! Receive this, Cola! 'Tis a cake.

I brought it hither stealthy, for thy sake.

Cola.— Thou little Princess! Ever art thou kind.

In all my prayers I'll hold thee still in mind.

(He eats the cake while he talks.)

Zoe.— What are the gods to whom thou shapest thy prayer?

What is the name I hear thee oft declare?

Cola.— 'Tis sweet Saint Nicholas that most I praise,

He giveth help through all the long, hard days.

Zoe.— Saint Nicholas! Speak I the name aright?

Now tell me more of this most wondrous wight.

Cola.— Chiefest to children, *Zoe*, is he friend.

Ever to children doth he blessings send.

Zoe.— Had I been born in some good Christian land,

Fain had I praised that saint, with heart and hand.

Our gods are fierce, with cruel eyes so hot.

I'll whisper to thee: Truth, I love them not!

Cola.— My sweet Saint Nicholas is ever mild.

Always he hearkens to the least, small child.

Zoe.— But if thy saint have power, call his name!

Will he not come and snatch thee from thy shame?

Cola.— Why should he help me? Why should he lend aid,

Until mine own strength shall be quite outpayed?

One must do all, and so my mother taught,

Before he ask that great aid shall be brought.

When I am older grown, and big and strong,

Thou'lt see they shall not hold me captive long.
 But till that day, dear lass, I must endure
 Whatever my ill fortune hath in store.

Zoe.— Cola, I pity thee with all my heart.

Cola.— Ah, Zoe, thou dost ever take my part.

So good! So kind! To Nicholas I'll pray
 To make of thee a Christian, too, some day.

(ILBRAHIM comes in.)

Ilbrahim.— Fair Princess Zoe, lo, thy father calls.

Grudge will he sore that thou dost talk with thralls.

Zoe.— Say thou naught, then, for my dread father's ear.

(She gives ILBRAHIM a ring from her hand.)

This ring from mine own finger, have it here!

Ilbrahim.— Get to thy task, thou little idle knave!

Hast thou forgotten that thou art a slave?

Zoe.— Ilbrahim, come! Do thou attend on me!

Chide not the lad, friend. Here is gold for thee.

(ZOE and ILBRAHIM go out. COLA kneels to his task, and presently speaks.)

Cola.— Sweet my Saint Nicholas, my shame is deep

That like a maiden thou hast seen me weep.

Gentle my name-saint, straight I will amend,

But through the long days, do thou stand my friend.

My fathers' faith I must not bring to shame.

Sweet my Saint Nicholas, I praise thy name!

Lo, on the hot air comes a smack o' spray.

How fare my parents, weary leagues away?

Kind Nicholas, let not my mother know

The shame I suffer here, the pain and woe.

Could I but see her once before I die. . . .

Indeed, Saint Nicholas, I do not cry!

Brave will I be, through all the days that come,

Only by night, oh! send me dreams of home!

(He looks up to the sky and presently sings.)

Swallow, my swallow!

Fain would I follow,
 Over the foam,
 Over the foam!
 Follow, oh! follow!
 Swallow, my swallow!
 Follow thee home!
 Follow thee home!

Saint Nicholas! The tears I cannot keep.

Saint Nicholas! They must not see me weep!

(The SULTAN comes in, and with him ZOE, ARBACES, ILBRAHIM, and MUSTAPHA. The last named carries a jar of wine.)

Sultan.— Lo, I am merry. I will drink red wine.

(He sits.)

And he shall serve me, yonder thrall of mine.

(ILBRAHIM fills from the jar the cup which COLA holds.)

Ilbrahim.— Speed, then, thou slave! Dost hear thy master's voice?

(COLA kneels and presents the cup to the SULTAN.)

Sultan.— Thy woe, proud Azzo's son, makes me rejoice.

Why on this day dost keep such sorry cheer?

Upon thy cheek, by Mahound! 'tis a tear.

Stout heart is thine, great Azzo's only heir.

'Tis a maid's garments fitter thou shouldst wear.

Cola.— Wilt thou be pleased to drink, O mighty lord?

Sultan.— I've blither sport than drink could e'er afford.

So thou hast dared to prattle with yon maid?

Spies do I keep, and know each word that's said.

Zoe.— Oh, good my lord, thine anger turn on me!

Sultan.— Peace, silly wench! Thou slave, I spoke to thee.

What is the false saint on whose name thou'lt call?

Cola.— 'Tis great Saint Nicholas, not false at all.

Sultan.— If strong thy gods, as they do boast in vain,

Why art thou left my captive, in such pain?

Thou seest our gods are stronger far than thine.

Then be thou wise, and worship at our shrine.

Cola.— Great lord, thou bidd'st me mine own faith forsake?

Sultan.— A truer worship, boy, I bid thee take.

Bow to our gods, and I will set thee free,

Yea, more, as mine own son will cherish thee.

Cola.— Great lord, I thank thee for this kindness shown,

But for thy faith I'll never leave mine own.

Sultan.— Thou wilt defy me, then, presumptuous slave?

Ere the sunsetting thou wilt be less brave.

Zoe.— Father! My father! Lo, I thee entreat.

Sultan.— Be silent, fool, or I shall have thee beat.

(*He turns to COLA.*)

Full little wont am I to beg and sue.

Bend to my bidding straight, or thou shalt rue.

Thou young dog, take this cup within thine hand.

Now pour the red wine forth upon the sand,

And praise thou great Mahound thou'st held in scorn,

Or thou shalt wish that thou hadst ne'er been born.

Zoe.— Oh, Cola, thou must do my father's will,

Or they will hurt thee sore and haply kill.

Cola.— I may not praise thy gods, for they are naught.

Sultan.— Another fashion, then, I'll have thee taught.

Bind yonder slave and scourge him sore with rods,

Until he humbly kneel and praise our gods.

(*ILBRAHIM and ARBACES lay hands upon COLA.*)

Cola.— Upon my body you may work your scathe,

And yet I'll not renounce my father's faith.

Sultan.— With torments dire we soon shall make thee bow.

Dost think thy silly saint can help thee now?

Cola.— Yea, my strong saint could save me in this hour.

Sultan.— Call on him, then, and let him show his power!

Arbaces.— Shall we about it, then, without delay?

Sultan.— Yea, lead him hence to torment, without stay.

Cola.— Saint Nicholas! Oh, help me to be strong!

Let not my martyrdom endure too long!

Sultan.— Yea, call thy saint, for haply he doth sleep.

Cola.— Saint of my heart, thy watch above me keep!

Sultan.— Saint Nicholas! Thou canst not win his ear.

Zoe.— Oh, Christian saint! Oh, why wilt thou not hear?

Cola.— Saint Nicholas! I've done my little all.

Oh, aid me now! Oh, come thou at my call!

(At the back of the stage appears SAINT NICHOLAS, as a comely youth and tall, in the splendid robes of a bishop. COLA stands with his face to the front and his hands upraised. He seems to feel the Saint draw near, but dares not look, lest it be a dream.)

Zoe.— What is this perfume steals upon the air?

(She crosses her arms on her breast and gazes rapidly toward the Saint.)

Ilbrahim.— What is yon light that beams so clear and fair?

(The three Paynims release their hold on COLA, and fall on their knees. The SULTAN covers his face with his arms, as if dazzled.)

Mustapha.— Out and alas! I can no longer stand.

Arbaces.— The strength is withered wholly from mine hand.

(COLA turns, slowly and fearfully. He sees the Saint and runs to him.)

Cola.— Saint Nicholas! Oh, surely thou art come!

Oh, Nicholas, my saint! Oh, take me home!

Saint Nicholas.— Saint of the weak ones, Nicholas am I.

Wherever children call, I hear their cry.

Rise up and fear not, Cola, my name-son!

My little soldier, now thy fight is done.

Lean thou thy tired head upon mine arm,

And I will hold thee safe from every harm,

Thou weary one! Full softly thou shalt sleep,

And I will bear thee home across the deep.

(SAINT NICHOLAS leads COLA off.)

Zoe.— O Nicholas! Great saint! Oh, stay for me!

(She runs out after them.)

Sultan.— Ho, where are ye, my knaves? I cannot see.

(He rises groping, like one gone blind.)

Why hath this darkness fallen on the land?

Why are there none to list to my command?

(The Paynims, awe-stricken and trembling, rise and hasten to him.)

Ilbrahim.— Here am I, lord, to do thy least behest.

Sultan.— Why is this darkness? Is it some mad jest?

Arbaces.— Out and alas, my lord, the sun shines clear!

Sultan.— Then I am blinded — blinded! Are ye near?

Ilbrahim.— A dread enchantment surely hath been wrought

By the great Christian saint we set at naught.

Sultan.— Lead me unto the temple without stay.

There will we fall upon our knees and pray.

Mahound and Termagant, to whom we bow,

Oh, save me, save me from my blindness now!

(The Paynims lead out the blind SULTAN. The ATTENDANTS remove the stool, table, cup and jar. In their place they set a great chair and go out. Enter AZZO and PIA, clad in black and very sorrowful.)

Azzo.— Oh, good my lady, thou must solace take,
And cease to grieve for our poor Cola's sake.

Pia.— Chide not, dear lord, for I must still be sad,
Whene'er I think upon our poor, lost lad.

(She sits.)

Azzo.— Alas, alas, that ever this should be!
My son doth serve the Sultan on his knee,
And so must serve until the day he die,
For all my gold his freedom may not buy.

Pia.— Saint Nicholas that is the children's friend,
Oh, aid my little lad until the end!

Azzo.— Unless the saints their blessed help shall give,
We may not see our boy while we shall live.

Pia.— This is the feast of Nicholas the saint.

Azzo.— Why warms the color in thy cheek so faint?

Pia.— A foolish hope indeed to thee 'twill seem,
But yesternight I had a blithesome dream.

Azzo.— Say on, dear lady, if 'twill bring thee peace.

Pia.— Within my dreaming, sorrow seemed to cease.

For I beheld a noble youth, and mild,
And in his arms he bore a little child.

Over the burning plains he seemed to stride,
Across the mountains, and the sea's harsh tide.

As he drew near, I looked upon his face,
And saw it shining bright with Heaven's own grace,

And then methought I cried aloud with joy,
For in his arms — O husband! 'twas our boy!

'Twas Nicholas the saint that strode the foam,
And in his arms he bore our lost lad home.

Azzo.— 'Twas a fair dream, my lady bright and dear!

Pia.— Shall I draw hope therefrom, or haply fear?

Perchance it meaneth that our lad is dead,
And the saint helped him in the hour he sped.

Alas, alas, my heart is like to break!

Again I weep for my lost darling's sake.

Azzo.— Take comfort, lady! Be not sad of cheer!

It may be, some good day — in some good year —

Pia.— Oh, but my lad, my little, tender son,

The Sultan's slave! My tears will ne'er be done.

(*COLA is heard to sing outside.*)

Cola.— Sweet Saint Nicholas,

Ever gent and mild,

Hear a little child!

Pia.— What is the sound I hear that rings so sweet?

Azzo.— Naught but the young lads, singing in the street.

'Tis Nicholas's day, of all the days,

And through the town they go and sing his praise.

Cola (singing outside).— Sweet Saint Nicholas,

Be thou to me kind,

Hold me still in mind!

Pia.— That song — it echoes! Is my brain gone wild?

Azzo.— It brings me heavy thoughts of our lost child.

I'll bar the door. The sound I may not brook.

Pia.— What manner child doth sing? Good husband, look!
(*Azzo looks forth at the door.*)

Cola (singing outside).— Sweet Saint Nicholas,
All a life of days,
I will give thee praise!

Azzo.— It is a ragged, sorry-looking wight.

Pia.— And is he ragged, then, and in sad plight?
Then call him in, for our poor Cola's sake.

Some good cheer for him surely we should make.

Azzo.— Ho, there! Come in, thou little, noisy knave!
(*COLA comes in, muffled in a ragged cloak.*)

'Tis this dame's pleasure thou shouldst sing a stave.

What! Stand'st thou dumb and frightened, my good boy?

Nay, sing and fear not! None shall thee annoy.

Cola (singing).— Sweet Saint Nicholas,
Far across the foam,
Thou hast led me home!

Pia.— What is that voice? Should things be as they seem —
(*COLA throws off his cloak.*)

Cola! My Cola! Oh, let me still dream!

Cola.— Mother! My mother! Clasp me to thee tight!

Pia.— Methinks I waken from a long, black night.

Azzo.— Full welcome art thou home.

Cola (kneeling).— Father, forgive
The wrong I've done thee. As I hope to live,
Henceforth thou'lt find me—,

Azzo (raising him).— Let the future show
All that we both have learned in days of woe.

Pia.— My child redeemed before mine eyes I see.
It was a true dream then that came to me.

Cola.— Belike I, too, have dreamed, O mother mine.
Methought the good saint bore me o'er the brine.
Methought he snatched me from the Sultan's court,
Where to the Paynim folk my shame was sport,
Where all were harsh, and none were kind — save one.

Pia.— Why dost thou look so sad, my dearest son?

Cola.— I think upon my little comrade true.

Would that the saint had brought her hither, too!

(*Mico is heard to sing outside.*)

Mico.— Turn about, turn about, turn about again!

Silly maid, silly maid, thou dost seek in vain.

Trip her in the puddle, so all her clothes are wet.

Heathen jade, heathen jade, no better should she get.

Pia.— What are those voices in the alley-way?

Azzo.— It is the street boys still about their play.

(*ZOE is heard to call piteously outside.*)

Zoe.— Cola! Oh, Cola! Dost not hear me cry?

Come thou and help me! Zoe! It is I.

Cola.— Mother! My father! 'Tis my little friend.

(*Cola runs out at the door, and is heard to speak outside.*)

Out on ye, cowards! Now your sport's at end.

(*COLA comes in again, leading ZOE, who is much frightened and dishevelled.*)

Azzo.— Methinks this is some little heathen lass.

Pia.— Poor little heart! What brought thee to such pass?

Cola.— My lady mother, lo, this little maid —

Look up now, Zoe! Be thou not afraid!

When all were harsh, to me she was right kind.

Pia.— My little maid, in me a mother find!

Zoe.— Oh, thou art gentle! With thee shall I stay?

For I have come, oh! such a weary way.

But good Saint Nicholas was aid to me,

When once I vowed that I'd a Christian be.

Azzo.— And thou shalt be baptized our daughter dear.

Cola.— Thou'lt be my sister, Zoe. Dost thou hear?

Zoe.— Saint Nicholas! To him I give all praise.

Cola.— Saint Nicholas that helped us in hard days,

Make us in fair days good and gentle still!

Saint Nicholas! We bow us to thy will.

Azzo.— Now go thou in, my good son, Heaven-sent!

Pia.— And go thou, little one that Heaven hath lent.

Cola.— Yea, hand in hand, dear Zoe, let us wend.

Azzo.— Now have we comfort, and our sorrows end.

(*COLA leads off ZOE, and AZZO leads off PIA. Then comes in PROLOGUS and speaks.*)

Prologus.— My masters all, that here are set in row,
Your praise upon Saint Nicholas bestow,
That ever hath been known the children's friend.
To him give laud and honor without end.
And may Saint Nicholas be with ye still,
And at this season all your joys fulfill.
And to all children, for his sake, be kind!
The little, ragged, poor ones have in mind.
Now may the saint, and all the saints above,
Keep ye, and hold ye ever in their love!
Amen!

(*So goeth out PROLOGUS and the play endeth.*)

INVOCATION

By "HUMILIS"

(From the French)

O my Lord Jesus, Childhood venerable,
I love and fear You, little and miserable,
For You are the Son of Love adorable.

O my Lord Jesus, welcomed Youth,
My soul adores You in humble duty,
For You are Grace in being Beauty.

O my Lord Jesus, who adorneth a garment,
Color of the calm sea and of the dawn,
Red and blue deck You with colors still.

O my Lord Jesus, chaste and sweet toiler,
Teach me the peace of the noblest labor,
That of the carpenter, that of the tailor.

O my Lord Jesus, Sower of parables
Containing the clear live gold of symbols,
Take my copper verses even as obols.

O my Lord Jesus, O Guest Divine,
Who pourest Thy Blood as they pour wine,
Let my hunger and thirst not call Thee in vain.

O my Lord Jesus, whom on fire we name,
Death of Love, whose death ever consumes its flame,
May Thy Truth take fire in the hearts of men.

DEUS BENIGNUS ET NATURA

BY FREDERIC HUNTER

All life was in the soul of quietude;
The sunlight slumbered in the garden close;
And wistful summer hazes overhead
Seemed longing for the guerdon of repose.

Time was a knowledge of the past; and life
Pulsed in one slow full chord too deep for tears;
Bathed in the light of beauty and of youth
Our full rich soul-life had no thought of years.

The treetops shivered in a fluttering flare,
And suddenly wind-shodden Time was there;
The silences were trembling at a sound,
And soft-awakened rustling hid the air.

The charm was broken; and a hint of change
Too soon betrayed the loss of our repose;
Yet we who dreamed with hearts that loved still knew
The Godhead in the petals of the Rose.

A MEETING

BY ALVILDE PRYDZ

Translated from the Norwegian by Hester Coddington.

I met thee, Death, in the dark watches — when thy breath swept my strings and made them resound!

I met thee, Night — and Horror, I met thee — thy heavy step made my lyre tremble. . . .

Death, thou art a friend to rely upon — a comfort in time of need! On earth there is no other friend so kind!

Great God, how many bitter herbs there are — not strengthening, but poisonous herbs, which steal one's strength and courage, and paralyze one's joy! . . .

And here amid mankind! . . . Would it have been better, would it have saved my soul from anguish, from bitter loneliness, if I had held myself aloof? . . . If I had sojourned with the creatures of the wood? . . .

They could not have done me so much evil!

Death, thou art everything to me! A haven thou art, alluring and safe. Here on earth where my lines have fallen, it is not so fair as it is with thee! Ah, it is hard to wander! . . . Now yearns my soul for thy cool, dark realm — for the silent stream of infinitude — for the great eternal life! . . .

Death, I long for the rest thou givest. Lift thy wings — their soft hum is music to my soul! Look upon me! I love thy gaze, so calm and soothing. Touch me! Thy poppy-filled hands bring peace after suffering — they quiet the storm on the sea.

Mighty art thou, oh Death! Great in thy strength, victorious ruler of eternity's realm! All hail to thee, as thou comest, silent deliverer, full of compassion! Powerful, yet gentle, through the eternal ages thou wilt bear us onward to peace.



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The Story of J. G. N., Called "Humilis,"	Comte Leonce de Larmandie	576
Prescience	Gertrude Litchfield	592
Four Poems by "Humilis"		593
I The Hands. II Body and Soul. III Predestined Couples. IV Love of Love		
The Elfin Garden	Madison Cawein	602
Two Poems: I War. II The Iron Hive	Georges Turpin	606
April Dreaming	Ruth McEnery Stuart	611
A Song Before Twilight	Arthur Ketcham	612
The Best of the New Books		613
Index		

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TWENTY-FIVE YEARS OF POET LORE

With this number, POET LORE finishes its first quarter century.

Here are some of the big things that POET LORE has done. This list, without further comment, shows why POET LORE is the only magazine in America that is indispensable to all those readers who are on the lookout for *new* genius the moment it appears, instead of waiting to fall into line after this genius has been discovered by others. Read this list carefully.

In 1889 POET LORE pointed out the supreme importance of Ibsen's dramas. It spoke of Ibsen then as "below no one but Shakespeare" to a nation that then only had heard enough of him to jeer. In the same year it gave its readers a review of Shakespeare's influence on Japanese literature. That was eighteen years before anybody else in this country even knew that there was such a thing as a great literature in "barbarous" Japan.

In 1890 POET LORE discovered and introduced to this country the lyric poet Mistral, whom other periodicals did not begin to notice until *fourteen years later*, when he shared with Échégaray the Nobel prize for literature in 1904.

In 1891 POET LORE made its readers acquainted with the work of Strindberg, who has but lately become generally known to the literary public of America.

In 1892 POET LORE brought to America some masterpieces of Bohemian literature, and it published Björnson's play, "A Glove," in the original Norwegian version of *En Hanske*, authorized by Björnson himself. It differs strikingly from the version made later for Germany.

In 1893 POET LORE published Maeterlinck's "The Blind," *which was the first publication of any of Maeterlinck's works in English*. In the same year it printed a *critique* whose very title is sufficiently significant of its priority: "Maurice Maeterlinck, Dramatist of a New Method."

In 1894 POET LORE published Maeterlinck's "The Seven Princesses" and "Pélléas and Mélisande."

In 1895 there appeared in POET LORE, Maeterlinck's "Alladine and Palomides"; and an appreciation of the genius of Robert Bridges was printed.

In 1897 POET LORE brought to America another of the now world-famous dramatists, Sudermann, giving to English readers

their first glimpse of him in that little masterpiece, "Teja," from his "Morituri."

In 1898 POET LORE published "The Sunken Bell." *This was the first English translation of any of Hauptmann's plays.*

As early as in 1899 POET LORE contained a story of Selma Lagerlof, whose name even now, after she has won the Nobel prize, is unfamiliar to all except pioneer readers.

In 1900, Échégaray, the great Spanish dramatist, who in 1904 won the Nobel prize, was already well known to the readers of POET LORE.

In 1903 the readers of POET LORE were made acquainted with the unusual genius of Brioux, whom the general educated public in this country did not learn to know till about a year ago.

In 1904 POET LORE began the publication of Gorky's plays, and also introduced its readers to the hidden treasures of Icelandic literature.

In 1905 POET LORE was as usual first among the pioneers in recognizing the real significance of the new Irish literary drama by the publication of plays by Synge and Hyde.

In 1906 POET LORE presented the dramatic work of Schnitzler in English for the first time.

In 1907 Andreyev was first made known to America by POET LORE, and in giving, then, "To the Stars," and his later masterpiece, "King Hunger," when, that was written, POET LORE has introduced his finest dramas. In the same year, D'Annunzio's noblest play, "The Daughter of Jorio," and the first English translation of any of Bracco's plays — "The Hidden Spring" appeared in authorized version. Bracco's "Phantasms" followed. Frank Wedekind's work was also made known this year to POET LORE readers.

POET LORE has introduced to this country no less than fifty-four European dramatists and eighty-six dramas. Of these dramatists, all of whom were unknown previous to the time of the publication of their work in POET LORE, practically everyone has subsequently become world famous.

POET LORE has gathered the artistic gems of *every civilized country under the sun*, at their first gleam, and offered them to the American public in advance of any other publication in this country. And continuing the same policy up to the present time, POET LORE is introducing to its readers *to-day* the unknown geniuses who are to become world famous *to-morrow*.

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NUMBER VI

THE BRIDE OF THE MOOR*

BY AUGUST STRAMM†

Authorized Translation from the German

CHARACTERS

MARUSCHKA.

LASZLO.

LASZLO'S FATHER.

MARUSCHKA'S PARENTS.

THE MOOR

The stars lament.

The windbreath whispereth

Whence? Whither?

Thou, thou? I, thou?

I. MORNING

In the hut through door and window the moor shineth.

Laszlo.— Thou dost belong to me!

Maruschka.— I belong to no one!

Laszlo.— My right!

Maruschka.— Thou hast no right!

*These two plays by August Stramm are published through the courtesy of, and in co-operation with, *Der Sturm*, the German fortnightly review of art and literature, which has done so much to encourage new tendencies and offer them a medium of expression. The plays are specially important as a revelation of the profound influence which the work of John Synge is exerting on Continental writers.— THE EDITORS.

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Laszlo.— Thy word.

MARUSCHKA (*breathes*).

Laszlo (*drawing his knife*).— Beware!

Maruschka (*takes a firebrand from the hearth*).— Come on!

Maruschka (*takes the milk from the fire and strains it*).

Laszlo.— He doth not fetch thee!

Maruschka.— If I do not wish!

Laszlo.— Thou wilt not wish!

Laszlo's Father (*on the stool by the fire*).— . . . She doth not change.

Maruschka (*sets down the milk for the old man*).— Thou hast never spoken of it to me — for how many years —?

Laszlo's Father.— I don't count them!

