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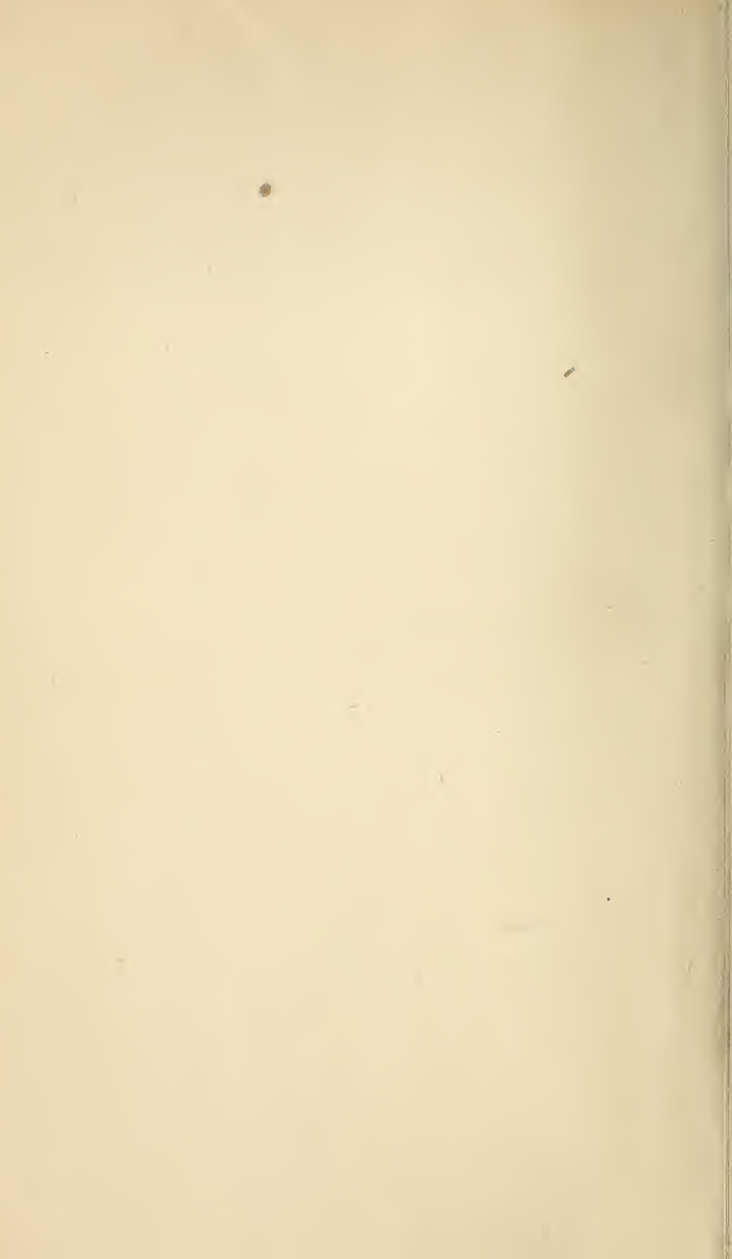


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THE
ANONYMOUS POET OF POLAND,
COUNT SIGISMUND KRASINSKI.

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A. C. Baker

THE UNDIVINE COMEDY,

AND

OTHER POEMS.

BY THE

ANONYMOUS POET OF POLAND,

COUNT SIGISMUND KRASINSKI.

“ He burned, a never consumed offering, upon the altar of his country.”

HIS POLISH ANNOTATORS: ADAM AND LADISLAS MICKIEWICZ.
POLISH POETRY IN THE NINETEENTH CENTURY, BY JULIAN KLACZKO.
A SHORT BIOGRAPHY OF THE POET.

cc

TRANSLATED BY

MARTHA WALKER COOK.

PHILADELPHIA:
J. B. LIPPINCOTT & CO.

1875.

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PREFACE.

IT is certainly the duty of a translator to be thoroughly convinced of the intrinsic merit of any work he may propose to translate, for he will be in a measure responsible for its influence upon the minds of those to whom he may introduce it. No hope of sudden success should dazzle him into unworthy labor. Let him first ascertain if the proposed work be one of general human interest, calculated to increase the moral worth of the people to whom it is to be offered, to express the influential conceptions of an original mind, open a new literature, throw light upon the hidden history of an epoch, or develop the characteristics of a nation;—if any one of the above conditions be met, then is the translator justified in transplanting the quickening germs into the mental being of his own countrymen, to bloom in wider consciousness, in fairer actions.

It is claimed that the translations herewith offered meet not only *one*, but *all* of the above conditions.

That the works of Krasinski are of “general human interest” is proved by the fact that, even under their anonymous publication, they were enthusiastically received by the critics of Europe, and immediately translated into French and German; that “they are calculated to increase the moral worth of the people to whom they are offered,” is evident in that they contain a genuine attempt to introduce the sublime ethics of Christianity into the vexed and vicious sphere of modern politics; that “they embody the influential conceptions of an original mind,” may be read in the fact that these “conceptions” *modified the character of an entire People*; that the translations open a “new literature” is clear, since they are the first specimens of modern Polish poetry as yet given to Amer-

ican readers ; that they “ throw light upon the history of an epoch and develop the characteristics of a nation,” is manifest in the strange truth that, as stated by Julian Klaczko, only through the lessons of Krasinski can some of the startling occurrences of the last Polish revolution be interpreted at all.

A curious spectacle is spread before the utilitarian and material spirit of the nineteenth century in the closely interwoven history of our author and his unhappy country. A Christian Poet teaching only forgiveness, patience, and self-abnegation,—the possession of whose works in his native land was Siberia or death, and who, to shield those dear to him from the vengeance of the oppressor, was forced to publish anonymously,—has so influenced the action of a brave, injured, and fiery people, that only in his poems can be found the clue to deeds which puzzled the despot and astonished the world ! Thus only can be explained that startling scene which occurred in Warsaw in February, 1861, when *unarmed* men, women, and children bared their breasts, and fell without resistance before the Russian battalions maddened by the sight of the unfurled Polish banner. For their poet had sung :

“ Holy Spirit, who hast taught us that the most sublime power on earth is the power of *self-sacrifice*, that the most mighty of arguments is virtue, grant that through love we may win the nations to the end whereto we aspire !”

“ To each Nation Thou hast given a vocation, O Christ ! A profound idea springing from Thee lives in each, and in it is the secret of its destiny ! Some Thou hast elected to defend the cause of celestial Beauty, and to offer to the world an angelic example by hopefully bearing their heavy cross along a weary way overflowing with their blood . . . until they have given loftier and more divine ideas to men through their sublime struggles ; given a holier charity, a wider fraternity, in exchange for the sword that has been plunged into their bosoms !

“ Such a nation is thy Poland, O Lord Jesus !”

—*Psalms of the Future*, KRASINSKI.

And with such ideas did this patriot-poet succeed in impregnating a nation ! To the eternal glory of Poland

be it said, that, strengthened by the divine lessons of her Poet, she has hitherto been strong enough to resist all the temptations to avenge herself held out to her by Russia in the fell scheme of Pansclavism; that, having shed her generous blood on almost every battle-field in Europe, and having been deserted and betrayed by those whom she so faithfully served, she still bares her own breast to the pitiless knife of the Czar, rather than aid him to whet it anew for the heart of the civilized world! She knows the fury of the Russian Bear too well to let slip a single link of the chain she still holds in her manacled and wounded hands. Let the Russianized pansclavists of Bohemia call her the "Judas of the Slaves;" England continue to temporize until India is lost and her own doom is near; Greece change the indolent Turk for the Muscovite Czar; France, conquered of old under the Great Napoleon in Russia because of his treachery to the martyred nation, and fallen beneath the armed heel of the ruthless Teuton under Napoleon the Little, seek a new ally in Russia as she cries in her terror "à bas les Polonais;" Italy wrap herself in her old indifference with regard to the fate of all "Northern Barbarians;" Austria in her fright strive to conciliate Galicia while losing Bohemia; Prussia rejoice in irritating stolen Posen, and join the oppressor in his designs until, having found his way through Vienna to Constantinople, the prophecy of Frederick the Great is fulfilled: "When Russia possesses Constantinople, two years later she will be in Königsberg; young America bend her spotless brow as the bandage is wound round her flashing eyes, that she may not see the pool of blood surrounding the Autocrat;—the Polish Eagle does not quail; finding no home on earth, she spreads her snowy wings, mounts into the sky of holy sacrifice, and hopes, 'because she there sees God!'"

These works of Krasinski "introduce a new literature to the American public." Translations from the French, German, Italian, Spanish, Russian, Norwegian, Swedish, Arabic, Persian, Hindoostanee, etc., are placed before us, but, as if the Russian censor ruled our press, for us Niemciewicz, Mickiewicz, Chodzko, Vincent Pol, Slowacki, Lelewel, Duchinski, Trentowski, Ostrowski, etc., etc., have suffered, written, sung, reasoned, and prophesied in

vain. Have we any life of the great and good Kosciuszko, or the brave and fiery Pulaski?

In 1855 the astute Russian, Pogodin, wrote to his own government: "The time has come in which we should seek an alliance with America." If an assassin can obtain the friendship and recommendation of a powerful friend of known honor and magnanimity, his nefarious schemes against the innocent may be pursued in comparative safety. Much has been said on the unbridled license of an untrammelled Press, but as great a danger lies in its purchased silence. Falsehood and exaggeration o'erleap their aims, destroy themselves, and perish in the light of liberty; but silence veils ghastly secrets, and crime securely revels under its close shroud. How is the alliance of America to be won? Silence! Stifle the cries of the victims who for the last hundred years have been crimsoning with their blood the white deserts of Siberia; the rattling of chains in the wastes of Tobolsk and the mountains of the Caucasus; the moans and sobs of an entire People we have resolved to destroy; the multitudinous cries of widows and bereaved orphans! This subtle policy has been skillfully pursued; and where silence has been impossible, history has been falsified, ethnography outraged, religious prejudices evoked, and the character of the Polish People traduced, that the deception might be complete. For, with Poland crushed and Constantinople won, Europe lies at the feet of the Mongolian-German, and, robed as an angel of emancipation and communistic light, he may Russify civilization at leisure.

With every generation since her partition, Poland has entered her united rejection of the iniquitous rule of her foes, by an attempted revolution, in which the awful protest has been signed in the blood of her martyred children,—men, women, and children alike ready to die in this solemn denial of *voluntary* subjugation.

The last disastrous attempt of Poland to arise from her sepulchre, occasioned by measures insulting to universal humanity, occurred during our own civil war. Russia endeavored to make it appear that the rebellion in America and the attempted revolution of the Poles were phe-

nomena bearing a similar character. No idea could be more erroneous, for the struggle in Poland was to restore legitimate authority to its rightful holders, to a government truly liberal, representative, and Polish; while our revolted States sought to wrest authority from the legally-elected rulers, the Congress of the United States. The resurrection in Poland meant union, life; the rebellion, division and destruction. The one sought to bring about general emancipation, the other to prolong slavery.

But in the hands of Russia all facts are wax, which her political artists mould to serve their own purposes. While branding the Poles throughout her own realm and monarchic Europe as freethinkers, republicans, and jacobins, she makes a sudden turn, and denounces them here as bigots, aristocrats, slaveholders, and despots, and their insurrection as but an attempt of the nobility to regain their ancient *status*,—a *feudal* conspiracy! Hear, shade of Kosciuszko!

Poland has long been anxious for the emancipation of her serfs, not only as moved by the advancing humanity of the world, but as a means of national power. Sword in hand, she defended it in the confederation of Bar, in 1768; discussed it in the diets of 1776, 1780, 1788, and finally adopted it by the famous Constituent Assembly of 1791. Kosciuszko, May 7, 1794, then Dictator of Poland, issued a document giving entire personal freedom to all the serfs; and on the 22d of January, 1863, the members of the National Polish Government decreed that the peasants were not only *free*, but were entitled to a certain portion of land, of which they should be sole proprietors. But emancipation would have made Poland too strong for her enemies, by uniting all classes,—and the oppressor would not permit it! Only six months after the noble decree of Kosciuszko occurred the terrible massacre of Praga, which quenched the contemplated emancipation in gore, and the following year the very name of Poland was—at least for a time—effaced from the political chart of Europe! In later days, the petitions addressed to the Emperor Ferdinand I., by the States of Leopol, 26th September, 1845, for the suppression of serfage and corvee, led to the massacres in Gal-

licia, and the destruction of the Republic of Cracow. Poland has been literally drenched in blood ever since her last emancipatory act of 1863. It is about as fair to accuse Poland of the permission of serfage during the last hundred years as it would be to accuse Abraham Lincoln and Whittier of being promoters of slavery! Yet this is precisely what Russia did, in order to assimilate the insurrection of Poland with our own rebellion, representing it as originating in the desire to support feudalism, in the very face of the first words promulgated by the Polish Committee, January 22, 1863: "*All the sons of Poland, without any distinction of faith or race, descent or station, are free and equal citizens of the country.*"

Strong and startling are the contrasts between the United States and Poland. We are young, powerful, active, happy, the bulwark of freedom, the hope of oppressed Peoples;—Poland has lived through many centuries; has been since her dismemberment so fettered that all action, save in the spasms of her revolutions, has been impossible; has been rendered utterly wretched, her body mutilated and thrice stabbed to the heart, and all that is material about her stifled in a living sepulchre. And yet there are striking points of resemblance. Both nations are daringly brave; both are confederatively formed,—Poland, Lithuania, and Ruthenia, uniting in 1569, being the first *voluntary confederation* in Europe; both prefer elective governments; both are opposed to religious persecution and oppression; both detest foreign domination, and love liberty better than life. And as if Heaven itself would draw the two countries in still closer communion, the idolized heroes of both nations, Washington and Kosciuszko, bound by congenial friendship, stood breast to breast in the great contest for American freedom. Material aid being utterly impossible, and in every aspect impolitic, yet in the higher world of justice the moral sympathy of the triumphant with the wronged and murdered Nation must be deep and true; her injuries will be exposed by the statesmen of freedom, and the tortures to which she is constantly subjected will flow in the burning words of fiery indignation from the eloquent lips of the freemen of America! Is this so? Alas! silence! silence!

But why call up this terrible spectacle of a great Aryan Nation in her agony, with the prolonged death-rattle in her throat; why lift the shroud of anguish from entire generations, fathers, sons, daughters, infants, all driven into dissolution by a barbaric and relentless foe, the ruin of schools and universities, the destruction of libraries, the deportation of students, the transplantation and consequent slaughter of thousands of innocent children, the forcible transportation of thirty thousand helpless inhabitants into the Caucasus, the desecration of maidens, the tortures of patriots, the knoutings of heroes, boys and matrons, and the persecution of the oldest form of Christian faith? Because the victim is not dead, and there is vast moral power in the force of public opinion. Because the American mission is the actualization everywhere of not merely nominal, but real freedom, founded upon justice and eternal truth. But chiefly it is done in the present relation, because it is our ardent desire that the Polish poet should be understood in all his sublime patriotism by American readers, and to show that his deepest hues are not so dark as the truth they depict; because, for full sympathy with his original conceptions, we must recognize his own sad stand-point, and the melancholy position of the country he so earnestly loved. For poet and people hold positions entirely exceptional in the history of the world.

Poles and exiles! it is with no light feeling of self-distrust that the daughter of a distant land has ventured to lay her daring hands upon the master-works of your poet, patriot, and statesman. She would fain have called the high poets of her country to the task of transmuting the thoughts of the Polish Dante into fitting English; but none seemed ready to begin the work. Wreathing their lyres with their own immortal flowers, singing their songs of freedom for the emancipation, cultivation, and delight of humanity,—some of them perchance momentarily charmed by the mystic might of Russia,—none were prepared to burn the torch of their own genius to illumine the spiritual and majestic features of your illustrious dead. Feeble as may be the fire of this torch as now borne, sway and flicker as it may in the uncertain hands, may its light yet be strong enough to manifest something of the

valiant "Polish soul" to my countrymen! Strong enough to point out to future translators the unexplored treasures of Polish literature, in order that in more inspired versions they may yet place "The Undivine Comedy" and "Iridion" where they deserve to rank,—after Dante and Shakespeare, among the loftiest creations of human genius.

I know that through the medium of a less impassioned language, and deprived of their exquisite form and bold and undulating rhythm, these poems will seem cold and imperfect in your eyes, but I beg of you to pardon the deficiencies, because of the difficulty of the task and the love and reverence which prompt its execution.

Whatever the material, venal, and passing phantoms of the hour may seem to say, believe not that American hearts have ceased to beat in unison with yours! Your courageous struggles for "a country" may be still misrepresented and misunderstood; the brilliant serf-emanicipation in Russia may for a time dazzle us into ignorance of the atrocious torments to which you are subjected, but misconception not voluntary cannot long endure, the Sun of Truth is everywhere rising and everywhere dispersing the mists of falsehood under its happy light, true republicans will learn that "the path to freedom lies not through the charnel-house." Right, not might, is the cornerstone of God's kingdom upon earth!

Liberty, justice, equality before the law, and self-government, are the normal dogmas of our political creed; to renounce them were to stultify ourselves. They are cornerstones in the temple we are building for the refuge of men; to uproot them were to bring it in ruins about our own heads.

We know that, tortured and mutilated, Poland still lives, and that, at every banquet of the "Holy Alliance," her grand and bloody form rises from her three graves to appal the three crowned and rival murderers of a nation. For she is buried, not in the corruption of the grave, but in the loyal hearts of her patriotic and tortured children, in the living sympathies of all who love virtue, self-sacrifice, and heroism, and in the eternal justice of God;—therefore is her resurrection certain!

TRANSLATOR.

BIOGRAPHY OF KRASINSKI.

THE following imperfect sketch of the "Anonymous Poet" is the only account we have been able to find of him in European literature. It is translated chiefly from "Unsere Zeit Jahrbuch zum Conversations Lexikon. No. 55. 1862. L. A. Brockhaus, Leipzig."

"The silent organ loudest chants the master's requiem."

So chants the fact that as yet no details of the life of the great Pole can appear, because they might compromise friends once very dear to him, living within reach of the vengeful arm of Russia. He renounced all fame while living, ever publishing anonymously, and the manifold experiences of his internal life, with his numerous historical and political letters, must slumber in the shroud of silence, until Polish patriotism is no longer crime, and confiscation and exile cease to be the doom of all connected with those daring enough to defend their native land.

The reader may, however, round this skeleton biography into flesh, by clothing its bones from the veined tissues he will not fail to find in the nervous pages of Julian Klaczko.

When Napoleon entered Poland, in 1806, the leader of the Polish Legions, General Dombrowski, summoned the fiery patriot, Wybicki, to unite himself with armed hand to the conqueror of nations; and as Napoleon spoke freely of the reconstitution of the country, such summons fell not upon unheeding ears in Poland. Many patriots of high distinction offered up property and life

in the new-born hopes for fatherland, and, captivated by the fallacious promises of Napoleon, hurried to join the French eagles. Count Vincent Krasinski, then about twenty-four years of age, a man of great wealth and high distinction, was one of the first to greet the French Emperor on Polish ground, and afterwards accompanied him in his campaigns as adjutant.

For a time Count Krasinski resided in Paris, in which city his wife, Maria, a princess of the house of Radziwill, presented him with a son, born on the 19th of February, 1812, who received in baptism the name of Sigismund Napoleon. This boy became the "Anonymous Poet of Poland."

Bitterly deceived were the high hopes of the Poles. After the signing of the act of abdication by Napoleon, April 11, 1814, Count Vincent Krasinski, then under orders from the Czar Alexander, led the unhappy remnants of the Polish legions back from France into Poland.

His countess soon after joined him there with the little Sigismund, then about three years old. Upon the immense estates of his forefathers, under the tender care of a devoted but very sickly mother, lived for many happy years the young Sigismund, a dark-eyed boy with long, fair curls, remarkable from his earliest years for rare powers of wit and intellect, for rapid and acute answers to difficult questions, for true and chivalric feeling, for high-strung and self-sacrificing ardor. His health, however, was exceedingly delicate. When but five years of age he was presented to the Czar, an especial friend of his parents, and recited for him the lines of Voltaire, "Tu dors, Brute!" meantime fearlessly gazing with childlike confidence into the keen eyes of the autocrat. Two years later he was introduced to the Empress, whom he pleased greatly. She said laughingly to him, "I acknowledge you as my knight. Will you accept the appointment, and defend me against my enemies?" His answer was as acute as chivalric. "I cannot," he replied; "your Majesty has no need of defenders, since you have no enemies."

He had instructors of great ability, and so rapidly was

he advanced in his studies, that he was soon able to enter the sixth class in the College of Warsaw. Uncommon powers of intellect, united with a great memory, ardent and unceasing efforts for thorough mental cultivation, distinguished him in his intercourse with his fellow-students. But however rapid his advances, he failed to satisfy his eager desire for exact and wide learning.

His mother died in 1822, and so bitter was the distress of his father, that he withdrew himself from all social intercourse, save that forced upon him by his official position, and devoted himself exclusively to the advancement of his idolized boy. He followed his mental and spiritual culture with eyes of constant watchfulness, and, at an examination to which the savants interested in the cause of education had been invited, he had the gratification of seeing his son, then but twelve years of age, astonish all present by his accurate knowledge of grammar, literature, geography, and history.

Although Sigismund was too young as yet to take any part in the meetings and discussions of the learned Poles so frequently held in the house of his father, they nevertheless exerted great influence over the precocious boy, and aided in preparing him for the vocation of an author. His susceptible nature readily seized upon whatever appealed to the imagination or soul, and he would often reproduce his impressions for the entertainment and instruction of his companions. When but fourteen years of age, he wrote a tale which he caused to be secretly printed, and then presented to his father, who approved the gift, but forbade all further essays at that time, fearing that the facility of composition might lead his son astray from more severe studies. But the boy stole from the hours allowed for sleep the time to write another tale, entitled "The Grave of the Family of Reichstal." This was followed by another, "Ladislaus Hermann and his Court," written in the style of the novels of Sir Walter Scott, of whose works he was at that time deeply enamored. Both of these tales were printed in 1829.

But a dreadful crisis was approaching in the fate of the dutiful, loving, beloved, and patriotic son. His father

and his country were to stand in deadly opposition to each other, and his young dreams of fame to be forever sacrificed. His life was a long penitential offering to his incensed country for the faults of his father. He sacrificed all glory to win silence and pardon for the illustrious offender.

The year 1825 was a memorable one in Russian history, in consequence of the sudden death of Alexander, and the outbreak of a wide-spread conspiracy for a constitutional government in Russia, of which the leaders were Pestel, Orloff, Ryléief, Bestuchef-Rumin, and Kachowski. During the inquiries instituted at St. Petersburg, it became evident that there were societies existing in Poland whose principal object was the restoration of that country to independence. Uminski, Jablonowski, Soltyk, Kryznowski, Lukasiniski, and others, members of one of these societies, were indicted for high treason. The trial fell under the jurisdiction of the ancient kingdom of Poland, whose capital was the city of Warsaw.

The reduced Poland of the Congress of Vienna enjoyed a nominal constitution, and the Polish Senate was convoked to preserve, ostensibly at least, a legal form. Some Senators were then living abroad, as Prince Adam Czartoryski, but they hastened home to record their patriotic votes. The President of this high tribunal was elected in the person of the Palatine, Peter Bielinski. The Commission of Inquiry classed the accused under five categories, and the Senate was charged to decide on their fate. It appointed lawyers as counsel for the prisoners; the proceedings were public, and lasted a month, when the court, with the exception of one dissentient voice, set aside the charge of high treason, and gave their decision: "Not guilty;" a decision based on the principle that all Poles naturally desire the independence of their fatherland. The one dissenting Polish voice was that of General Count Vincent Krasinski, the father of our Poet!

The Emperor ordered the judges to be reprimanded, a thing before unheard of, and consoled himself by confining the accused in the dungeons of St. Petersburg, in direct violation of the constitution,—and this was one of

the grievances subsequently alleged in defense of the Polish revolution.

The constitutional victory of Poland, so full of patriotic joy, was, however, greatly saddened by the fact that a patriot so distinguished as Vincent Krasinski should have voted on the side of the absolute Russian Government, then represented in Warsaw by the Grand Duke Constantine, famous for his persecution of all patriotic Poles, as well as of the students of the university.

Peter Bielinski, the President of the Senate and Commission of Inquiry, died soon afterward, and, on the day of his funeral, the fiery fellow-students of young Sigismund Krasinski made a strong demonstration, in the way of threats and insulting expressions, against the young man, judging him utterly unworthy of their fellowship, because of the unpatriotic vote rendered by his father on the trial above mentioned.

An eye-witness, Professor Podbielski, then a fellow-student of young Sigismund on the benches of the university, thus describes the occurrence: "On one of the subsequent days, after the public lecture to the students in common of the faculties, I observed quite a commotion among the young men; many leaving the hall, rushed to Krasinski, and as they tore the badges of the university away from him, I heard them cry: 'You are not worthy to be our fellow-student, because your father cast his decision against our brothers, our noble patriots!' Sigismund, with chivalric and undaunted bearing, though of exceedingly slight form and delicate and refined appearance, met them fearlessly, and with true Polish spirit offered them a sincere pardon for their insults to himself, so utterly innocent in his own person of all wrong; but their leader, young Lubinski, and others, refused to listen to his manly explanations. I was astonished at proceedings so unjust, but our Professor, with some friends, finally interfered; I left the hall, and never again saw our great Anonymous Poet, our long unknown, pure, and noble patriot."

This college occurrence was, without doubt, the original of the scene described by "The Young Man" to

“Dante” in the first part of “The Unfinished Poem” or “Fragment.”

Constantine was greatly enraged at the decision of the Polish Senators, tortured Lukasinski in prison, and sent Krzyzanowski to Siberia. The Polish revolution broke out in 1830, November 29th. Flying with the Russian army from Poland, Constantine, cruel to the last, caused the unfortunate Lukasinski to be chained to a cannon and dragged with the flying troops.

There is but little doubt that the iron entered deeply into the soul of the brilliant and enthusiastic boy at the epoch of the mortifying scene above described. The struggle must have been terrible in the heart of this devoted son, this enthusiastic patriot. It was probably at that time he made the double resolve which filled his entire life with conflict. He piously determined to do all in his power to contribute to the happiness of the father who idolized him, never to desert him, and yet to make his whole life a silent expiation for the crime of that father; to live only for the moral elevation of the wronged country; to devote all his powers to her resurrection; never to yield to the seductions of ambition; never to permit himself to wear the laurel crown with which his unhappy country would so gladly have wreathed his brow of genius. Is there in the whole range of literature a cry more full of heart-rending pathos to be found than in the sole allusion he ever suffered himself to make to his father, in the appeal to his country, found on the last page of his weird tale, “Temptation”?

From the time he quitted the university, his life was but an unbroken chain of wanderings in search of health. Always delicate, the shock he had received told sadly upon him, and, as he grew older, his sufferings assumed many depressing and severe forms. Henceforth the reader must expect little but dates, reading the history of his mind and soul in the original works marking the times and places of his pilgrimage.

On quitting the university, he went first to Geneva, where he wrote for the journals; among such articles, were some written in French for the “*Revue Encyclopédique*.” Falling ill, his physician advised him to seek

a milder climate, and he spent the winter in Italy. Returning again to Switzerland, he met there with Mickiewicz, and they made together the tour of that romantic country. The daily association with that far-famed poet kindled the slumbering sparks of creative genius in the soul of Sigismund.

The close of the year 1830 found him in Italy, where he received the distressing intelligence of the disastrous events occurring in Warsaw. They made a profound impression on the enthusiastic and patriotic young Pole, but he was thoroughly unable to follow the dictates of his heart. His moral strength would have been sufficient to have supported him through the conflict then so wildly raging in his breast, but he was forced to succumb to physical weakness: the consequent struggle brought upon him an illness which chained him to his bed during a whole year. He has often declared that this was the most painful period of his existence, and a state of bodily suffering began in it which was to last as long as life endured.

At the urgent request of his father he returned to Warsaw in 1832. Thence he went to St. Petersburg, where the Emperor offered him such position in the service of the state as he should deem most congenial with his tastes and wishes. He, however, begged permission to continue his travels, and as the court physician declared the severity of the climate would prove disastrous to health so delicate, and his eyesight grew every day weaker and weaker, it was decided that he should at once repair to one of the foreign watering-places. His stay in St. Petersburg having lasted all winter, gave him an opportunity to become thoroughly acquainted with Count Branicki, in whose house he first saw the maiden whom Heaven had destined to be the partner of his life.

It was about this date that Priessnitz, of water-cure fame, began to be celebrated, and Sigismund, with other Poles, hastened to Gräfenberg to try that mode of cure. He found it, to a limited extent, beneficial, and it enabled him to pass the winters of 1833 and 1834 with some degree of comfort in Vienna. It was then and there he wrote the tale "Agai-Chan," in which there is a sketch of the

usurper Dimitri, as well as "Maryna," a tale which he afterwards discarded as unsatisfactory.

The terrible disasters which had convulsed his native land in 1831 awakened in him the deepest sympathy, the most concentrated reflection. He gave words to the thoughts and feelings thus suggested in a marvelous drama, "The Undivine Comedy," the second part of which was written in Vienna, and in which he evinced not only the clearest insight into the perplexed Present, but even tore the blinding veil from the distant Future.

The year 1838 he spent in Italy, where, surrounded by the immortal memories of Rome, he wrote his "Iridion," a work which entitled him to a high rank in the literary world. He also visited Warsaw in 1838, but was not able to remain there for any length of time, for, though a true Pole, he could not bear the rigor of his native air; after a short stay in Karlsbad and Teplitz, he returned to Italy, meeting and associating with many of his beloved compatriots in Rome and Naples.

In 1842, Count Branicki, with his three accomplished daughters, visited Rome. It had long been the wish of Count Vincent Krasinski that his son should seek his life-companion in this family; that wish was now fulfilled. Sigismund sued for the hand of Elizabeth Branicka, celebrated his betrothal, and was married at Dresden. The blessing of the Church gave him a wife richly gifted in body and soul, of an amiable temper, and possessing that ready conception of the sublime and beautiful so calculated to throw over the life of the poet the atmosphere necessary for full poetical development. The young couple spent the first two years of their married life in the land of their fathers, not indeed wholly untroubled, but far from the vexatious turmoil of the world. The malady of his eyes, as well as his general ill health, held him aloof from society, limiting his intercourse to a few trusted friends, among whom was Amilie Zaluska, who had grown up with him, and whom he loved as a sister. His first son, Ladislaus, was born in 1844. He would gladly have continued to reside in his native land, but as this could not be without the most injurious influence upon his health, he was forced to resume his wanderings, tarrying

for some time in Nice. The frightful occurrences of which Galicia was the theatre, in 1846, affected him most painfully. When referring to an opinion regarding these circumstances expressed by him at a much earlier date, he passionately exclaimed: "Ah! why was I not a false prophet?" and almost cursed the exactness of his prophetic vision. These startling events gave rise to a discussion with the fiery poet, Julius Slowacki. This discussion awakened intense interest, and will ever remain a most valuable exposition of the political opinions of the times; it also placed in the strongest light the antagonistic genius of the two poets.

Toward the end of the year 1847, and about a year after the birth of his second son, Sigismund returned to Rome, and was consequently an eye-witness of the political scenes occurring during 1848 in the capital of the world. His religious feelings were always deep, and it was most natural that during his sojourn in Rome, a man of his character and antecedents should become through conviction an ardent champion of the Catholic Church. In June, 1848, he returned to Heidelberg, whence he paid a short visit to France, then convulsed by revolution. After a trial of sea-bathing, he remained some time in Baden, where, in spite of severe physical suffering, he labored upon the first and third divisions of "The Undivine Comedy," of which, as already stated, he had finished the second part in Vienna. It was his custom while thus occupied to have his wife seated at the piano, that he might hear her play the melodies he loved. When Baden was also drawn into the whirlpool of the revolution, he went to Berne, in which place he was utterly prostrated by sickness. When just beginning to recover, he received a command from the Government to return immediately home. He obeyed the summons, and suffered the necessary results. He spent that winter in Warsaw, but in consequence of the disastrous effects of the rigor of the climate upon his delicate organization, he was threatened with total loss of eyesight. With great difficulty he obtained from Russia permission again to leave Poland. He tried sea-bathing at Triport, which, instead of mitigating, greatly increased his maladies. He was allowed to select Heidel-

berg as his residence for the winter, where his wife soon joined him. The disease of his eyes had so increased as to incapacitate him for all literary labor. The following summer he spent at Baden; the following winter in Rome. He took great interest in the excavations and disinterments then being made in the Appian Way, finding in them the subject of a masterly poem dedicated to his wife, which has never as yet been published. He went also again to Naples, and was a frequent guest in the Palace of the Grand Duchess, Stephanie von Baden, who took as great pleasure in the society of the Polish poet as she had already taken in the perusal of such of his works as she could obtain in French. He then went to the Rhine, but was ordered by the Government to return to Poland, where he arrived with his family late in the autumn of 1852, and remained there until the close of the next summer. But as his residence in that climate would have been certain death to him, he again applied for permission to go abroad. Having obtained it, he went to Boppard, on the Rhine, to try for the second time the water-cure, but he derived no benefit therefrom. His sons remained in Warsaw with their grandfather, while he, tortured by continual suffering, remained upon the Rhine. His wife, after having given birth to a daughter, followed him to Heidelberg,—the only place abroad in which the Russian Government would allow him to remain for any length of time. Dreadfully emaciated, he had become so weak that, with tottering steps, he was only able to walk for a few moments during the day under the shadow of the trees in front of his dwelling, and could only write with his pencil. In this pitiable condition, the command was again issued for his immediate return to Poland! His wife instantly returned to Warsaw, to endeavor to have the order canceled. After the most untiring efforts she obtained its recall, but with the express understanding that *permission to remain abroad was granted for the last time*. Return was *certain death*, but as Russia knouts her own poets, she could scarcely be expected to attach any importance to the prolongation of the life of the noble Pole.

The death of the stern Nicholas, in 1855, so far alleviated the position of Krasinski that his residence abroad was

no longer bound by conditions so rigorous. The nomination of his father as Governor of Poland gratified him exceedingly, so much the more as the appointment was received with general satisfaction by his countrymen.

He tried the water-cure again at Kissingen in 1856, but he remained so ill and debilitated that during a period of ten months he was only able to move about by the aid of crutches. He spent the following winter in Paris, and was advised by his attending physician there to try sea-bathing the ensuing summer.

But a heavy misfortune now fell upon him. Through the failure of the house Thurneissen, he lost not only a considerable portion of his own, but nearly the whole of his wife's property.

As the old general greatly longed to see his son and grandchildren once more around him, Sigismund determined to gratify the wishes of his father, although he was well aware that such a journey in his state of health would prove highly injurious to him. A new and deeper sorrow awaited him on his return to his native land: the death of his idolized daughter, Elizabeth. Utterly prostrated, he hastened to Heidelberg, to place himself under the advice of Dr. Chelius. He spent the remainder of that winter tortured by perpetual cramps and spasms. He also lost his beloved friend, Ary Scheffer. Dr. Walther, of Dresden, pronounced his lungs affected, and advised him to try Plombières, from which trial, however, he derived no benefit. He also tried the springs at Ems, but with no better effect. He then returned to Dresden, to place himself under the immediate care of Dr. Walther: useless efforts! The skillful physician saw at once the rapid ravages of the deadly disease, and could only advise Italy or Algiers. Krasinski, not satisfied with the advice of one physician, went to Dr. Louis, in Paris, for additional consultation, but, too timid to tell him the whole truth, that physician gave him so much encouragement that he resolved to remain in that city. A new method of medical treatment was essayed, but at its very commencement his heart was again wrung by severe affliction. A telegraphic dispatch announced that his father was lying at the point of death. In consequence of his utter exhaustion, he was

unable to hasten to the dying bed, and was forced to commit this tender duty to his wife, who fulfilled it so efficiently that she arrived in time to close the dying eyes of Count Vincent Krasinski. The news of this death fearfully shattered the sinking frame of Sigismund; he withdrew from society, and was scarcely to be seen even by his most intimate friends. He tried to soothe his aching heart by preparing a sketch of his father's life for the Italian sculptor who was to execute the monument of General Krasinski, but was only able to bring it down to 1827.

Meanwhile, he was constantly urged by his friends, who saw how rapidly he was declining, to seek a milder clime; but he would not listen to their entreaties, and remained in Paris. He watched the course of political events with intense interest, and his soul was filled with divinations of important and widely-spread changes yet to be. His illness now suddenly assumed a form so marked that he at last became alarmed, and recalled to Paris his wife, who, at his request, had remained in Warsaw to attend to the inheritance left him by his father. His three physicians agreed in the opinion that his days were numbered, and his wife saw on her return that there was no hope for the husband so dearly loved.

The seal of death was indeed already upon him, and, after a painful struggle, lasting through ten entire days, his pure and immortal soul left his racked and suffering body during the night of the 23d to the 24th of February, 1859.

The coffin containing his mortal remains was placed temporarily in the Church of the Madeleine; but later, accompanied by Count Zamoyiski, it was taken to Poland, and at Opingora, the ancestral seat of the Krasinskis, his body found its final resting-place, surrounded by illustrious ancestors.

And this is all our author, who evidently loved the subject of his biography, ventures to tell us of the internal life of the man, of the exhausting conflict between filial veneration and duty and intense and glowing patriotism, forever surging through the soul of the sublime Poet.