Maruschka. — 'Twas summer — winter — not at all — it was sun — storm —

Laszlo's Father (*takes his pipe from his teeth*).— They often change —

Maruschka.— What was my dress?— What did I do?— Did I run?— Did I speak—?

Laszlo's Father (*drinks*).— Children — who didn't run — I never took!

Maruschka.— Children —

Laszlo's Father (*drinks and arranges himself comfortably*).

Maruschka (*sits down and stares into the fire*).— Dost thou know — that I am his child—?

Laszlo's Father.— I never saw him!

Maruschka.— Thou didst never see him —

Laszlo's Father.— He saw the sign on thy brow —

Maruschka, (*her hand wanders slowly over her left eyebrow*).

Laszlo's Father.— Thou must know it!

Maruschka.— What — must —

Laszlo's Father.— Thy blood!

Maruschka (stands up).— My blood —! ? — My blood —! ? —
And yet thou hast robbed me of it? —!

Laszlo's Father.— We are all robbed somewhere — all —
and abandoned.

Maruschka.— . . .

Laszlo's Father.— Not all find their father again.

Maruschka.— I shall have to chastise thee!

Laszlo's Father.— Thy kind father ——

Maruschka.— and therefore thou hast deceived me? ! (*Tears
a lasso whip from the wall.*)

Laszlo's Father.— I have brought thee up — on the moor!

Maruschka (whips the old man with heavy blows).— Deceived
— deceived ——

(*LASZLO'S FATHER holds out his arm and flees limping through
the doorway. LASZLO stands jeering at the doorpost.*)

Maruschka.— Thou dost laugh —— ?

Laszlo (his pipe in his teeth).— It does n't hurt the old dog
any! (*He grasps her wrist as if he wished to tear it off.*)

(*MARUSCHKA craftily frees herself, springs back and raises
the whip.*)

Laszlo (laughingly grasps the knife).— Come on!

(*MARUSCHKA lets the whip fall slowly. Breathless listening.
LASZLO laughs shortly.*)

Maruschka.— He driveth many —— !

Laszlo.— He doth not drive!

(*MARUSCHKA flings herself on the ground and listens. LASZLO
makes a motion towards her.*)

Maruschka (springs high).— I — I — do not know these
sounds!

Laszlo (grins).— He driveth!

Maruschka.— He doth not drive!

Laszlo.— His carriage hath no horses.

Maruschka.— No horses ——

Laszlo.— Something doth drive it, I don't know what.

Maruschka.— Thou didst see it?

Laszlo.— I saw it — beyond the moor — where the great roads go — wide — in the distance — to the domes and towers — to the lights in the night —

Maruschka.— . . .

Laszlo.— It chaseth — and rattleth — and clattereth — and whirleth. (*Laughs and throws his pipe in the corner. MARUSCHKA clasps her hands. LASZLO buries his hands in his pockets.*)

Maruschka.— Let us flee—!

Laszlo (laughs and steps behind her, softly).— *Maruschka!* (*MARUSCHKA slips by him. LASZLO, barring the door.*) He doth not approach us — the moor would swallow him up there — his wagon is heavy — he must go on foot like thou and I — he doth not fetch thee . . . !

Maruschka.— He — doth — not — fetch — me —

(*An automobile halts, panting in the distance.*)

Laszlo.— Hearest thou? It rattleth — mad — rrrrrrrr! — the men yonder — they have no morning and noon and night — when the sun appeareth — they know not one another — wild — pell-mell — heaven archeth them not — always only in patches — walls — corners — roads — hard and full of stones — criss-cross — thou wouldst not find thy way through!

Maruschka (quivering in her whole body).— Father —

Laszlo (laughs silently and goes out).— He doth not fetch thee!

(*MARUSCHKA starts up, shuts in wild haste the door and windowpanes, bolts the shutters and the door, pushes the footstool and the table against it, cowers down and leans convulsively against the door.*)

A Pair of Sunbeams (tremble through the cracks) . . . (There is a knock.)

II. NOON

Before the hut. The heavy reed roof is bowed to the ground. High elder bushes make the walls green. Maize fields glow on the moor.

- The Father (knocks).*— Thy father ——
Maruschka (within).— I know thee not!
The Mother (knocks).— Thy mother ——
Maruschka.— I know thee not!
The Parents.— Thou wilt learn to know us!
The Mother.— Open!
Maruschka.— This is my house!
The Mother.— Thy — house ——
Maruschka.— I have raised it — I have roofed — and
 patched it ——
The Mother (gazing at the roof).— Thou hast roofed it——
The Father (shakes the post).— It doth not stand firm!
Maruschka.— I am safe here from storm and weather ——
The Mother.— No less with us ——
-
- The Father.*— I have treasures ——
Maruschka.— I care not for treasures!
The Mother.— I love thee!
Maruschka.— I fear thee! ♣
- (LASZLO sits on the springhead, with a clear laugh takes a gun
 in his hand, and shoots into the maize field.)
- The Parents.*— . . .
Maruschka.— Laszlo!
Laszlo (comes out of the field and laughs).— A kite! (Throws
 the bird on the ground and sits down again.)
-
- The Father (knocks).*— Mara ——
The Mother (knocks).— Maria ——
Laszlo (calls).— Maruschka!
Maruschka.— No! ! !
 (THE MOTHER knocks.)
Maruschka.— You would take me away from my moor ——
The Father.— We would lead you into a garden!
Maruschka.— What is that — a garden? !
The Mother.— A garden ——

The Father.— A garden ——

The Mother.— A moor — with high — shady trees — with meadows — soft and cool — flowers — roses — oh! — blossoms — oh! — wonderful odors ——

Maruschka.— My flowers are fragrant also — I will not take yours.—

The Father.— Thou wilt only have — what thou dost wish.—

Maruschka.— Then I will stay here—!

The Mother.— Stay ——

Maruschka.— You shall stay here!

The Mother.— We ——

The Father.— We must go home.——

Maruschka.— Your home —?

The Mother.— Our — home ——

Maruschka.— My home is the moor!

The Mother.— The — moor ——

Maruschka.— So I do not belong to you!

The Father.— Thou art my flesh!

The Mother.— Thou art my blood!

Maruschka.— You have guarded me badly.

The Mother.— We have guarded thee ——

The Parents.— As our soul ——

Maruschka.— What is — that — our soul?

The Mother.— What — is —? That which leads thee to us —!

Maruschka (cries out suddenly).— I am afraid near you!

The Parents.— We love thee! ——

Maruschka.— I do not feel — I do not feel — I do not feel anything for you — get out of my way — out of my way — I will see the moor ——

(The PARENTS step aside.)

The Father.— Thou wilt see — so often wilt thou ——

Maruschka.— So often? — So will I always!

The Mother.— Thou wilt not want ——

The Father.— Thou wilt not miss it ——

Maruschka (cries out).— You will not force me —!

The Father.— Thou shalt be free — free.

Maruschka.— Then I must be ashamed of my will —!

The Father.— Thy will is our will.

Maruschka.— They would despise me.

The Father.— Thou wouldst be respected!

The Parents.— Thou art our child!

Maruschka.— Here I am respected — and nobody's child.↵

The Mother.— We — are — all — omebody's child —

Maruschka.— I — feel — so — forsaken —

(LASZLO straightens up.)

The Mother.— Child!

The Father.— Open —!

(LASZLO folds his arms and turns towards the old people.)

Maruschka.— I am not coming!

The Mother.— Thou art coming!

Maruschka.— No — no!

(LASZLO steps threateningly towards the old people.)

The Father.— We do not force thee —

Maruschka.— So long I have not — lived!

The Mother.— Thou wilt first live —

Maruschka.— No! — no!

The Mother.— Free thou comest — free —

The Father.— As thou dost wish —

Maruschka.— Then I wish a space — a little space of time.

The Father.— Thou mayst have it — as long as thou dost wish —

Maruschka.— Until night —

The Father.— So soon?!

The Mother.— So long?!

Maruschka.— Until night!

The Father.— Until night!

The Mother.— Now open —

Maruschka.—

The Father.— Now open.

Laszlo.— Maruschka!— Open!—

(*MARUSCHKA opens. Stands immovable, staring erect in the doorway. White shining clouds tower across the heavens and hunt dark shadows across the moor. The PARENTS stand gazing at MARUSCHKA.*)

The Mother (goes with outstretched arms toward her and clasps them around her).— My — child!

Maruschka (with terror-thrilled voice).— Lászlo!

(*LASZLO seizes her hand and wildly snatches her away from her PARENTS. MARUSCHKA sinks against him, exhausted.*)

III. EVENING

The horse-paddock. Alders on the pond. Heavy sun-glow clouds turn to a drab gray.

Maruschka (leans exhausted on the edge of the paddock and breathes heavily).— I have galloped over the moor. (Stretches her arms in despair.) Walls. (Gazes at the clouds.) Yonder — yonder —

Laszlo (hands in his pockets and pipe in his teeth).— Clouds —

(*MARUSCHKA falls on her knees and clasps her hands in front of her eyes.*)

Laszlo (runs to her and bends over her).— Maruschka — I am here!

(*MARUSCHKA takes her hands from her eyes and stares at him. She springs up and embraces him.*)

Laszlo (flings away his pipe, grasps her with his fist in her hair, bends her head backwards and kisses her wildly).— I — am — beside — thee! I —!

Maruschka (kisses him again with frantic ardor).— Lászlo!

Laszlo.— Thou dost love me — thou dost love me — thou dost love me still — I know it — I knew it —

Maruschka (frees herself suddenly and stares terrified at herself).— I love thee — thee — yes — no — the moor — still — I love thee — thee — thee — thee only — (*bridles invisibly and cries in fearful anxiety*) — and I love still a little all other — dreadful — I do not understand — I perish — I —

Laszlo.— Why dost thou toil—?—Thou art free — quite free — nothing holds thee — if thou wilt not —

Maruschka (cries out).— And I will not — no — I will not — never will I wish — oh —

(*Grasshoppers chirp in the straw.*)

Maruschka.— . . .

Laszlo.— Grasshoppers!

Maruschka (laughs in a forced manner and tries desperately to compose herself).— I was startled — the air is so sticky — isn't it? — So sticky — isn't it?! — *Laszlo* —

Laszlo.— It is soft and warm!

Maruschka.— No — no — yes — still — *Laszlo* — yes — it doth all belie me —!—The straw — the straw — see — it whisteth — and rustleth — besides — it stirreth not — the spring — (*she bows*) — it shineth not — the sky — see — rigid — dumb. — They spoke before — the clouds — oh — (*She cowers down and veils her sight.*)

Laszlo.— A storm is coming — like every day —!— (*Dust-whirls stretch to the clouds; the moor darkens.*)

Maruschka (cries out).— All — so I never saw it! — I am no longer — *Laszlo* —

Laszlo (bends over her and raises her).— *Maruschka!*

Maruschka (rises and gazes in all directions across the moor; her glance remains clinging to the sheen on the water. She presses close to LASZLO, whispers in the deepest anxiety of terror).— *Laszlo* — the water — *Laszlo* — dark — the eye — whose? whose? — my father! — deep — immeasurable — so dark — clear — the whole moor shineth in it — and — (*goes to the water, grasps the alderbush and bows over the sheen on the water*) — Where is — my home —?

Laszlo (springs after her, seizes her and roughly pulls her back on the firm ground, which she strikes hard. He, cruelly wild, grasps her hair and shoulder violently).— Thou art mad.

Maruschka (stiffens under his grasp).— I'll not get away.

Laszlo.— I'll not let thee.

Maruschka.— I'll not get away! I love thee!

Laszlo (pulls her wildly to and fro).— I hold thee — I hate thee. — I enslave thee. —

Maruschka (casts up her arms to him and pulls his head down to hers).— I — love thee — I love thee — thou wild — thou cruel one. — Yes — forsake me not. (*Raises herself to LASZLO.*)

Laszlo (frees her).— We belong together.

Maruschka (combs her hair with her hands, and stiffens in the movement).— He — will — come and look at me —

Laszlo.— He will not look at you!

Maruschka.— He will — he hath such great strength.—
Flee?—

Laszlo.— Thou needst not flee.

Maruschka.— Flee —

Laszlo.— I — will — kill — him!

Maruschka.— . . .

Laszlo.— I'll kill him!

Maruschka.— . . .

Laszlo.— I —

Maruschka (seizes him and shakes him with wild laughter).—
Laszlo — Laszlo — thou wilt not kill him — no — no — no —
thou wilt not kill him—!

Laszlo (shakes her off).— Woman!

Maruschka (stops suddenly and listens. Dust clouds shriek on the moor).— The — moor calleth —! (*With suddenly recovered courage.*) — I will kill him! — I will kill him! — I!

(*MARUSCHKA grasps LASZLO'S arm and rushes away with him.*)

IV. NIGHT

In the hut. The hearthfire has gone out. Window shutters

and door are closed. An oil lamp flickers on the earthen hearth.

MARUSCHKA and LASZLO dig a grave as long as a man in front of the hearth. MARUSCHKA pauses and stares at the spade standing up in the void. LASZLO pauses and stares at MARUSCHKA. He pulls a little tuft of heather out of his waistcoat and offers it to her.

Maruschka.— . . .

Laszlo.— For the glance!

Maruschka (grasps the tuft hastily, puts it in her bosom, and digs again).— Where — is —? —

Laszlo.— The old man—?— The moor is wide!

(MARUSCHKA and LASZLO dig. LASZLO springs into the grave, which reaches up to his breast. He turns round in it and jumps out again, and laughs shortly and maliciously.)

Maruschka.— Is it raining yet?

(LASZLO goes to the door and opens it a crack, listens and softly steals back. MARUSCHKA throws down the spade. LASZLO, chuckling, gives her the knife. MARUSCHKA snatches it hastily and conceals it. The door moves.)

Maruschka.— . . .

Laszlo (goes to the door and touches it).— The wind.

(MARUSCHKA cowers in the most remote corner of the hut.)

Laszlo.— . . .

Maruschka.— It — bloweth — out of — the — earth!

Laszlo.— Thou wouldst not know it.

Maruschka (shuddering).— I — I — (*cries out*) — it shuddereth at me —

Laszlo.— Everything shuddereth!

Maruschka (bows her head).— And on again.— Where I am so happy —? !—

Laszlo.— Thou art not obliged to go?

Maruschka.— . . .

Laszlo.— Maruschka!

Maruschka (cries out).— I must!!! I must!!!

Laszlo.— He must go!!!!

Maruschka.— Go! Go! *He can never go!*

(*LASZLO snatches away the dagger. MARUSCHKA struggles with him. LASZLO flings her in the corner.*)

Maruschka.— Kill me!!!— Kill me!!!— Thou canst not kill him!!!

(*LASZLO laughingly tries the edge of the dagger.*)

Maruschka.— He doth not live there — he doth not live there! — here! — here the knife! — here! (*She tears her shawl from her breast.*) Thou drivest him out no longer.

(*LASZLO leaps to her and wildly kisses her naked breast. MARUSCHKA thrusts him back and frees herself from him. Motionless listening. LASZLO creeps to the window and peeps through the crack, springs back and seizes the knife.*)

Maruschka (whispers).— He — doth pass — he — doth pass — (*Steps brush against the outside of the door. MARUSCHKA sinks down crouching, her whole body trembling.*)

Laszlo (in a loud whisper).— Maruschka — dost thou love me?!

Maruschka (stammering).— Yes — yes — yes!

(*Knock. LASZLO extinguishes the lamp and stands ready to spring. Knock.*)

Maruschka (cries out).— Yes — yes!!!

(*The door opens, impenetrable darkness yawns in. Silence. A low-sounding thunder, then a flash of lightning lights up the moor as clear as day. Heat lightning on all sides. The FATHER, wrapped in a broad mantle, stands in the doorway and stretches his arms toward MARUSCHKA. LASZLO flies loose at him. MARUSCHKA springs high and strikes him on the arm. A short struggle. MARUSCHKA wrests the dagger from LASZLO and stabs him in the breast. LASZLO falls in a short leap without a sound. The FATHER enters. MARUSCHKA stands stiff and erect. The FATHER wishes to step toward LASZLO, but his glance remains riveted on the grave. He turns to MARUSCHKA and looks at her. MARUSCHKA breaks down silently.*)

V. DAWN

Near the hut hedged fruit trees, vegetables and flowerbeds. A woodfire glows on the ground. Dawn on the moor. Larks trill in the distance. A lark strikes up loudly near by and ascends.

Maruschka (rises on the bank beside the hut).— Who — who is dead? — I — I — who am I? — (She lays her hand on her forehead and stares across the moor.)

(The FATHER stands beside her and lays his hand on her shoulder.)

Maruschka.— The heather —?!— I do not see it.— (Cries out.)— Fire!— Fire doth swing in it—!!!

The Father.— Calmly — Calmly — my child!— It will soon be day! (The sky brightens.)

Maruschka (shrinks into herself and cowers on the bank).— Who art thou?— Who doth speak?— I know thee not —

The Father.— I have sought thee — sought thee — I have wandered.

Maruschka.— I do not understand thee!— I cannot understand thee.— Who art thou —?

The Father.— Look at me.—

(MARUSCHKA shrinks, but raises her eyes to him. A falling star glides down and dies away. MARUSCHKA veils her sight, moaning, in her skirt.)

The Father.— My — child!

(MARUSCHKA lets her hands fall, rises and gazes across the moor, where the falling star disappeared. The wind plays in her loosened hair and in the bushes and leaves on the moor.)

Maruschka.— From heaven — to the moor —

(A white streak of mist rises and sinks.)

Maruschka (casts herself on the grass wildly sobbing and kisses the flowers).— Pearls — tears — tears — they weep — they weep

The Father (always beside her, bends over her).— The dew doth bring new life.—

Maruschka (creeps from flower to flower and kisses them).—
Live — weep — live — where is home?

The Father.— The mist there—?— Wide — wide — the great forest — that rusheth — and rusheth — immeasurable life — a house in it — a tower above it — far away thou canst gaze into the distance — moor thou seest — and forest — forest — water floweth — floweth — winds blow — roar —

Maruschka.— What is the tower to —? !—

The Father.— I have looked out — from there — to thee — and the stars in the night — who told me of thee —

Maruschka (listens).— The stars told thee? —

The Father.— I can read in them.

Maruschka (rises on her knees),— I too — I too — they often speak to me —

The Father.— Now behold — we speak *one* tongue.

(*THE FATHER wishes to lay his hand on her shoulder. MARUSCHKA bends back full of fear and stretches out her hands to keep him away.*)

The Father.— Fear not — where thou art — thy moor is also!

Maruschka (in terror, breathlessly and almost without a voice).—
What drove thee to me? !

The Father.— We belong together.

Maruschka.— I know nothing!

The Father.— We all know nothing.— (*He lays his hand on her shoulder.*)

Maruschka (in the deepest dread).— Thou — thou dost murder me —

The Father.— Mother adorneth the home — she doth know thou art coming.—!—

Maruschka (springs up wildly).— Light! Light! Light!
Where is my moor? (*She springs to the glowing fire, snatches a firebrand out of the fire, and throws it on the roof of the hut.*)
Light I will have. Light! Light!

(*The hut flames up quickly. The sun streams through the mist.*)

Maruschka (covers her blinded eyes).— Oh!

(Dark clouds of smoke behind the rapid crackling of the hut darken the sun to a drab red disk.)

Maruschka (takes her hands from her eyes).— I — see — no — way — any more —!— no —

The Father (steps over to her).— Child!

The Moor — (a dark silhouette on the drab sky.)

Maruschka.— Oh — my moor—!—

The Father.— Give me thy hand —!

Maruschka (gives him her hand).— The moor is dying! —

The Father.— Back to her — step by step — slowly — I bring thee home — gaze not behind!— Before thee lieth the way — there — will be light again — the sun — thou shalt see in the light!!! — in the light!!!

THE END

SANCTA SUSANNA

THE SONG OF A MAY NIGHT

BY AUGUST STRAMM*

Authorized translation from the German by Edward J. O'Brien

CHARACTERS

SUSANNA.

CLEMENTIA.

A MAID SERVANT.

A MAN SERVANT.

CHOIR OF NUNS.

A SPIDER.

NIGHTINGALES, MOONLIGHT, WIND AND BLOSSOMS.

Scene: The Convent Church.

Trembling streaks of moonlight; in the depths of the high altar the perpetual red light is shining; in the wall in front to the left of the great image of the Crucified a frugal candle is burning. SUSANNA lies in prayer, on the left of the flower-adorned altar of Heaven's King, who stands in the rectangular niche beside the crucifix altar. Her forehead rests on the lowest step. Her arms are spread over the upper steps.

*Clementia (only a step behind her).— Sancta Susanna!
(She lays her hand on SUSANNA's shoulder. SUSANNA gets up.)*

Clementia.— The night has begun!—

Susanna (with her soul far away).— It sounds — a note —

Clementia.— The organ sounds behind!

*Susanna.— To me it is — like the ringing — of bottomless
deeps — of heavenly heights —*

*All rights reserved by the author.

Clementia.— You come thence. You were with God!

Susanna (in meditation).— I — was ——

Clementia.— You are ill.— You pray — you scarcely live any longer on this earth.— You have a body also.

(*SUSANNA rises and stares at her, frightened.*)

Clementia (lays her arm on her).— Come!

(*The church clock strikes one stroke, clearly, to mark the half hour; the nightwind shakes the windows, the branches rustle.*)

Clementia (to herself).— Ave Maria!—

Susanna (starting).— Who spoke? !—

Clementia.— The nightwind flung the blossoms against the windows ——

Susanna.— It called something.

Clementia.— The church clock struck.— I said the Ave ——

(*A window opens, the nightwind breaks in singing in a tone that dies away; leaves and branches rustle and whisper down to the whispering rustle of the shadowy floor. SUSANNA turns with hands stretched down behind from her body, to the dark choir, silent, rigid.*)

Clementia.— A pane was opened.— I will close it!

Susanna.— Let it —— (*She breathes hard.*)

Clementia.— The great elderbush, do you smell its blossoms? (*She inhales the fragrance.*)— Even here it exhales its fragrance! It blooms in white and red umbels—! I will have it uprooted— to-morrow — if it disturbs you!

Susanna.— It does not disturb me — it blooms! ——

(*A female voice chokes in moaning desire.*)

Clementia.— The meadow ridge under the blossoms! I will forbid the way.—

Susanna (listens).— She — is — not — alone —! (*CLEMENTIA crosses herself. SUSANNA breathes hard, goes to the cross, while stiff with emotion.*) If — she — would — come? !—

Clementia.— Who? !—

Susanna.— . . .

(*CLEMENTIA folds her frightened hands.*)

Susanna (her hand heavy on the pew).— I — would — speak — to her — in conscience —

(CLEMENTIA folds her hands, bows her head and goes. A spring door rattles softly.)

Susanna.— The — (The terrible scream of a woman dies away; the branches rustle. SUSANNA quivers.)— Elder — blooms!

(The spring-door rattles softly with blowing wings; softly shuffling footsteps approach. MAID SERVANT behind CLEMENTIA, shivering, with timid glances around, hands folded.)

Susanna.— Ave Maria!

(MAID SERVANT sinks on her knees, bowing low to the ground.)

Susanna.— Child!

Maid Servant (raises her head helplessly and stares at her).— I — I don't know! (She breaks out in frightened weeping, and slides along with folded hands toward the middle pillar, to hide behind it.)

Susanna.— I will not be angry with you! — You — were — under — the — elder?! —

Maid Servant (has become quite still, and stares at SUSANNA).— I — I — know nothing.—!— He — he — will — (She hangs her head very low.)

Susanna (gravely).— Who — ? ! —

Maid Servant (raises her head and stares at her, then bursts out laughing heartily).— My William — holy — (She stops, frightened, and bows her head shyly; the laughter and the words resound from the vaulting — twice — thrice — yet again — in vanishing ghostly echoes.)

Susanna (goes to the MAID SERVANT, lays her hand on her shoulder, raises her head, and gazes at her face).— Stand up! —

(MAID SERVANT stands up with folded hands.)

Susanna.— Dost thou love him?

Maid Servant (twists her fingers, shy, laughing softly, ashamed).