After a judicious analysis of the works of Krasinski, which we omit because the subject is more widely treated by the older and younger Mickiewicz, as well as by Julian Klaczko, our biographer continues:

A fragment only has as yet appeared of an apparently large work, entitled "Cracow in 1858," which seems to be written in the style peculiar to this poet. A volume of extracts from his letters has also been published in Paris, under the supervision of one of his dearest friends, Constantine Gaszynski, under whose name Krasinski published "The Dawn."

Poland venerates in him the distinguished author, the inspired poet, the sublime spirit, the brave man who knew how to sustain hope in adversity, and to quicken with new powers the sinking soul. The effort of his life was to attain moral perfection in his own being. But he rested not in this alone; he strove, even through his own constant sickness and sorrow, to call it forth not only in individuals, but to *make it the life-pulse of his entire nation!* The character of his works, and their marvelous influence upon his countrymen, have justly entitled him to the rank of a truly *National Poet*. Every chord which as an individual he struck upon his lyre rang in harmony with the desires, feelings, thoughts, and hopes of the Polish People. There certainly have been men on earth who could absorb into their own wider and deeper being all the thoughts, feelings, and hopes of their country; who were capable of fusing them in the glow of their own genius, and of bringing them forth in the clear light and close unity of art. Undoubtedly Krasinski takes a high, if not indeed the very highest, place among such rare national creators. Continually crushed under the weight of severe bodily afflictions, deeply wounded in heart, he took into his inmost soul the sad history of his People; he felt it as his own anguish, and placed it as his peculiar seal upon everything he has written. Sincerity, truth, glow of sympathy, knowledge, nay, clear prophetic insight, were the strong rounds of the ladder by which he ascended to such glittering heights. Wherever his people still breathed, not yet crushed to dust under the merciless foot of the spoiler, there the Poet,

raising his own sorrow-crowned head above the miseries of Time, gazed with the holy trust of the martyr far into the heavens, and "there saw God," divining with sacred pride and joy that Future which the Polish people see clearly revealed to them through their present agonies, and which their poets, in spite of chains, prisons, torture, and exile, never cease to sing to them. In the vast world of thought and the wide regions of poetry there were no limits for Krasinski, and he reveled in that mystic freedom of art which was alike denied to himself and country in the sphere of politics. But no impurity ever sullies his noble pages, and what he wrote on political regeneration is already graven on the heart of the world.

And yet he never once stooped to win popular applause. Compared with the contemporary writers of Poland, he is especially distinguished by a nature not objectively, but essentially and spiritually poetic, which is stamped deeply upon all his writings. But his peculiar traits are not to be found in the rich gifts of an excitable fancy, wealth of imagery, charms of vivid description, or luxury of ever-varying combinations. They are to be looked for in a higher region,—in a love for justice, and a clear and far-reaching insight into truth, into its development in things yet to be, a power of so distinctly portraying the future that one is strongly disposed to characterize his works as "Apocalyptic."

Known until now only as the "Anonymous Poet," he never sought literary fame, but concealed the good he was effecting as sedulously as others conceal shame. Enjoying the love and esteem of his countrymen, blessed with a wife as high-souled as beautiful, and lovely children, surrounded by many and true friends, and in the possession of large property, he might have been regarded as one highly favored by destiny. But health, that most inestimable of blessings, was denied him from youth until his last sigh; and his heart was wrung by never-uttered sorrows. He was thus no friend to idle and useless amusements, and was seldom seen in the saloons of the gay world; but he loved social intercourse with the friends whom he trusted, and it always

gave him pleasure to converse upon the historical and philosophical questions of the day. Then would he open a mine of intellectual wealth, of original and striking views, of profound ideas, which, under more favorable circumstances, would have made him at least the equal of the statesmen of his time.

Devout in the very depths of his soul, he shrank from no sacrifice for his family or friends, and was generous and magnanimous almost to prodigality. His own words, uttered in defense of the spirit of knighthood, are wonderfully appropriate to himself :

" He burned, a never-consumed offering, upon the altar of his country."

P R E F A C E.

TRANSLATED FROM LADISLAS MICKIEWICZ, SON OF ADAM
MICKIEWICZ, THE GREAT POLISH POET.

Extracted from the French Edition of the Works of Krasinski.

POLISH Poetry, in the nineteenth century, stands in striking contrast with contemporary literature. While the latter has fallen under the corrupting influence of the schools, has proclaimed *art for the sake of art*, and voluntarily restricted its empire to the mysteries of the worship of the Muses, the former has pursued another path, and Poetry has remained in Poland, what it ought ever to be in the heart of a great people, the vigorous and spontaneous expression of the feelings and thoughts which constitute the spirit of the nation. From this common fund have the poets, or, to use their own language, the "prophets" of Poland, drawn all their inspiration; and prophets they really are, for like tongues of fire they were given to their people to express all their hopes and all their agonies.

They cling to a firm belief in the Resurrection of their Country, but no more than the patriotic feeling which engenders it is this faith confined to themselves, for however irreconcilable it may seem with the actual fate of Poland, it is, nevertheless, found in all Polish souls impressed by an internal conviction far more powerful than the external evidence of the moment.

Is it not indeed truly surprising to see this People, which, in the day of its greatest prosperity, and two centuries before its fall, had the fatal foreknowledge of that fall,

affirm with the same certainty, now when its ruin is consummated, its approaching resurrection? In this faith, opposed to nature and fact, is there not something resembling a pledge from Providence, something like a sacred promise made to the oppressed? At least the poets have so understood it, and, confiding in this intuition, they have, in the absence of a terrestrial country, created an ideal one, the admission into which is only to be won by devotion and virtue.

"To be a Pole
Is to have noble aspirations and a flame divine."

Thus the aim of the Polish poets was essentially national, but it would be a great error to deduce from this that the absorption of the genius of Poland in the sad mysteries of its own existence ever rendered it a stranger to the thoughts and interests of the West. So entirely would such a deduction be contrary to fact, that it is precisely through the intuitions of her poetical genius that the close union of the West and Poland—perhaps indeed the dependence of their mutual destiny—is most clearly revealed, the moral and intellectual life which animates both springing from the same sources, and the whole social organism being governed by the same necessities. The works of the Anonymous Poet bear the frequent stamp of this truth. They are full of important lessons even for the most prosperous peoples. We have placed ourselves in this double point of view in publishing these translations. The alliance between France and Poland, consecrated by blood, will be cemented by related ideas. We hope it will be fertile, for to it we owe that system of international justice, acknowledged by France, which is summed up in the principle of the nationalities. It is impossible to deny that the initiative in this movement belongs to the reclamations of Poland. However warped this principle may have been in Germany or elsewhere, it cannot be gainsaid that it constitutes a moral progress which will benefit all Europe.

It may be reserved for the history of Poland under her present circumstances to introduce another motive-power, as yet too little heeded in *public* life, the principle of *Duty*

as the "primum mobile" of the State and of the citizen. Is not her martyrdom truly a constant appeal to the self-sacrifice of her sons, and to the fraternity of nations?

That the nationalities are really collective individuals, that each one has its part to play in the destiny of this world, and that the lesson to be taught by Poland is the guidance of governments by principles of abstract justice and duty, are favorite themes with the Anonymous Poet. He regards a *nation* as an entity differing from a merely *politically constituted State*; the one being merely a human, the other a divine idea founded in the very nature of things. It is the duty of nations to translate the designs of God into the world of fact; to incarnate them, to make them useful to the entire humanity. Such should be their aim and the purpose of their existence. Should they fail to fulfill their mission, should they betray it, they must perish as nations; but if they struggle for the truth, material force alone will not be able to repress their development; their spirit must at last prevail, and they will rise into a higher life.

From this theory springs a system of political morals, not different from individual morality, nor parallel with it, but the same elevated to a higher degree. Applying these conclusions to the situation forced upon his country, the Poet teaches her that *hate* is death to the spirit, and always strikes it with impotence.

To struggle without relaxation is an absolute necessity, and he desires and urges it; but let it be a constant combat of good against evil, of light with darkness; let the love of God and man guide and support it, for such love is the pledge of victory! Without an ardent desire that equal justice may be meted out to all, without Christian forgiveness and moral superiority, he sees only champions of passion, or base gladiators in the wide arena.

The future of Poland looms magnificently before him; she is to resume her existence in the reconciliation of extremes and antagonisms, in a reign of peace and happiness. He has no doubt of the progress of humanity, but he assigns, as its absolute condition, the reparation of one of the greatest crimes committed since the Death on Calvary,—the assassination of a Nation, the violent sup-

pression by man of a thought of God! He predicts a glorious resurrection to Poland, if she will faithfully guard the principle of life implanted in her, if, surrounded by hate, she can preserve herself from a moral fall.

Such are the ideas which have presided over the creation of all his works, and which he has interpreted with unequalled splendor. He endeavored to present his thought under two aspects:—the sterility of hate, demonstrated in “Iridion” and “The Undivine Comedy;” and the fertility of love, as illustrated in “The Dawn” and “The Psalms of the Future.”

We will attempt to give a rapid analysis of these poems.

Iridion is a type of the man of antiquity in deadly combat with Fate. The descendant of an illustrious family, which had fought to the last for the independence of Greece, he only lived to pursue victorious Rome with the implacable enmity which had been enjoined upon him by his ancestors. To aid him in the superhuman task to which he had been consecrated from infancy, the intense hate of several generations had been occupied in gathering mighty resources for the hour of struggle. Wealth, influence, rank, relations with the barbarians, alliances with their leaders, etc., had all been skillfully prepared. He, in his own person, seemed created for such a rôle. To great vigor, manly beauty, and the entrancing fascination of a demigod, he joined the inexorable heart of a hero. He knew neither pity nor weakness. He had left room in his soul for only one thought, one desire,—the destruction of Rome. Whatever this one passionate thought could conceive, he executed without recoiling from any sacrifice. On the other hand, the Eternal City, under the rule of Heliogabalus, was but a corpse, crushing with its inert weight all who sought to live. All was peril without and confusion within; society was crumbling into ashes, and there was nothing to sustain it save the imperial power, formidable for all who feared it, but weak for those who defied it. Iridion found everywhere fit instruments of vengeance; he oppressed with the oppressors, and conspired with the conspirators. His indomitable energy urged on the conspiring and antagonistic elements to a gigantic and

decisive struggle, which he intended should terminate in their mutual destruction.

A single force refused to be made use of to serve the hatred of Greece: the persecuted Christianity, which repelled all violence, and placed its sole hope in spiritual arms. Astonished at a resistance which he could not understand, he at first sought to subdue it, but, growing irritated, he moved too rapidly, and precipitated events. The outbreak took place, but brought not the anticipated results. Uniting in the name of their resentments, men often move together in the path of their own interests. Hatred, the savage sentiment of individual egotism, although it may be strong enough to unite men in a common action, is not sufficiently powerful when it becomes necessary to *exact obedience* from them! Helio-gabalus perished, but Rome endured. The efforts of the heroic leader, aided by many chances of exceptional success, miserably failed, because the whole enterprise was vitiated by the very idea which inspired it!

The tendency of the poem is still more fully unveiled in the epilogue. Introducing the supernatural into the web of the plot, the Poet transports Iridion into our own epoch, and shows him that very Rome which had oppressed others, itself destroyed and degraded,—fallen as low as even his hate had dreamed it. But these black ruins do not glorify vengeance, for above them rises the Cross, the emblem of those Christians who had renounced the transitory supremacy of power to establish a reign of faith, charity, and forgiveness.

And this Cross, which here appears as the synthesis of the Past, the Poet will once more bring before our eyes in glory, as the supreme hope of the world of the Present! It will shine from the skies in sign of pardon and alliance, and, in seeing it, the guilty conqueror will say, "GALILÆE, VICISTI!" and will be engulfed in his own nothingness! Such is the dénouement of "The Undivine Comedy," in which the glowing imagination of the Anonymous Poet has traced the struggle which is to precede that apocalyptic day.

Humanity, in "The Undivine Comedy," is severed into two camps, under the leadership of two chiefs,

Count Henry and Pancras. Irreconcilable enemies, both having issued from a like critical spirit, the one repels the Future, the other the Past. This absolute exclusion is on both sides the fruit of an utter want of faith. Pancras is the personification of human reason, which defies itself in its own essence, and believes only in finite calculation,—in action as the result of the power of numbers. Count Henry also personifies human reason, which glorifies itself, in his case, in his own individuality, denying all general laws, and, as a rule of conduct, bowing only to his individual fancies. If he believes in the cause which he defends, it is because he believes in himself, and when *he* is defeated, he despairs and rushes into suicide. He kills himself at the very moment that the God of Life has chosen to reveal Himself in the most striking manner to the conscience of the Peoples!

A feeling of astonishment is at first created by the fact that our author gives the victory to Pancras, the cynic and scorner, the unyielding antagonist of the truth whose triumph is announced. But this victory was necessary to demonstrate that in any struggle undertaken only with the arms of hate, the advantage is always assured to *blind force*. A still deeper design is also manifest. The defeat of Pancras by Count Henry would have only resulted in the glorification of the genius of man; and the intervention of the divine symbol, instead of originating an instantaneous reaction, would but have strengthened the pride of Count Henry, in such case, invincible. Now neither pride, nor genius, are the supreme arbiters of human destinies! The onward path which in their free progress leads men to good, is the Good itself, and it alone, in which, according to the noble words of the Poet, all wisdom is contained! Upon the perfecting of virtue and on its reign depend our salvation in this world and in the next. Triple and one, identical in its terms which cannot be separated, cause, means, and effect, that good is origin and life, divine order and immortality, for it is the universal bond which links the Spirit of every being to the Spirit of God. It proceeds in its manifestations by order, harmony, love, and union, and is the woof in the work of the universe which, in the divine loom,

supports and unites the infinite threads of Creation:—threads which all move under its direction, and west, to which every human effort must be attached, if fertile or imperishable results are to be evolved. Whosoever works otherwise, builds upon the sands; striving to annul the labors of the centuries, he can found nothing true, real, or absolute; the lightest wind will sweep away the building reared by his ignorance and presumption.

All the generous ardor with which such convictions inspired our Poet, he wrought into the service of his cause in "The Psalms of the Future." Sublime Pleader! His nation in its agony was then ready to rush into measures of extremity, but, braving unpopularity, he started up at once to the defense of practical good sense and chivalric honor, against the madness of despair.

In 1846, Galicia was mined with conspiracies, all of which had adopted the national flag as their symbol of order and rallying sign. Nevertheless, for some of the affiliated, this flag was to bear in its folds, not only the independence of their country, but also a violent and radical transformation of society. These radicals, while holding up the foreign usurpers to the indignation of the people, also doomed the higher classes of the Polish nation as accomplices in an oppression from which they, however, had been the first to suffer. The Government of M. de Metternich, though fully informed with regard to the insurrection, left free course to the democratic and socialistic propaganda, certain in advance that when the revolution did break out, it would fall exhausted by mutual destruction before reaching the Government, and that in a soil so torn and uprooted by internal convulsions, it would be easy to build a firmer foundation for Austrian power.

The Anonymous Poet understood the danger, and divined the calculation of the Austrian Government; he endeavored to avoid the peril, and disappoint Austria; and to effect this, he used the arms which his own genius placed in his hands,—that mastery of poetic form which stamped his words with so much authority! He wrote the Psalms of Faith, of Hope, and of Love, and in them he made eloquent appeals to the heart, as well as to the political acumen of his fellow-citizens. He demonstrated

all that was false in their ideas, all that was culpable in their contemplated acts, dissuading them from their designs; and then, rising to a majestic grandeur of conception, he opened before them paths which would inevitably lead them to realize the highest ideal upon earth.

But the passions of men were already unloosed, and nothing could arrest them. They found even an apologist in a man of genius and a rival of our Poet, who replied to him in poetic tones—a mingling of biblical prophecy and zealous polemics—“that all progress must be bought by blood, and that God renewed the face of humanity as He did that of the earth, by a series of deluges!” The contest of the two poets retains its celebrity among the literary glories of Poland, and we will find its last echo in the final scene of “The Fragment,” which was not published until after the death of the author.

The contest was still in progress, when the events themselves assumed the reply. Truly it was not Poland, but the all-powerful administration of M. Bach, which rose from the massacres in Galicia! Austrian domination triumphed materially and morally over its opponents, and seemed to realize the conditions which render a victory final. The ideas of the Anonymous Poet, slighted at a time when they would have insured success, were now confirmed in every conscience as a reproach or a regret. But the utter discouragement which pervaded all minds, joined to the conviction that repentance came too late, struck such regret with sterility. Alas! hours of like prostration occur in the history of most nations; hours of gloom and despair, when all that is still living lives only in the feeling of impotence and utter nothingness! Such terrible trials are inevitable in the course of time;—probations which decide upon the life or death of a people, as it shall triumph over its despair or abandon itself to torpor! The Anonymous Poet, always in the breach, felt it now his duty to react against this discouragement, and to use the moral authority he had gained through such tragical occurrences to waken the dormant energies of his compatriots. Under this conviction, he published the “Psalms of Grief and of Good Will,” in which, through his ideal, he returns to hope,

—hope for Poland, whose immortality he never ceases to proclaim!

Especially is the last Psalm remarkable for its boldness of conception. In the very moment in which accumulated disasters bore his country to the earth, and the wretchedness of slavery consumed it like a leprosy, not suffering himself to be shaken by its apparent decomposition and death, and looking far into the future, he points out how everything is preparing for and aiding in the Advent of Eternal Justice.

Addressing himself to God, he thanks Him for all the benefits He had never ceased to bestow on Poland, and blessing His all-powerful Hand, he exclaims: "It is not Hope which we beseech from Thee, O Lord! it falls upon us like a rain of flowers,—nor is it the destruction of our enemies: their doom is written on to-morrow's cloud! It is not to break the gates of our grave: they are already broken, O our God! Nor is it arms for the combat: they are already speeding on the tempests' wings! Nor is it succor: Thou hast already oped for us the field of action, but in the midst of this explosion* of dire events, we pray Thee, Lord, to purify our hearts! Give us the gift of gifts: the Holy Will which opens every grave!"

A faith so vast, so limitless, almost defying Heaven to disappoint it, could not be without influence over other souls. It ought to have elevated and inspired them,—and so indeed it really did. Therefore the *Psalms* are not regarded merely as a *literary fact*, but as a *political event*, which has its place marked in the National History.

The Dawn was written several years before the *Psalms*. It is composed of a succession of lyrical pieces, in which we see the constant development of the political and humanitarian ideal which had become, as it were, a religion to the Poet. This poem shadows forth the earth restored to the rule of harmony, which is its eternal law, and, after its deluge of blood and crime, blossoming anew under the eye of God.

All the works of the Anonymous Poet are written in the spirit we have essayed to portray in this succinct analysis. He devoted himself to the development of these ideas, and

* The Revolution of 1848.

to their introduction into the morals and life of his nation. The mere singer of the beautiful, the worshiper of the Muses, is elevated by him into sterner regions; he uses the poetic powers to enforce moral convictions, profound thoughts, and conscientious patriotism. In other circumstances, and under another government than that to which Poland is subjected, he would not have strung the lyre, but would have mounted the rostrum, and become the centre of political action. But neither rostrum nor political life was possible for him upon his native soil. Through poetry alone could he popularize his conceptions by preserving their precision in the frame of an exquisite, imperishable, and easily-retained form: poetry is also the delight of the nation, whose woes are cradled in its magic, and whose soul palpitates in its divine accents, its lyric enchantment. Therefore he bowed his genius to the exactions of rhyme and rhythm. And never had he to complain that he had so done, for not only did he attain the proposed political aim, but he won a brilliant literary glory, only surpassed by that of Mickiewicz.

Before closing this preface, one point remains to be glanced at, which would furnish material for a long development, a profound examination. The Anonymous Poet is ranked in Poland among her Catholic writers. It would be far more conformable with the truth to say that he possessed a religious soul, for, with regard to the doctrines revealed in his works, it is very evident that there are wide gaps to fill and important theses to be cut off, before it would be possible reasonably to include them in any defined limits of the dogmas of the Church. At all events, a commentary would be required to establish their exact meaning and bearing. But if the judgment of the public upon this point is erroneous, it is because that public is more logical than the author himself. Without following him into his theosophic ideas, obscure even for those accustomed to such studies, his readers became imbued with the moral side of his work, and seized upon its spirit,—a spirit which was soon to find its final form in Catholicity, to which the author definitely returned toward the close of his life.

This said, let the reader read and judge!

ANALYSIS OF THE UNDIVINE COMEDY.

EXTRACTED FROM "LES SLAVES," A COURSE OF LECTURES DELIVERED BEFORE THE COLLEGE OF FRANCE (1842-43), BY THE MOST RENOWNED MODERN POLISH POET, ADAM MICKIEWICZ.

[In this very remarkable work, by Adam Mickiewicz, written in French, and which, by some strange oversight, has not yet appeared in English, no less than four lectures are devoted to a criticism upon "The Undivine (or Infernal) Comedy." The Essay of Julian Klaczko has been found so long and exhaustive, that it is the intention of the Translator to give but a few condensed extracts from the analysis of Mickiewicz. The whole course of Lectures is recommended to the reader, as full of information not elsewhere to be found; and, although in the latter portion somewhat blemished by the elaboration of certain futile theories, containing a mine of brilliant, deep, and highly original thoughts.—TRANSLATOR.]

The word "Undivine" is used in preference to "Infernal" (the term employed in the French translation) as better expressing the relation of the drama to the "Divine Comedy" of Dante. The word is so appropriate that its coinage may be pardoned.—EDITOR.

It is my intention now to place before you the analysis of a very remarkable work which appeared in 1834, entitled "The Undivine or Infernal Comedy."

I will not call this work a fantastic Drama, although it is now customary to give this name to all compositions in which the characters and scenes are not immediately derived from the world of prosaic reality. Utility and Reality are indeed the boast of our century; but what can be more variable, more contingent, than what we choose to call *solid reality*,—that visible and material world which is ever on the wing, which is always yet to be, and which has no Present? It is through the soul alone that we are able to seize the connections and rela-

tions of the visible world ; it alone gives them fixity or reality ; it alone generates ideas, institutions, literature,—the only things truly *real*, the only things which penetrate the soul, become incorporated with it, and constitute the living traditions of the human race. Every work which causes the chords of souls to vibrate, which generates new views of life, must be considered *real* ; and foreign writers render but justice to Polish Poetry in declaring it, so regarded, as *very real* ;—and there is nothing more palpitating in its strange *actuality* than the work we are now about to consider.

The time, the place, the characters of “The Undivine Comedy” are all of poetic creation. The scene of the drama is laid in the future ; and, for the first time in the history of art, an author has attempted to construct a *prophetic play*,—to describe places, introduce persons, recount actions which are yet to be. The struggle of the dying Past with the vigorous but immature Future forms the groundwork of the drama. The coloring is not local nor characteristic of any country in particular (though we recognize it to be Polish by the melancholy contrast felt rather than seen between the state of the nation and that of the individuals who compose it), because the truths to be illustrated are of universal application, and are evolving their own solution in all parts of the civilized world.

The soul of the hero, Count Henry, is great and vigorous ; he is by nature a poet. Belonging to the Future by the very essence of his being, he becomes disgusted with the debasing materialism into which its exponents, the *new men*, have fallen ; he then loses all hope in the possible progress of humanity, and is soon presented to us as the champion of the dying but poetic Past. But in this he finds no rest, and is involved in perpetual struggles and contradictions. Baffled in a consuming desire to solve the perplexing social and religious problems of the day by the force of his own intellect ; longing for, yet despairing of, human progress ; discerning the impracticability and chicanery of most of the modern plans for social amelioration ; finding nowhere his ideal ; he determines to throw himself into common life,—to bind

himself to his race by stringent laws and duties. The drama opens when he is about to contract marriage. The Angels desire to aid him, to open a way into the Future for him through the accomplishment of his duties; the Demons tempt him to embrace falsehood.

Voice of the Guardian Angel. "Peace be to men of good will! Blessed is the man who has still a heart: he may yet be saved! Pure and true wife, reveal thyself to him! And a child be born to their House!"

Thus the words once heard by the shepherds, and which then announced a new epoch to humanity, open the Drama. They are words spoken only to men of *good will*,—men who sincerely seek the truth,—who, in great or new epochs, are able to comprehend it, or willing to embrace it. The number of those who have preserved a *heart* during the excited passions of such eras is always very small, and without it they cannot be saved, for love and self-abnegation are the essence of Christianity.

To instill new life and hope into the disappointed man, the Angel ordains that a pure and good woman shall join her fate with his, and that innocent young souls shall descend and dwell with them. Domestic love and quiet bliss are the counsel of the heavenly visitant.

Immediately after the chant of the Angel, the voice of the Demon is heard seducing the Count from the safe path of humble human duties. The glories of the ideal realm are spread before him; Nature is invoked with all her entrancing charms; ambitious desires of terrestrial greatness are awakened in his soul; he is filled with vague hopes of paradisiacal happiness, which the Demon whispers him it is quite possible to establish on earth. In the temptations so cunningly set before him by the Father of Lies, *three* widely-spread metaphysical systems are shadowed forth: 1st. The Ideal or Poetic; 2d. The Pantheistic; 3d. The Anthropotheistic, which deifies man. The vast symbolism of this drama is recommended to the attention of the reader.

* * * * *

Abiding by the counsel of the Angel, our hero marries, thus involving another in his fate. He makes a

solemn vow to be faithful, in the keeping of which vow he takes upon himself the responsibility of the happiness of one of God's creatures, a pure and trusting woman, who loves him well. A husband and a father, he breaks his oath. Tempted by the phantom of a long-lost love,—the Ideal under the form of a maiden,—he deserts the real duties he has assumed to pursue this Ideal,—personated indeed by Lucifer himself, and which becomes—true and fearful lesson for those who seek the infinite in the finite—a loathsome skeleton as soon as grasped! From the false and disappointing search into which he had been enticed by the Demon, he returned to find the innocent wife, whom he had deserted, in a mad-house. False to human duties, his punishment came fast upon the heels of crime.

In the scene which occurs in bedlam, we find the key which admits us to the meaning of much of the symbolism of this drama. We accompany the husband into the mad-house to visit the broken-hearted wife, and are there introduced into our still-existing society,—formal, monotonous, cold, and about to be dissolved. Our hero had married the Past, a good and devout woman, but not the realization of his poetic dreams, which nothing could have satisfied save the infinite. In the midst of this strange scene of suffering, we hear the cries of the Future, and all is terror and tumult. This future, with its turbulence, blood, and demonism, is represented as existing in its germs among the maniacs. Like the springs of a volcanic mountain, which are always disturbed before an eruption of fire, their cries break upon us; the broken words and shrill shrieks of the madmen are the clouds of murky smoke which burst from the explosive craters before the lava pours forth its burning flood. Voices from the right, from the left, from above, from below, represent the conflicting religious opinions and warring political parties of this dawning Future, already hurtling against those of the dissolving Present.

Into this pandemonium, by his desertion of her for a vain ideal, our hero has plunged his wife, the woman of the Past, whom he had sworn to make happy. It is to be observed that she was not necessarily his inferior, but,

in the world of heart, superior to himself. A true and pure character, feeling its inferiority, and anxious to advance, cannot long remain in the background; it has sufficient power to attain the height of self-abnegating greatness. God sometimes deprives men of the strength necessary for action, but He never robs them of the faculty of progress, of spiritual elevation. Meanness and groveling are always voluntary, and their essence is to resist superiority, to struggle against it: thus all the bitter reactions of the Past against the changes really needed for the development of the Future, spring from a primeval root of baseness.

An admirable picture of an exhausted and dying society is given us in the person of the precocious, but decrepit child; the sole fruit of this sad marriage. Destined from its birth to an early grave, its excitable imagination soon consumes its frail body. Nothing could be more exquisitely tender, more true to nature, than the portraiture of this unfortunate but lovely boy.

After the betrayal of our hero by his Ideal, the Guardian Angel again appears to him to give him simple but sage counsel:

"Return to thy house, and sin no more!
Return to thy house, and love thy child!"

But vain this wise advice! As if driven to the desert to be tempted, we again meet our hero in the midst of storm and tempest, wildly communing with Nature, trying to read in her changeful phenomena lessons he should have sought in the depths of his own soul; seeking from her dumb lips oracles to be found only in the fulfillment of sacred duties; for thus alone is to be solved the perplexing riddle of human destiny,—“Peace to men of good will.” Roaming through the wilderness, sad and hopeless, and in his despair about to fall into the gloomy and blighting sin of caring for no one but himself, he hears the angel, who once more chants to him the divine lesson that only in self-sacrificing love and lowly duties can the true path to the Future be found:

“Love the sick, the hungry, the despairing!
Love thy neighbor, thy poor neighbor, as thyself, and thou wilt be redeemed!”

The reiterated warning is given to him in vain. The Demon of political and warlike ambition then appears to him under the form of a gigantic eagle, whose wings stir him like the cannon's roar, the trumpet's call; he yields to the temptation, and the Guardian Angel pleads no more! He determines to become great, renowned, to rule over men: military glory and political power are to console him for the domestic ruin he has spread around him, in having preferred the delusions of his own excited imagination to the love and faith of the simple but tender heart which God had confided to him in the holy bond of marriage. The love and deification of self in the delusive show of military and political glory is the lowest and last temptation into which a noble soul can fall, for individual fame is preferred to God's eternal justice, and men are willing to die, if only laurel-crowned, with joy and pride even in a bad cause.

In the third part of the comedy we are introduced into the "new world." The old world, with its customs, prejudices, oppressions, charities, laws, has been almost destroyed. The details of the struggle, which must have been long and dreadful, are not given to us; they are to be divined. Several years are supposed to have passed between the end of the second and the beginning of the third part; and we are called to witness the triumphs of the victors, and the tortures of the vanquished. The character of the "idol of the people" is an admirable conception. All that is negative and destructive in the revolutionary tendencies of European society is skillfully seized upon and incarnated in a single individual. *His mission is to destroy.* He possesses a great intellect, but no heart. He says: "*Of the blood we shed to-day, no trace will be left to-morrow.*" In corroboration of this conception of the character of a modern reformer, it is well known that most of the projected reforms of the present century have proceeded from the brains of logicians and philosophers.

This man of intellect succeeds in grasping power. His appearance speaks his character. His forehead is high and angular, his head is entirely bald, his expression cold and impassible, his lips never smile,—he is of the same

type as many of the revolutionary leaders during the French reign of terror. His name is Pancras, which name, from the Greek, signifies the union of all material or brute forces. It is not by chance he received that name. The profound truth in which this character is conceived is also manifested in his distrust of himself, in his hesitation. As he is acting from false principles, he cannot deceive himself into that enthusiastic faith with which he would fain inspire his disciples. He confides in Leonard because he is in possession of that precious quality.

His monologue is very fine; perhaps it stands next in rank to that of Hamlet. It opens to us the strange secrets of the irresolution and vacillation which have always characterized the men who have been called upon by fate alone to undertake vast achievements. In proof of this, it is well known that Cromwell was anxious to conceal the doubts and fears which constantly harassed him. It was those very doubts and fears which led him to see and re-see so frequently the dethroned Charles, and which at last drove the conscience-stricken Puritan into the sepulchre of the decapitated king, that he might gaze into the still face of the royal victim whose death he had himself effected. Did the sad face of the dead calm the fears of the living?

It is well known that Danton addressed to himself the most dreadful reproaches. Even at the epoch of his greatest power, Robespierre was greatly annoyed because he could not convince his *cook* of the justice and permanence of his authority. Men who are sent by Providence only to destroy, feel within them the worm which gnaws forever: it constantly predicts to them, in vague but gloomy presentiments, their own approaching destruction.

A feeling of this nature urges Pancras to seek an interview with his most powerful enemy, the Count; he is anxious to gain the confidence of his adversary, because he cannot feel certain of his own course while a single man of intellectual power exists capable of resisting his ideas. In the interview which occurs between the two antagonistic leaders of the Past and Future, the various questions which divide society, literature, religion, phi-

losophy, politics, are discussed. Is it not a profound truth that in the real world also *mental* encounters always precede *material* combats; that men always measure their strength, *spirit to spirit*, before they meet in external fact, *body to body*? The idea of bringing two vast systems face to face through living and highly dramatic personifications is truly great, suggestive, and original.

But as the *Truth* is neither in the camp of Pancras nor in the feudal castle of the Count our hero, the victory will profit neither party!

The opening of the last act is exceedingly beautiful. No painter could reproduce on canvas the sublime scenery sketched in its prologue; more gloomy than the pictures of Ruysdael, darker than those of Salvator Rosa. Before describing the inundation of the masses, our author naturally recalls the traditions of the Flood. The nobles, the representatives of the Past, with their few surviving adherents, have taken refuge in their last stronghold, the fortress of the Holy Trinity, securely situated upon a high and rocky peak overhanging a deep valley, surrounded and hedged in by steep cliffs and rocky precipices. Through these straits and passes once howled and swept the waters of the deluge. As wild an inundation is now upon them, for the valley is almost filled with the living surges of the myriads of the "New Men," who are rolling their millions into its depths. But everything is hidden from view by an ocean of heavy vapor, wrapping the whole landscape in its white, chill, clinging shroud. The last and only banner of the Cross now raised upon the face of the earth streams from the highest tower of the Castle of the Holy Trinity; it alone pierces through and floats above the cold, vague, rayless heart of the sea of mist,—naught save the mystic symbol of God's love to man soars into the unclouded blue of the infinite sky!

After frequent defeats, after the loss of all hope, the hero, wishing to embrace for the last time his sick and blind son, sends for the precocious boy, whose death-hour is to strike before his own. I doubt if the scene which then occurs has, in the whole range of fiction and poetry, ever been surpassed. This poor boy, the son of an insane mother and a poet-father, is gifted with supernatural facul-

ties, with second or spiritual sight. Entirely blind, consequently surrounded by perpetual darkness, it mattered not to him if the light of day or the gloom of midnight was upon the earth; and in his rayless wanderings he had made his way into the dungeons, sepulchres, and vaults which were lying far below the foundations of the castle, and which had for centuries served as places of torture, punishment, and death for the enemies of his long and noble line. In these secret charnel-houses were buried the bodies of the oppressed, while in the haughty tombs around and above them lay the bones of their oppressors. The unfortunate and fragile boy, the last scion of a long line of ancestry, had there met the thronging and complaining ghosts of past generations. Burdened with these dreadful secrets, when his vanquished father seeks him to embrace him for the last time, he shudderingly hints to him of fearful knowledge, and induces him to follow him into the subterranean caverns. He then recounts to him the scenes which are passing before his open vision among the dead. The spirits of those who had been chained, tortured, oppressed, or victimized by his ancestors appear before him, complaining of past cruelties. They form a mystic tribunal to try their old masters and oppressors; the scenes of the dreadful Day of Judgment pass before him; the awe-struck and loving boy at last recognizes his own father among the criminals; he is dragged to that fatal bar, he sees him wring his hands in anguish, he hears his dreadful groans as he is given over to the fiends for torture,—he hears his mother's voice calling him above, but, unwilling to desert his father in his anguish, he falls to the earth in a deep and long fainting fit, while the wretched father hears his own doom pronounced by that dread but unseen tribunal: "*Because thou hast loved nothing but thyself, revered nothing but thyself and thine own thoughts, thou art damned to all eternity!*"

It is true this scene is very brief, but, rapid as the lightning's flash, it lasts long enough to scathe and blast;—breaking the darkness but to show the surrounding horror, to deepen into despair the fearful gloom. Although of bald and severe simplicity, it is sublime and terrible. It is so concise that our hearts actually long for more, un-

willing to believe in the reality of the doom of that ghostly tribunal. It repeats the awful lessons of Holy Writ, and our conscience awakes to our own deficiencies, while the marrow freezes in our bones as we read.

Nor is the close of the drama less sublime. Because the TRUTH was neither in the camp of Pancras nor in the Castle of the Count, IT appears in the clouds to confound them both.

After Pancras has conquered all that has opposed him—has triumphantly gloated over his Fourieristic schemes for the material well being of the race whom he has robbed of all higher faith—he grows agitated at the very name of God when it falls from the lips of his confidant, Leonard: the sound seems to awaken him to a consciousness that he is standing in a sea of blood, which he has himself shed; he feels that he has been nothing but an instrument of destruction, that he has done *certain* evil for a most *uncertain* good. All this rushes rapidly upon him, when, on the bosom of a crimson sunset cloud, he perceives a mystic symbol, unseen save by himself: “The extended arms are lightning flashes; the three nails shine like stars,”—his eyes die out as he gazes upon it,—he falls dead to the earth, crying, in the strange words spoken by the apostate Emperor Julian with his parting breath, “VICISTI GALILÆE!” Thus this grand and complex drama is really consecrated to the glory of the Galilean!

Nothing more intensely melancholy than this poem has ever been written. The author could only have been born in a country desolated for ages! Therefore this drama is eminently Polish. The grief is too bitter to express itself oratorically. Its hopeless perplexity of woe has also its root in the character and depth of the truths therein developed. The poet-hero aspires for the Future; it disappoints him;—he then grasps the dying Past, because, as he himself says, “God has enlightened his reason, but not warmed his heart.” His thoughts and feelings cannot be brought into harmony. The tortures and agonies of struggling with pressing but insoluble questions are not manifested in artistic declamations, in highly-wrought phrases, nor in glowing rhetorical passages proper for citation. The Drama is as prosaic and bitter as life itself;

as gloomy as death and judgment! The style is one of utter, nay, bald, simplicity. The situations are merely indicated; and the characters are to be divined, as are those of the living, rather from a few words in close connection with accompanying facts, than from eloquent utterances, sharp invectives, or bitter complaints. There are no highly-wrought amplifications of imaginative passions to be found in its condensed pages, but *every word is in itself a drop of gall, reflecting from its sphered surface a world of grief,—of voiceless agony!*

The characters are not fleshed into life; they pass before us like shadows thrown from a magic lantern, showing only their profiles, and but rarely their entire forms. Flitting rapidly o'er our field of vision, they leave us but a few lines; but so true are the lines to nature, so deeply significant, that we are at once able to produce from the shifting and evanescent shadows a complete and rounded image. Thus we are enabled to form a vivid conception of all who figure in these pages; we know the history of their past, we divine the part they will play in the future. We know the friends; the stilted godfather with his stereotyped speeches; the priest, in whom we recognize an admirable sketch, the original of which could only be found in a decomposed and dying society.