— O — holy mother — oh —

Susanna.— I — might — see — him —

(CLEMENTIA raises her hand. MAID SERVANT stares a

CLEMENTIA and shivers. *A loud knock at the door in the choir—three times—and a voice calling. All are frightened. CLEMENTIA lets her arm fall.*)

Maid Servant (in free, passive rejoicing).— That's him.

(CLEMENTIA goes into the choir; a key turns heavily, a door creaks and closes with a hollow sound in the lock; a halted man's voice speaks angrily. Heavy steps endeavor in vain to tread softly.)

A Man Servant (young, strong, turning his cap in his hand, stands in the nave between the pillars, his eyes timidly sunk to earth, with shy defiance).— I will fetch my maid!

(CLEMENTIA plunges behind him out of the darkness. SUSANNA stares at him, then turns abruptly, and goes to the altar. Deep stillness, the maiden steals to the MAN SERVANT, who lays his arm in hers; with shy, shaking steps they both go out, followed by CLEMENTIA. The key turns, the door creaks, a gust of wind drives blustering between the pews, the door falls shaking in the lock, the key cries out. The candle before the crucifix goes out, flaring and shivering. SUSANNA, startled, stares into the gloom, out of which, between the pews, the white face of CLEMENTIA now floats nearer.)

Susanna (screams).— Satanas!— Satanas!—

Clementia (remains an instant paralyzed, then hastens speedily forward and stands with convulsive twisted hands in front of SUSANNA).— Susanna!!! *(SUSANNA lays her hand on CLEMENTIA's shoulder and bows her head, exhausted.*

Clementia (shocked).— Sister. Susanna!!— Sister!!— you must rest. *(She wishes to lead her away.)*

Susanna (sits down on the steps of the altar).— Light the candle!—

Clementia.— . . .

Susanna.— Light the ——

(CLEMENTIA takes a wax taper out of the niche and goes into the choir; she turns round in confused haste, her eyes looking behind.)

Susanna.— What is ——?!—

Clementia (in panting fear).— I— can— not!— *(She presses close to SUSANNA. SUSANNA rises and gazes into the darkness.)*

Clementia (*cowers on the steps*).— I do not — know — it blows — it goes.

Susanna.— The nightwind ——

Clementia.— It hums — it taps ——

Susanna.— The organ — the blossoms —— (*She takes the wax taper out of her hand.*)

Clementia.— Sancta Susanna.— (*She cowers down in a heap and joins her hands convulsively in front of her face.*)

(*SUSANNA goes slowly between the pews to the front, where she wholly disappears in the darkness; the perpetual red light goes out behind her figure. Out of the darkness approaches slowly a light at the same height, the light of the wax taper which SUSANNA bears before her. SUSANNA lights the candle.*)

CLEMENTIA (*leans her head on her hand*).— It was one night — it was one night — like this — thirty — forty years — it was — it was one night like this — (*She stands staring, looks into the void, and raises her hand in exorcism. SUSANNA approaches her, and stares at CLEMENTIA, under the exorcism.*) The nightwind sang ——

Susanna.— The — nightwind — sang —?

Clementia.— The — blossoms — tapped.

Susanna.— The — blossoms — tapped —?

Clementia.— And I was young ——

Susanna.— Young —?

Clementia.— Dedicated to the Lord — (*SUSANNA lets her head sink on her breast.*) Here I lay on my knees even as — thou —— (*A nightingale warbles loud. CLEMENTIA cries out hoarsely.*) — Beata! — (*She veils her eyes with her arms in terror and lets her arms fall again. SUSANNA lifts her head and stares at her, with great terrified eyes. CLEMENTIA, her words hesitating, staring into the void.*) — Pale — without veil for her breast or frontlet — naked —— So she came.— (*A nightingale calls far away.*) Thence — (*points with rigid arm to the right*) she mounted high on the steps — and saw me not — she ascended the altar — and saw me not — (*in hot haste*) — she pressed her naked, sinful body

against the crucified image of the Redeemer — and saw me not — she embraced Him with her white-glowing arms — and kissed His Head — and kissed — kissed — (Both nightingales rejoice near and far, loud and lastingly.) CLEMENTIA, crying out.— Beata! I called — I called, but — ! (tired) — there she fell down — she fell — (The nightingales suddenly become dumb.) We beguiled her away.— (In gray the upper part of her body half turned to the image of the Crucified, and hands stretched as if warding off something from her.)— Since then the light burns — perpetually — the light for atonement — since then the cloth girds His Loins — His Loins — there — (points in the dark behind the crucifix) — there they have — walled in — flesh and blood — in cement and stone.— (Hoarsely.) — Dost thou hear her? ! — Dost thou hear? ! — I have — heard her — long — always — a short time ago — (points in the gloom towards the high altar) — there — just (Claps her hands over her eyes.) — Almighty Father in Heaven! — the light has gone out!

Susanna (stares.)— I have lit it again! — (She leans her hand on the altar.)

Clementia (lets her hands sink slowly and stares at her. A spider as large as a fist creeps forth out of the darkness behind the altar. CLEMENTIA sinks terrified on her knees, pointing to the insect).— The — spider! —

Susanna (turns her head to the spider and remains standing in paralyzed trembling. The spider runs over the altar and vanishes on the other side behind the crucifix. SUSANNA turns toward CLEMENTIA after a while. Trembling and shuddering in a mechanical movement she takes her hand from the altar — her hands stretched from her body down toward the ground — stiff with terror).— Dost thou hear it —? !

Clementia (terrified).— Dost thou — hear —

Susanna.— Dost thou — hear —

Clementia.— . . .

Susanna.— The voice —

Clementia.— I — hear — nothing —

Susanna.— . . .

Clementia (makes an attempt to scream, but remains hoarse with terror).— I— hear— nothing!

Susanna (ghostly, repeating).— Confess— confess— (She stands with her back turned to the Cross.)— He— said— what?!—

(*CLEMENTIA* in the most awful terror. *SUSANNA* makes a movement of her head to the Cross there.)

Clementia (folds her hands, stammering).— Ave— Maria—

Susanna.— Did he say nothing? (*CLEMENTIA* shakes her head in dumb terror. *SUSANNA* extinguishes the wax taper, which has been steadily burning in her hand, and lays it on the altar; all movements performed mechanically; then she descends from the altar— step for step— silently— and remains standing close beside *CLEMENTIA*. *CLEMENTIA* bursts out laughing happily, silver-clear, — a frail many-voiced echo mingled with the dying song of the wind and the whispering of the branches.— She tears the veil from her breast, the coif, and the band; her long hair falls over her naked shoulders.) Sister *Clementia*— I am beautiful—!— (The wind drives strong, the branches rustle mightily, and the nightingales warble clearly. *CLEMENTIA* sinks on her knees, with folded hands raised high.) Sister *Clementia*— I am beautiful—

Clementia.— Sancta *Susanna*—

Susanna.— Sister *Clementia*— I am—

Clementia (rises stiff and rigid, with every word more and more firm).— Chastity— Poverty— Obedience—

(*SUSANNA*, staring dumbly, with her hand heavy on the pew. *CLEMENTIA* passes by close to her into the darkness; the window slams violently; the rejoicing song of the nightingales, the rustle of the boughs, and the song of the wind dies suddenly. *CLEMENTIA* returns.)

Susanna (springs up and seizes her). The window up!— The window— (*CLEMENTIA* raises the great cross of her rosary against her. *SUSANNA* reels back, staring at the cross, step by step, up to the altar.)— I— I see the— shining Body! I see— Him stooping down— I— feel His Arms expand—

Clementia (holds the cross high).— Chastity— Poverty — Obedience.— (Every word re-echoes clearly out of the vaulting, at last all three in one another re-echo and coalesce.)

Susanna (cries out and stares around).— Who speaks there?!

Clementia.— I!

Susanna.— I — I — I — never said that!!

(CLEMENTIA holds up the cross in front of her.)

Susanna (tears away the loin-cloth from the great crucifix with a single rent).— So help me! My Saviour against yours.— (She sinks on her knees and looks up to Him.)

(The spider falls down behind the arm of the cross into her hair. SUSANNA cries out with a shriek and beats with her forehead on the altar. The spider creeps over the altar and disappears behind. The bells sound shrill through the vault, among them the hollow strokes of the twelve hours. SUSANNA rouses, goes with her hands wild and tangled with her hair, and creeps on all fours down the steps of the altar in horror, fleeing from herself. With the last stroke of the hour the bells die into silence.)

Clementia (lets the cross sink).— Ave Maria— a new day!—

(SUSANNA crouches to stare around on the lowest altar step. Soft steps shuffling along and murmured prayers. The procession of nuns enters.)

Leaders in Prayer.— Kyrie eleison ———

Choir.— Kyrie eleison ———

Leaders.— Regina cœli sancta ———

Choir.— Ora pro nobis ———

Leaders.— Virgo virginum sancta ———

Choir.— Ora pro nobis ———

(The moonlight, that hitherto fell in clear streaks through the windows and cast bluish light on the pews, dies away, it becomes totally dark. The NUNS come forward to the holy water font, but stop as they catch sight of CLEMENTIA, who stands immovable in the nave between the pillars and looks at SUSANNA, who has risen and mounted to the highest step of the altar. The prayer dies away; the

NUNS *assemble in startled silence in a wide semi-circle around SUSANNA; finally all stand still, motionless in mute awe.*

Old Nun (steps forward a pace, silently).— Sancta— Susanna!—

(SUSANNA stirs, arrow-erect on the height.)

Old Nun (bows her head).— Sancta Susanna— !

Susanna.— Behind the court lie stones — (Old Nun screams. SUSANNA, firm.) You must make me the wall!—

(Old Nun sinks slowly, arms spread on her knees. CHOIR follows her. CLEMENTIA stands staring at SUSANNA, shuddering.)

Susanna (suddenly strong).— No!—

(Old Nun springs up. CHOIR follows her. Old Nun holds the cross of her rosary over her head. CHOIR follows her.)

Old Nun.— Confess!—

Susanna.— . . .

(CLEMENTIA lifts the cross.)

Clementia and Old Nun (severely urgent).— Confess!!!

Susanna.— No!!!

Clementia, Old Nun and Choir (shrieking).— Confess!!!

(The word echoes three times in the vaulting, the windows of the church rattle, the storm howls outside.)

Susanna.— No!!!! (The echo of the word grows intricate from the former echoes.)

Old Nun (in ecstasy).— Satana!!!

Old Nun and Clementia.— Satana!!!

Old Nun, Clementia and Choir.— Satana!!! (Shrieking, intricate echo.)

(SUSANNA, erect and high, in untouched grandeur. All stand still and motionless.)

THE END

'WAR'

A Play in One Act

BY J. E. FILLMORE

CHARACTERS

A WOMAN.

A YOUTH.

A MAN.

Time: The Present.

Place: A country district in Central Europe. The edge of a forest.

Scene: The interior of a poor cottage of one room. In the right wall of the room is a fireplace with a low fire on the hearth. On the mantelshelf stand a candle and a crucifix. Before the fire stand a bench and a cradle. The cradle is empty save for a small blanket which is thrown over one side. In the rear right corner of the room is a cupboard; to the left of this, but not quite in the center of the rear wall, a door. Along the wall to the left of the door is a low bed and over the bed is a casement window with heavy inside shutters. A curtained bed is built partly into the right wall. Against this wall, to the right of the bed, stands a table on which is a bucket of water, and over which are shelves with dishes. A short distance out into the room from the table stands a low cobbler's bench covered with tools.

(The dim light of dusk enters through the casement window. Through a fine rain distant tree-tops are faintly seen. On the bench before the fire a woman sits huddled. She croons softly and

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moves the cradle slightly with her foot. After a time she rises and slowly goes to the door which she opens. As she peers out into the gathering darkness and holds out her hand to feel the rain there is heard the sound of a very distant shot. She closes and bolts the door and fastens the shutters over the window. She takes the candle and lights it in the fire, replacing it on the shelf. Stepping back, the WOMAN bows before the crucifix as if murmuring a prayer. She notices the cradle, sits down and leans over it with a soft, joyless laugh.)

Woman. — Ah, baby, baby! That never knew the feel of a cradle! That only woke to fall asleep on your dead mother's breast! And I'd been waiting so long! And the cradle was all ready — the cradle was all — Hark! — (*In a relieved tone.*) The rain. (*After a silence a faint, anxious tapping comes at the door. The WOMAN stands fearfully in the middle of the room. After a moment she takes the candle and approaches the door.*) Who's there? (*The tapping comes again; the WOMAN softly draws the bolt and backs away. The door is tried and opens slightly to admit a youth who quickly closes it behind him and bolts it. The young man is clad in a wet uniform, but is without hat, gun or knapsack. His left arm hangs in a torn and bloody sleeve. His boots are muddy and there are spots of mud on his uniform.*) Paul! Paul!

Youth. — (*Putting out the candle with his hand.*) The light! The light! I'm followed! — Water — a drink — quick! (*He stumbles toward the fire, gazes at the cradle stupidly, then seems to recollect something. He passes his hand across his forehead.*) Oh, yes — but empty! — Where's Clara? (*The WOMAN has secured a cup from the cupboard and has filled it with water from the pail standing on the table. She hands the YOUTH a drink without answering. He drinks greedily, looks about anxiously, lights the candle in the fire and looks about again. He notices the curtained bed.*) In bed? — Mother? — (*Quite sharply.*) Mother! My wife! Where is she? — and the — baby? — the baby! (*Slowly the WOMAN goes to the bed and draws back the curtains, showing it empty.*) (*Fearfully.*) Mother! — Are they away — ?

Woman. — Yes — away — away!

Youth. — Where? (*The WOMAN hesitates.*) — At her father's?

Woman. — (*Turns slightly from him, looks up and crosses herself.*) She is safe — in her Father's House.

Youth. — Since when? (*Places the candle on the mantel and sits down on the bench before the fire.*)

Woman. — Since the beginning of the rain.

Youth. — Three days! — The baby must have been very young; tell me, was it a boy?

Woman. — A boy.

Youth. — (*Smiles, stirs, then shrinks back to his first position as if in pain.*) Water, more water! (*The WOMAN refills the cup.*) — And now the roads are closed; she can't come back to-night. (*Drinks feverishly.*)

Woman. — Not for many nights.

Youth. — (*Rises painfully to his feet; touches his arm tenderly; winces.*) Only to-night matters; to-morrow I shan't — shan't — (*Staggers; his mother hastens to help him sit down.*)

Woman. — Here's blood! — Fresh, too!

Youth. — It's nothing — a flesh wound.

Woman. — Thank God it's not worse. Be quiet; I'll get a basin of water and wash it. (*Moves to rear and gets a basin and cloth from the cupboard, then goes to the table.*)

Youth. — Would to God it were worse!

Woman. — Paul! (*He starts as if he had heard something, looks toward the door and listens intently. The WOMAN crosses to him.*)

Youth. — The shot had better struck my heart.

Woman. — (*Puts down the basin.*) You're feverish. Here, let me help you off with your coat. (*He lets her take off his coat and sits motionless while she begins to dress his wound.*) Tell me, have you seen your father lately?

Youth. — No.

Woman. — The officers said you might be together.

Youth. — We were separated.

Woman. — (*Anxiously.*) Father was not hurt? Why aren't you together? What is father doing?

Youth. — He has been made an outpost.

Woman. — (*Relieved.*) Ah — and you — ?

(*The YOUTH turns away sullenly, as if refusing to answer, then starts suddenly and looks toward the door.*)

Youth. — There! — you heard. Just as I expected!

Woman. — (*Glances at the door.*) There, it's nothing!

Youth. — You heard nothing?

Woman. — Nothing. Nor you.

Youth. — Your ears are not sharpened by the pangs of coming death.

Woman. — Death! Your wound is slight.

Youth. — The enemy is at hand — Water! — God, how thirsty!

Woman. — (*Filling the cup at the table.*) Let them come; you can hide. I will say no one has been here.

Youth. — There's no hiding for me. One saw me come in. They want me. (*He bows his head in reflection.*) But there's always the other way — there's always the other way.

Woman. — (*Going toward him.*) Yes, prisoners are exchanged — not shot.

Youth. — (*Rises.*) There's something you haven't noticed.

Woman. — (*Backs away slowly, puts cup down on the cobbler's bench.*) Yes, there is something strange, but I can't — quite —

Youth. — (*Looking down at his uniform. Simply, hopelessly.*) You see how I am dressed.

Woman. — (*Taking up his coat suddenly.*) The uniform of the enemy!

Youth. — I — needed it.

Woman. — To escape from their camp. — You were a prisoner!

Youth. — To escape from their camp. — I was not a prisoner. (*Defiantly.*) I was — a spy!

Woman. — (*Recoiling.*) A spy!

Youth. — (*Bitterly.*) Oh, we all hate spies! But a thousand men saw sunrise to-day because of me — a spy!

Woman. — Your country needed you. You did right to serve.

Youth. — (*Looks quickly at the door, listens, then sinks to his seat. Speaks swiftly, nervously, almost as if to himself.*) This afternoon they found me out. But I had a moment's warning. I started off ahead of them — on a good horse, too — ha, yes, a good horse. I led them over the fields, over the creek, and along the edge of the forest toward our own lines. They gained on me, but they couldn't get a good shot. It began to get dark, and when I got nearly to our own territory, they slowed down, and I thought I had shaken them off. I had hardly lost sight of them when one of them jumped out of a clump of bushes off to one side. He shot my horse from under me.

Woman. — (*Giving him the cup.*) Here, drink.

Youth. — (*Drinking feverishly and handing back the cup.*) I wasn't hurt. I couldn't see the man in the bushes. There was no time to lose in random shots; I dropped my rifle and ran for the forest. The man followed, gaining at every step. He could have caught me if he had n't stopped to shoot so often. I was tired, but once in the forest I got ahead. Oh, it takes one born here to know the forest. But he followed well. I couldn't get far away. I emptied my pistol at him, but he dodged behind trees and I hardly saw him. Once, when I was near the open, I saw the horsemen following the sound of the shots. (*He listens expectantly, looking suddenly around at the door.*)

I don't know why I came this way, right into the enemy's territory — but I made a circuit of the Big Hill and found myself near our garden. I didn't intend to come in here, but — as —

(*He pauses as if interrupted.*) Has there been any fighting around here?

Woman. — None.

Youth. — No soldiers have passed lately?

Woman. — The patrol passes often.

Youth. — Two soldiers must have fought. Just outside the garden I stumbled over a fresh grave.

Woman. — (*Starts, recollects.*) A fresh grave! — Three days there —

Youth. — Three days — The day Clara left —

Woman. — The day Clara left. (*Half to herself.*) And you stumbled over the grave — you stumbled —

Youth. — (*Hurrying on as before.*) As I fell, the man emptied his pistol at me. It was getting too dark to shoot, but one bullet took me in the arm. I ran faster, off to one side. I slipped into the hidden path —

Woman. — The path father and you cleared to the little spring. Then you shook him off.

Youth. — Somehow the man followed.

Woman. — (*Uneasily.*) No.

Youth. — I was well ahead, though, but loss of blood began to weaken me. — The thirst was worse. It never let up. It made me mad. I raced off to one side again, over near the garden. I crept into the currant bushes and listened. I couldn't hear anything. I crept between two rows up toward the cottage. Still, I could hear no one. It was almost night. I saw you close the door and fasten the shutters. I wondered if it was well with Clara — if I had a son. The thirst never let up. I chewed the wet leaves. (*The WOMAN fills the cup with water again and places it on the mantelshelf, as if waiting for the YOUTH to cease speaking.*) After a time I saw the man. He had lost my trail. He went into the stable. I could just see him pass the whitewashed door. He thought I would hide there, or he went there to wait for the patrol to come and help hunt me down. He knew I was wounded and couldn't get far away!

Woman. — (*Taking the cup.*) Drink; the fever —

Youth. — (*Swiftly, nervously.*) I crept up toward the cottage; I thought I had better while I still had the strength. I

could n't call for you to open — a word would have brought a bullet. I knew it would be all up with me if he saw the light when the door opened. It was a risk — but I took it. Better die here than in the mud of the garden! — Oh, home! — home!

Woman. — (*Offering the cup.*) Come, drink. If the man had seen you he would have been here by this time.

Youth. — Just as I turned to come in I saw him once more against the whitewash. He bides his time. He knows how soon the patrol comes.

Woman. — It's only your imagination. Come, —

(*The son reaches for the cup. Both start suddenly. The WOMAN lets her eyes follow the YOUTH's gaze toward the door. She replaces the cup on the shelf.*)

Youth. — You heard that?

Woman. — (*Grimly.*) I heard nothing! (*It is plain that the WOMAN is fast losing her composure. Both listen intently. The WOMAN crosses the room stealthily, her eyes never leaving the door.*)

Youth. — (*Starting suddenly.*) At last!

Woman. — (*In a lower tone.*) Hush — !

Youth. — (*Half rising.*) A step!

Woman. — (*Moving about wildly.*) Hide! For the love of Heaven — hide! — In the bed! — in the cupboard! — *anywhere!*

Youth. — There's no hiding for *me.* (*Dumbly.*) It must be — the other way.

Woman. — What other way?

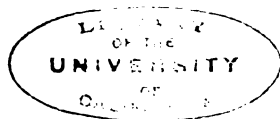
Youth. — (*Taking a small folded paper from his pocket and showing her.*) This.

Woman. — What's in that?

Youth. — Escape — freedom — sleep!

Woman. — What do you mean? (*Looks toward the door.*)

Youth. — Farewell! — (*Quickly.*) Tell Clara the road was open and I could not wait. When little Paul is a big boy, tell him his father died for his country. When father is home from the war —



Woman. — (The WOMAN has approached him, then stepped back in surprise, as if unable to speak.) Paul! — What is that?

Youth. — Poison. (She snatches it from him.) Give it back! — You don't know what you're doing! Give it back! (He tries to take it.)

Woman. — Suicide! — You would lose your soul! (She turns as if to throw the paper into the fire. The YOUTH restrains her).

Youth. — Wait. You would rob Clara of my grave. She would bring little Paul there and tell him of his father.

Woman. — You would rob her of your companionship in heaven!

Youth. — Whō knows God's will? (The WOMAN makes again as if to throw the paper into the fire. The YOUTH stops her. Kneeling, he points into the fire. As he speaks the WOMAN slowly shrinks back from him as if fascinated.) Yes — look into the glowing coals! See! — Sunrise! — A line of soldiers with gleaming rifles stands before a ditch. A man is led before them — blindfolded. He stands alone. They raise their rifles — ready! — fire! A bleeding corpse falls to rot in the mud! (While the WOMAN stands dumb, as if still in her vision, he takes the cup from the mantelshelf and starts to reach out his empty hand for the powder. He winces, replaces the cup and reaches out with his freed hand.) Come, mother, you can't refuse!

(The WOMAN seems to be about to give him the paper, suddenly comes out of her dream, crumples the paper violently in her hand.)

Woman. — Your soul must be saved alive! (There is a short distinct tapping at the door.) Quick! — Help drag this bed across the door! (The YOUTH refuses, sitting before the fire with his hand half over his face. He looks stolidly into the coals. The WOMAN drags the low bed across the door. She calls out.) I am an old woman and alone; pass by! There is no one here! (She approaches the fireplace. There is a silence.) Oh, why does no one answer? (Her glance takes in the cup on the mantel, then she looks suddenly at the paper in her hand. The door is tried from without. She looks at her son in agony, takes the cup with mingled

loathing and cunning and slowly crosses the room, setting the cup on the cobbler's bench. She looks around at the door. There is a tapping.) Sunrise!—(Whispers.) Sunrise! (Feverishly she unfolds the paper and lets its contents slip into the cup of water. She crosses to her son, offering the cup.) Don't be angry with me, Paul. Come, the fever is on you again. Drink! (The youth grudgingly takes the cup, and without drinking places it on the bench beside him.)

Youth. — The thirst has left.

Woman. — God said that! *(After a moment there is another tap at the door. She hesitates, wrings her hands and takes the cup again.)* Ah, he's angry with his old mother — his old mother that loves his soul better than her own.

(The YOUTH rouses himself a little impatiently, takes the cup, drinks, then resumes his former position. The WOMAN backs across the room, watching him, wide eyed, After a time he passes his hand slowly over his forehead. He rises with an effort. The WOMAN hastens to steady him.)