Our author also stigmatizes the medical art of our day as a science of death and moral torture. While the anguished father tries to penetrate the decrees of Providence, and in his agony demands from God how the innocent and helpless infant can have deserved a punishment so dreadful as the loss of sight, the doctor admires the strength of the nerves and muscles of the blue eyes of the fair child, at the same time pedantically announcing to his father that he is struck with total and hopeless blindness! Immediately after the annunciation of this fearful sentence, he turns to the distressed parent to ask him if he would like to know the name of this malady,—that in Greek it is called *αμαυρωσις*.

Through the whole of this melancholy scene, only one human being manifests any deep moral feeling—a woman: a servant! Falling upon her knees, she prays the Holy Virgin to take her eyes, and place them in the sightless

sockets of the young heir, her fragile but deeply-loved charge! Thus it is a *woman of the people* who, in the midst of the corrupt and dying society, alone preserves the sacred traditions of sympathy and self-sacrifice.

The cruel tyranny of Pancras and the mob is also full of important lessons. From it we gather that despotism does not consist in the fact of the whole power being vested in the hands of one or many, *but in the fact that the government is without love for the governed, whatever may be its constitutional form.* One or many, an assembly of legislators or a king, an oligarchy or a mob, may be equally despotic, if *Love* be not the ruling principle!

POLISH POETRY IN THE NINETEENTH CENTURY.

THE ANONYMOUS POET OF POLAND: HIS INFLUENCE UPON THE SOULS OF HIS COUNTRYMEN IN THEIR STRUGGLE FOR FREEDOM IN 1861.

BY JULIAN KLACZKO.

Translated from La Revue des Deux Mondes of Jan. 1, 1862.

THE events occurring in Poland since the commencement of the year 1861, stamped as they are with a character so remarkably original, and so difficult of comprehension in Western Europe, so skeptical with regard to all magnanimous political aspirations, have had among other results that of concentrating attention upon a writer who died about three years ago, and whose renown has been, as yet, almost confined within the limits of his own country. But such a fame can no longer be thus limited. The strange influence of the Anonymous Poet of Poland in the *national movement* which has broken out upon the banks of the Vistula, and the marvelous power, so clearly seen throughout the progress of the recent agitation, which his writings have exercised upon the spirit of his People, have been already noticed in this Review. What more astonishing spectacle could indeed be presented than the transmutation of ideal, nay, even mystical thought, into living, suffering, and palpable reality? A marvel truly in this age of utter practicality, is the moral and posthumous power exercised over a whole people by a solitary and contemplative genius, who, step by step, succeeded in impregnating an impassioned Nation with the most powerful, yet wholly abstract convictions, with a love of truths, the more difficult of comprehension as they were in a

measure metaphysical, and utterly opposed to the natural instincts of the masses! Marvelous indeed that capability of creating a policy hitherto unprecedented and nowhere understood, and yet well fitted to disconcert a powerful and subtle adversary! Ah! apart from all feelings of justice and outraged national rights so vividly engaged in the formidable Polish question, is there not an interest of the very highest order in this novel phenomenon of a *living* poetry throwing the light of a new day upon the most startling events, a poetry which, while incarnating itself in the form of palpitating actuality, does not the less continue to hold its being in the realm of the Ideal, to retain its character as one of the most remarkable manifestations of modern genius, marked with that seal of excellence stamped upon the highest works of art? Truly here is food for thought! Such has been the power, and such is the poetry of the author of "The Undivine Comedy," of "Iridion," of "The Psalms of the Future"—a spirit as mighty as unknown!

For those who love to seize genius, in its passage across this earth, in the joys and sorrows of its human existence, who seek above all in the works of a great author the mystic alphabet by which they may learn to read the man himself, the life of the Polish writer, in its details and catastrophes, presents a study as curious as pathetic. Even the name of "Anonymous Poet," which the author of "Iridion" retained during life, and which remains his even after death, is sufficient to force us to acknowledge that we stand in the presence of a situation by no means common, perhaps of a state of suffering happily exceedingly uncommon, and which at once commands our respect. For no longer do we live in the days of modesty and innocence, when the painter gave himself but a little corner in his picture, and disappeared in his work! In our times, the artist is too apt to make his own personality the one luminous point of his composition! And well indeed it were if only the truly imperial genius should thus seize the wreath of laurel to crown himself; or if the halo of glory were only wreathed by those who merit at least some degree of public attention. But where is now the talent, however wretched, to be found, which will re-

nounce one iota of its own claim to glare, to celebrity, if even but for a day; where is the name which will refuse to be bruited abroad, however ephemeral the worthless echo? Yet here is a man of the most incontestable genius, whose precepts have modeled the soul of a nation; a writer applauded by a whole people, and yet who through life steadfastly declined to receive the homage so sincerely offered; who never suffered the confession of that which was his glory to be torn from him even by his most intimate friends, and who preserved until death sealed his eloquent lips his position of renunciation and abnegation. In times so full of personal infatuation, so eager for success, so intoxicated with the incense of vanity, is not this renunciation of self calculated to excite our astonishment? But astonishment turns to sympathetic emotion, when we learn that this act of absolute self-abnegation was at the same time an act of *painful expiation*; that by this silence constantly kept with regard to himself, the author in a manner implored silence with regard to another;—that it was a *son* who thus magnanimously immolated his own memory to win the boon of forgetfulness for that of a guilty *father*!

Reserve is a duty toward him who, during his whole life, tried to hide himself from all public notice. Let us, however, endeavor to reanimate this noble figure by some of those general and almost impersonal traits of which he himself made use in portraying more than one of the heroes of his dramas. He assigned them no dates, he gave them no family names, they were rather symbols than persons. To present him thus to our readers will be to give them a type rather than a person. Let us imagine, then, a man of large fortune, of ancient family, allied even with some of the reigning sovereigns; a man who numbered among his ancestors leaders in a national war held in perpetual veneration, and who was brought up to reverence his own father, then dear to the country, and illustrious in many famous battles. A day came when that idolized father, so intrepid in the fire of combat, gave proof of pusillanimity in civil life,* and deviated from the

* Vincent Krasinski, the father of the Anonymous Poet, replaced Prince Poniatowski in the command of the Polish army at the end of the Em-

path of patriotic duty, at least as the Nation then understood it. It was neither treachery nor treason, still less could the act be attributed to motives of personal interest; it was but the infirmity of a weak character, whose vanity had yielded to the subtle seductions of the ruler of Poland. But the public indignation was not lessened by such considerations, and it fell upon the son, then but seventeen; an insult was at that time inflicted upon him for which nothing could console the man of honor, the high-spirited gentleman. This was, however, but the commencement of trials far more severe; three years later, the unfortunate son was to find in his father a perjured traitor, overwhelmed alike by the curses of his country and the honors pouring upon him from the triumphant oppressor, the blood-stained conqueror of an outraged people.

A haughty soul would have found in such circumstances the pretext for an extreme decision; it would perhaps have sought in the unmerited insult and persecution an excuse for the acceptance of a situation which it had not created for itself, and toward which the animadversions of the conquered, and the splendid temptations of the conqueror, equally urged it. On the other hand, an unscrupulous spirit, yielding to the weakness of an age which proclaims the *sovereignty of the end*, and places our duties to a public cause above all family ties, would have seized this occasion to gain a popularity as easily won as

pire, and afterwards took part in the government of the kingdom of Poland after the Restoration. He was a descendant of one of the leaders of the Confederation of Bar. General Krasinski unfortunately excited the national sentiment against himself by his vote in the Senate in a trial for conspiracy in 1828, and the young Sigismund in consequence received a deadly insult upon the public square from his fellow-students; this filled him with anguish, and, at the request of his father, he left Poland. When the Revolution of November 29, 1830, broke out, he started immediately for his native land, but was forced to stop at Berlin. His father had been taken at Warsaw by the insurgents; he saved himself by a promise of devoting himself to the national cause,—but soon after set out for St. Petersburg. This treachery filled Sigismund with despair, his health failed, he could no longer dwell in the land he loved, but lived almost entirely abroad, devoting himself to poetry, publishing successively his poems without ever confessing himself to be their author. Through him Polish patriotism found a new expression, a mode of thought as yet unknown in the actual world.—*From Charles de Mazade. TR.*

brilliant, and would at once have sought and published a rupture, which would have been everywhere welcomed with applause. But this unhappy son was neither a Coriolanus nor a Brutus; he was only a Christian! He received in utter simplicity the simple command of God: "Honor thy father and mother." He never believed he had the right to deny him who had given him life, nor even to sit in judgment upon his actions; but at the same time he felt himself as strongly the son of the nation,—he shared in all her agonies, and in all the hopes of his oppressed and murdered country. Thus placed by God between his father and his country, with sublime resignation he accepted the unceasing struggle without any possible issue, which two sentiments *equally sacred* were to wage forever in his soul. He lived almost always abroad, thus avoiding a contact more bitter than dangerous; without, however, ever being able to withdraw himself from the pitiless arms which forever weighed upon him and his. He once said to us: "My footsteps have almost always pressed a foreign soil. I have only heard from afar the groans of the victims; but I *feel* everywhere the hand of the executioner." Thus it was upon a foreign soil that he became a poet, but he only accepted this celestial gift from Heaven as a means of penitence on earth; and in giving such master-works to his suffering country, he forever renounced the reward so dear to poets—glory. He believed it to be his duty to expiate a fault not his own, by immolating the most legitimate and purest personal fame, and always pleaded for another by this persistent sacrifice of silence, or at most, by these brief and timid words, heart-breaking in their pathos for those who understand them: "O my Country, my mother thrice murdered! They who merit most thy tears, are perhaps they who merit not thy pardon!" Thus he knew all the torments of creative genius without ever tasting its raptures! Erostratus reversed, he passed his whole life in erecting a temple, that a *name might be forever forgotten!*

Certainly such a life has that in it which must touch the soul, and in a time when poets so often shock us by factitious griefs, and a parade of wounds upon which they enlarge at pleasure, one is consoled—we were about to say,

happy—to see a great and noble grief supported with such true and quiet dignity. And that which seems to us to merit still higher esteem is the great moral vigor which the Anonymous Poet displays in his work of expiation, the unflinching integrity, the firm tread of a conscience ever bearing so heavy a burden. It is the peculiarity, as well as the dangerous shoal of all efforts at rehabilitation, to exceed due measure, to fall into excess; and to whom would the world have more readily pardoned the adoption of extreme passions and sublimated ideas, of ultra and excited patriotism, than to this son, the labor of whose life it was to cause his father's name to be forgotten, and who, to effect that end, had taken up the arms of poetry,—that is to say, even the weapons of passion and exaltation? He was, however, strong enough to resist this dangerous temptation, and he who bore in his heart such a touching necessity to win the favor of the public, has almost constantly braved it in its inclinations and caprices! He was, without doubt, faithful to the national sentiment, but refused to submit to its entrancements of the hour; on the contrary, he boldly stemmed the current of whatsoever he believed wrong or injudicious, even at the risk of drawing upon himself an unpopularity which would have been to him doubly grievous. Ah! let us for one moment consider the grandeur, virtue, and merit of such courage in the painful position he occupied. His first literary effort was distinguished by a defiance boldly thrown at the humanitarian and socialistic systems, then so much in vogue in his own country; and at a later date, he armed himself with all his poetic lightning to combat a democratic propaganda, of which he clearly saw the fatal consequences, but which had at that time subjugated almost all minds. Not only did he wound his nation in its transitory political predilections; he was not afraid to strike it in its sentiments the most profound, the most deeply rooted in its heart. As an example of this, he preached the utter powerlessness of vengeance, of hate, to a subjugated people, chafing under oppression, gnawed by despair, proclaimed dead, and who saw in this ever-vivid vengeance, this persistent hate, the ever-living proof of its own vitality. He sung to them the majesty of a

wholly moral resistance, the glory of a quiet martyrdom without combat: ideas not calculated to be agreeable to the masses, especially to a people warlike by instinct, and gifted by nature with a temperament of fire. He preached to the cruelly wronged, a theory of sublime mysticism filled with such divine forgiveness that it exposed itself to criticism and suspicion, as it seemed to border upon an enervating submission, and could easily be confounded with it. Indeed, a long time after the death of the poet, on the eve of the late events in Warsaw, a maddened democracy was not ashamed to rail at the "lyric cowardice of the great anonymous poet."* He, however, was neither discouraged by raillery nor by bitter and cruel invective. His faith was deep in the truths he proclaimed, and for all further results he trusted to time, to justice, and—why should we not say it?—to his inspired words, of which he knew the irresistible power among his people.

It is, indeed, an exceedingly difficult thing for any foreigner to estimate aright the immense and sovereign power which Poetry exercises upon that unfortunate nation. This arises from the fact that a very false and incomplete idea is generally held of the position of the country, and of the kind of foreign domination which has tortured it, especially in Russian Poland, and under the rule of Nicholas. We do not now speak of the scattered persecutions always arising upon the discovery of conspiracies as little dangerous as cruelly punished; we speak of the *ordinary state of things*, the *every-day life* in Poland. Religious faith constantly annoyed and suspected as a symptom of ill will toward the government; no universities nor institutions of science; all schools given entirely up to a foreign tongue, and regulated by officers or sub-officers from the heart of Russia; a censorship ignorant, susceptible, and timid sitting in judgment upon *every thought* and *every word*; the administration, government, and courts of justice directed by foreigners speaking a language rarely understood, and universally detested; the manners, customs, and habits of the country violently up-

* Mieroslawski: Insurrection of Posen. Second edition. 1860.

rooted ; every glorious memorial of the past destroyed or severely punished ; a police of spies forever upon the watch to entrap the unwary ; menace and the most fearful punishments suspended over every Polish head ; in a word, repose nowhere, and death everywhere ! In such a state of affairs, the moral life, which is, whatever may be said, the national life, finds its only refuge in Religion and in Poetry.

This is not the time to appreciate aright the part held by religion in this whirl of torment ; but it may be said without exaggeration that Poetry divides the influence over souls with religion, if with some natures it does not even monopolize it. Works of imagination do not constitute in Poland, as in more happy lands, the *mere delight* of the intellect ; they are not read in saloons, nor discussed in freedom and with eager play of thought. Imported secretly by the Jews, they are bought literally at their weight in gold ; and such poems are devoured in mystery, often at midnight, in the midst of friends long and fully tried, and who are all sworn to keep the secret. The doors are bolted, the shutters barred, and one of the Faithful is always placed in the street to give the alarm should the enemy approach ; for the discovery would be Siberia or death ! After such readings have been again and again repeated, feverish and palpitating as they are rendered by the attendant precautions and risks, the pages of the poem are given to the flames, but the verses remain indelibly graven upon the excited memory. Under such circumstances do our unfortunate youths hear the burning words of our poets, which alone speak to them of country, liberty, hope, virtue, and combat. It is often only through the "Sir Thaddeus" and "The Ancestors" of Mickiewicz that the greater part of our young men and maidens may learn anything of the history of their own times. A Polish writer once made the profoundly true remark, that history could only point to two nations which had received an education exclusively poetic : Greece in ancient times, and the Poland of the nineteenth century. Is such an education harmless, irreproachable ? Is it devoid of the greatest dangers both for the man and the citizen ? We are far from pretend-

ing it is so, but beyond doubt it is the only practical—alas! the only possible—course; and it alone explains the strange sovereignty exercised by poetic genius in that country.

Such sovereignty, like all others, has its cares, nay, even its agonies and remorse; and Mickiewicz has admirably symbolized the glory and the misery of the poetic mission in Poland in the famous Banquet Scene in “Wallenrod.” Our readers will doubtless recollect the subject of this celebrated tale. Wallenrod, while still an infant, had been torn from his own country, and brought up in the midst of its enemies; he had held the highest positions, and would perhaps have forgotten his origin, had he not been accompanied by an old blind man, a poor Bard, a “Waïdelote,” to remind him always of his birth, and reanimate his hate. This Bard enters in the midst of a banquet, and in the very presence of the conquerors, in a language which they cannot understand, pours into the ears of the young Wallenrod his sonorous chant, the memories of his childhood, his plighted faith, his oaths, and the duties still to be accomplished. And such has indeed been the glorious rôle of the Polish Poet in recent times; but how cruel and terrible this rôle often is, is also indicated at the close of this pathetic scene, when Wallenrod, subdued and fascinated by the words of the poet, renews his oaths, but at the same time makes him responsible for the calamities certain to ensue. He says to the Bard:

“You desire struggle? You urge me on to combat? Amen! But let the blood which must flow be upon your own head! Oh! I know, I know you! Every hymn of the Bard is a presage of misfortune, like the howling of hounds at midnight! Death and devastation are your favorite chants; *to us you leave the glory and the punishment!* From the very cradle your perfidious songs twine their serpent rings round the bosom of the infant, breathing into his soul deadly and subtle poison,—*a stupid passion for glory, and a wild love of country!* and these songs forever haunt a young man like the ghost of a dead enemy, appearing in the midst of every festival to mingle blood with the full cups of wine! *Aye, I have heard them, these songs; I have hearkened too much to them!* The die is cast, and you have won the throw! *It will be the death of the disciple, the triumph of the poet!*”

This will serve to give us a conception of the sombre and appalling nature of the power exercised in that

country by the inspired words of the poet, who has not only the *moral* responsibility for the ideas propagated which every writer must incur, but who must also assume that of the *material* fact of publication, with the consequences it entails upon all concerned in such publication, endangering the safety of publishers, readers, and possessors! Let the reader strive to conceive the torments endured by a poet of loyal soul and upright desires, urged on the one side by genius, perhaps more strongly still by conscience, to keep up the sacred fire in human hearts by the propagation of original and impassioned ideas; yet who, on the other side, shudders at the thought that the pages written when *he* was safe from persecution may, in other hands, become proofs of a crime always severely punished, give cause for protracted tortures, and expose the innocent to death! As an example: Young Lévitoux, on a certain day, was seized and confined in the citadel at Warsaw, because a copy of "The Ancestors," by Mickiewicz, had been found in his possession. Wrung and exasperated by torture, and above all fearing that he should become delirious under its infliction, and betray the names of his companions in the *crime*, a confession of which was sought to be torn from him, the prisoner drew the night lamp closer with his manacled hands, placed it under his bed, and actually burned himself to death!