Youth. — *(Wearily.)* I didn't know I was so hot; I must get away from the fire — it makes me sleepy — *(He looks about drowsily.)* I seem to forget — where — *(The WOMAN leads him to the low bed and helps him to lie down, lifting his legs to the bed and straightening them out.)* — sleepy — sleepy. *(The WOMAN stands mutely at the foot of the bed. After a moment the YOUTH opens his eyes, looks dreamily about, then seems to see something at the side of the bed. He exclaims in mild surprise.)* Clara! — and the baby! — But the roads — are — closed —

Woman. — *(Softly.)* The road is always open — the road is always — *(She breaks off and goes to the head of the bed and kisses the YOUTH's lips. There is a tapping at the door. She starts, then rises and quite calmly pulls the head of the bed away from the door, then drags the bed somewhat out into the room. From the curtained bed she takes a stiffly folded sheet which she unfolds and spreads over the form of the YOUTH. Quietly, she goes to the door and slips the bolt, then stands between the door and the bed stolidly waiting.*

The door is flung open and a man darts into the room, closing the door quickly after him. He is of middle age, uniformed, but very differently so than the YOUTH. The WOMAN starts back.)
 Father! — Father!

Man. — (*Quickly.*) I was chasing one of the enemy. He came this way.

Woman. — If you had called! —

Man. — A word might have brought a bullet. He got away, but he is near. I wounded him, but —

Woman. — You wounded —

Man. — I couldn't go back without coming in —

Woman. — (*Dully.*) It was you!

Man. — I — ? You have heard the fellow! Did he try to get in? (*The WOMAN staggers weakly back from the man who now sees the sheet-covered form.*) God! — Is that — ? Is he — ? (*The WOMAN nods; she starts to cross herself, but suddenly she looks at her hand and holds it away from her with horror. The man speaks without triumph.*) So — I killed him.

Woman. — (*Struggles to speak.*) — The wound — was nothing —

Man. — But he died.

Woman. — Poison — I — (*indicating herself.*)

Man. — (*Suspiciously.*) Poison — some trick! (*He makes as if to look under the sheet, but the WOMAN forces him back.*)

Woman. — No — no! (*Half to herself.*) He thought he would be taken — shot.

Man. — You saw him take it?

Woman. — (*Nods weakly.*) He said you saw him come in. — There was the tapping at the door — the tapping! He said he would be shot — at sunrise — (*half whispers.*) Sunrise! — thrown into the ditch — into the mud — He wanted to be buried where his wife —

Man. — (*Breaking in.*) But prisoners are not shot —

Woman. — He was — a spy.

Man. — A spy! (*Again tries to look and is again prevented.*)
So he took poison.

Woman. — He — had poison — I took it away; but he begged — begged —

Man. — You gave it back?

Woman. — There was the tapping — the tapping — I gave it to him in some water — and he never knew — never knew —

Man. — You poisoned him!

Woman. — I couldn't let him lose his soul — I couldn't! — I wanted him to be with his wife — his baby —

Man. — But we might have got information from him — he might have been forced to tell something. He was a spy — an enemy!

Woman. — He — wore the enemy's uniform — but — but —

Man. — But what? (*Suddenly suspicious.*)

Woman. — He was one of us.

Man. — A comrade — My God! — If you had waited!
(*He attempts to look again. The WOMAN prevents him.*)

Woman. — He was sure it was the enemy — sure —

Man. — A countryman! —

Woman. — (*To herself.*) There was the tapping — the tapping —

Man. — Such a young fellow, too. — I could see that — almost the size of our Paul — (*Slowly he stretches out his hand as if to turn down the sheet. The WOMAN restrains him, speaking half in command, half in appeal.*)

Woman. — Say I — did — right — say — I —

Man. — (*After a pause; gravely.*) You did do right, WOMAN, — God help you. (*The WOMAN turns away to the rear wall, her face covered. The MAN speaks tenderly as he draws down the sheet.*) — And he was one of our own! — (*Looks.*) My son! — My son!
(*After a time he looks at the WOMAN, who, feeling his glance, finally brings herself to look into his eyes. He exclaims in a voice full of bitter understanding, but without reproach.*) — You!

CURTAIN

JAROSLAV VRCHLICKY AND HIS PLACE IN BOHEMIAN DRAMA*

'Concessions! All the time concessions! Our entire life consists of bartering concessions. We concede away our ideals, our warm youthful dreams. We concede the precious jewels so that we could keep the empty treasure box.

'And what is the ultimate gain? Our hearts grow weary, our souls commonplace. Were it not for books and work, how could we ever live thru it all. . . . '—*Vrchlicky*.

BY CHARLES RECHT

AS the modern Bohemian literature dates from the epoch of European revolutions of '48, the prolific pen of Jaroslav Vrchlicky was due somewhat to the literary demand of a newly awakened nation. His predecessors in the drama had paved the way for him at a sacrifice of personal freedom to them, and the cost of starvation. When the Slav will prevail in the world, and the story of the Czechs will be recounted by foreign students of letters, the daring and enthusiasm of the young dramatist, Joseph Kaietan Tyl, will earn the tribute which properly belongs to him. Ordered to disband his troupe of actors, driven out of Prague, forbidden by the authorities to perform plays in the Bohemian tongue anywhere in Bohemia, this actor-playwright wrote his playlets in garrets and fields, and performed them in villages by candlelight, with marionettes before the newly-freed Serfs. Marionettes would hardly be suitable for a production of Strindberg before a modern audience, yet to a mind with an imagination which is not overtaxed, the dolls represent all emotions of character. The marionette has of late lost its place on the English-speaking stage, as though its use prevented a purely artistic production. This is an error. In

*See in the Autumn, 1913, number of POET LORE, the Introduction to Vrchlicky's 'At the Chasm.'

plays for children, for instance, the use of the marionette will prove a great educational factor, as it rouses the imagination of the child and weaves about the helpless tottering idol a purer and better fiction than does a realistic production by clever self-conscious children.

In the newly-awakened Bohemia, the marionettes became very popular, and the simple crude Kopecky earned his way to fame by writing hundreds and hundreds of 'scenarios' for marionettes. He paraphrased 'Hamlet,' 'Faust,' 'Uncle Tom's Cabin' and others, sowing the seed in a nation of peasants for a desire for dramatic self-expression. What Kopecky did in the villages, Vrchlicky found himself called upon to do in Prague. But his treatment of the classical themes was not the journalistic effort of the penny-a-liner; it was a master's hand retouching ancient fables. A thorough knowledge of the prevalent conditions in the place of action seems to pervade the entire play, be the scene in fabulous dark Slavdom, glorious Hellas or debauched Rome. True, that the style and construction is still pre-Ibsenite. Asides and monologues mar the effect and heroic exits seem bombastic to our modern ear. But the plot, the wit, the poetry is there. And the variety of subjects almost awes us. Taking a few titles at random:

'Pietro Aretino' (1892), comedy in four acts. Venice in 1347.

'Three Kisses' (1893), a dramatic poem in one act. Bohemian mythology.

'Samson,' a trilogy, a dramatic poem consisting of: I. Samson and the Philistines; II. Samson in the desert; III. Samson and Delilah.

The 'Barrel of Diogenes' (1902), comedy in one act, Corinth, 329 B. C.

'Ear of Diogenes' (1900), comedy in three acts; Syracuse, 384 B. C.

'New Life' (1900), comedy in one act. Modern Bohemian aristocracy.

'Wisdom of Rabbi Ben Loew,' comedy in four acts. Prague during the reign of Rudolph II.

Let us look into the texture of this many colored tapestry. Let us examine the workmanship in particular of one of his Roman plays, and follow it with a translation of a practical stage piece—a popular one-act Bohemian play of situation.

THE VENGEANCE OF CATULLUS

Written in 1887. Action takes place in Rome, in the year 60 B. C.

PERSISTRATES, a Syrian slave dealer arrived in Rome with ACME, a beautiful Greek slave. While he was taking her through the forum in order to deliver her to her new master, CONSUL QUINTUS CECILIUS METELLUS, the Syrian stopped to hear the exhortation of a demagogue. ACME took advantage of the preoccupied mind of the rustic and slipped away from him. He raised a hue and cry, a mob gathered and they pursued the beautiful slave. She ran into the house of the poet, GAIUS VALERIUS CATULLUS. The slaves of CATULLUS woke up and prevented PERSISTRATES from entering. The combat brought the poet to the door, and he, finding the girl exceedingly pretty, and upon ascertaining the name of her new master, offers her his protection. He orders his slaves to eject PERSISTRATES, who swears that METELLUS shall avenge the wrong.

Persistrates.—The mighty Metellus will avenge me. He paid well for this slave, and she is his. I'll go, but you will pay dearly for this, you obstinate Roman — and that miserable slave also.

Catullus.—Not another offending word against her — she is my guest. (*To his slaves.*) Get me rid of him, and if he does not go, throw him out into the street.

Persistrates (*partly on the threshold and partly behind scene*).—This is a den of robbers — but I'll teach you — slave thief! I know well why you will not give her up — you leach, you want a beautiful slave for nothing, beggarly Romans — you are all

cheats — all of you. Senator a rogue, Quaestor a rogue, Consul a rogue, Pontifex Maximus a rogue — all rogues — all of you. (*The slaves drive him out.*)

(*GAIUS hides the girl in an adjoining chamber. METELLUS promptly arrives.*)

Metellus.— Good cheer to you, Gaius Valerius. Pray forgiveness of the muses for me, because I tear you so rudely from their sweet embrace.

Catullus.— How do you fare, O Consul? Alas, both the muses and my friends have forgotten me.

Metellus.— Your blame probably in both cases.

Catullus.— Hardly — consul — but permit me to offer you a seat in my house. (*Points to a seat.*)

Metellus (seating himself).— You are forgetting all your friends. How long is it since you were with us? Did some one offend you? Perhaps Cicero is in your way? Did his wit hurt you?

Catullus.— Cicero's wit cannot offend me — he is so much older and he saved the country.

Metellus.— He did not save it alone — others had a goodly share in it, though they do not brag about it. Was it young Cæsar, perhaps? He is so free with his tongue — but, then, you know when we drink we loosen up a bit. Ha! Gaius?

Catullus.— Neither did Cæsar offend me. They whose minds are equal to mine, I respect, and the others I regard not.

Metellus.— Well, was it Gellius?

Catullus (to himself).— That scoundrel. (*Loudly.*) Let us forget it, consul. We cannot change the world.

Metellus.— Then it could have only been Clodia. I always tell her to be careful of her sayings, lest she offend the best of my friends. How unfortunate! How stupid!

Catullus.— Be not vexed, consul. How long I have absented myself from your house, I know not — but I know that the old order still prevails there. Sometimes a blossom falls away from the bough, but the tree blooms as ever — somewhere in the forest, a bird grows silent forever, but the forest resounds

as of yore with thousand-throated song. Why should the hackneyed life change its course for my sake? Not even we poets are indispensable to this world.

Metellus.— Truly spoken, Gaius Valerius. You were always clever. Well, in the house things remain unchanged. Cicero talks political gossip between his nods over the wine cups; Cæsar teases and plays with my wife's slaves, and Gellius —

Catullus.— I care nothing about Gellius. Tell me about your wife, about Clodia.

Metellus.— My wife entertains Gellius. (*Observing that CATULLUS is displeased.*) Why are you displeased? The evenings are so tedious — if you would come, she would entertain you, Gaius; it is all the same to her, dear friend.

Catullus.— And to you also, apparently. This would be very funny indeed if it were not so sad.

Metellus.— What do you fear, Gaius Valerius?

Catullus (to himself).— Shall I open the eyes of this bloated fool? But to what end — I'll rather get rid of him. But how? (*Loudly.*) Let that pass, consul. Your visit has moved me deeply, it brought to my mind the memories of my former visits at your house. Days of our old friendship and jollity, that true Roman jollity. Let us be merry and forget. Wine! Ho, there, Furinus, some wine. (*FURINUS enters.*) That old wine, which Hortensius praised, saying it contains all the laughter of Bacchus.

(*FURINUS brings in an amphora of wine and two vessels, and serves.*)

Metellus.— I never offend Bacchus by refusing his pure divine gift.

Catullus.— Well said, my friend, — pure wine! Wine is never mixed except by fools and duped husbands. Let's drink to their health. (*Raises the vessel.*)

Metellus.— There is meaning in your words. I'll gladly respond, for I am neither one nor the other. (*Raising the vessel.*) So to their health, Gaius. (*Laughing.*) But why should just these two sorts mix their wine?

Catullus.— Fools mix their wine, Consul Metellus, because they are fools.

Metellus.— And duped husbands?

Catullus.— Love is like wine.

Metellus.— Excellent comparison!

Catullus.— So that duped husbands drink only mixed wine.

Metellus.— There you are! I never thought of that — well, well — these poets — rascals! Well, as long as I drink unmixed wine. Long live poetry. Gaius Valerius. (*Raising vessel.*)

Catullus.— And friendship!

Metellus.— And love! But unmixed, ha! ha! (*He laughs.*)

Catullus.— Yes, unmixed. (*They drink.*) And what are you citizens doing in the Senate, consul?

Metellus.— The Senate? I am the Senate.

Catullus.— What's doing in politics? The provinces.

Metellus.— I am the provinces.

Catullus.— Pardon my short-sightedness, consul, I should have asked what are you doing?

Metellus.— I am opposing the agrarian laws. That fool Flavius thinks that the Senate does not know that Pompeius is back of his laws. We are more clever than he thinks.

Catullus.— Yes, it is either Pompeius or Cæsar, there is no room for a third man in Rome.

Metellus.— What's that? It is either Metellus or Pompeius, you ought to say. (*Drinks.*)

Catullus.— Oh, yes, Metellus. (*To himself.*) It's all fiddlesticks to me.

Metellus.— Cæsar? Begone! Who'd think of that stripling after that scandal.

Catullus.— Scandal? I know nothing about it. I pray you, tell me. (*He pours out more wine for him.*)

Metellus (drinking).— You don't tell me that it is news to you? Are you living in the Cycladæ Islands or in Rome? There certainly was a scandal and a great one, too.

Catullus.— No — tell me.

Metellus.— I always predict that women will be the ruin of young Cæsar. They will be his misfortune. He is losing his hair rapidly, and as for a beard, he will never be able to grow one. Ha, ha, fancy it! Cæsar is a prætor, you know that.

Catullus.— Yes, and ——

Metellus.— And a prætor must hold at his house ‘the feast to the Goddess of Chastity.’ It takes place at night, and no man must be present. Now, you know that the brother of my wife is crazily in love with Pompeia, the wife of Cæsar.

Catullus.— I know that.

Metellus.— Pompeia was the priestess at this feast — ha — ha — and Clodius, dressed in woman’s garb, went there — ha — as a harp player — ha!

Catullus.— The rascal. And they found him out?

Metellus.— Of course. You know Aurelia, Cæsar’s mother. She has sharper eyes than Argus. She screamed and howled, and the next day all Rome was full of the scandal. One of the tribunes of the plebs had to sue Clodius for blasphemy of the gods.

Catullus.— A pretty little tale — but why Cæsar? What had he to do with this?

Metellus.— Did it not happen in Cæsar’s house? Was not Clodius there after Cæsar’s wife? And then Clodius said that Cæsar egged him on. *He* wanted to find out what the women folk did at the ‘Feast of Chastity.’

Catullus.— But did not Cæsar testify in favor of Clodius? Did he not defend the honor of his House and prove the alibi of Clodius?

Metellus.— Cæsar did — yes — but not Cicero.

Catullus.— But what cares Cicero for the wife of Cæsar and the pranks of Clodius.

Metellus.— Oh! simple poet! (*Laughs.*) Back of all was Terentia, the wife of Cicero.

Catullus.— What has she to do with it?

Metellus.— Baby! (*Drinks.*) You know that the evil tongues said that Cicero is after the sister of Clodius, my wife, Clodia.

Catullus (to himself).— And they did not lie either.

Metellus.— And that angered old jealous Terentia, the wife of Cicero — so now Cicero had to testify against his old friend Clodius — understand?

Catullus.— Not fully.

Metellus.— When you marry — you will. These women are awful! Fancy it! The other day, Gellius said that every husband — every one, he said, is duped and deceived by his wife — what say you about it?

Catullus (with an ironical smile).— Nothing at all, consul.

Metellus.— Not I, of course, that's self-understood. I told him, and they all agreed with me, that *I* am not. No, sir! I drink my wine unmixed — ha — ha. That was excellent wit, that was, Gaius Valerius. (*He laughs and drinks; wants to rise, but overcome by wine, sinks back into the seat.*) I must tell this comparison at home — they'll have a good laugh about it. But here I talk and talk and forget the purpose of my call.

Catullus.— I am anxious to hear it.

Metellus.— This morning I bought a little present for Clodia, a young slave from the Syrian dealer, Persistrates. I wanted to surprise her.

Catullus (to himself).— And enjoy yourself.

Metellus.— We told him to bring her to the house of Cæsar, and we would all look her over.

Catullus (to himself).— Poor girl! (*Loudly.*) Yes, and —

Metellus.— And we waited over at Cæsar's, and waited, and drank and drank —

Catullus (to himself).— So much the better.

Metellus (he is speaking more and more sleepily and slowly).— And the slave dealer does not come — no — no — hour after hour — no slave dealer — then he comes alone — face like a red beet — the fool! She escaped him —

Catullus.— What can I do about it?

Metellus.— He blurted out that she ran into your house, Gaius Valerius — here into your house. Gellius wanted to call

an ædile with lictors for the slave — but I said — Gaius Valerius Catullus — he is a friend of mine — a good friend of mine — you understand, said I — no scandal among friends — I'll go there and we'll settle it like good friends. Gellius said Catullus wants to anger Clodia, so he takes in pretty slaves as substitutes, but I made believe I did not hear it — I never hear it when any one insults any of my friends — my friends — and you are a good friend of mine — you and Cæsar and Hortensius and Gellius and Cicero.

Catullus.— Nice company, thanks. (*To himself.*) Not asleep yet!

Metellus.— And I want good-will everywhere among friends — ha — ha — everything quiet, peaceful, ha — ha — understand. (*He falls asleep.*)

(*When the corpulent CONSUL has fallen asleep, CATULLUS summons FURINUS and they move him into a curtained niche and hide him. CATULLUS recalls ACME, who overheard part of the preceding dialogue. A love scene ensues. ACME does not know who CATULLUS is and recites some of his own poetry, which she memorized. ACME admits that she is betrothed to SEPTIMIUS SEVERUS, a friend of CATULLUS. Just then FURINUS enters hastily and announces the arrival of Clodia. ACME resumes her former place of hiding. CLODIA (surnamed also LESBIA) enters and demands the slave. CATULLUS refuses. CLODIA names CATULLUS, so that the listening ACME learns for the first time that he is the very poet whose verses she had been reciting. CLODIA complains bitterly of the infidelity to her of CATULLUS. He answers by reminding her of her numerous lovers. He names Gellius, Gellius Peplecola, his uncle, Cælius, Rufus, Sestus Clodius.*)

Clodia.— Accuse me — Oh, pure swan of Verna! Who is Aufidia, Ipsitilla?

Catullus.— They succeeded you, O Clodia! My poisoned heart sought peace and oblivion. It discarded the shattered chalice in which it found but ugliness and sin. Love? Neither you nor I knew love, Lesbia, and now it is too late.

Clodia.— To-day, you are a sober and a bitter sophist, poet Catullus. Love means a different thing to you than in former years. You have forgotten the happy days when you and I secretly met in the house of Manlius. Forgotten your kisses and your verses to me when we sat among the tangled blossoms of Egyptian poppies. Then you lived, Gaius, because you were a poet still, and you loved. To-day your lyre is mute — but I still love you fervently, passionately.

(CATULLUS reminds her of her liaison with GELLIUS. She replies that she uses GELLIUS to forget her sorrow, her love for CATULLUS. She demands and implores, wants to kill the Greek slave. He reminds her of her husband and her immorality. She admits she is but the victim of circumstances. When very young, she married METELLUS, and he left her for a campaign through the morasses of Gaul. She is insistent. He moves away from her — she follows —)

Catullus.— What do you want? All is at an end between us.

Clodia (after him).— Nay — nay. The poem of our love is but beginning now.

Catullus.— Unfortunate, what are you doing? (*Moves nearer to the curtained niche.*)

Clodia.— A great poet — you may be, but a heartless man you are. (*She follows and he stops, at the curtain. She implores him and kneels down. She raises her hands to him.*) Forgive me — love me!

Catullus (who is standing closely to the curtain, steps aside quickly and pulls the rope, the curtain opens rapidly and CLODIA kneels at the feet of METELLUS. The consul's hands embrace his rotund abdomen, and he is snoring loudly).— Here is your place Clodia.

Clodia (crushed).— This is treason!

Catullus (laughing loudly).— Ho, Consul Metellus, rise! You never experienced such a scene as this. Behold!

Clodia (to CATULLUS).— You wretch!

Metellus (awaking, just as CLODIA is rising from the ground.

He rubs his eyes).— My sweet little dove — see, Gaius Valerius! Here, indeed, is a wife for you.

Catullus (with irony).— She longed for you, consul. She was jealous of you. I did not know how to convince her that, overcome with the burden of the cares of state, you succumbed to sleep here. She demanded to see you, so I had to satisfy her—that perfect wife of yours.

Clodia (in a rage).— I shall remember this.

Metellus (rising. To CATULLUS).—And the gossips were saying that you and she — Ha! Ha! I drink my wine unmixed, do I not, Gaius Valerius?

(*ACME is called then, and accompanied by FURINUS is escorted to the house of her betrothed, SEPTIMIUS SEVERUS. PERSISTRATES appears and explains that it was all a mistake, that the real Greek slave girl had been found by him and was already at the house of METELLUS.*)

Metellus.— Well, at any rate, I had an excellent nap here — suppose we go home — dearest Clodia.

The indispensable hackneyed screen of French comedy is here, to be sure, but there is subtlety in the treatment which discloses a skilled hand. And there's an atmosphere in this bit of an act which relieves our conception of the heavy *deus ex machina* Cæsar and his times by the sketch of the young Cæsar, who is rapidly getting baldheaded, who flirts with Clodia's slaves and sends her brother to spy on his own wife. And thundering Cicero falls asleep between cups of wine and political small talk. The self-same familiar touch prevails in his treatment of all heroes, be it Samson, Bar Kochba or Titiano Vecelli.

To-day, modern Bohemian literature is in a transitional period. The great poet Svatopluk Cech is dead — Vrchlicky is gone, and while there are minor dramatists and poets, whose work is perhaps about equal to that of Pinero or Henley, there are none whose fame would spread far beyond the limits of the crown lands of Saint Venceslas.

In the field of humor and satire, however, Bohemia was exceptionally favored in the birth of Ignat Herrman. Unfortunately his writings are so local, the types drawn so purely bourgeois Bohemian, that the non-Slavonic world must forever be denied the pleasure of the exquisite wit and humor unparalleled by any one else in the Bohemian world of letters. His is a treatment of a sympathetic onlooker, and while each type is provokingly ludicrous, the peculiarities and helplessness awakens our sympathy and love. His 'Little Shop that was Eaten Up' (three volumes) is a masterpiece. Almost a photographic portrayal of the life and death of a small shopkeeper, it contains unsurpassed humor and pathos. While his 'Prague Sketches,' his 'Little Folks of Ours' (childhood experiences superior to 'Tom Sawyer'), 'Small Animals I Have Tried to Keep,' and many others, would not offend our Anglo-Saxon prudery, there are others where plain speaking is not avoided, and he completes such details of his picture willfully, knowing that he is writing for a nation whose mind is pure and which demands truthfulness from its teachers and bards.

All such writers of Bohemia, however, owe a debt to Vrchlicky which they cannot over-estimate. Mainly a poet, he inspired other poets. As a dramatist he lifted the drama from the marionette stage. As a translator he made it possible for younger men to study from a good translation the works of Shakespeare, Byron, Ibsen, de Musset and many others. As a patriot he taught the younger men to look for art among men and women of the Boehmerwald, Erz and Riesengebirge. His works have as well a practical stage value. The following one-act piece could be mistaken for a play coming from the Guignol, the Stadtheater or the Princess. I have taken some liberty with the original manuscript and left out a sentence here and there to bring it a little closer to our understanding of a one-act play. The ending of the play was also changed. Modesty, not my intention, forbids my stating that I touched it but to adorn. I trust, however, that the intrusion of the minor mind will cohesively blend

into the frame work of the entire picture and not mar its effect.

THE WITNESS*

Dramatis Personae

IUSTUS KORBER, J. D. (*fifty-five years of age*), a lawyer.†

THERESA, his wife (*thirty-three years of age*).

GUSTAV CERNICK, J. D. (*thirty-five years of age*), a lawyer, KORBER'S associate.

JOSEPH VALENTA (*about sixty years of age*).

MARY, a servant.

A PLAINCLOTHES POLICEMAN.

The dining-room in KORBER'S apartment. The servant is clearing the table at which KORBER, buried in a newspaper, is sitting. THERESA is taking things down from a buffet. The appearance of the room indicates that the family is about to remove. Most of the pictures are on the floor and are set back against the walls. Near the hearth is a barrel, and a trunk on the left; near the window is a lady's writing table. Atop of it are hat boxes, toilet articles and similar trifles. As the curtain rises, the servant, having placed the dishes on a tray, is taking them out into the kitchen on the right.

Theresa. — You'll have to excuse that poor lunch, dear — the moving upsets everything.

Iustus. — Oh! don't mention it.

Theresa. — And are you not vexed?

Iustus. — Not about the luncheon; there are plenty of other things.

Theresa (going over to him). — Poor boy, you are worried.

Iustus. — Some things just do not succeed, and in others people take advantage of you.

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†In Austria all lawyers have J. U. D. degrees, and are called doctors.

Theresa.— But you ought not to worry any more. There's no need of it now.

Iustus.— Easily said. Well, it will not kill me. (*Pause.*) Will you be through to-day with this (*surveying the disarranged articles*) veritable babel?

Theresa.— I hope so. Does it not give you a queer feeling to move after all these fifteen years? It is a big part of our life from which we are forcing ourselves.

Iustus.— But you insisted yourself on this moving.

Theresa.— Of course, I did. We did not have enough space here. (*Going toward the window.*) Across the yard is the insane asylum with its high walls and a row of tiresome windows.

Iustus.— And it annoys you only now, after these fifteen years. Women! Women!

Theresa (smiling).— There you go, against women again.

Iustus.— Do I wrong you then? I was fully contented here for twelve — fifteen years, and you for the last twelve never uttered a word against the neighborhood. All at once — 'it's gloomy here.' All of a sudden, the 'high walls' and 'tiresome windows.' You know well that I do anything to please you, and so I moved. Had you wanted to remain here, we would have never moved away.

Theresa (seriously).— Thanks, very much, for catering to my whims.

Iustus.— You are entirely welcome. (*He reads. Pause. IUSTUS continues to read the newspaper. THERESA is removing dishes from the buffet into the basket.*) Well, all in all, are you glad to move away from here?

Theresa.— Yes, I am longing for a change.

Iustus.— You know that we can still remain here if you wish it. The flat is not rented. I can stop over at the landlord's and tell him. All you have to do is to hang up your pictures, and things will go on as in the past.

Theresa (quickly).— Oh, no! no! What would the people

say about us? Everybody knows now that we are moving, and besides, you'd forfeit a month's rental in the new house.

Iustus.— How practical you are.

Theresa.— We'll be through with everything before evening. Only let's get away from here.

Iustus.— For my part! (*He puts away the newspaper, rises and goes into the adjoining room. THERESA continues her work. Presently IUSTUS returns with hat and overcoat and goes over to the hearth and lights a cigar.*) There's another thing!

Theresa.— Yes, dear?

Iustus (taking a paper out of his pocket).— I found this on my desk this morning. D. Cernik sends me his immediate resignation.

Theresa (surprised).— Resignation?

Iustus.— Yes — stupid fellow — his style and all, is insulting.

Theresa (suppressing her nervousness).— That's why you lost your appetite this noon.

Iustus.— Bah! Nonsense. But to leave me after ten years suddenly — without the slightest cause. And he has not enough decency to come straight to me and tell me like a man. He writes it and puts it on my desk and goes.

Theresa.— He probably will want to open his own office now.

Iustus.— Then I could understand his motive, but he does not.

Theresa.— Where is he going?

Iustus.— He says he is going to America.

Theresa (stops in her work and repeats very slowly).— To America.

Iustus.— Evidently, he is insane. But whatever he does is immaterial to me. It's only that I was so dependent upon him. He was so reliable and, as a rule, he did not talk much. I can't bear a prattling fool. In that way Gustav was perfect — even if he was not a good worker, he did not talk. God knows whom I'll get. Some fellow who'll talk politics, literature, drama and what not, from morning till night.

Theresa.— Well, young men must take an interest in life.

Iustus.— They should be like me. My life is in my law books and cases. The other things are superfluous.

Theresa.— Unfortunately so for you.

Iustus.— Fortunately, you ought to say. If you'd follow my ways, you would not be so nervous. But people who have no cares of their own, make everything their business. And so they get themselves into no end of trouble. Now I have made my little speech and I can go.

Theresa.— When are you coming back?

Iustus.— I don't know. Hardly to this place. We'll see each other in the new flat.

Theresa.— And you say that so indifferently.

Iustus(*in the doorway*).— Should I cry about it? Some people move every half a year. If they were like you, they'd have no tears left for the regulation family funeral. Good-bye.

Theresa.— Good-bye, dear. (*THERESA remains alone for some time, continuing her work.*) To America — to America. He, the only witness — (*going to the window*) except these high mute walls. (*She shivers nervously.*) Away from these witnesses — to America.

(*GUSTAV CERNIK enters. He is dressed for travel.*)

Gustav.— Good evening.

Theresa (*surprised*).— You? (*Collecting herself.*) Yes — Good evening.

Gustav.— I see that I should not have come here at all. Forgive me, and farewell!

Theresa.— Good luck to you, Cernik.

Gustav (*looking around*).— So you are really going away.

Theresa.— It is best to end all at once.

Gustav.— Just as I am doing.

Theresa.— Yes, Korber told me that you are going to America.

Gustav.— The only solution to our problem, Theresa.

Theresa.— Pardon me — our problem —

Gustav.— Yes, dear Mrs. Korber — our problem.

(The scene which ensues is that of a parting between two old lovers. She tells him that the walls of the room of the opposite house seem to reproach her for her infidelity. He says that he has noticed her indifference to him. He returns little love notes which they exchanged, when he worked in the law library next to her sewing-room. He wants to begin a new life also, and returns these to her so that all the witnesses may be destroyed. She places them on the mantel. He goes over to her and embraces her passionately. He kisses her once more, and covering her face with her hands, she rushes into an adjoining room. He leaves. There is a long pause. Enters JOSEPH VALENTA, a tall, grayish man, poorly dressed. He holds his cap in his hand.)

(VALENTA takes a few steps into the empty room, looks around, goes back again to the door, coughs.)

Theresa (entering from adjoining room).— Who's here?

Valenta.— Pardon, *Gnädige Frau*, pardon my liberty.

Theresa.— Who let you in?

Valenta.— I did not have to ring at all, *Gnädige Frau*.^{*} The door was open, there was no one in the vestibule, so I walked in here.

Theresa.— And what do you want?

Valenta.— I wanted to ask you to kindly, to — I met Dr. Korber in the street about half an hour ago, when he left the house, and I begged him — I asked for some kind of employment even if it were ever so small. The doctor, he was so kind, he said I should come over here, that he will come back here and we'll talk about it. Some minor clerical work or errands. I would do anything; you'd be satisfied — I am an old man, but I am well preserved, and when the doctor gave me hopes he said he would see — excuse me, *Gnädige Frau*. I was so bold as to——

^{*}I have used the title of "*Gnädige Frau*" and not "*milostpam*," its Bohemian equivalent. My reason for it is twofold: in the first place, it is a strictly German custom imported into Kleinstädtliches Bohemia; and secondarily, because the American readers will more readily understand the meaning of that custom if it is in German. Personally, I should have preferred to use the Bohemian "*milostpam*" in colloquial usage. This flattering title is pronounced "*gnä'ge*," and it is used in this form by Valenta.

Theresa.— But my husband will hardly return to-day. And you can see that we are moving. There's no time for it to-day.

Valenta.— That's just why I took the liberty to-day, *Gnädige Frau*, as long as we are, as it were, still neighbors. —

Theresa.— Neighbors?

Valenta.— Certainly (*pointing to the windows*), *Gnädige Frau* does not know me, but I know her very well.

Theresa (*not noticing his motion*).— No, I do not know you.

Valenta.— And I know the doctor, very well, too, and also that young gentleman who always sits over the law books — there. When a man sees the same faces every day for fifteen years, he knows them like his own family.

Theresa (*disturbed*).— You watched our faces daily for fifteen years. That's terrible! But from where?

Valenta (*goes to the window and points*).— From there, *Gnädige Frau*.

Theresa (*frightened*).— That's the madhouse — man — did you escape from there?

Valenta (*smiling*).— I am not a lunatic. I was the caretaker of the inmates there, *Gnädige*. But I was unfortunate. Every man has his enemies, and I am the victim of mine. We had a new superintendent and he believed the report that I drugged and mistreated the patients there. So, yesterday, he discharged me. After fifteen years, *Gnädige*, it is hard, and so in my distress, I wondered if the doctor and you could not assist me with employment of some sort. A person who lives across the way for fifteen years and notices everything that goes on in the opposite apartment, and sees day after day who comes in and who goes out, he feels that they are sort of old acquaintances, *Gnädige Frau*, begging your pardon.

Theresa.— You have spied on us for fifteen years. And you use that as an inducement for me to employ you! That is a strange recommendation.

Valenta.— Good Lord, *Gnädige*, you cannot blame me. When I had to sit there (*pointing at the windows*) with nothing

at all to do. My work was over early. All the windows are on this side, so this was the only interesting place I could look on, as you never did lower your windowshades.

Theresa (disturbed).— Who could fancy that — you insolent, low fellow —

Valenta (smiling).— Really, *Gnädige*, do not excite yourself — I will not mention a word to a living person — I am a very discreet man, you know — but — our sort gets into all kinds of places and learns of all kinds of secrets — because them fellows across the yard there, they give away many dark things — so our sort, as I say, goes deeper into secrets than the priest or the doctor —

Theresa.— Yes — I know it. So here we were spied upon for fifteen years, and you have the brazen boldness to brag about it.

Valenta.— But, *Gnädige*, when I mentioned it to the doctor he was not a bit excited about it. I told him the same that I told you, but he only smiled and told me to call a little later. And I watched him all these years, there in his room at his desk where he sat over his masses of law papers and books, just as I watched the young man, his assistant. They used to sit in there and you used to sit at the window. There was also a couch, — it is not here now — You sat alone and sewed and sang. And right here over your head hung a beautiful little canary which sang loudly as though it wanted to compete with you. What became of it — did it die — the poor, dear thing?

Theresa.— Keep quiet, man, for heaven's sake, keep quiet.

Valenta.— I used to envy you this peaceful, well-regulated life, *Gnädige Frau*. Right over there in the hall hung a large picture — it's not there any longer either. (*Looks about.*) You have moved and changed it all — and it is a long time since you sang, *Gnädige*.

Theresa.— Why are you torturing me?

Valenta.— I — *Gnädige* — heaven forbid — Good Lord, your simple life, — at least, the way I saw it, — (*looking intently at her*) gives you no reason for alarm or reproach.

Theresa.— Listen, my man, why then are you telling me all this, and what are you bothering me for? When my husband comes, I'll tell him to have nothing to do with you. I do not want you in my house. A man who spies on his neighbors for fifteen years is a shameless fellow.

Valenta.— Especially if he keeps quiet about it.

Theresa.— You know nothing at all, nothing.

Valenta.— Yes, I saw it.

Theresa.— From across there?

Valenta.— Yes. One afternoon, the doctor was down town and the servant girl was out of the house. You were alone. You sat here, your sewing in your hands, looking at an open door. Then from the adjoining room the young gentleman came in and looked at you so lovingly. I seem to see it even now. He held a cigar between his fingers and sat down (*does likewise*) on the edge of this table.

Theresa.— Why do you remind me of it?

Valenta.— So you'd know that I know it, *Gnädige Frau*. He stood here and talked and talked to you a long while. I was looking at you all the time and was getting tired of it. He had talked to you in that way many a time before, and then quietly went away. But on this particular day when he stood against the table he spoke so vehemently —

Theresa.— Be silent!

Valenta.— Well, I am not saying anything, not a word. You resisted him as much as you could. I can't deny that — but in the end —

Theresa.— Keep still, you wretch!

Valenta (coming nearer to her).— Well, *Gnädige Frau*, you put in a good word for me with the doctor — and you will see how discreet I can be — an old veteran like myself — believe me, I can't even remember such little trifles — but you reminded me of it with your excitement. Who'd think of it — What's happened, has happened, now we must be good friends and help each other.

Theresa.— God, this is dreadful. We must help each other — this man has the audacity to tell me this so quietly because he knows of my sins. You are an evil and dangerous fellow.

Valenta.— No, *Gnädige*, I am not.

Theresa.— Prove it then, swear that you will never utter a word, and that you will go away and never cross my husband's or my path.

Valenta.— But, *Gnädige Frau*, I am a poor, miserable man. My enemies have ruined me. I have nothing to eat. I am penniless.

Theresa.— So that's the game. (*Goes into adjoining room.*) Wait — (*Short pause. She returns presently with a roll of bank notes.*) There you are. There's more there than you expected.

Valenta (*just glances at the bank notes, then quickly puts them into his coat pocket*).— God bless you, *Gnädige Frau*.

Theresa.— Now, go quickly — and don't let me hear from you again.

Valenta.— No — no. I'll leave the city to-day, and you shall never see me again.

Theresa.— Thank God for that.

Valenta.— You have saved a destitute man, *Gnädige Frau*. (*He takes her hand and wants to kiss it; she quickly withdraws it and points to the door.*)

Theresa.— Go! — and quickly —

(*VALENTA exit.*)

Theresa (*sighs*).— That's over, God! Now for a new, clean life. (*Calls.*) Mary! Is there no one here? (*Calls.*) Mary! (*Runs from one door to another excitedly.*) Always alone — always. (*Presses bell-button nervously, and continuously.*) God! (*She clenches her hands and brings one to her lips.*)

Mary.— You rang, *Gnädige Frau*?

Theresa.— Where have you been all this time? There's no one in the whole house. Nice order! A strange man walks

right into this dining-room without ringing — and I had my hands full to get rid of him.

Mary.— You have forgotten, *Gnädige Frau*, that you sent me to urge the expressman to come. He is on his way now.

Theresa.— Of course, I sent you. But why did you leave the hall door wide open?

Mary.— The doctor was the last one to leave, *Gnädige Frau*, he probably left it open. I am always careful about the hall door.

Theresa.— You always have an excuse for everything.

Mary (going to the window).— We'd better begin to get ready. The van and moving men are out there.

(*THERESA goes to the window and looks.*)

Mary.— But Lord, look, what is that — two men are fighting down there.

Theresa.— God Almighty, that's the same man!

Mary.— And the other fellow does not want to let him go. Look at the crowd — how they run! Too bad we can't hear what they have to say up here. Here's the doctor, *Gnädige Frau*. He is taking that man's part — that old man's — he talks to the other fellow — they are quiet now — they are coming up here. (*Turning to THERESA.*) Is that the man who frightened you so badly, *Gnädige Frau*?

Theresa (extremely upset).— Yes.

Mary.— Here they are.

(*Enter DR. KORBER, followed by a plainclothes policeman, who is handcuffed to VALENTA.*)

Policeman.— Begging your pardon, *Gnädige Frau*, for intruding, but this fellow (*pointing to VALENTA*) was discharged from the crazy-house for bribery and drug-selling, and we had him under surveillance. We saw him enter your house, and after a while he re-appeared and was in a great hurry. I stopped him but he acted so suspiciously that I searched him and found in his possession the bank roll (*showing money*), about five hundred dollars. I wanted to take him to the station-house quietly, he

protested, so I had to use force. Then your husband came by, and we thought we'd all come up to investigate.

Iustus.— This man was our neighbor for fifteen years, and he asked me for employment this morning.

Valenta.— Yes, this gentleman told me to call here for a job, but he was not at home.

Policeman.— That part of your story is quite right, old chap, But what did you do here when the boss was out?

Theresa.— He asked me for work.

Policeman.— But the money?

Iustus.— Money?

Policeman.— Yes, that's why I pinched him. A man like he never had that much money in his life. They (*pointing to the window*) don't get that in two years, in salaries.

(*VALENTA is silent.*)

Policeman.— You people would better look over your things here. If this money does not belong here, it belongs some other place. We'll find out soon enough. We'd better be going. (*Wants to lead VALENTA away.*)

Theresa.— It was my money, I gave it to him. Let him go, he's innocent.

(*The POLICEMAN, surprised, looks from KORBER to THERESA, and then at KORBER again. Short pause.*)

Iustus.— Well, officer, if my wife says so, it must be true. Let him go and please go, too.

Policeman.— Begging your pardon, sir, no harm meant, I was just doing my duty.

Iustus.— I understand — it's all right. I thank you.

Policeman (to VALENTA).— Now, get yourself away as soon as you can.

Iustus (to POLICEMAN).— You leave him here a while. Good-bye, officer.

(*OFFICER leaves. Long pause. KORBER is pacing up and down the room, goes over to the mantel and picks up the papers left by CERNIK. THERESA is standing by the window, her back to*

audience and to KORBER. VALENTA is nervously fingering his cap. He is standing at the door and is looking at bank roll left on the table.)

Iustus (to VALENTA).— You were a keeper in the insane asylum over there?

Valenta.— Yes, sir.

Iustus.— And you were discharged, and came to ask me for employment?

Valenta.— Yes, sir.

Iustus.— Then you did not find me at home, when you called?

Valenta.— No, sir.

Iustus (to THERESA).— Did you give this man five hundred dollars, Theresa?

Theresa (still in the same position).— I did.

Iustus.— You told me that you watched my house carefully for fifteen years, and you knew what went on there.

Valenta.— Yes, I did.

Iustus.— Dr. Cernik's boat leaves Hamburg to-morrow morning, Theresa.

Theresa.— Does it?

Iustus.— He was here and told you. (*Pointing to papers on the mantel.*)

Theresa.— He was, but he did not say.

Iustus (to VALENTA).— Sit down. (VALENTA takes a seat at the table.) What did you say to my wife when you called here to-day, and what did she tell you. Now tell me all you know.

Theresa (turning to IUSTUS).— Excuse me, Iustus. At what time does the next train leave for Hamburg?

Iustus.— Seven-twenty. You still have time.

Theresa.— I'll get my hat and coat in the meantime. (*Exit. Goes to adjoining room.*)

Iustus (taking seat).— Now you shall tell me just all you said to my wife this morning, and all she said to you. Everything!

Valenta (moving about uneasily in the chair).— Well, doctor,

it was like this. I am a poor, miserable, penniless fellow. I have a lot of enemies.

(From the adjoining room a revolver shot is heard. IUSTUS rushes into that room. VALENTA picks up money on the table, puts his cap on and goes out.)

CURTAIN

SHAMBLES

A SKETCH OF THE PRESENT WAR

BY HENRY T. SCHNITTKIND, PH. D.

CHARACTERS

GRANDFATHER.

GRANDMOTHER.

GRANDSON, *five years old.*

HIS FATHER.

PRIEST.

Scene: A shabbily-furnished, ill-smelling room of a shanty situated in any part of Europe at the present time. Through a window in the background can be seen a garden overgrown with weeds and skirted by a tumble-down fence. Twilight.

*Grandmother (trying to put her little grandson to sleep, croons softly).—*The sun that is lost in the night

Comes riding again in the dawn;

But my boys were called to the fight,

And my sunlight forever is gone.

*Little Boy (whimpering).—*Granny.

*Grandmother.—*Yes, dear.

*Little Boy.—*Granny, I'm hungry.

*Grandmother.—*Now, keep still, like a good boy. Try to fall asleep. (*She continues her crooning.*)

The waves that are whirled to the shore,

Return to the arms of the sea;

But my sons are gone to the war,

And they'll never be coming to me.

*Little Boy.—*I want to eat, granny.

Grandmother.— Wait till your daddy comes.

Little Boy.— Where's daddy?

Grandmother.— Daddy's gone to the war.

Little Boy.— What's that, granny? Is war a nice place where papa'll get somethin' to eat for me?

Grandmother.— Go to sleep now.

Little Boy.— I want to eat! I want daddy!

Grandmother.— Hush, child, hush! (*She continues her melancholy lullaby.*)

Now, don't you be staring so wild,—
For the menfolk must battle and die,
Whilst mother and sister and child
Must weep till their eyes be dry.

Little Boy.— Don't sing this, granny. It makes me feel awfully 'fraid.

Grandmother.— A fine little hero you are! You hardly deserve to have a soldier for a father.

Little Boy.— Granny, dear.

Grandmother.— Yes.

Little Boy.— What's a soldier?

Grandmother.— A soldier is a man who tries to kill the enemy.

Little Boy.— What's the enemy? Is it a great big giant or a wild animal what wants to hurt us?

Grandmother.— No, dear. The enemy are people just like us.

Little Boy.— Tell me, granny. Has the enemy got little children what's hungry, just like me?

Grandmother.— Yes, indeed.

Little Boy.— Then why do we try to kill the enemy?

Grandmother.— Wait till you grow up to be a big man, and then you'll know.

Little Boy.— Does the big men what's all grown up know why they try to kill the enemy?

Grandmother.— Now won't you stop plaguing me with your foolish questions?

Little Boy.— Granny!

Grandmother (beginning to lose her patience).— Well, what now?

Little Boy.— I want my mama.

Grandmother (trying to suppress her tears).— You know you can't see mama.

Little Boy.— Why can't I see her?

Grandmother.— Your mama has gone away for a long, long time. The angels have taken her with them.

Little Boy.— No, they didn't. She told me she was goin' to bring me a little brother. Why ain't she here with a little brother?

Grandmother.— God wanted her and so He sent His angels to take her with them.

Little Boy.— Why didn't papa chase the angels away?

Grandmother.— Papa's gone to the war.

Little Boy.— Granny, I hate the war! He made papa go away from me'n mama, an' then he let the angels come an' they took mama away. An' now I'm awfully lonesome, an' I'm so frightened an' hungry!

Grandmother (crushes him to her breast, as her entire frame shakes with her sobs).— You're a bad boy to-day, sonny.

Little Boy.— I ain't a bad boy. (*Drowsily.*) Granny, when the angels took mumsy away, wasn't they sorry for me? (*Almost in a whisper, as he is falling asleep.*) Say, granny, was it the angels that sent papa away to the war? (*He sleeps. His GRANDMOTHER puts him on a couch where he tosses restlessly.*)

Grandmother (shaking her head, as she watches him).— Poor little orphan! What strange words were those he spoke with his childish lips! Do the enemy have little hungry children like himself, he wants to know. Then why do we try to kill them, says he. (*She crosses herself.*) Oh, Lord, preserve my mind from evil thoughts! (*Rouses her husband, who has been dozing in a corner.*) Father!

Grandfather.— Yes, mother.

Grandmother.— Don't be sleeping there, father. Why don't

you help me fix up the room for our son? Here we are, expecting him from the war hospital, and you sit and doze there as if it's none of your business.

Grandfather.— Is little sonny asleep?

Grandmother.— Yes.

Grandfather.— Then I might as well say it, for the kid won't hear me. Do you know, mother, somehow I've got a feeling that when our boy comes back from the war he won't be with us long.

Grandmother (who has begun to sweep the room).— Why, what do you mean? He can't leave us now. You know why.

Grandfather.— Of course he can't, poor lad. A fellow that's had his two legs shot away from his body can't very well be traveling around much. But that ain't what I mean.

Grandmother (frightened, half-guessing his meaning).— Don't, father! Come now, help me tidy up the room.