Accustomed as the country was to such scenes of horror, the terrible torture endured by this brave boy of seventeen excited profound emotion; but he who suffered most was the poet, Mickiewicz; the idea of having been, however involuntarily, the cause of such a death, everywhere pursued him, and many years after the occurrence he could not think of it without a shudder. Nor was the Anonymous Poet spared the anguish of such literary *successes*! He published in Paris a little tale called "The Temptation," at the close of which is found the sole cry from his soul which he ever allowed his lips to utter upon his own situation, and in which it was generally believed is figured, under poetic types, a recital of a real event,—a meeting between the poet and the Emperor Nicholas. The students of Lithuania resolved to

reprint the tale, which had indeed appeared in the columns of a journal of that country, stamped with the *imprimatur* of the censor, who had understood nothing of the manuscript. But information soon came from St. Petersburg, an inquiry was ordered, and several hundred young men were thereupon forced to make the journey to Siberia! They were the flower of young manhood, and the grief of the bereaved families was heart-rending. The distress of the Anonymous Poet must have been great, and the relative security which he enjoyed at such a moment must have oppressed his soul, especially when he considered to what *high protection* he was indebted for his own immunity.

Under conditions so full of difficulty, so appalling for a scrupulous and delicate conscience, the Anonymous Poet found a kind of solace in relinquishing fame,—in being able to bear witness to himself that he never wrote with any view to glory, that he never sacrificed to frivolous tastes, or to the higher fantasy of art for the sake of art. The author of “Iridion” and the “Psalms” never sang but of his country, addressing himself only to the moral, political, national, and religious thought of his audience,—to the “Polish soul,” as they say in that land. He also sought other means to lighten the burden of responsibility which almost stifled him, and, fantastic as they may seem, they will yet be readily understood by those who can trace the subtle and ingenious refinements of a generous and anguished spirit. Yielding in a manner to an imperious internal voice, he indeed *published* his poems, but he never took any steps to *disseminate* them, to extend the circle of their influence, to augment or multiply their editions. He was, on the contrary, ingenious in his methods of decreasing their number, of paralyzing their circulation. Thus he offered the contradictory spectacle of an author desirous of influencing public opinion, and at the same time striving to diminish the means of such action! He had adopted a belief nearly fatalistic on this subject, which he suffered to come to light under rather curious circumstances. His short poem, “Resurrecturis,” first appeared in the *Review of Posen*, an important and estimable publication

without doubt, but which its gravity, its locality, and above all its exceedingly conservative tendencies, precluded from any wide circulation. A friend of the poet extracted this poem from the *Review*, and published an edition of it in Paris of some thousands of copies. It was no young, enthusiastic, and reckless student of Lithuania who had conceived the idea of this republication; it was a man of mature mind, an old general of tried wisdom, and accustomed to weigh well his actions. The complaints of the poet, however, were not the less full of bitterness. "But the salutary truths contained in the 'Resurrecturis,'" it was said to him, "would have been almost lost for the nation in a review so difficult to obtain." "No," was the characteristic reply; "*the soul which had need of those words would have found them there, as well as elsewhere; the poem would have been offered to them by destiny, by fatality; why should we pass from lip to lip a cup of bitterness?*"

And this poetry, to speak only of it,—to say nothing of the immense correspondence held by our author on all sides, of which only extracts have as yet appeared, and which for a long time yet to come may not see the light of day,—this poetry, what is it? Polish poetry generally, that of the author of "Iridion" especially, has been accused of being too obscure and symbolic, of speaking in enigmas and allegories; in a word, of wanting that serenity and transparency which are the true conditions of all pure art. But art, in order to be true and living, must always bear the marks of the moral surroundings in which it has been developed, and, to judge impartially of Polish poetry, the moral state of Poland itself must never be lost sight of. In a country so long overwhelmed by misery, all works of the imagination will necessarily be cloudy and sombre. Also, where long-continued oppression has taught men to understand one another by a half-word, a glance, the language of poetic inspiration must content itself with occult signs. This becomes a custom, almost an æsthetic necessity. We must again call the attention of the reader to the fact that works of imagination cannot be read in Poland as with us; that they are perused in secret, with guarded caution, and in the midst

of dangers very real ; that they are committed to, and graven upon the memory, and thus constitute for months, for entire years, the nourishment of the soul. Such Poetry must hide in its bosom depths that thought may slowly explore. The messenger received in mystery, must speak of mysterious things, of mystical ideas, and the least that can be demanded of books held at the risk of life, and arriving like leaves of the Sibyl, is, that they should speak the language of Oracles. This language is never complained of there ; they learn rapidly to understand it ; they grow accustomed to it, as one grows accustomed to see in darkness. Besides, of all the works of the Anonymous Poet, the "Undivine Comedy" is the only one really of an enigmatic character. All the rest were seized by the national intelligence from the first moment of their appearance. Marvelous Poetry, born from the situation forced upon Poland by her sufferings and misfortunes, and which, next to that of Goethe, has, in our times, devoted the most profound scrutiny to the mysteries of life, the emotions of the soul !

II.

"The Undivine Comedy" appeared in 1835, being the first work which attracted general attention to the Anonymous Poet ; nor is its date one of the least original sides of this vigorous creation. In fact, the poem seemed like a defiance thrown to the general tendencies of the time ; a solemn protest against the contemporary aspirations. Let us for a moment recall the character of that epoch, a period of general effervescence in ideas, beliefs, and passions. The revolution of July had just given the world an impetus which nothing had as yet arrested. Young manhood almost universally dreamed of Republics ; spirits religiously inclined appealed to the Gospel itself in support of Democracy ; new and mystic sects, supporting the cause of those disinherited by fortune, accused the vicious organization of the Social Status as the cause of widespread misery, and claimed for all human beings a right of which they had hitherto been ignorant, and which was full

of temptation: *the right of happiness!* The *novus rerum ordo* of Virgil was adopted as the creed of the millions; and is it at all astonishing that this cry should be especially heard and re-echoed by misery and poetry; that is to say, by the two things in the world the least inclined to be content with that which really exists? Poland was then suffering under immense evils, unmitigated woes, and perhaps it needed nothing less than the conviction of an approaching and universal upheaval, of an entire renovation of society, to inspire its poets again with words of faith and hope. Even the Muse of Mickiewicz, so discouraged and hopeless once, as shown in his widely celebrated "Song of the Polish Mother," which appeared on the eve of the combat of 1830, now acquired a serenity of foresight, a haughty attractiveness, in the strangest contrast with the gloom of the deceptive reality, but which gathered force and charm from the previsions of a new era. These same previsions inspired another poet of ardent and feverish genius, of vivid imagination, and still more vivid passions, Słowacki. None escaped the enrancement of this prophetic spirit; even the sweet and melodious singer of waves and plains, Bohdan Zaleski, was borne into the universal current. The presentiment, nay, the certainty, of a political, social, and religious transformation, broke forth in all the inspired works which the Polish poets then sent from the bosom of exile to their desolate country as the harbingers of good news.

But in the midst of this unanimous concert in honor of the regeneration of humanity, all at once tolls a knell of doom: an anonymous author takes up the theme then so popular,—the trial of the Past and of the Future, the final struggle of the Old World and the New,—and in his drama a Count Henry (the last defender of a state of things which has reached its final term) is seen to fall, if not without *éclat*, without appeal, before Pancras, the energetic representative and avenger of the oppressed and disinherited of our times. The theme was indeed well known, but the picture was combined and painted in such a manner, that it was not necessary to be endowed with the soul of Cato, it was sufficient to be simply human, to become interested in the conquered cause, to

be forced to withdraw a moment from the heavy conflict, and to fear the triumph. But of triumph, properly speaking, the Drama proclaims *none*, for the adversary, triumphant only for a moment, suddenly sinks, confessing himself conquered in his turn; the combat only ends for want of combatants, and it is precisely this end, which is no solution, which adds so wondrously to the horror of the picture. In this Infernal Comedy nothing remains standing upon the upheaved soil; the horizon is closed around us at every point. At the final catastrophe, the *Cross alone appears*, flaming and bloody, rather as sign of condemnation than redemption; it seems only to descend upon the earth as the funereal seal upon a grave immense as the universe!

As strange, as contradictory to the aspirations and hopes of the epoch as this work appeared, it did not the less take hold of all intellects by a sort of provoking fascination. In one very fine scene of the drama, the leader of the incarnate democracy, irresistibly attracted to his great adversary, curious to know him, having eagerly sought the interview that he might penetrate his thoughts and motives, is introduced. The "aristocratic" poem seemed to exercise the same kind of mysterious attraction upon a public then in a measure imbued with the ideas of Pancreas; the readers returned again and again to the startling figure of Count Henry, with a shivering eagerness partaking at the same time of repulsion and sympathy. The true problem, the enigma of the drama, was indeed the adversary of Pancreas, the champion of the Past, the defender of a dying society. It was truly difficult to understand this enemy of the democracy, who yet seemed attached to it by more than one secret and unconquerable affinity; this friend of the rich, of the nobles, who yet esteemed them so little; who even overwhelmed them with his contempt; this martyr without enthusiasm, this confessor without faith! The experience taught by a revolution, the painful trials of 1848, were necessary to enable even the critics to understand the mysterious hero of the Anonymous Poet; and it may well be said that it was only by the light of the flames that kindled all Europe that for the first time, in all its palpable and salient

truth, this idea of a skeptical defender of a dying world was seen and comprehended.

Let us here endeavor to retrace the meaning of this figure, to unite its principal and characteristic traits. They may be found in "The Undivine Comedy," as in the "Fragment," in which the author handles the same subject under different treatment, which "Fragment," however, remains but a sketch, published after the death of the author. They are strangely mistaken who receive *to the letter* the position forced upon the adversary of democracy by the fatality of the passions and times, and who can only see in Count Henry the Aristocrat with narrow prejudices and timid foresight. He himself tells us "that he had had his nights of stars, in which his soul had believed it possessed sufficient strength to float through all the worlds suspended in the infinite azure, and to reach the threshold even of God without losing breath." In a sublime episode of the "Fragment" entitled "A Dream," all the evils, all the miseries of our century appear before the eyes of the hero: armies drilled in the art of fighting against the independence of the nations, and stifling the liberties of the citizens; the Police suspending over all its vigilant eye, like the immense and movable vault over a prison, picking up everything, even to a pin, for a pin might grow and become a formidable weapon in the hands of the oppressed; the workers famished, emaciated, crowded into subterranean and deadly caverns, strange Cyclops with lamps fastened upon their foreheads, drilling without rest the heads of needles, with fingers soft and weak as wax, and sighing in vain for the sunshine; nations buried alive, strike their chains forever against the walls of their sepulchre, while men of religion, crushed into slavery, advise them to die in silence, so that they may neither break the repose nor trouble the enjoyment of the "Powerful upon earth!" . . . In another grand episode of the same "Fragment," the centuries past are made to defile before us in the most ingenious symbolism, and in that magical order which the philosophy of history so delights in developing. Liberty appears slowly disengaging herself from epoch to epoch, ever increasing with every people, and with every new elevation of humanity:

surely the meaning of these two pictures is evident. Count Henry has shared in all the virtuous indignation, as well as in all the generous aspiration of his century. We hear him break forth into imprecations against the robbers who wear crowns; against the priests who counsel men "to die in slavery;" against the bankers and merchants, "who would bargain for the nails with which the feet of Christ were fastened to the Cross, and who will scarcely admit that God could have created the world *without capital*." We see him affiliating himself to secret societies: "to those who aspire and conspire; who labor in darkness on the work of the Future!" "The increasing insolence of vice had seemed to him the most certain sign of approaching downfall, the moment had once appeared to him not very distant when Justice should reign upon the earth, when all nations should conquer their independence, when man would regain his dignity, and even woman rise from the state of degradation in which laws without either justice or love had thrown her."

It is, however, the same man who is soon after to appear as the *determined adversary* of the cause of the people; as the obstinate advocate of an order of things which he had so often cursed! When his own invocations to liberty and humanity are repeated to him by immense and palpitating choirs of the people, the inspired prophet of the Future becomes at once the resolute soldier of the Past, acknowledging nothing but his vocation, and repulsing all compromise. He now calls to his aid all the vigor he had once devoted to earth's agonies, and has recourse to arms and the principles of other days. Formerly he esteemed but lightly the advantages of birth and the privileges of assured position; but now he draws himself to his full height in his pride of being a gentleman; he appeals to the lessons of history consecrated by past centuries. Formerly he only spoke of God in the humanitarian and vague language so dear to our speculative pantheism, or, still further astray, he only addressed his prayers to "*Mother Nature*;" but now he assumes as his war-cry the names of "*Jesus*" and of "*Mary*," and chooses for his last bulwark a crumbling feudal tower, which bears the name of "*The Holy Trinity*." With a convulsive grasp

he clings to the ruins of a dying generation, and bursts into demoniac laughter at the word once of such power: "Progress!" "Progress!" he replies to the chief of the democratic party, "happiness of the human race! I too *once* believed it possible! Here, take my head, if it may be. . . . The first man in the desert died, and we may ne'er re-enter Paradise! . . . It might have been perhaps, . . . but it is no longer possible. . . . Nothing but murder now will satisfy,—unceasing war and ceaseless mutual slaughter!" . . . It is not, however, that he has a single hope left in the happy issue of the struggle, nor even that he has any faith in the absolute justice of his espoused cause. If the new order of things inspires him only with horror, he has not therefore learned to esteem the cause he defends! "*Your side I hate: the other I despise,*" is the confession which escapes him even in the presence of the chief of the inimical party. What an avowal! what a position! and above all, what a startling change!

Nevertheless, it is not so strange as it may appear at first sight, and the only thing which should really astonish us in this exciting creation is, that it should in 1835 have so *fully divined the situation which would be forced upon us in 1848!* In truth, does not this poem resemble and recount *in the most singular manner recent realities?* Does it not contain the *inner* history of nearly all men among us? Have we not all of us also been rocked for our hour in these enchanting dreams of infinite progress? have we not all been associated in hopes or in act with those who "*aspired and conspired,*" or who "*worked in the darkness at the edifice of the Future*"? There was a time in which all new doctrines found eager acceptance among us; every Utopia was met with a benevolent smile. The infallibility of majorities had become for us a dogma, the organization of labor pleased us for the moment, even socialism might prove effective, and a man truly liberal was close on the admission of the "*free woman!*" Then came the day in which the spirits so long evoked and flattered suddenly rose, imperious and menacing, summoning us to keep our promises, to fulfill the dreams we had excited, or the people in their collected strength

would hurl themselves upon us, and seize with their own hands the happiness of which we were defrauding them ; —and we all recoiled in terror ! Then in order to save society menaced to its base, we too made our appeal to a *personal, helpful, and incarnate* God,—truly hitherto a little too much forgotten by us,—we seized arms which had been rusting for ages, and escaped for shelter behind the remains of the thrones and altars still left standing upon the earth ; “ to the fortress of the holy Trinity ! ” To the socialism of the future, we opposed the society of the past ; we were seized with a sudden veneration for the memories, the institutions, and even the abuses of feudalism ; we smiled contemptuously on all who spoke of progress. “ Progress ! ” we exclaimed with Count Henry. “ We too once believed it possible,—but it is no longer of that the masses speak,—it is of a return to the state of the savage ! ” “ Unceasing war and ceaseless mutual slaughter ! ”

Alas ! in this just and holy struggle we found ourselves associated with strange auxiliaries and marching sometimes under still stranger flags, and we confounded more than one *righteous* claim from civilized Peoples with the *iniquitous* and *bloodthirsty* pretensions of the barbarous masses. Every revolt against oppression then seemed odious in our eyes ; every cry of liberty filled us with terror ; and we might well have made the confession so comically tragic of Falstaff, that “ we had become *cowards through conscience* ! ” No humiliation had been spared to our pride, no recantation to our ancient faith, no trouble nor remorse to our innermost feelings. Truly we have had personal experience enough to enable us now perfectly to understand Count Henry,—to pity him also,—*it is so sweet to compassionate ourselves* !

We must not, however, compassionate him too deeply ; let us rather preserve the strict impartiality of the author toward him. The fall was not undeserved, and the poet acknowledges it in an apostrophe to his hero, of which every word has its meaning. He says :

“ Stars are around thy head—under thy feet surges the sea—a rainbow forever floats upon the waves before thee and disperses the clouds ! What-

soever thou lookest upon is thine,—the shores, the cities, the men belong to thee,—the heavens are thine,—and nothing seems to equal thy glory :

“To listening ears thou chantest airs of rapture inconceivable,—thou twinest hearts and then unwreathest them, like a garland, at the caprice of thy skilled fingers! Thou forcest tears, then driest them by a smile,—and then thou frightenest the smile away for a moment—an hour—too often forever . . . ! But what dost thou feel? What createst thou? Of what dost think? The stream of beauty flows through thee, but thou art not beauty! Woe to thee! woe! The child weeping upon its mother's breast, the field flower ignorant of its gift of perfume, have more merit than thou before the Lord!

“Whence comest thou, ephemeral shadow, bearing witness to the light which yet thou knowest not, hast never seen, and never art to see? In anger or in mockery wert thou made? Who gave to thee this life so wretched and delusive, that thou canst play the angel till the moment of thy fall, when thou wilt creep a reptile to be stifled in thine own corruption? Thou and the woman have one origin!

“And yet thou sufferest, although thy agony brings naught to birth, and serves for nothing! The groans of the lowest beggar are counted in heaven, compensated amid the music of the angels' harps; but thy despair and sighs fall to the bottomless abyss, and Satan gathers them and adds them with joy to his delusions, lies!”

The meaning of this apostrophe is easily understood. Count Henry certainly aspired to the ideal, and had borne bitter grief; but he had never tried to reproduce the ideal *within his own soul*; he had only drawn vanity and severity from his afflictions. His enthusiasm was not only false, but *for* the false. He had rather *sought emotions* than experienced true feelings. “He and the woman have one origin.” He had had neither simplicity nor spontaneity. Pride had taken possession of his soul, and, while he believed that he loved and adored humanity, he only loved and adored himself and his own thoughts. “Peace to men of good will!” the Guardian Angel cries at the commencement of the Drama; but it is rather a warning than a benediction. Let us notice in passing these words of “*good will*.” They are the first words, as they will be the last, of the magnanimous poetry of the anonymous author! These words are at the commencement of his “Infernal Comedy,” as they will form, at a later date, the title of the last of his “Psalms.” This “*good will*,” the existence of which the poet does not acknowledge in his Count Henry, the humanitarian dreamer, or defender of established order, he understands as comprising good faith, sincerity, up-

right and pure intentions: "that tranquil and loving force against which the gates of hell shall never prevail." From the cold and troubled source of *false exaltation* he makes all the misfortunes of his hero flow; the misery of the man, the embarrassment of the citizen, the distractions of his public and private life.

The drama commences with a wedding scene. After having lived long alone with his thoughts and his dreams, Count Henry "*descends* to terrestrial vows," and contracts a marriage. For a moment we are induced to believe that the visionary dreamer at last understands the true vocation of life, and the sweetness it still holds in reserve for him; that he will taste the happiness of a pure and lasting love; that he will found a family; but a few words, eloquent in their brevity, soon dispel such illusions. With the straightforward sense of a loving soul, the young bride says to the husband: "I will be to thee a faithful wife, as my mother has taught me, as my own heart dictates to me." To which he replies: "Thou shalt be *my song* for eternity." The wife speaks the language of society; he responds with the accents of poetry! She is fatigued with the noisy ball, forming so painful a contrast with the soft emotions of her heart, and feels faint; but the Count finds her so lovely in her exhaustion and pallor, that he begs her to return to the dance. "I will remain here and gaze upon thee, as I have often watched the floating angels in my dreams." She still complains of weariness, but he insists, implores, and is obeyed! By such traits as these the poet reveals his character from the very commencement. Thus one is not astonished in so soon finding Count Henry wandering about the mountains, in dark and stormy nights, in pursuit of his old phantoms. "Since my marriage, I have slept the sleep of the benumbed, eating and drinking and sleeping like a German artisan!" His wife is "born for home and hearth," but "not for him;" she is not what he *dreamed*. He certainly does not fail in finding words for the expression of a grand sorrow, nor lacks he powerful images; but how much deeper and even more poetic is the sentiment of the young wife in these simple words: "Yesterday I went to confession; I

examined into all my sins; but I could find nothing which ought to offend thee!"

A son is born of this union; but the father is not present at the ceremony of baptism, at the moment when his infant receives a name and enters into the human city. The mother comes forward tottering, her eyes haggard and wandering in delirium, and cries, to the amazement of the assistants: "I bless thee, George! I bless thee, O my child! Become a Poet, that thy father may love thee; that he may not one day deny thee! Thou wilt merit well of thy father thus; thou wilt please him, and then he will pardon thy mother. . . . I curse thee, George, if thou becomest not a Poet!" . . . She becomes mad, and is taken to an asylum for the insane. At this frightful news the soul of the husband is torn; he breaks into sobs of remorse. "I promised her fidelity and happiness, and I have thrown her, living still, into the hell of those already damned! I blast all upon whom I breathe, and am doomed to destroy myself. Hell has thrown me here, that I might be to men its image upon earth! Upon what pillow of horror lays she now her head! With what harmonies have I surrounded her? The howls of madmen!" He would perhaps have pursued this monologue for a longer time, if a mysterious and sardonic voice had not suddenly cried to him: "*Thou chantest a Drama!*"

This madness of the wife is a masterly invention; it is indeed with an art akin to the genius of Shakespeare that poetic justice is here administered to the hero of the Drama. He had found his wife too practical,—tranquilly sleeping at regular hours, and never soaring above the earth. Well! She will quit the earth; she will sleep no more, save with the tossing restlessness of the deranged! The sense of reality will altogether escape her, and she will lose her earthly reason! He was a dreamer; she will become a lunatic; she will in good faith practice the exaltation of which he has only dreamed, and to his poetic inspirations she will reply in delirium. "Thou wilt no longer despise me, Henry!" she says to him when they meet in the mad-house. "I am full of inspira-

tion now ; *my soul has left my heart and mounted into my brain!* Look at me ! Am I not thine equal now ? I can comprehend all now,—express it, sing it ; I chant the sea, the stars, the clouds, battles,—no, I have never seen a battle. You must take me there ! I must see and describe a corpse, a shroud, blood, air, the dew, a coffin. . . . I am so happy !”

These incoherent speeches—in which, however, each word has its own tale to tell—are interrupted at intervals by cries still more incoherent breaking from all sides. They are the cries of the insane who are confined in other cells in the house. But let us take good care not to imagine all this to be only a puerile effort to produce a tragic scene ! Alas ! these voices have a profound significance in themselves ; this symphony of madness has its dominant key ; the mad poetry of the wife is designedly interrupted by these wild cries, which are the precursory signs of the approaching delirium of society entire ; and through the domestic anguish is already seen the misery of the world.

“A voice from above. You have chained up God ! One is already dead upon the Cross. I am the second God, and you have given me also up to the executioners !

“A voice from below. To the scaffold with the heads of kings and nobles ! Through me will begin the liberty of the people.

“A voice from the left. The comet tracks its way in fire across the sky ; the awful Day of Judgment draweth near.

“A voice from below. I have killed three kings with my own hands ; ten still remain and a hundred priests who still sing mass.”

“Are not these people terribly deranged ?” asks the wife, in listening to these infernal cries. “They do not know what they are saying,” she continues ; “but I can tell you what would happen if God Himself should go mad !” *If God should go mad !* The thought is of a ferocity, but also of an energy almost unequalled, nor does it lessen in its wild development. “But I can tell you what would happen if God should go mad.” (She seizes him by the hand.)

“All the worlds would fly about in space, mount up on high, or roll in the abyss: and every creature, every worm, would cry, *I am God!* and they would all *die* one after another, and all the comets and suns would go out in the sky: and Jesus Christ would save us no longer! Tearing his hands from the nails, with both hands he would hurl his cross into the abyss! Listen! how this cross, the hope of millions, falls from star to star! It breaks at last, and covers with its ruins the universe entire! The Holy Virgin alone continues to pray, and the stars, her servants, are still faithful to her,—but she too will plunge where all created things are plunging down—for God is mad!” . . .

Between these scenes of domestic life so vigorously sketched, and those of public life soon so stormily to unroll, is placed a melancholy idyl: a series of episodes between the father and child, the widower and orphan. And rarely has the imagination of a poet created a form so exquisitely graceful, or of a symbolism so deep, as the little George of the drama. His mother's prayers have been but too well answered; her son, like the Count, is also a poet, indeed, a poet in a higher sense, for he does not *seek emotions*, they rise spontaneously in his heart; his soul vibrates like a harp, and multiform images, even against his will, ferment in his brain and “give him pain in his head.” He recites sweet and harmonious songs, he says he hears his mother sing them, whom he has never known; he declares that he hears celestial voices, but in spite of high nervous energy he is weak and sickly. At the age of ten years the child withers away, becomes blind, and finds life only within his own soul. It is easily divined that the poet meant to personify in George those pure and contemplative natures which are often met even in the midst of the most agitated society and in the most stormy times; naïve and delicate souls with high thoughts and refined perceptions, but timid and shut up in themselves; blind to all the things of this earth, and understanding nothing of the commonplace facts of the world, which are, however, its stern necessities. Little George has strong religious instincts; he wants to pray always, he

refers everything to God. But let us not be deceived; it is not really *faith*, it is rather the *necessity* of *belief*, the eager desire of certainty. The piety of the child proceeds too much from the poetry of the father; this the author indicates in the most ingenious manner. The Count takes his son to the cemetery; George kneels before the tomb of his mother, and recites the "Ave": "Hail Mary, full of grace! Mary, Queen of heaven, Lady of all that blooms on earth, that scents the fields, that paints the fringes of the streams." . . . The father silences and reproaches him. He recommences: "Hail Mary, full of grace! The Lord is with thee! The angels bless thee, and as thou glidest softly through them each plucks a rainbow from his wings to cast beneath thy feet." . . . Who does not know this tendency to endeavor to increase faith by poetry, to adorn the words of the gospel, to beautify Golgotha itself? But is this *really religion*? It is indeed a religion able to produce internal delights and mystic raptures, but it can give neither dogmas to the intellect nor rules to the conscience, nor can a society tottering to its base find any support therein. In the social war so soon to burst forth, little George dies from a wandering ball.

Behold us instantaneously launched in the midst of the horrors of a social revolution! The transition is abrupt and violent; it is a *surprise* in the Drama, as it also was in our history. The Count, undeceived by time and grief, cured of his chimeras upon the progress of the human race, has now taken in hand the defense of society menaced at all points,—and further commentary is unnecessary! Let us, however, remark that in this new transformation our hero no less retains the original vice of his nature, the capital sin of which consists in seeking *impressions, emotions*, rather than searching for *truth*; in burrowing into his imagination rather than scrutinizing his conscience. He regards this civil war only as a fatal and bitter task; and yet he sometimes surprises himself by his keen relish for its savage poetry, representing in advance to himself its fields of battle, its torrents of blood. It is the "*sublime horror of the cannon*," admired from the opposite point of view! His pride, hitherto latent,

flashes into ominous light. He delights in playing his rôle as a Titan ; and we are often tempted to ask if, at his pleasure, he does not exaggerate the perversity of human nature, as he had before exaggerated its indefinite perfectibility. The dangers which threaten civilization are, nevertheless, great and real ; and the dissolution of society is painted with the direst and most frightful hues. Let the reader turn to the new "Walpurgis Night" in "The Undivine Comedy," at which Count Henry, unknown, assists ; let him look into the wild Saturnalia of the famished masses eager for pillage and murder, in the midst of which our hero recognizes some of his old acquaintances, his ancient associates in the "*Great work of the Future!*" Let the reader survey these scenes of misery and carnage, in the midst of which stands out one of masterly power,—the interview between Count Henry and the chief of the revolutionists.

In vain may the plebeians hate and curse all social superiority ; it will not the less exercise upon them a disturbing and mysterious attraction ! In the ingenious picture of Paul Delaroche, it is evident that the beheaded Stuart still awes Cromwell from the folds of his shroud ; he imposes upon him even to his white hand, so long and taper, so skillfully brought in close contact with the rough and bony fist of the Puritan chief. It is not, then, astonishing that Pancras should feel an irresistible desire to see his aristocratic adversary, to speak to him, that he should even desire to save him ; but why should the Count, on his side, feel an equal attraction, and consent to an interview of which he must so well have known the futility ? Alas ! that which forced it upon him was the attraction which sometimes induces us to open a grave that we may contemplate a face, now deformed and revolting—once idolized ! In this broken mirror, the Count wished to gaze upon his own image, wildly altered and distorted. Strange, and well calculated to excite despair, is the fact that in this contest between Count Henry and Pancras, nothing determinative is brought to light ; only their own individual sources of complaint are justly put, and well founded ; no brilliant fusing spark of universal truth flashes from the contact of these negative poles. Pancras

says: "You who are old, rotten, satiated with food and drink, worm-eaten and crumbling into dust, give place to those who are young, vigorous, hungry and robust!"—"Ah! I know you too," replies the Count; "I have visited your camp at night, and have seen the bloody dance of fools and barbarians; their floor was the decapitated heads of those who differed in opinion from them! I recognized all the vices of the Old World peering from the new garments; they sang a new song, but it ended ever in the old refrain: Bread, meat, gold, and blood!" "Your ancestors were robbers!" cries Pancras. "And yours were slaves!" replies the Count.

The adversaries separate; the struggle recommences more furiously and implacably than before, and in the final moment, when the last bastion crumbles, the Count kills himself by leaping from the top of the precipice. He had already heard the doom of Heaven, which condemned him because "he had esteemed nothing, loved nothing but himself and his own thoughts;"—and it was his own son who must explain to him the meaning of those voices from the sky! The death of Pancras is still more sudden; it is unforeseen, unprepared, and therefore deeply significant. Scarcely has he reached in triumph the top of the ramparts when the victorious chief suddenly and without apparent cause grows faint; he totters and expires, only indicating with his hand a bloody cross which appears in the heavens, and uttering but the words: "Galilæe, Vicisti!"

We have already said that the most despairing phase of "The Undivine Comedy" is found precisely in this termination without solution; this universal triumph of nothingness, in which all the principal actors in the drama, the Count, his wife, Pancras, and even poor little George, have been engulfed. Are we, then, forever to despair? or must we seek among the actors of the second rank a figure, a shadow to whom an interest, a hope may be attached? May it perhaps be Leonard, the beloved disciple of Pancras, the sincere enthusiast, who shared all the dislikes, all the ideas of his master, but whose hands are unstained with blood, and who, either by chance, instinct, or good fortune, has no crimes with which to re-

proach himself? Has the task of reconciliation been reserved for him (the type of the rising generation) who has shared in our struggles, seen our misery, taken a part in our follies, but has kept himself pure from our atrocities? At all events, the rôle of this generation will be vast; it will have much to forget and much to learn. It must above all things weigh well the words addressed to our tragical hero by his Good Genius: "Thou wishest to salute the new sun; and for that thou fixest thine eyes upon the highest point of the heavens! *Look rather round thine own horizon!*" *Let us too watch our horizons!* Let us each measure and cultivate with care the field given to his individual action; let us mount from the known to the unknown, from ourselves to the human race, and who can say that we will not again find ourselves in the presence of our "lost God"?

However that may be, it is, alas! certain that we have by no means reached the term of our trials, and that *The Undivine Comedy* will still for a long time continue to be the *Drama of the Future*. The dangers threatening society will force us more than once to prefer the established order to the moral order, and will more than once surprise us into invoking the phantoms of the Middle Ages from the fear of the red spectre; into playing the sons of the crusaders without even being the children of the cross; into proclaiming ourselves Papists, without even being Catholics!

Taken in a general sense, the problem developed in "The Undivine Comedy" is not at all restricted to the present time; it has already traversed more than one phase, and found its expression in more than one masterpiece. The problem is in truth no other than the struggle between the ideal and society; the situation forced upon the man who, bearing in his conscience a fancied type of justice and happiness, must find it realized in the world surrounding him, or impose it upon it. Even the Middle Ages had endeavored to formulate this problem in the creation of Perceval, a hero of pure soul and high aspirations, who takes the first passers-by for angels, seeks an ideal city through numberless trials and struggles, and ends by finding it, conformably to the ascetic character of the times,

in a monastic and mysterious order, that of the Templars, the Guardians of the Holy Grail, of whom he becomes the King. But above all, Shakespeare has created in Hamlet the eternally tragic type of a man placed between his ideal and society; of a man such as the upheaval of religious opinions and the revival of learning have made him; with an immense extent of knowledge, but without any interior power to govern it; with the precious gift of being able to look at all things from their varying stand-points, but without any instinctive and genuine convictions; with a susceptible and questioning conscience, but which for that very reason has grown more hesitating, more uncertain with regard to good as well as to evil; in short, with that excited and luxuriant imagination which too often supplies the want of *will or force* by brilliant and unreliable fantasies.

Magnificent indeed is the conception Hamlet forms of man in the abstraction of his philosophy, "So like a god in reason, so sublime!" But how little conformable with this ideal appears to him the society in which he is called to live! How well he knows how to ridicule and scathe the rogues and villains who reign and govern, the politicians who would deceive God himself, and how full is his soul of melancholy indignation against "The whips and scorns of time, the oppressor's wrong, the proud man's contumely, the law's delay, the insolence of office, and the spurns that patient merit of the unworthy takes." . . . His own noble inspirations, his dearest interests, the summonings even from another world,—all call and urge him to undertake a work of reparation. The task is with him almost a personal question; he has a father to avenge and a throne to reconquer, but when this work is placed before him, he grows weak, hesitates, his reason totters. His refined conscience suggests to him, at the same time, the most subtle scruples as well as the most perfidious cruelties, and after having weighed and scrutinized everything, he comes to the strange conclusion that "nothing in itself is good or bad, but that our thinking makes it so." He takes refuge in his imagination, and stifles all action in profound and brilliant soliloquies. "*He composes for himself a drama,*" gives himself as spectacle to

himself, and enjoys his success as an artist ; he selects the most ingenious means for the simplest objects, and forgets the end in his complicated means. Through the very force of his determination to foresee everything, to leave nothing to chance or remorse, he ends by becoming the mere plaything of the most fortuitous circumstances, and by committing the most atrocious as well as the most useless crimes. He spares his enemy, and only strikes those who had loved him, or who had done him no harm, and pronounces judgment on himself in those melancholy lines which bear witness at the same time to his desire that the right should prevail and his want of power to accomplish it,—

“ The time is out of joint ; O cursed spite
That ever I was born to set it right ! ”

The hero of “ The Undivine Comedy ” reminds us by more than one trait of the Prince of Denmark : he has the same imagination and the same sensibility ; he loves to make soliloquies and compose for himself dramas ; he joins to highly elevated and generous aspirations weakness and impotence ; and his conscience, refined to excess, at last grows hard and sinks to cruel actions. There is more than one element common to the two works ; among others, the poetic justice which punishes Count Henry’s *determinate exaltation* by the madness of his wife, is very like that which punishes the counterfeit madness of Hamlet, by the too real insanity of Ophelia. But let us not be deceived by this resemblance ; if the character of the catastrophe is the same, the *situation* is aggravated, and the *dénouement* becomes more saddening. The hero of the Polish poet not only *recalls* the type created by Shakespeare, he *continues* it,—continues it under entirely new conditions, created by contemporary and still more heart-rending disasters. It is certainly very sad to will and see the Good, and yet feel utterly powerless before the Evil ; the Prince of Denmark fully felt this terrible anguish ;—but it was reserved for the man of our times to endure a torment far more horrible,—that of aspiring to the Good, and to be not only forced to tolerate the Evil, but *even to defend it—through fear of worse,—through dread*

of utter destruction and the abyss of nothingness! Hamlet defending the reign of fools and rogues, of the Poloniuses and Osrics; Hamlet making his breast and heart a rampart for the throne of the crowned murderer, Clodius,—and all this to escape the spicy logic of the “grave-diggers,” who found the greatest nobility should belong to the tanners and undertakers:—certainly the irony would be bitter—satanic! This is, however, precisely the rôle which devolved upon Count Henry; the kind of combat to which a liberal man of the nineteenth century is sometimes called! The contest is sad and deceptive in a very different manner from what it was in times not far removed from our own, for in the present struggle we surprise ourselves not only in wanting faith, but in failing to act in *good faith*;—and the drama becomes so much the more poignant that, in being *tragic* and *infernal*, it does not the less resemble a *comedy*!

III.

There is one thing very remarkable in considering the collective works of the Anonymous Poet: that is,—if I may so term it,—the *descending* movement of his mind from universal questions embracing all humanity to national or psychologic subjects. The phenomenon is surprising, because it is not the common movement of poetic genius. Take Dante, Shakespeare, or Goethe, you will find them gradually rising from the special to the general, from the finite to the infinite, from the *Vita Nuova* to the Song of Paradise; from the historic and national drama, and from *Romeo*, to the vast and deep conceptions of *Macbeth* and *Hamlet*; from *Werther* and *Goetz von Berlichingen* to the second part of *Faust*, and *Wilhelm Meister*. But without leaving the regions of Polish poetry, the career of Mickiewicz offers a most striking example of a development always *ascending*. He begins by ballads and romances based upon traditions and popular legends; that is to say, by that which is the most inherent in the natal soil, the most closely shut in by the domestic horizon. He rises afterwards to the tale of *Grazyna*, in which the

memories of a feudal past are depicted; to *Wallenrod*, where he presents to us the present of the nation with all its feverish preoccupations; we hear already in it the tocsin of 1830. He afterwards, in his *Sir Thaddeus*, represents to us the national life collectively in its customs and memories, and in the most minute analysis of its internal being,—and only then, for the first time, does the poet enter upon the problems of the Future. It is exactly the reverse with the Anonymous Poet. At the very beginning of his career, at the age of twenty-three, he wings his first flight into the highest regions of speculation, pierces with a single look the whole structure of Society and Morals, but this sphere once flown over, or rather, passed through, he never returns to it; he folds designedly his wings, tracing circles ever more and more narrow; and the choice of the forms successively adopted by the poet is like an image of his own internal development. For his first works, he preferred the Allegoric Drama, the widest and freest form which can be found; then he limited himself to the Tale, to the imaginative, or rather, visionary tale, it is true, but a species of composition far more closely united and regular than the dramatic allegory; and he finally ended by restricting himself to the most individual and concentrated expression possible,—to a severe and measured lyricism.