Grandfather (cleaning up the room).— There's no use fooling ourselves, mother. We might just as well get used to it, and then it won't come so hard later. Seems to me that letter was plain enough. Just listen to it again. (*Takes a letter from his pocket, spreads it on his knee, and reads it with difficulty, tracing the words with his forefinger as he reads.*) 'Dear Sir: Your son, as it has already been my sad duty to inform you about a month ago, has lost both his legs while heroically fighting the enemy. After a brave struggle at the hospital against the inevitable, he wishes once more to see his parents. We are therefore sending him home.'

Grandmother.— I wonder what they can mean by saying that he's had to struggle against the in-ev-table?

Grandfather.— I ain't had much schooling, but the whole letter is quite plain to me.

Grandmother.— You mean —

(*GRANDFATHER shakes his head significantly.*)

Grandmother (stops her work and looks at the sleeping little boy).
— Poor kid!

Little Boy (tosses and speaks in his sleep).— Give me another piggy-back, daddy!

Grandmother.— Do you know, father, I've been thinking.

Grandfather.— Well?

Grandmother.— I've been wondering why our sons have to go to the war. They are called away to fight while their mothers and wives and little ones are left to strave at home. I ain't very clever, but still I can't help wondering whether God thinks it's right. Just look at this child a-tossing on the couch. Don't he need all his father's love and all his care at home? Then why did they make him go away to get killed?

Grandfather (crosses himself).— The Lord preserve us! What strange, ungodlike thoughts you've got into your head! Did n't the priest tell us that we ought to thank God when He allows us to sacrifice our sons for our country?

Grandmother.— I hope God will forgive me, but the more I think of it, the more it seems to me that it ain't right. Why should we have to send our sons away to the war like cattle to the shambles? Can God want us to do that?

Grandfather.— But the country needs 'em to fight.

Grandmother (becoming more and more excited).— Now just tell me who's the country? Ain't *we* the country? And do *we* want them to fight? What do *we* get out of the war, anyway? We get crusts of bread soaked in the blood of the children we have suckled. That's all *we* get out of the war. And at night, when the pillow is all wet with our tears, we remember how we've worked our hands to the bone and hungered and spent sleepless nights, so as to bring our little ones up to manhood. We remember the first time they began to toddle, looking up so timid-like into our eyes for fear we would let them fall down. And now those same feet have to be trampling over the dead and wounded bodies of men whom they've shot down. And we remember how their chubby little baby fingers would open like a lily in the morning, and clasp our necks till we'd think that we'd never want any better joy in the world to come. And now those same fingers are clotted with blood, and they have to pull the trigger and push the bayonet into warm, living, beating hearts.

Good God, is that all that a mother's love and a mother's heart-aches are good for?

Grandfather.— Mother, I don't understand you!

Grandmother.— It ain't hard to see it all, once your eyes are opened.

Grandfather.— But good Lord, don't you think it's glorious to die for your flag?

Grandmother.— I know they've been filling our heads with that stuff. But let me ask you this. Who gets all the starvation? Whose children is it that become orphans? And whose old parents is it that are left broken down like trees shattered by the thunderbolt.

Grandfather.— Why, it's us.

Grandmother.— Yes, us working people. We do the fighting, and when our lives are ruined and our sons are swept like so many rats into the grave, and when the new lands are won, and gold and silver and rich cloth and spices are brought in from those lands, do *we* get any of these good things? No. And was n't it *our* sons that died for them?

Grandfather.— You frighten me! You're making me think!

Grandmother.— Do you know, I believe it's the rich bankers and factory bosses and the like of them that want war.

Grandfather.— Now what in the world has got into your head?

Grandmother.— Common sense, that's what. This little kid here asked me a couple of childish, innocent questions, and they made me see things in a new light.

Grandfather.— I think women must be possessed of the devil nowadays. That's what I think.

Little Boy (in his sleep).— Oh, daddy an' mumsy, I'm so awfully glad you've come back! You'll never go away from me again, will you?

Grandfather (looks at him for a moment, then stealthily wipes a tear in his eye).— Mother, I guess we had better not talk any more about this. I'm afraid it'll make me think unholy thoughts.

Little Boy (in his sleep).— Say, mumsy, has the enemy in the war got mothers?

Grandfather.— I wish the kid would stop talking in his sleep. Seems to me he's feverish. (*A knock is heard.*)

Grandmother.— I wonder if they're bringing him now! (*She opens the door. Enter PRIEST, leaving the door open.*)

Priest.— Good afternoon, and may God bless you.

Grandfather.— Good afternoon.

Grandmother.— Good afternoon, Father. (*To herself.*) I wonder what he can be wanting here?

Priest.— I have heard that your son is to be brought from the war hospital, and so—I thought I would see him—before —

Grandmother (to herself).— I guess I'm also beginning to understand that letter. 'He's been fighting against the inevitable — wants to see us once more —' Oh, what's to become of us, and the little one? The Lord have pity on us!

Priest.— Let me bring you whatever comfort I may in the name of the Lord, and let me offer you the sincerest thanks in behalf of our country.

Grandmother.— Thanks for what? For covering this little boy's mother over with earth, and for sending us back a cripple that's going to die in place of the big, smiling lad we've given to our country?

Grandfather.— Mother, keep still! (*To PRIEST.*) You see, Father, she's somewhat upset. Women are so nervous.

Priest.— I hope our Heavenly Father will forgive those words of yours, even as I have forgiven them.

Grandmother.— Begging your pardon, Father, I don't want to be forgiven, if what I've said is sacrilege.

Little Boy (in his sleep).— I'm hungry, daddy. When are you comin' from the war? Will you bring me somethin' to eat?

Grandmother (pointing to the LITTLE BOY).— Maybe what he's saying is sacrilege, too?

Grandfather (to himself).— She may be right, after all.

Priest.— My good woman, I confess that war is horrible, and for that reason I have always prayed for universal peace. But when our superiors see fit to declare war upon another country, it is our sacred duty to encourage our soldiers to slay the enemy.

Grandmother.— That's just the trouble. You pray with your lips for peace, and with your hearts you lust for blood.

Priest (suppressing his anger).— Please do not be unreasonable, my good woman. I assure you my heart bleeds for every one of our boys who has to give his life to his country.

Grandmother.— You say your heart bleeds for the poor soldiers. Do you know what that means? Do you know how a mother's heart bleeds when her boy is lying wounded on the battlefield at night, while his living body is rotting away amidst the dead corpses? Do you know how a grandmother's heart bleeds when the lips of her little grandchild whimper, 'Say, granny, has the enemy got little children what's hungry like me?' Can you understand that, Father?

Priest.— God's will be done. No war is declared without the consent of Heaven.

Grandmother.— Now, look here. Why don't you be honest about it. When a king wants to get some silly thing he calls 'honor,' or when some rich people want to get new land, what's the use of dragging God's name into it? Is n't it enough that the people who make the wars tear up families without holding God responsible for it?

Priest.— My good woman, you make me speechless!

Grandmother.— So much the better! Then you would n't be telling people that God wants us to have wars. (*She gets up abruptly and walks to the couch, where she sits down, looking at the LITTLE BOY, and now and then nodding sadly.*)

Little Boy (in his sleep).— Oh, mumsy, I hears 'em! The angels is a-tellin' the soldiers not to kill the enemy! 'Cause they got little children an' mamas, just like us!

Grandfather (in a low voice, showing the letter to the PRIEST).— Does it mean that our son is expected to ——

Priest (nods assent).— I've come to see him before he passes away.

Grandfather (becoming excited and clenching his fists).— She's right! The old woman is right! Us poor working people get all the blood and the bullets in the war, and the other people get all the benefits! 'Taint right to make us fight their battles, is it?

Priest.— I sympathize with you in this hour of your affliction.

Grandmother.— Instead of sympathizing for them that get killed, you'd better be spending your time preaching against them that make the wars. Then you'd be doing God's work, instead of the devil's work, as you're doing now.

(She lights the lamp. A faint murmur is heard outside, coming nearer very quickly. Soon fragmentary sentences are distinguishable: 'He's coming!' 'They're bringing him!' 'His two legs are shot clean away!' 'Poor people!' 'They say he can't live over night.' A large number of people approach the house, crowding around the windows and the open door. As they come near, their voices die down again to a whisper. They point to the occupants of the room, murmuring and nodding to one another. One voice, raised a little above a whisper, is heard to say, 'Yes, and they've got the priest all ready, too!')

Grandmother (having rushed to the door in trembling expectation).— Where is he?

One of the crowd.— Right back there. They'll be here in a minute.

Grandfather (goes to GRANDMOTHER and puts his arm around her shoulders).— Brace up, mother.

Grandmother (bitterly).— Oh, I can stand it, all right.

(An ambulance passes by the window. Immediately afterwards the son is carried in on a stretcher. He is very faint. His parents bend over him and kiss his lips. The hospital attendants lift him tenderly, without uncovering him, and put him on a bed.)

The Son (pointing at the blanket that covers him).— You know, don't you?

(His parents nod assent. Some of the more forward of the bystanders come into the room and group themselves around the bed. No one disturbs them.)

The Son (weakly).— Where's the wife and the little boy?

Grandmother.— Here's the child, sound asleep, and your wife, why she —

Grandfather (interrupting her).— Oh, she's gone out — to—
(He breaks down and turns his head away.)

One of the Crowd.— Poor people, they'll have to break the news to him pretty quick.

Son (overhearing it).— You might as well tell me. I understand it. Nothing will make much difference to me now. Is she — *(GRANDFATHER nods assent.)*

Priest (to SON).— Bear up, my son. Remember, the lives of our heroes and their dear ones are not lost in vain. In fighting the foes of your country, you have done God's work.

Son (still speaking with an effort).— Don't. I can bear everything, but not this lie. Don't mention God's name in my presence. I am a murderer!

Grandmother (stroking his hair).— Come, come, don't be thinking about that, dear. You must be tired from your journey. Try to sleep.

Son.— I'll be having sleep enough before long.

Grandmother.— Don't talk that way. You'll live, and we'll be happy yet.

Son.— The only happiness for me is a speedy death.

Grandmother (misunderstanding him).— No, don't say that. There are thousands of people that are crippled for life, and yet they can be happy.

Son.— It is n't that. It is n't my crippled body, but my crippled soul.

Priest.— Your parents and I have been praying for your soul every day.

Son.— Do you think God could hear your prayers when the gates of heaven were stormed with the wails of a thousand mothers

whose sons I and my companions have killed? Do you think He could look down upon me when everywhere could be seen the speechless mouths of babes dumbly asking for bread? With this hand I have ripped open a mother's breast as she was about to offer it to her infant's lips. Do you think that after this God can ever look down on me in compassion? Drunken with blood, I tore out the eyes of men that but a moment before could look upon the flowers and the sunlight. Can I dare now to raise my eyes to heaven? I cursed and I laughed when I saw a dog tugging away at the warm entrails of one of God's children. Can I now raise the same voice in prayer to heaven?

Grandmother (horrified).— Oh, my son, how could you? You who have always been so gentle that the sight of a hungry man would make you weep!

Son.— How could I? When the heavens rain fire upon your head and the earth gapes under your feet, then your senses are maddened and you do not know what you are doing. For several weeks we had tried to capture one of the towns belonging to the enemy, though why we tried to capture it, none of us could tell. As we made charge upon charge, we could see our comrades' blood whirled about us like spray in the tempest. The taste of blood was on my tongue. Wherever we charged, traps with pointed stakes at the bottom would open suddenly beneath our feet, and the next moment the bodies of our companions would writhe upon the spits like worms on a fish-hook. One day we had to cross a river. A whole regiment was ordered to dam up the waters so that the rest of us might pass over their dead bodies to the other shore. Once, as I was taking aim with my gun, a hot shower of blood blinded my eyes and a trunkless arm, with the fingers still writhing convulsively, flew against my breast. Good God, that same arm may have once stroked the hair of a prattling child! Perhaps the child at this very moment was calling for its father. You here will never know how the sight of human blood maddens one. We were beasts! The only reminders of manhood about us were the weapons of destruction orged by the brain of man!

*Grandmother (lowers her head on his breast and weeps).—*My boy, my boy!

*Son (becoming somewhat delirious).—*Don't touch me! Can't you smell the odor of blood on me? Don't you see shreds of human flesh clinging to my clothes?

*Grandmother (still weeping, her head upon his breast).—*My son, my son!

*Son (vehemently, with a supreme effort).—*At last, when we captured the town, we were so maddened that we mowed down every living object that came in our way. In one church we found a woman who was picking up the headless body of her child. Half in pity and half in fury, one of my companions ripped her body open with the sword. In another part of the town a number of our drunken soldiers were throwing little infants into the air and catching them on the points of their bayonets. And we are all, all of us, made in the image of God!

*Grandmother.—*Hush, hush! (*She puts her hands to her eyes, as if to shut out the terrible picture.*)

*Little Boy (awakened by the loud talk, begins to cry).—*Where's my papa?

*Grandfather (takes him in his arms, and brings him to the bed).—*Here's your papa.

*Little Boy.—*This ain't my papa. My papa's a big strong man, an' he always smiles to me, an' he takes me on his shoulders, an' he runs all over the house with me. This man is old an' he looks funny, an' his face is so skinny, an' it frightens me! He ain't my father. Take him away from here.

*Grandmother.—*Now be a good little boy and kiss him, for he is your papa.

*Little Boy.—*Then why didn't he bring somethin' nice to eat?

*Priest.—*Some one ought to take this child away from here for a few days. Then he'll be spared a good deal of suffering.

*Grandfather.—*You are right.

*A Woman.—*I'll take him to my house, if you don't mind. We'll take good care of him there.

Grandmother.— Please do.

(The WOMAN is about to carry the BOY out.)

Grandmother (unable to restrain her tears).— Say good-bye to papa, sonny.

Her Son (holds out his arms to little BOY).— Good-bye, my child, and may God take you away before ever you grow up to be a soldier! This is the only blessing I can give you.

Little Boy (shrinks).— I want to go away! I want my papa! I hate this horrid man!

(WOMAN takes him away, whimpering.)

Son (the muscles of his face twitching as he sees this, tries to sit up, but falls back, his body writhing visibly under the cover).— I'm fainting!

(The PRIEST runs to his side with the open Bible in his hand. The SON motions him away with the little strength he has left. Then his hand falls to his side lifeless. He lies still.)

Grandmother.— My son! Speak to me!

Priest.— His soul is safe in the keeping of our Heavenly Father.

(GRANDFATHER shuts the eyes and covers the face of his son. The PRIEST goes out quietly. After him, one by one, the PEOPLE depart slowly, leaving the old parents alone with the dead body.)

Grandmother.— And now he, too, has been taken away. The war has gathered the harvest. We old ones, the useless chaff, we're all that's left over.

Grandfather.— Aye, but the little one is left, too.

Grandmother.— He, too, like his father, will be dragged away to the shambles of war when he grows to be a man. War will always be waiting for the strongest and the best, unless —

Grandfather.— Unless what?

CURTAIN

THE ART OF 'HUMILIS'*

BY MAURICE SAINT-CHAMARAND

IN the course of the year 1904, M. Léonce de Larmandie, sole possessor for more than twenty years of the manuscript poems, whose real author (let us designate him by his initials G. N.) refused to recognize his paternity,— M. de Larmandie had issued, in an incomplete brochure addressed to a few privileged readers, some of the most beautiful poems of the said G. N., under the ægis of *La Société des Poètes Français*, and in the hope of drawing these poems at last out of their obscurity! But whether public opinion was not favorable enough to the humble poet's verses, or *La Société des Poètes Français* had other preoccupations at that time, the fact remains that these poems, without an acknowledged father, and deprived in a sense of any civil status, had to undergo the fate of those foundlings who are confined in obscure asylums, like children abandoned to the mercies of society.

Two years later I met M. de Larmandie, who read me some of the poems, and then, at my request, all the poems of G. N., and proposed to me that I consecrate the pages of *La Poétique* to the glorification and publication of the masterpiece of the nameless poet, to-day 'Humilis.'

Glorification! masterpiece! these are big words; and, if the first can still be understood in speaking of mystical poetry, the second may appear excessive to those who, to calm the susceptibilities of their contemporaries, demean themselves with too

*In introducing the work of 'Humilis' to the English-speaking public as a possible candidate for the Nobel prize in literature, a word of explanation and reassurance is necessary. The story told by the Comte de Larmandie is not only absolutely true, but the identity of 'Humilis' is vouched for by such prominent men and women as MM. Auguste Rodin, Jean Aicard, Leon Dierx, Auguste Dorchain, Jean Richepin and Mme. Hélène Vacaresco. To relieve the wandering poet's pressing necessities an edition of his poems, adorned by four unpublished designs of M. Rodin, has been issued at twenty francs by the review *La Poétique*, 39, rue d'Artois, Paris. It is limited to three hundred copies, and is interesting to Rodin collectors. We are able from another source to inform our readers that the poet's real name is Joseph-Germain Nouveau. He is an old man now, yet he is still begging his way from town to town through the war-exhausted fields of France accompanied by the shadow of Blessed Benedict Labré, who, as he firmly believes, watches over his fortunes. (THE EDITOR.)

hasty admirations, and pretend never to concern themselves with the judgments of posterity.

But first, where does posterity commence, and where does it end? And is posterity herself so infallible in her judgments?

You have the example of Ronsard, immortalized while living; dupe of the stroke of a pen which made him descend suddenly from the summits of Parnassus; ignored by many successive generations, to reappear three centuries later, still applauded, and how astonished to find himself again in our midst!

If, then, posterity has its weaknesses, you will pardon us also for ours, and for exalting before you, according to our optimism and our sympathies, the work of an obscure poet whose reason has been shipwrecked in boundless spiritualities and immanent felicities, to whose glorification he vowed his humble masterpiece.

His name: we shall only remember that which he gave himself one day, when pressed by M. de Larmandie to have his work published, he cried: 'If ever I publish my verses, they shall appear under the name of "Humilis."'

His story: it is that of a mediæval pilgrim, of a twentieth century vagabond. He wanders somehow from city to city, and visits mystical cities by preference. He goes poor and humble, according to Scripture, and has chosen Benedict Labré as his patron. Happy in that contemplative life which he has celebrated in one of his most ecstatic poems, he passes like 'the swallow of the highways' who depends for all things on the hand of God, and he eats the bread of angels more often than the bread of men.

His work, like his name, like his story, is to-day a legend. He has composed his poems, they have been for over a quarter of a century 'for the saints and angels,' as he cries in devotion, and, always with devotion, he wishes to destroy them. He disavows first of all their paternity, we have said. As he celebrates, in one of his poems, the anonymity of the cathedrals, perhaps he wishes to emulate the glorious abnegation of their divine architects. He regards renown as an obstacle to his salvation. The first article of his faith is humility. And now to the poet who

refuses glory, glory comes; she comes not to him, but to the very work of his humility.

M. de Larmandie will relate to what devices, to what subterfuges he has had to have recourse in order to guard a copy of these precious poems.

Meanwhile, religious scruples came to the poet. At first, in order not to reveal his real sentiments, like a new Virgil, he blamed his work (according to him, imperfect) for the obstinacy which he showed in wishing to make these poems disappear. An intense purist he went so far as to pretend that the modern French tongue, surcharged with articles and relative particles, was unfit to present mystical ideas in sufficiently simple form. His work has now proven the contrary.

For my part, I attribute to theological reasons the destructively obstinate determination of this Saturnian poet to devour his own children, and I have good grounds for my belief that he was seized with a tardy, holy terror for certain pages of his gospel where he exalted the future humanity of his dreams, in strophes with a quasi-pagan fervor, less conformable, no doubt, to rigorous orthodoxy than to certain subversive theories of the Virgin-Mother and other philosophic devotions of Auguste Comte, the founder of positivism.

Whether or not he had been forced to dread the fires of the secular power (quite platonic to-day), Humilis, I suspect, feared the faggot for his soul; and the torch of the *auto-da-fé* ever real in his eyes, most unfortunately affect his conscience and his reason.

Visionary, he has been able to follow a dizzy path; a poet, he always finds a wisdom or a truth to sing. Having to separate with difficulty his spirit of dreams from positivism, being obliged to harmonize his philosophy of yesterday with his fervor of to-day, in his Christian dream he opposes to the fall of man and the lost paradise of Genesis the superior future of a humanity grown wise in the recovered paradise of his orthodoxy. Moreover, it is not for a vain dream or a doubtful harmony that he praises the humblest flowers of human wisdom: charity, chastity, poverty, humility; that he celebrates the humble hands which, says he, revealed the lyre to antiquity; that he adores the blue serenity

of the Child Jesus and the Virgin; that he cuts and carves his marvellous periods in the living stone of the cathedrals and the Christian thought of the Middle Ages; that he sings the joy of light on every tomb, or seeks below the earth the tenebrous word of enigma and resurrection. He sees, he announces, in times that the multitude has not arrested, this submissive humanity, happy, grown wise, yielding to the Master's Spirit, to the Spouse's precepts, and doubtless delivered from the original defect which bore heavily upon it. Man has reversed all his science and pride, and broken all his gods, all his Baals and Molochs. He has accomplished finally his anarchic, but peaceful dream.

A naive and eloquent painting the poet has made of this earth renewed by faith and peopled by the elect and predestined! They are laborers, shepherds, poets, good astrologers, 'divine workmen whose heaven is content,' or more often they are all children, children whom the Master calls to Him, and whom He offers as an example to the pharisees and the subtle discouraging theologians, saying to them: 'Heaven is for those who are like one another.'

These, it seems to me, are the supreme thoughts of 'Humilis' and the secret confidences of his philosophy; and in default of a more complete interpretation of his work, we have the joy of understanding the sum of idealism, love and poetry which his poems contain. A poet, he does not linger at the crossroads of schools, disputes and systems; but his work offers us an unappreciable field of new ideas and fertile sensations.

THE STORY OF J. G. N., CALLED 'HUMILIS'

BY COMTE LEONCE DE LARMANDIE

I

TOWARD the close of the year 1878, while yet figuring as a minor employee in the Ministry of —, at the end of a dull, misty afternoon in October, I was moodily going along the Quai d'Orsay, to enter my poor young man's garret, in the Rue de Lille, Hotel des Ambassadeurs (O irony of names!).

Since I had crossed the Rue de Grenelle, I had noticed, preceding me by a few paces, a swarthy, thick-set little man, about my own age, going along nonchalantly with a sad expression. I was idly interested in meeting this unknown figure, and took pleasure in following him first along the Rue de Bellechasse, then over the pavements of the Quai, going up again toward the Caisse des Consignations.

Passing in front of the barracks, now demolished and replaced by the Gare d'Orleans, the individual stopped short, considered for a few seconds a postern which seemed condemned, drew from his pocket a bit of chalk and traced some lines with methodical leisure and without the slightest hesitation. I, paused and read them:

“Les vers des tourlourous sont toujours amusants.
Ils retracent d'abord leurs gestes paysans;
Se plaignent que d'écus on ne les couvre guère,
Préfèrent constamment leur payse à la guerre.”

I imagined that, from the fact of this quatrain, French poetry was not likely to be remarkably enriched,— if the opulence

of the rhymes were once set aside. The poet turned round suddenly and sharply exclaimed in my face:

‘You are also in the ministry?’

‘Why, yes.’

‘I have seen you going out.’

‘In what office are you?’

‘With Magnabal.’

‘Poor man! how sorry I am for you!’

‘And you?’

‘With Dumesnil. That is a little better.’

And I asked him his name.

‘J. G. N.,’ he replied,—‘moral great-grand-nephew of Joseph Benedict Labré. I do not ask your name, for I know you are the famous L ——’

‘Why famous?’

‘They call you original and independent.’

‘Well, my dear J. G. N., we can match one another, I think.’

‘As you like. I have a thousand verses like those you have just read. I call them my barracks-men. I have not found a publisher; L —— does not find them interesting; J —— asks five hundred francs. Don’t you think it is absurd?’

‘Absolutely.’

‘Farewell, monsieur, till to-morrow.’

Some hours later my concierge handed me a bundle of papers. They were the promised verses of J. G. N., and were as bad as those traced on the gate of the barracks. Next day, at the ministry, I made inquiries among various people, and the replies which I received seemed unanimous.

This dreamer, this morose man, snorting at his task, scribbled rather poor verses from time to time; the division superintendent, Magnabal, called him a bad employee; his comrades looked upon him as a fool; the sub-superintendent said: ‘To be a fool is one thing; but I believe that there is something interesting in that sad, cloudy head.’

II

I left the ministry about 1880, and for eighteen months heard nothing more of J. G. N. We never met, and we disdained looking each other up. In the spring of '81, on the 18th of March, to be precise, crossing the Seine by the Pont des Saints-Pères, I perceived my J. G. N., who stopped me with the gesture of a prophet, a grave and collected countenance, an attitude of compunction, and a mystical gaze.

'Is it you?' he said.

'It certainly is.'

'I shall not ask you how you are, or if you slept well last night. We have graver questions to discuss.'

'The barracks?'

'Perhaps.'

'Benedict Labré?'

'Why not? He is the greatest of the Saints. Moreover I have made poetry out of his filthiness.'

'Aha!'

'*Sapiens nihil affirmat quod non probet.* Do you wish to hear me?'

'I am all ears.'

And J. G. N. recited:

'Je sais que notre temps dédaigne
 Les coquilles de son chapeau,
 Et qu'un lâche étonnement règne
 Devant les ombres de sa peau.
 L'âme en est-elle atténuée?
 Et qu'importe au ciel sa nuée,
 Qu'importe au miroir sa buée,
 Si Dieu splendide aime à s'y voir!
 La gangue au diamant s'allie,
 Toi, tu peins ta lèvre pâlie
 Luxure, — et toi, Vertu salie;
 C'est là ton fard mystique et noir.'

I was stunned. This bizarre and incoherent man had proven that he was a great poet. Without noticing my amazement, J. G. N. thus questioned me:

‘Are you a Catholic?’

‘Certainly.’

‘A good Catholic?’

‘As good as possible, with a train of human weaknesses, you know.’

‘Ah! they are not necessary.’

‘They should not be necessary.’

‘Do you go to Mass?’

‘Yes.’

‘To confession and communion?’

‘At least once a year.’

‘What lukewarmness! You must have more zeal in the Lord’s service.’

‘I am not a saint.’

‘You are in the wrong. . . . Do you abstain from meat?’

‘Most of the time.’

‘Do you fast?’

‘Ah! that ——’

‘What! You do not fast? You are not a good Christian. The verses which I am going to recite to you are a part of a great poem dedicated to the glory of religion. If you wish to hear them?’

‘Why, certainly.’

‘But you will fast?’

‘We shall see.’

‘No, no, you will fast! I wish to make you a good Christian, and without fasting, you know ——’

‘We are listening all this time for your poems.’

‘In the street?’

‘No, let us go to the *Café Vonflie*.’

‘Very well, but you see that fasting is a hardship, without which you cannot mortify the flesh.’

Through the Rue des Saints-Pères, the Rue du Cherche-Midi, and the Rue du Regard, we went towards Number 2, Rue Notre-Dame-des-Champs, the celebrated Café Vonflie, where many joyous hours of my youth have slipped away.

We sat down at a table inside the smoking-room, and I offered dinner to my companion, who first made some difficulties.

'I assure you, *mon cher*, that to prepare to recite the praises of the Most High, it would be better to fast.'

'I disagree with you. You would recite badly and I should listen even worse.'

'You insist?'

'I insist.'

'Very well. I yield. I am in the wrong.'

'Let us eat.'

The faster proved to have a superb appetite; he drank so freely that slight signs of intoxication appeared in his face. Then suddenly he fell asleep for three-quarters of an hour.

When he awoke, taking up once more the course of his ideas, he went on:—'Ah! *mon cher*, how wrong we were not to fast! One must be so pure to chant the praises of God. One must resemble my moral great-grand-uncle Benedict Labré, even by —'

'J. G. N., I am listening.'

My acolyte closed his eyes and joined his hands; we were alone in the feebly-lighted room, and Vonflie, with the benevolently grimacing head of a *genius loci*, watched over our tranquillity. It was half past nine in the evening. In a clear voice, with extreme slowness and in an ecstatic attitude, J. G. N. began to intone his work; pausing every five minutes, he went on with his extraordinary subverted psalmody into the latest hours of the night. The legal hour of closing was long since past. I was stupefied, dazzled, crushed.

This strange man was letting me listen to the most beautiful hymn to the Divine Glory that I had ever heard; superior to the

choruses of 'Athalie,' the 'Méditations' of Lamartine, the 'Sagesse' of Verlaine.

I exclaimed: 'When are you going to publish them?'

'There is no reason for haste.'

'What! there is every reason.— It means glory and money.'

'And Holy Humility, Satan that you are.'

'Bah!'

'Bad Christian?'

'As good as you are.'

'We should have fasted.'

'Your appetite was superb!'

'I was in the wrong.— I must do penance. You will be the cause of my passing the rest of the night kneeling on a steel ruler; and it is no fun, I assure you.'

'I believe you.'

'Have you tried this fruitful mortification?'

'Never.'

'Do you wish to keep me company?'

'I would rather listen to more verses, stretched on a comfortable lounge.'

'Your religion is effeminate.'

'Have you a manuscript?'

'They are all in my memory still.'

'Then transcribe them for me.'

'What is the use? You invite me to sin through pride.'

'Simply as a copyist,— in the interests of heaven.'

'God has no need of us.'

'Go ahead, you triple-dyed fool!'

'I imitate from afar — or more often I endeavor to imitate my moral great-grand-uncle, the incomparable Labré. You will see that after death, the Vermin will change into a flood of stars.'

'No doubt.'

III

A few months later, the powers of the ministry who had not pardoned in J. G. N. a useless but resounding despatch, made him

understand that his resignation would be favorably received. The poet did not haggle over this satisfaction to the mandarins of the Rue de Grenelle; he then fulfilled a promise by confiding to me the wonderful manuscript of the 'Doctrine of Love'; but with the injunction not to reveal to whom it belonged.

'This book, if ever it appears,' said he, 'will be entitled "The Doctrine of Love," and will be signed *G. N. Humilis*.'

'That is too didactic. I should prefer *Gloria in Excelsis*.'

'The demon of pride. Try to be humble.'

'Then you must try to look for glory.'

'My glory is the imitation of ——'

'Yes, I know.'

Now J. G. N. began to hate his work, his masterpiece. He hedged like this: 'I must be humble above all, and think of Labré, my dear, great saint. And then my verses are really very imperfect, in the presence of the great subject which they have dared to treat. It is pure folly; I was mad when I wrote them.'

After leaving the ministry, J. G. N. made the acquaintance of a good Maronite called Father Spath. This Father Spath was on a collecting trip to Latin countries. The poet became enthusiastic over the tales of this monk from beyond the Mediterranean, and decided to accompany him to Lebanon. His absence was prolonged for nearly two years. I silently rejoiced at this exodus when I thought of the magnificent poems that our friend was likely to bring back to us, after gazing at biblical lands with his seeing eye. On his return from Palestine, J. G. N. showed me a bulky poem entitled 'Valentines. Alas! 'Valentines,' though well-written perhaps, did not recall in the least the poet's inspired chant of divine splendors.

By dint of searching and supplication he had obtained from I know not what unhappy printer, the composition of the work, and I can see him yet, merrily landing at my door with the complete proofs under his arm.

'My dear friend,' he cried, 'you are going to do me a great service.'

'How?'

'Oh! nothing. I ask pardon of God, of man, and of you. I was crazy; I have returned with sane ideas. I simply wish to beg, to conjure, to supplicate you to write a preface for me.'

'I would rather write a preface for 'The Doctrine of Love.'

'Do not speak of that book again.'

'What?'

'No, I beg of you. And, by the way, you are going to return the manuscript to me, so that I may burn it.'

'You are mad.'

'I was mad when I composed those ineptitudes.'

'You are at this moment.'

'No, *you* are; but to return to the subject; will you preface my 'Valentines?'

'Yes.'

'What do you think of them?'

'I have told you; I like the others better.'

'Ah! fool, triple fool, a romantic book! I was still under the influence of that idiot of a Hugo to whose memory I have composed this verse, which is good:

'Bobine de rimeur gâteusement sonore (!).'

'You have done better.'

'It is one of my best. Ah! *mon cher*, Hugo and all his tribe, how miserable they are! Speak to me of Malherbe who wrote thirty verses a year.'

'I'll write the preface.'

'Yes. I tire you, don't I?'

'No.'

'You don't agree with me?'

'No.'

'But you'll do what I ask?'

'Yes.'

'Good. One word more.'

'Yes.'

'On the difficulties of your task.'

'Yes.'

'You must demonstrate that this book of "Valentines," with its air of triviality ——'

'Yes ——?'

'That this book is identical at bottom with the miserable still-born *factum* which you like so much; only that it is much better conceived and considerably better written.'

'You desire this blasphemy?'

'Yes.'

'You shall have it.'

'And I want something convincing.'

'There *mon cher!* ——'

'Ah! you are not convinced.'

'No.'

'You are crazy.'

'Have you asked Saint-Croix?'

'He is crazy.'

'D'Artois?'

'He is crazy.'

'Dierx? Bloy? Marguerite? Delahaye ——?'

'Crazy, *mon cher*, all crazy!!! You name all these madmen, and forget to add your own name to the series.'

'And yours?'

'I alone have the exact vision.'

'I'll preface it; and the recompense?'

'Whatever you say.'

'Then let me keep *the other* a while longer.'

'You are decidedly mad to link them. The book is damned; it will expiate in flames the shame of having failed to see the light.'

'I fulfilled my promise exactly and cooked up a preface which was subtle, and affected to demonstrate the identity of a licentious

and vulgar poem with the most beautiful mystical pages that were ever written.

In a week I had it all patched up. J. G. N. was delighted: 'In good time,' he cried, 'I knew you would come to your senses. Ah! Malherbe, the great man.'

'You are going to publish it?'

'Why certainly.'

J. G. N. did not publish 'Valentines.' He was seized by tardy scruples, destroyed the proofs, including my preface, and even found means to destroy the type. I have been told since that a well-known publisher guards a set of the proofs.

IV

Appointed to conduct a course of design in the *lycees* of the city of Paris, for he had a clever pencil, the poet was suddenly seized with a fit of dementia, under the following circumstances. One day at the opening of the class, he said to his pupils: 'Design is not all, there is also music, and I only admit of sacred music. Do not speak to me of Wagner. There is a man who has been proclaimed a genius for having loudly orchestrated complex legends.' And he began to intone liturgical vespers. They interned him at Bicêtre, where I went to see him one day. I found myself in the presence of a gentle, spiritually resigned man, who had at times even judicious opinions on life. But *Humilis* always disapproved of his masterpiece.

'Ah! *mon cher*, my mystical verses! A pure and simple blasphemy meriting excommunication, if the quite special indulgence of the court of Rome does not intervene.'

'How is that?'

'*Mon cher*, only *soutanes* have the right to treat these subjects; a layman exposes himself to heresies, and heresy (*dame!*) means the faggot. And behold another proof of the divine mercy: my sojourn here is my expiation; I pay for my poetic folly by being cloistered in a madhouse, for they think I am crazy. It is fantastic. I! One of the most lucid men of my generation!'

I replied: 'Evidently. Are you well-nourished?'

'Much better than Benedict Labré.'

'Have you any cause for complaint?'

'No, except that they prevent me from going to vespers to avoid, they say, nourishing my mysticism; but I play them a trick. I have my liturgy and rubrics at my finger-tips; they do not wish me to hear vespers — I chant them —. Mad men have every right. Now, I am officially mad.'

'What shall I say to your friends?'

'Nothing; in the first place, I have no friends.'

'And Saint-Croix?'

'He has offended me by praising my frightful book.'

'But I also have praised it.'

'Ah! yes, but with you it is an infatuation, a monomania; on this particular point you are crazy enough to be locked up. Conscientious alienists would send you here to keep me company.'

'You have no commission for any one?'

'You will give a sou for me to the *garçon* of the Hotel Saint-Joseph.'

'A sou?'

'Yes, *mon cher*, you will never miss it; it is a question of delicacy for me.'

'Ah! bah!'

'This sou I do not possess. I am obliged to ask you to advance it to me, is n't that so? Well! if I were to ask you for a hundred sous you would find it hard and with reason, too —. Now you see that I am not crazy. I am very lucid. Admit it —'

'Yes. That is quite evident.'

'Say especially that I am healthy in spirit,

Simplement j'expie
Un travail impie
Le plus insensé des duels*
Et quelques plaisirs sensuels.

*A duel without any sad consequences, but which had provoked his dismissal from the ministry.— L. DE L.

You see that I still rhyme, and that I improvise: like Sophocles before his judges when his daughters wished to have him declared incapable of managing his affairs.'

V

The administration finally grew tired of my remonstrances and of guarding within its walls a lunatic who was so tranquil, peaceful and agreeable, and neither agitated nor brutal, but who simply exaggerated a few mystical exercises. As soon as he had left the asylum, J. G. N. was once more violently seized with mad hatred for his great work, with a rage for destroying his masterpiece; he riddled with letters, visits and questions every one whom he suspected of detaining some portion of this poem.

Warned in time of this excess of autophagy, I began to copy hastily 'The Doctrine of Love,' and was practically ready to return the poet his own manuscript when he reclaimed it from me. In twenty-five years I must have made thirty-two copies. The sly fellow did not leave me free: he exacted my word that I had no copy in my possession. I was as loyal as a man ought to be to a misguided person, while keeping to my intention of preventing the disappearance of a marvel. I did not practise any deception. I demanded three weeks to memorize the work; he granted them to me, not believing in the power of my memory, and I devoted a tremendous time to memorizing these twenty-eight hundred verses. I have a memory wonderful enough to allow me to accomplish this task. I said to the man: 'I no longer have anything material belonging to you.'

'How do you mean?' he asked anxiously.

'I have memorized your verses; they are in my head and for the moment nowhere else. You cannot prevent me from knowing them.'

'You can retain such a mass of insanities in your mind? I am incredulous.'

'Never mind, you are warned: you can never accuse me of felony.'

He reflected a few moments and ended by saying:

'You will now give me your word of honor not to discharge your memory on paper for two years.'

'Well,' I replied, 'your poems will remain in my brain for twice three hundred and sixty-five days — after that I promise nothing.'

'You can never retain these scraps.'

'Console yourself with that hope.'

And he went away less reassured than he wished to appear. He began by consigning to the flames the copy which he had regained with such difficulty; then organized with sagacity a series of traps into which he tried to make me stumble, doubtful, in spite of all, of the veracity of my declaration.

I received in perhaps a week's time a dozen visits from totally unknown people who wished to inquire about the great work of which I had been, of which I was still, they said, the retainer. I did not blunder, I could not blunder, I confined myself to reciting a few fragments to these precious spies whom I never allowed to take any notes.

When the two years had elapsed, I dictated 'The Doctrine of Love' almost word for word.

J. G. N. now tried again by letters and the visits of new inquirers. I no longer replied, except evasively, and by the clear affirmation of an absolute fact: I had memorized the twenty-eight hundred verses.

At this time I had a great many copies made as an increased precaution, so that I might be able, if necessary, to deliver them to the fire.

I did not yet trouble myself about publication, confident of the future; I even lived for many years without speaking to J. G. N., or thinking of the treasure that I guarded.

One day, sitting in the Hotel des Gens de Lettres, my attention was drawn by a discussion which was taking place before the front door. The bristling concierge absolutely refused to allow a beggar of dubious appearance to come up. I intervened —

This beggar was no other than my friend J. G. N., in a get-up which was thoroughly guaranteed to make every porter and dog bristle at sight of him.

'Ah! *mon cher*,' I cried with the deepest emotion, 'here you are.'

'Here I am.'

'I can attribute anything to you, my dear friend, but you must adopt a rational mode of life.'

'I have never had one.'

'And the result is ——'

'I do not complain of the result. The blessed Labré was more destitute than I.'

'Ah! you still march in the orbit of this blessed man?'

'More than ever. He is the Saint of Saints.'

'And food, and shelter?'

'I can live on three hundred francs a year.'

'Well! Well! That is wonderful indeed.'

'Say four hundred.'

'Yes, let us say so —— But to say so, it is necessary to find them.'

'Oh! ——my friends.'

'Are not rich.'

'The ministry——'

'Very paternal, to be sure, but a little indisposed.'

'And Providence. You look as if that was of no account.'

'There is no need of tempting it.'

'I beg, and I am still alive.'

'So much the worse.'

'We are not on earth to have a good living, but to live in goodness.'

'You have the means at hand to serve you.'

'What?'

'Your wonderful volume.'

'A horror! which I have destroyed.'

'Which I have preserved in my memory.'

'Stuff and nonsense!'

'I'll prove it to you.'

'Do not mention it any more.'

'I shall never cease to mention it.'

'Good-night. I'll come back.'

J. G. N. climbed the stairs again a fortnight later, exhausted, emaciated, dying of starvation. •

'I consent at last — if you still find the rhymes fit for anything,' he said to me in a low voice, hanging his head like a man making a shameful avowal of weakness and pusillanimity, 'I consent to the publication of this wonderful book you love so much.'

'Victory!' I cried, transported with joy, 'after twenty-five years!'

'You will give me back the manuscript?'

'I ask a week to dictate it to a secretary.'

A week later I handed J. G. N. the desired copy; he began to read it attentively.

'But,' said he, after a few moments, 'these verses are not mine. I do not recognize them.'

'You are jesting.'

'No, really — I agree, however, to revise them, but it will take me many years. — Malherbe, I have already told you, only made thirty verses a year. — Can I have the presumption to wish to go beyond this model?'

After this declaration, which was equivalent to a refusal, on the advice of the poet's other friends and some of the greatest writers of our time, I concluded that there was nothing to be done in concert with J. G. N. In fact, I possessed his consent to the publication; he had formally given it to me, though not frankly. Then, besides, Rubicons and *coups d'état* have never been able to frighten me.

VI

You will ask, perhaps, why I have displayed so much devotion and zeal for a work which is not mine. Was I prompted by

friendship for J. G. N.? —In part, no doubt (I should not be truthful if I said *altogether*), there was my fervor for the work, my ardent desire to enrich French letters and the world's literature with an infinitely rare precious stone; my qualities are above all those of a disciple and an admirer, and I admire with all my heart what I consider admirable; old as I am, I have never occupied a position in the first rank, but I have been an incomparable lieutenant-general. Allow me this little bit of bragging! What makes me cherish J. G. N.'s poem is that it is arch-artistic; religious literature is encumbered with so many fiddle-faddles, so many follies, so many Saint-Sulpiceries of every description, without heart, without soul, without art, even without truth, only with a good intention, designed more often to pave Hell than to cause rejoicing in Heaven, that I have been transported with joy at finding mystical poetry worthy of being applauded by the whole of intellectual humanity.

I shall certainly be approved by the whole artistic public: I scorn any other. If Leonardo had only brought forth one work (I shall not even say St. John, but only Bacchus), and if he had subsequently wished to destroy that canvas, would not the recognition of the centuries acquit the man who violated the artist's caprice, and preserved such a work to the world?

Suppose Virgil's friends had not guarded for posterity the marvellous *Æneid* that the gentle poet, considering it imperfect, had destined to the flames! I disdain to plead extenuating circumstances. I boast and am proud of what I have done.

I am more proud of this work of an unknown man which I have preserved than of a hundred works which might have issued from myself. Like the explorers of lost cities, I have stolen and concealed in my heart, to restore them to the sunlight, the jewels of a king who has disappeared. After a battle raging for a quarter of a century against a phantom, one of those embraces of clouds, which Baudelaire speaks of, and which break through your arms, I have saved a marvel from destruction, I have treated it like a goldsmith who discovers a buried treasure under the ground, I have

sorted respectfully the sapphires and pearls, the rubies and emeralds, mingled with clay and dust.

PRESCIENCE

BY GERTRUDE LITCHFIELD

O sweet, that I to-day thy love should be,
And all thy fevered thought of me,— of me,
Should warm my heart, and fan with passion's flame
Dull embers there, which wake to burn — and blame!

O sweet, that I for aye thy love might be —
The end of love like thine could not foresee!
For had'st thou brought me a less ardent gaze,
I'd trust thee on and on, nor count the days.

O sweet, did we but love in that calm heaven
Where kisses are as cool as dew at even,
And eyes serene as sunset's parting glow,
Ah then, we'd love aright — prove love — and know!

FOUR POEMS BY HUMILIS

I. THE HANDS

CHERISH your hands that one day your hands may be fair. No perfume is too precious for your hands. Care for them: thoughtfully cut the grievous nails. No instrument is too delicate for the nails.

It is God who maketh the hands fruitful in marvels. They have taken their snow from the lilies of the Seraphim. In the garden of the flesh they are two flowers of light, and the blood of the rose is under their delicate nails.

A mystical spring doth circle in their veins, wherein the violet runneth, the bluet doth smile: vervains have slumbered in the lines of the palm: the hands tell unto the eyes the spirit's secrets.

The greatest painters were amorous of hands, and the painters of hands are the model painters.

Like two white swans swimming side by side, two sails on the sea melting their heavy pallor, abandon your hands to the water in basins of silver, prepare for them the aromatic linen.

The hands are the man even as the wings are the bird; the hands of the evil ones are desert lands; those of the humble old woman, who turneth a light spindle, make the eyes read a wisdom graven in their wrinkled lines.

The hands of laborers, the hands of sailors show the sunburnt gold of the Heavens under their brown skin. The wing of sea-gulls guardeth the odor of the waves, and the hands of the Virgin a kiss of the moon.

The fairest sometimes engage in the blackest trade, the holiest were the hands of a carpenter.

The hands are your children, and they are twin sisters; the ten fingers are their sons, equally blessed; be watchful over their play, over their least quarrels, over all their conduct to infinite details.

The fingers make nets and from them go forth the towns; the fingers revealed the lyre in ancient times; they toil, bent to the vilest tasks, they are the craftsmen and the musicians.

Loosed in the forest of organs on Sunday, the fingers are birds, and it is at the tip of the fingers that, recalling the flight of the jays from branch to branch, laugheth the familiar swarm of Signs of the Cross.

Serve your hands, they are your faithful servants; grant for their repose a bed of lace.

It is your hands which make a caress here below; believe that they are sisters of lilies and wings: do not despise nor neglect them; suffer them to flower like asphodels.

Carry to God the sweet treasure of your perfumes in the evening, when prayer dawneth on the lips, O hands; and be ye joined for the poor departed. That in the hands God may refresh our fevers.

That the month of fruits may load you with its gifts, open always, O hands, over a nest of pardons.

And you, say, O you, who, detesting arms, contemplate your sadness in the stream of our tears, old man, whose locks go white towards day, young man with the divine eyes where love ariseth, gentle woman blending thy revery with the angels.

Sometimes the heart is swollen at the bottom of strange evenings, and without dreaming that in your hands the will doth flower, you all say: 'Where then, in truth, is the remedy, O Lord, for our ills are extreme?'

— But it is in your hands, but it is your very hands.

II. BODY AND SOUL

God maketh thy body noble, thy soul delightful. The body doth rise from the earth, the soul doth aspire to the heavens; one is a lover, the other is the beloved.

In the peace of a vast delicious garden, God blew in a little mire a little flame, and the body went forth alone on its gracious feet.

And this breath enchanted the body, it was the soul which, joined to the love of animals and forests, in man did worship God beholding woman.

The soul doth laugh in the eyes and fly with the voice, and the soul expireth not, but the risen body issueth from black slime a second time.

A dart is keen and lightning flashes swift, but the mystic impulse of the soul is such, that the angel's flaming sword doth hesitate.

Suave and fair God wrought thy deathless body: the legs are the twin pillars of the temple, the knees the throne, the bust is the high altar.

The torso's line at its most ample summit, pure flanks of an ancient vase, doth dream and run, in the harmonious order of the lyre.

While an ode to God, in quick diastole, the lyre's heart, in an eternal phrase, doth sing to the heart's low melodious chords.

From the shoulders, sailing from the vase's brim, the head emergeth, an adoring flower, drowned in long, luminous ecstasy.

If the soul is a bird, the body is the fowler. Its look doth burn from the depth of flaming eyes, lit by gentle tears, the oil of sorrow.

Time's measure tingleth in the cloistered temples, the long arms mounting to the firmament, have charitably the steadiness of stairs.

The glowing heart dissolveth in their clasp, as the wine-press doth dissolve the fruit of the vine, and on the folded arms liveth recollection.

Nor fleecy lambs, nor plumage of the swan, nor the fiery mane of the messengers of hunger, efface thy splendor, O glorious crest of hair

Made in the night's dark azure, or fine gold of dawn, o'er which doth float a wild perfume, where woman sootheth man on a boundless sea.

Bright clear nightingale, grave and sonorous beard, trembling

song on the lips' brink, gentle voice! Gentle glory of laughter,
blossomy mouth!

Every part of the body yieldeth unto thy laws, Great God, who
maketh the earth turn under Thy Sign, in well-ordained succession
of the months!

Thy laws are her brisk comrade's sanity, the soul, as a rhythm
loveth his running steps, but the soul rejoiceth alone where God
abideth.

The body's pain subsideth in decease, but the soul's anguish is
the bourneless ocean: they are two gifts one doth not rightly value.

Oh! do not slight thy soul! The soul neglected is dull and
pineth, as the mounting daylight, doth wear away the golden
crescent's horn.

And the body, scorned by the soul, in ugliness, condemned by
God, doth grow emaciated, a banished fool in the corner of a court.

The grace of your soul doth blossom to light in the Word, and
the other, in an air fond of cool flights, with vestments light as a
soul which soareth away.

Know how to love your soul by loving your body, seek the
musical water in baths of pale marble, and the silent wave of
genius in strong men's hearts.

Blend your limbs dull with fatigue, where the sunburn of life
imprinteth on them his furious kiss, with the cool lamentations
exhaled by the Naiad;

So on the coming day your glorious body, lighter than those of
the faithful Mercuries, may mount across the sky's victorious
azure.

In the wave of genius, at the sure sources of beauty, nakedly
plunge your souls, like able swimmers, that they may venture forth
with faith, the giver of pinions!

In the night, approaching a dawn's divine red blushes, march
by the path of holy practices; be ye patient and grave, white trav-
elers.

Let Chastity, study's delightful sister, labor's tranquil merry
young companion, perfume your discourses and solitude.

The pasture of the soul is wholly truth; the body, content with little, garners nourishment in the mystical kiss where beauty reigneth.

Even as God diffuseth man in nature, know how to love it in you, and first be gentle, unto yourselves, and gentle to every creature.

If you love not yourselves in God, love you yourselves?

III. PREDESTINED COUPLES

Mayhap one day the bridegroom according to love, the bride according to love, according to the order of Emmanuel, without jealousy of him, without jealousy of her,

Their free fingers busy in manual labor, fervent as the day when their hearts were espoused, will nourish in their soul a fire come from Heaven;

The fire of the charming god whom the executioners crushed, the delicious fire of veritable love, with which the souls of the lucid saints are aglow;

Woodpigeon and turtledove, in the height of their mystic tower, will build their nest, over which reigneth chastity, color of dawn and daylight,

Perfect chastity, where the soul doth bathe, that taketh the incense of the soul and the roses of the body, that a lily doth symbolize and a child doth teach;

Which maketh the saints, which maketh the strong, the mysterious law our souls divine when they see the closed eyes and joined fingers of the departed.

Dreaming of Nazareth, under this law divine, they shall dissolve their glances and marry their voices, in the ideal kiss of love the soul doth imagine;

Whether they sleep on a plank or the bed of Kings, the world knoweth them not, and their secret slumbereth better than a treasure hidden under the grass in the heart of the forest.

The night alone doth relate it unto the rosy star; leaving the road to mettlesome cavaliers, in the discreet path where the soul watcheth over them,

They are never two, the warlike number, never two, for love without end doth accompany them, ever *Three*, for Jesus is with them always.

Peaceful pilgrims crossing country and city, where the feet flower with the odor of thyme; and the spouse remaineth a lover, and the Virgin is a companion.

From silken dawn to the satin setting of the sun, their gentle toil smelleth sweet, their pure slumber doth pray from the star of the evening unto that of the morning.

They are white children of the Virgin Mary, rose of the universe by simplicity, and glorious mother of the aching heart.

It is she who doth open for them with marvellous clearness, a book on her knees where their heart doth see its dream, under her mantle celestial and blue as summer.

Humble as Jeanne, modest as Geneviève, the spouse doth spin and dream of the carpenter's lily: the husband doth work and dream of Eve's innocence.

With her hand which is dipped in the ripple of holy water, each day in the Church where her soul doth drink in abundance, whose fingers are eager to turn the leaves of the psalter,

For the poor loves who go onward in trial, the members of Jesus who filled the crowded suburb, for the old man's bed and the habit of the widow,

She spinneth the hemp, she spinneth the flax, as she also spinneth the slumber of the sick, and the innocent laughter of the little orphan.

The heart's golden music which quivereth and persuadeth, her word soweth belief in the evil man, whom she loveth as well as a comrade, and casteth him on his knees.

She is more serious and better than our hearts; he hath only the beautiful thoughts of our likeness; a couple predestined, a delightful husband!

They have joy and they have love supremely! Their hearts are clad in the ecstasy of grace; for they have cast away all violence!

Issuing strong from combats valiantly fought, their body doth ramble about and their soul doth wander in the fair living garden of every virtue.

To be pleasing to the pure beauty which doth claim them, her will is to dwell untouched, even as a fruit, in the virginity natural to woman.

Docile to the golden ray which crosseth his night, listening vaguely to the world which is going to be born, like unto the roar of mighty waters,

Content to love Jesus and to recognize the marvelous meaning of his simple discourses, he doth place in God his heart, his senses, and all his being,

Inhaling the humble flower of his chaste amours, accepting only the odor of the eternal race, gathering not the fruit which rejoiceth always.

For this share grievous to the carnal race, is the share of mystery and the lion's share: it is your future, Lord, which doth fructify in her.

For we are the sons of rebellion; our brows are angry, and our hearts are sullen; and death for us is the law of retaliation.

Son's of Adam's desire under the wings of the night, engendered outside of the law of chaste paradises, we wander over the earth, and draw in our urns

With wines of impurity, Lethe of cursed days; sharing our treasures while filled with covetousness, even as a group of bandits around a table.

But mayhap one day, under the eyes of the Church, will see the husband shine as a pure diamond, and the spouse flower as an exquisite pearl.

And this ideal couple will glow with a sure flame.

IV. LOVE OF LOVE

1

Love well your loves; love you the love who dreameth, with a rose at his lip and flowers in his eyes; it is he whom you seek when your April dawn ariseth, on whom a fragrance doth rest when you are old.

Love you the love who doth play in the sun of colors, under the azure of Greece, around its altars, and who unrolleth to heaven her tresses and girdles, or emptieth a quiver on hearts immortal.

Love you the love who speaketh with the low leisure of *Ave Marias* whispered under the vaulted arch; it is he to whom you pray when your head is weary, he whose voice doth return you the cradle's rhythm.

Love you the love God breatheth over our mire, love you blind love, lighting his torch of flame, love you the love in dream that seemeth like to our angel, love you the love that is promised to the ashes of the grave!

Love you the ancient love of the reign of Saturn, love you the charming god, the hidden god who hung, like a moth of the night, an invisible kiss on the lips of Psyche!

For it is he, whom the earth yet calleth the flame, of whom the human caravan went dreaming, who, tired of wandering, ever seeking a soul, mourned in the lyre and wept on the wind.

Now he returneth: behold his eternal dawn hath quivered like a world in the womb of the night, it is the beginning of the rumors of his pinion; he watcheth over the wise, and the virgin followeth him.

The dream that the day dispels in the heart of women is this God. The sigh that traverseth the woodland is this God. It is this God who twisteth the oriflammes, on the masts of vessels and over the laughing housetops.

He doth palpitate always under the linen tents, under every cry and every secret, it is he whom the lions contemplate in the star-

light; the bird doth sing of him to the wolf who doth howl in the forests!

The spring doth weep for him, for he will be the foam, and the tree doth call him, for he will be the fruit, and the dawn awaiteth him, the gentle terror who will withdraw every shadow and every night.

Behold him who returneth, his reign is nigh! Love you love, and laugh! Love you love, and sing! And let the echo of the woods awake in the rock! Love in the deserts, love in the cities!

Love over the ocean, love on the hills! Love in the great lilies that climb from the valleys! Love in the word and love in the coaxing breezes! Love in prayer and love on the violins!

Love in every heart, and on every lip! Love in all arms, and love in every finger! Love in every breast, and in every fever! Love in every eye and in every voice!

Love in each city; open, ye citadels! Love in the workshops; toilers, on your knees! Love in the convents; angels, beat your wings! Love in the prisons; dark walls, tumble down!

2

But adore ye the terrible Love who dwelleth in the dazzling light of future Zions, and whose wound, still open, bleedeth forevermore on the Cross, whose arms open wide unto the nations.

THE ELFIN GARDEN

BY MADISON CAWEIN

At close of day,
As once in childhood, through the meadows gray,
I took my way.

Dim scents of myrrh,
And twilight gleams of glimmering lavender,
Led me to her,

That elfin child,
Who, to her garden, with her beauty wild,
My soul beguiled.

I seemed to see
Her eyes, like fireflies, underneath a tree,
Gazing at me.

She seemed to stand
Fluttering the moon-moths with a dewy hand
Across the land.

And, following slow,
I came into a place I used to know
Long, long ago.

A place of peace
Guarded about of many stately trees,
The haunt of bees.

A garden place
Of flowers and fruits, wherethrough I oft would pace
In childhood's days.

Slow-following soft
An elfin voice, that murmured oft and oft,
Deep in the croft.

And suddenly
I saw her there, beneath a blossoming tree,
A-beckoning me.

And with a smile
She took my hand and led my soul a-while
Down many an aisle

Of flowers; and told
Of many dreams of beauty known of old,
That now are mold.

And as we walked,
Along the paths the moonbeams whitely chalked,
The flowers talked.

A rose-bloom said:
'He is returned, who thought his dream was dead —
It *lives* instead!'

Another sighed:
'He is returned to her, — who was his bride, —
He thought had died!'

One said, ' 'Tis plain
She holds him still with all her elfin train
Of heart and brain!'

And all around
There grew a whisper, twinkling into sound,
From air and ground.

It said, 'We've grown
Into the garden, making it our own
From dreams here known.

'From dreams, behold,
With which was changed the darkness of its mold
To faery gold.

'Making it sweet
With spiritual messages of little feet
That here did fleet.

'And still they weave
Their spells around it.— *He*, too, may perceive.—
We give him leave.'

And I, at that,
Beheld a secret place, a violet mat,
Where some one sat.

A little lad,
That seemed to have the face that once I had,
In days not sad.

And then a star
Fell, trailing heaven with a fiery scar —
And from afar,—

Glints of the moon
Showed where the faeries tripped it to a rune,
A cricket tune.

And as they passed,
Around the lad their elfin spells were cast,
That held him fast.

And he was gone,
Somewhere into the regions of the dawn,
Where all is wan.

And in my ear
I heard a voice cry, 'Wake! the dawn is near!
Why slumber here?'

And, old and grayed,
Within that garden where, a child, I played,
I woke — afraid.

TWO POEMS

BY GEORGES TURPIN

I. WAR

For days and months the Races were destroyed.
Under the bleeding sky's dark red horizon
Death reigned in state attended by rape and famine
Announced by thunderous roars from the jaws of cannon.
The fields were ravaged bare by the warring hordes;
Stark naked corpses stained the flowers in the meadows.
The red and sticky ground was a cemetery
Where all these silent foes slept in despair.
Wandering troops rode onward to adventure. —
War roamed yet under her silver helmet;
And fiery, unappeased, in her ancient armor,
She led away to the combat the last survivors. —

The engines are new: the madness is still the same!
The soldiers' eyes are terrible and shudder:
These are the massacrers in swarming butchery;
Who go to slay to the golden sound of clarions
Afar one hears the long, loud roar of armies.—
O God! are there living men who may yet be mangled?
On! and on their agony goes to the welter
Crying with all their might: 'We must conquer, or perish!'
Over them hovers fantastic a human bird,
An airship whirling mad to a motor's rhythm,
And all, with eyes upraised to the Zeppelin
Hurl at the azure sky a terrible clamor. —

Death — Yes, Death is there! They feel her approaching;
And so in a mighty warmth superb and disdainful,

Scorning the glint of steel and the bounding bullets,
They mount to the fierce assault in all their knighthood.
A nameless uproar, sonorous clashing of sabres,
A snort of iron crashing in helpless bodies,
And night and day, in the lurid evening or morning,
The slaughtered soldiers pay their tribute to Glory!

Hear the mournful cry of the hurtling shells
And the bellowing roar across space
Of the cannon balls, hungry for human flesh —
And hark to the warrior song
Of the black cavalry from the Soudan
Who charge as a single soul on their chestnut steeds —
Hark to the piercing wail of the Gatling guns
Punctuated by rattle of cannon,
And hark to the proud fanfare
Conducting cuirassiers and dragoons to the combat.
The Kings and Emperors in their purple mantles
Seem turned to stone,
For over the depth of the heavens empurpled with conflagration
Infamous war, accursed war,
War, with a great hypocritical gesture,
Binds their pale white brows with branches of laurel!

The end at last! Death hath accomplished her task.
The iron Mower putteth an end to the wounded:
Diseases are there, appalling carrion-birds
Who suck the thick black blood of the dead and dying —
While far away a single survivor is stirring —
He moves with pain; he is frothing, he is mad;
He is alone! — He shudders. His eyes seek rest;
But find nothing around him — only the sea of the dead —
He is afraid, he feels in his empty belly
The terrible windy rattle of staring Hunger,
And becoming a child, in self pity regretting the battle,

He weeps for an hour, his head buried deep in his hands!
 Some one touches his arm — It is War, it is She!
 He is the great conqueror whom She is going to crown;
 But all at once he feels that his brain is cracking,
 And the wound in his mouth stains the laurel branch with blood. —
 And toward the fierce dark sky where the stars are weeping
 His voice mounts sonorous and smotheres the hurricane;
 And while the night unfurls her great black sails,
 He shouts his rancor in a wild song of madness:

'Below, in a hamlet
 I lived with my household,
 Every new springtime
 My boys and girls
 Would sow the clear wheat
 That later, in autumn,
 We mowed, at the moment
 The golden ears shivered!

'In the shade of the steeple
 Which sleeps on the hill,
 Or near the great rocks
 That the blue sky painted;
 We went in the evening
 Against the rough sea
 To bathe our hopes
 In the marvellous night!

'We lived in peace
 As our fathers before us —
 In perfect calm
 For we loved the soil —
 No lofty dreams!
 Our greatest pleasure
 Consisted, most often,
 In village rejoicings;

'And when the time came
To go to the grave,
A tender hand
Put a seal on our eyelids!
And in the tomb
On God's chosen day,
We went forever
To sleep under grass.

'Thou hast stolen my peace,
Thou hast given me glory!
I am a butcher
Despising his victory—
I hate thee, who makest
The just an assassin,
Who washeth his hands
In the blood of his sons!'

Then, his brain drunk with a murderous ire
And knowing no more where to plant his bloody steel,
With his bayonet he slashed the red throat of war
And slaked his awful thirst with her reeking blood—
And cursing heaven, in sublime delirium,
He trampled under foot the glorious silken flags;
And feeling still in his heart the ruddy pulse of his Crime
Uttered a fearful cry awakening echoes,
Then as he could no longer find other victims:
He slew himself and gave up to the Peace of the Grave.

Over the base charnel-ground where crows and vultures
Whirled aloft in their mournful silent flight,
Life appeared at last to perpetuate the Races,
And suddenly unmasking two children who had been spared,
The Adam and Eve of a great new cycle of grace,
She joined their two bodies together in a kiss.

II. THE IRON HIVE

In a corner of the suburb, among grey houses,
 The hive upraiseth to heaven her steely dome,
 And her twenty chimneys which launch on the breeze
 A dull smoke ——

In her womb, the motors explode regularly,
 And the triphammers, mechanical monsters,
 Pound the haughty metals
 Between their maxillaries of energy ——

The creeping straps crawl in the atmosphere
 And layer beams which turn night and day
 Receive with an easy air
 Their daily embrace of love ——

In the red-hot fire of the ovens, in the belly of the boilers,
 Men in labor are stoking the coal
 Which the monsters digest
 In a nameless uproar ——

Fire who devoureth his prey,
 Fire who licketh, Fire who doth writhe,
 Fire who doth laugh, Fire who doth sing, Fire who doth gnaw!
 Fire in the factory is King!

The Hive lives on him, on his immense power,
 And the insect-workman for his flame in madness
 Hath adoration ——
 Even as a choir-boy
 Prostrate during the Divine Sacrifice,
 Near the flaming greedy hearth
 Which grins,
 He prostrates his brow
 And vows his arms to his service ——

In the Iron Hive at the red-brown lungs of the forges,
The Men of the Future, having abandoned the soil,
Will come to burn their blood and parch their throats —
Woe!

APRIL DREAMING

BY RUTH McENERY STUART

Impulse of violets wakes the air
 In vestal shade where dozes
On down of mist miladi fair,
And when shy sunbeams gem her hair
She smiles into the rainbow there;
 'Tis April, dreaming roses.

Bright wings of unborn butterflies
 And leaves of daffodillies
Float gaily through her dreamland skies,
While dim and white and angelwise,
On filmy moon-wings softly rise
 The souls of Easter lilies.

A SONG BEFORE TWILIGHT

BY ARTHUR KETCHUM

Go not, O Summer Day, until thou bless me.
Give me a dream to keep;
A silver star for folded hands of twilight
To take to sleep.

Go not, O Summer Day, until thou send me
The word I wait to hear;
That to the darkness I may bring its comfort,
Held close and near.

Go not, O Summer Day, until thou bind me
One secret of the grace,
Of wind and blue and clear light shining
In a dear face.

Then go, O Summer Day, and of thy splendors
A votive garland make;
And crown a festival, remembered,
For thy dear sake.

THE BEST OF THE NEW BOOKS

In this list we shall include only such books as in our opinion are really worth while. No extended reviews will be given, only the briefest description. The fact that a book is listed is the highest commendation we can give. These books can be secured of any good bookseller, or they will be sent postpaid by POET LORE on receipt of the published price.

TEN THOUSAND MILES WITH A DOG SLED, by Hudson Stuck. An account of the vast snow fields, frozen rivers and rugged mountains of the Yukon country by the archdeacon of the Yukon. Excellently illustrated. (\$3.50 net.)

THROUGH THE BRAZILIAN WILDERNESS, by Theodore Roosevelt. Colonel Roosevelt's own narrative of his much-discussed expedition through a part of Brazil never visited by civilized man, including a 500-mile journey on mule-back across the height of land between the river systems of the Paraguay and the Amazon, and a trip down the "Unknown River." The illustrations are particularly interesting. (\$3.50 net.)

THE CRUISE OF THE "JANET NICHOL." There can be no greater inspiration and pleasure for lovers of Stevenson and his work than in this diary of his wife, written during their cruise in 1890, with no thought of publication, but, as she says "to help her husband's memory where his own diary had fallen in arrears." (\$1.75 net.)

THE VOYAGES OF THE NORSEMEN TO AMERICA, by William Hovegaard, is the first of the Scandinavian monographs. The series is published to promote the study of Scandinavian history and culture, in the belief that true knowledge of the North will contribute to the common profit on both sides of the Atlantic. The book has 83 illustrations and 7 maps. (\$4.00 net.)

THROUGH THE GRAND CANYON FROM WYOMING TO MEXICO, by Ellsworth L. Kolb. A book of exceptionally interesting travel, with many illustrations. (\$2.00 net.)

UNVISITED PLACES OF OLD EUROPE, by Robert Shackleton. A particularly interesting travel book, especially well illustrated. (\$2.50 net.)

FOUR ON A TOUR IN ENGLAND, by Robert and Elizabeth Shackleton, the latest book by the well-known traveler-authors of "Unvisited Places of Old Europe," with sixty-four pages of illustrations. (\$2.50 net.)

MOROCCO and SIAM are the two latest additions to Pierre Loti's notable series of Eastern travel books. It is interesting to read in Loti's dedication to Siam, "I do not believe in the future of our distant colonial conquests. And I mourn the thousands and thousands of our brave little soldiers, who were buried in those Asiatic cemeteries, when we might so well have spared their precious lives, and risked them only in the last defence of our beloved French land." (Each \$2.50 net.)

LUCA DELLA ROBBIA, by Allan Marquand. A catalogue Raisonné of the works of Luca della Robbia. The monuments are arranged in chronological sequence, together with their related documents and bibliography. Some of the monuments and some of the documents are now published for the first time. A scholarly monograph. (\$7.50 net.)

OUR SENTIMENTAL GARDEN, by Agnes and Egerton Castle. A book filled with the whims and fancies of garden-lovers beautifully illustrated in color and black and white, by Charles Robinson. (\$1.75 net.)

A MIDSUMMER NIGHT'S DREAM, a rich octavo gift edition, beautifully illustrated by W. Heath Robinson; twelve in full color and over sixty in black and white. (\$4.00 net.)

THE VICAR OF WAKEFIELD, charmingly illustrated by Edmund J. Sullivan in color and black and white, makes a gorgeous gift for boys and girls just growing out of juveniles. (\$4.00 net.)

NAT GOODWIN'S BOOK, by Nat C. Goodwin. An intimate and permanent history of the American stage for the past forty years, by the greatest living actor. Illustrated by many rare photographs. (\$3.00 net.)

RECOLLECTIONS AND REFLECTIONS OF A JAPANESE ARTIST, by Yoshio Markino. An interesting volume by the author of "A Japanese Artist in London." Delightfully illustrated. (\$2.00 net.)

MY PATH THROUGH LIFE, by Lili Lehmann. Musical and personal memoirs of a great singer that will interest all who have heard her. Well illustrated. (\$3.50 net.)

THE PRACTICAL BOOK OF OUTDOOR ROSE GROWING, by George C. Thomas, Jr. Elaborately illustrated with ninety-six reproductions in full color of all varieties of roses. The rose-lover and the rose-grower should be keenly interested in this beautiful and comprehensive book on roses. As a textbook for the amateur gardener, it will at once take a permanent place, both for its practical arrangement and adaptation to ready reference, and for the explicit and authoritative instructions given covering every phase of the subject. (\$4.00 net.)

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THE EAST I KNOW, by Paul Claudel. Claudel was for many years in the service of the French government in Cochin China. This series of word pictures of that far Eastern life is the first of the author's work to appear in English. (\$1.25 net.)

NOTES ON NOVELISTS WITH SOME OTHER NOTES, by Henry James. Stevenson, Zola, Flaubert and d'Annunzio are some of the novelists — "London Notes" and "An American Art Scholar" are some of the other notes; all are the finished work of an experienced workman. (\$2.50 net.)

THE LAST SHOT, by Frederic Palmer. The story of a titanic war by an expert war correspondent. (\$1.35 net.)

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REMEMBER RHYMES, by A. A. and E. B. Knipe. Fifty childhood rhymes with many illustrations in black and white and color. (\$1.25 net.)

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THE AMERICAN BOYS' WORKSHOP, by Clarence B. Kelland. The boys *vade mecum*; its various sections are devoted to the Outdoor Boy in Summer, the Aquatic Boy, the Outdoor Boy at Home, the Outdoor Boy in Winter, the Indoor Boy, Miscellaneous Helps, Rope Work Every Boy Should Know. The book has many helpful diagrams. (\$1.25 net.)

THE BUBBLE BALLADS, by Melville Chater. A particularly attractive volume of verses for children, remarkably well illustrated and decorated by Gertrude A. Kay. (\$1.50 net.)

THE CUCKOO CLOCK, by Mrs. Molesworth, is the latest addition to the Stories All Children Love Series. Lippincott have just issued a charming calendar consisting of twelve color illustrations from this well-known series, which they will send, on request, for fourteen cents in stamps. (\$1.25 net.)

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