We might perhaps try to explain this phenomenon of a development so different from that of Mickiewicz by purely external circumstances; by stating that Mickiewicz had lived for a long time in his own country, and had only gradually attained a position which might be termed cosmopolitan, while the Anonymous Poet had been early and violently thrown into other lands, among the ideas and prepossessions of the West, and only through the force of will and reflection returned to the feelings and wants of his own people. But there are far more inherent, far deeper causes for the fact. A *moral* question here leads the historic or literary inquiry, and the concentric development of the genius of the poet is in exact correspondence with the leading ideas which he had formed upon the duties of the present, upon the mission of man and of nations in the critical epoch we

are now traversing. "The Undivine Comedy" was rather a farewell than a salutation; it was an energetic protest against a fatal delusion of the age, in which it was thought possible to regenerate *humanity* without having first regenerated *man*; to establish universal *rights*, without having first strengthened the individual in his *duties*. The noble precept, that "in order to salute the sun, we must look at our horizon," the poet was resolved to put into practice. He did *look at his own horizon*; he labored more and more to understand the ground given to him to cultivate,—the field left to his action and good will; he tried to formulate more and more exactly his individual mission with the means accorded him, and under the circumstances in which he found himself placed, and thus, in successively narrowing his circles, he arrived at a point,—the human soul; according to the national expression, "the Polish soul,"—"at that imperceptible point which nevertheless has an infinite periphery, since it contains God."

At the first glance, however, the work which so closely followed "The Undivine Comedy" (1836) resembles it in many respects. First, as to form, it also is a dramatic allegory, with varied scenes boldly sketched, and interwoven with lyric digressions. Secondly, as to subject, it also represents the fall of a world, the crumbling away of a society. But that which from the first distinguishes "Iridion" from "The Undivine Comedy" is, that the scenes are no longer to be played in the future; they occur in a well-known and determinate past. With the rare intelligence of sublime conceptions, the poet places himself on the very *knot* of these three elements, viz., the classic element, the barbaric element, and the Christian element: the tissue of which three, providentially combined, interwoven, and developed by the centuries, has formed our modern civilization.

The triple name borne by the hero of this poem.—Iridion, Sigurd, Hieronymus—immediately indicates the point of intersection in the history of humanity in which the drama is set. Is it due to the possession of an historic base that the second work has over the first the advantage of a firmer, yet more plastic, design? Or should

it not rather be attributed to the special place chosen by the poet,—to the antique world whose genius, even in decline, seems to have had the gift of giving lucidity and transparency to all with which it came in contact? At all events, it is certain that this second composition is in bolder relief, and more harmoniously ordered, than “The Undivine Comedy;” the figures are no longer mere symbols; they have marked traits, sculptured by a skillful graver; they are stamped with distinct individuality, and the characters are largely developed. However, that which most distinguishes it from “The Undivine Comedy” is, that in place of a cosmopolitan and humanitarian tendency, it has a patriotic bearing; it aims at the special situation forced upon Poland since her dismemberment, which must not be forgotten as we read.

Without doubt, history is familiar with more than one country which has gnawed its chains of foreign domination in despair; it knows even nations which, like Greece, after ages of oppression, awake to the full energy of patriotic feeling; but, with the exception of Spain under the yoke of the Moors, it offers no nation which has struggled as constantly as Poland against its subjection. A century has elapsed since the division of Poland; and how many insurrections does she not count in her sad annals? how many efforts always conquered yet always springing forth anew? And what untold bitterness must have accumulated in hearts always crushed yet always obstinate to combat! Above all, let us not forget that, for the most part, the generations born after the division have never known, in its living reality, the country for which they have fought without cessation; the fatherland has only been for them a mournful memory,—the recollection of a great grief, of a great crime remaining unpunished, and forever calling upon them for *vengeance*. Let us likewise note that to a material dismemberment a spiritual dismemberment had also corresponded; that a current of emigration was renewed after every catastrophe, the chief cause of which lay in an undying feeling of protestation against the cruel work of the invaders. A strange situation has grown up from these facts,—one beyond the limits of all ordinary rules;

a situation of constant excitement, feverish and deleterious, calculated to mine the morality of the nation, and threatening to pervert the delicate sense of the just, of the upright. *Foreign domination is not only odious in what she permits herself to inflict upon the oppressed; she is more horrible through that which the oppressed deem justifiable to inflict in turn upon her!*

The state of being forced upon Poland by the triple yoke, recommenced in her interior in the necessity of simulating and dissimulating, in raising cunning to the height of a civic duty, while the art of deceiving the oppressors becomes almost a virtue; and for her children thrown into exile, it created externally the mission of struggling against the enemy upon every battle-field, and through every available means. The example of Bem alone would be sufficient to make evident the danger incurred in the possible distortion of the most sacred feelings of a nation by this constant and violent struggle without quarter. That the glorious soldier of Ostrolenka and Transylvania should have embraced the faith of Mahomet, only in the hope of still making war upon the Russians, is sufficient to prove how the moral sense may sometimes be eclipsed even in the most heroic soul; but that the illustrious renegade should have lost none of his prestige with a nation so fervent in its faith, and whose whole past history had been an unceasing combat against Islamism; that the pious peasant of Posen should have still continued to hear and salute in the sound of the bells of his church the magical and still venerated name of "Bem,"—this becomes a grave matter, and shows with what feelings the country is animated for those who love it! And what can be said of the ideas of a *vengeful Pan Slavism*, which were already beginning to germ and delude souls, at the time when the Anonymous Poet was composing his work? How are we to speak of this strange and satanic doctrine which preaches suicide, that death may be given to others? which recommends voluntary slavery, the reconciliation with the most cruel but also the strongest of the adversaries, that thus vengeance may be wreaked on the less guilty? that pleases itself in the hope of preparing a new Attila

for a world which remained an impassive spectator during the agonies of the crucifixion of a people? . . .

It is difficult, nay, it is almost impossible, for the happy upon earth, for those who enjoy a free and independent country, to comprehend the surging *hell* of temptations, of torments, which are massed in the single word, *Slavery*, for a subjugated people! But the Anonymous Poet understood this Hell, and shuddered at the sight! Diving into the tortured depths of the "Polish soul," he suddenly encountered this current of sombre and ferocious ideas,—“they chilled his soul!” He was appalled at the force of that national feeling feeding itself upon hate of the oppressors; he was frightened at that love of country stronger far than death, but which began to think of giving death to others! He wished to give a warning to his people, and thus he wrote “Iridion.”

The Anonymous Poet depicts the patriotic grief caused by foreign oppression in its most legitimate, as well as in its most vivid aspects. What could be more touching, more attractive to our imagination, than the memories of Hellas, the classical home of art, of poetry, and of that love of country which brought forth so many heroes and originated so many illustrious actions? What could be more justifiable than the resentment of a descendant of Themistocles and Miltiades “against the people born of a wolf;” against the Roman who came to Corinth as a liberator, friend, and then became the proud and cruel master of Greece, nay, of the entire world? “Iridion” gives us the genius of Hellas meditating a great stroke of vengeance after ages of subjection and oppression. The scene is placed at the epoch of Caracalla and Heliogabalus, in the time of the deepest abasement of the empire, when the grandeur of Rome was naught but monstrosity, seeming ready to fall before any bold attack. Thus heightened by the splendor of a glorious past, justified by causes of well-founded complaint, favored by the most propitious circumstances, the attempt of “Iridion” offers still another element of success: it is not the *sudden* growth and bloom of a single will, a single age; it was prepared afar off by a generation which gave itself up in

advance to the task of sowing, without the hope of harvesting, even of living, save in its successors! This is the deep thought developed in the Prologue, in which two persons are boldly sketched who are doomed to die before the real Drama actually begins, but who give birth to the future hero, to the "*Son of Vengeance.*"

Amphilochus, a Greek of illustrious race, counting even Philopœmen among his ancestors, had deeply felt all the woes of his subjugated people: "a slave because a Greek, he was by nature an avenger." With the clear-sightedness of hate, we had almost said the hate of the exile, he had seen on the still clear horizon the dark speck from which the tempest would one day break forth, and had divined in the barbaric race of the Northmen the future destroyers of the Eternal City. He went to the Cimbric Chersonesus, to the land of "Silver-Torrents," among the Scandinavians, not to induce them to move against the common enemy, Rome, but to find a wife; an oracle having predicted to him that great misfortunes to the imperial city would be the fruit of such an alliance. The contrast between the Greek genius, refined almost to subtlety, and the uncultivated but heroic character of the Scandinavian, briefly indicated as it is, is yet portrayed with the highest skill. The Greek fixes his choice upon the purest of virgins, upon Crimhild, the High-Priestess of Odin, the daughter of King Sigurd: a civilized Othello fascinating a barbaric Desdemona! She says to him: "I know not thy country; I have not even seen it in my dreams; nor do I know thine enemies; and yet, O miserable virgin, dishonored Priestess, struck by the curse of Odin, I will follow thee!" The scene in which Crimhild appears for the last time to take her place upon the stone of sacrifice, to sing her last hymn in the holy forest of the God of the North, surrounded by the chiefs of the hordes, by the lords of the plains, by the kings of the sea, is stamped with massive grandeur. Filled with mystic inspiration, her eyes gazing into infinite space, she foresees the ages yet to come, hears the hammer of Thor breaking the helmets and bucklers, the breasts and skulls of men into dust; she sees her brothers, her people, leaving the land of Silver-Torrents, precipitate themselves

upon an immense city, a city on seven hills, of which she vainly tries to find the name,—this name suffocates and escapes her—she writhes to find it—but no utterance relieves her tortured breast—she falls to the earth. The Greek then advances from the ranks of the breathless crowd; amidst the universal stupefaction and indignation, he enters the dread and sacred circle, and, bending over the priestess, says to her: “In the name of *Rome*, name of thy enemy and mine, I call thee back to life! Crimhild, rise!” Then turning to the crowd, he thrice cries: Rome! Rome! Rome! The virgin rises, repeats after him the mysterious name, and then follows the stranger “as the wife, the husband!”

From this union so strangely assorted by destiny, from this pair settled in an island of the Ionian Sea, where everything recalls the past, two children, pledges of love, are born, whom Amphilochus, on his return from his expeditions in the neighboring archipelagoes, blesses in their sleep with the words: “Remember to hate Rome! When you shall be grown up, let each of you pursue it with curses; Iridion, with fire and sword; and Elsinœ with all the genius and subtleties of woman!” The Prologue ends with the touching picture of the death of Crimhild.

Many years pass, and we are transported to Rome, whither Amphilochus had taken the ashes of his wife, his household gods, and his hate. He too is dead, but has left his designs to his son, beautiful as a demigod, “but pale, because of all the Roman blood yet wanting to his cheeks!” Amphilochus has also left his son, as counselor, guardian, and friend, Masinissa, an old man whom he had first met in the land of the Getulians when he had lost his way upon a tiger-hunt: he is the *waïdelote* of the classic Wallenrod. The work of the Greek has ripened, and Iridion has now immense forces at his command, destined to be employed against the accursed city. Through his father he belongs to Hellas and the part of Asia so thoroughly hellenized; through his mother he is affiliated with the Germans, who begin to throng into Italy, filling the ranks of the cohorts and legions. He has with him the ancient world and the modern, even the

Romans are on his side,—not the abject freedmen whom the conqueror of Numantia had already repudiated with scorn, and who then formed the *senatus populusque*, but the true Romans, the legitimate descendants of the old patricians. There is a fine scene in which a wretch named Sporus, by the command of a jester of Heliogabalus comes to assassinate Iridion ; but, “he was hungry, and in the Palace of Amphilochnus they had given him food ; he was thirsty, and they gave him wine ; he had heard his brother gladiators bless the name of the Greek,” and he gives his secret and himself to Iridion. Iridion is struck by the language of the slave ; he discerns the traces of past greatness upon his brow, shining like a lamp in a tomb. . . . “Thy name?”—“Sporus, but formerly Scipio.” . . . “I can bring thee a Verres, a Capius, a Sylla, all gladiators like myself.” . . . And the son of Amphilochnus is filled with joy. But all this is not yet enough ; he must have a vengeance more refined, and above all he must secure himself against the *Fatum* of the Eternal City. What if he could gain the Emperor himself to side against the empire ! If he could but make the successor of Augustus the instrument of his vengeance, and force the last of the Cæsars to destroy with his own hands the last of the Romans ! . . . And why should that be impossible ? Had not Nero already tried to burn the city ? and the present occupant of the throne, the foolish son of the mad Caracalla, was he not more insensate than Nero, and even more of an artist than he who loved to see the flames flash high ? Besides, the grasp of the Greek was already upon Cæsar ! Heliogabalus had become deeply enamored of Elsinoë, whom Amphilochnus had consecrated from her infancy to pursue his work “by all the genius, all the perfidy of woman !”

The drama opens precisely at this point, when Iridion is saying farewell to his sister, who is about to be taken to the palace of Cæsar. Our poet possesses in the highest degree the difficult art of creating female characters, and his works contain a gallery of feminine figures full of pathos and originality. The daughter of Amphilochnus has been brought up from infancy in the idea that she is to be the victim to expiate the shame of her fathers and

the sufferings of many nations; she has been taught by Masinissa; and the decrees of her brother have hitherto been her law. But when the fatal moment arrives for the accomplishment of her destiny, her soul revolts, and, like Antigone, she bursts into lamentations upon her doom, upon her youth condemned to pain, her beauty to profanation. Iridion remains inexorable, and refuses all temptation to pity. He leads Elsinoë to the statue of their father.

“Formerly”—he says to her—“the sacrifice of the life of a man sufficed for nations; now even *honor* must be offered up! . . . Maiden, listen to me as to the dying, as if never again to hear my voice on earth! Thou art to enter the Palace of the Accursed, to live with the damned; to yield thy body to the son of shame:—see to it that thy soul remains high, pure, and free! Let Cæsar never sleep upon thy breast! Alarm him constantly with cries that the Prætorians call to arms, that the patricians conspire, and that the people storm his palace gates! and slowly, day by day, and hour by hour, madden him with rage and fear; drink all the life-blood of his heart! Now rise and bow thy head! Conceived in the desire of vengeance, grown up in hope of this revenge, destined to shame and to perdition, I consecrate thee to the infernal gods—and to the manes of Amphiloachus the Greek.”

It has sometimes been given to poetry to render history probable, thus, for example, the Richard III. of the Chronicles first becomes possible for our intellect, or acceptable for our imagination, in the tragedy of Shakespeare. The Anonymous Poet has, in the same manner, succeeded in making us believe in the existence, the reality, of one of those Roman Cæsars, who, in spite of Suetonius and Tacitus, have always seemed to us inexplicable enigmas. Through an ingenious and profound art our author has succeeded in unraveling all the elements constituting that remarkable and fantastic being called Heliogabalus. Born under the burning sky of Asia, the son of Caracalla became High-Priest at Emesus at fourteen years of age, and was familiar with all the sanguinary voluptuousness of the worship of Mithras. At seventeen, he was Cæsar, master of the world; and placed upon this giddy height, the

young man rapidly exhausted all feelings, all sensations. He was a child, with the instincts of a decrepit old man ; his passions were worn out ; his soul was only lighted by the flickering gleams of lubricity. Worlds could not fill the ennui of his heart ; it was the incarnate void ! In spite of his power, his eye could rest but upon one thing, the abyss into which so many of his predecessors had fallen ; the thought of death everywhere pursued him, and what he most feared in it was the idea of giving up his tender limbs, white as snow, to the rage of the populace, for in his own manner he was an artist, he was in love with his own divine form, and if he must die, he intended that "his blood should flow over diamonds before descending to Erebus." He had had a jeweled court prepared, into which he might precipitate himself in case of sudden danger.

We may now understand the plans founded by Iridion on such a character when it should be shaken and tortured by an arm vigorous as the hammer of Thor, supple as a serpent, white as a lily ;—and *Elsinoë* knew well her part ! She became the strong virgin borne in the bosom of *Crimhild*, the Scandinavian Valkyria, with proud looks and haughty scorn when in the presence of the enfeebled son of Asia. Why did he speak to her, this weak *Cæsar*, of his divinities of light, of his *Genii* of the night, and of his sacrificial powers, so adored by the highest pontiffs of the East ? The daughter of ice and snow despised the effeminate gods who float in clouds of incense, rocked by the sound of flutes, and bathed in the blood of trembling roes or infants newly born ! Ah ! he was very different, her mother's god and hers, strong *Odin*, made of oak and steel, who, calm amid rains, snows, and tempests, held a cup of foaming blood of heroes in his stalwart hands, and saw the Northern seas break at his feet ! Why did he speak to her of sharing all his splendor, greatness, and infinite power ? She knew too well the end of all the *Cæsars* ; the first chance centurion might plunge his knife into the swan-like throat, and throw the divine majesty of *Caracalla's* son to the dogs to tear ! Does not *Severus* plot against him even in his own palace ? are not the cohorts in revolt even at the gates of his own capital ?

Before pretending to make the chaste body of a virgin of Odin seek shelter in his arms, he must learn not to tremble himself before his eunuchs and Prætorians; she has no dream of bliss for him who has no morrow! Heliogabalus foams with baffled desire, with spite, with rage, with fear,—beyond all, with *fear!* Yes, it is too true; he is surrounded with plots and snares, he must be crushed, and no one can possibly save him! . . . Yes, replies the Valkyria; in her pity for this wretched master of the world she has prayed for him to her strong gods, and these gods have revealed to her the name of one who could secure the throne of Cæsar;—but she will not give this word. Why should she? The Emperor would not have sufficient courage to appeal to this hero of fate,—he who shivers at his own slaves! At last, however, she suffers this name to be torn from her lips,—it is the son of Amphiloclus, her brother! Heliogabalus then sends for Iridion.

The palace of the Cæsars opens to the descendant of Philopœmen, nor does he enter it as "*Græculus,*" as had so many of his countrymen, as simple poet, ranting rhetorician, or amusing epigrammist. No, he comes as master, who dictates his commands, and looks scornfully upon the debased throng encumbering the Court. It is an easy thing for him to augment the terror of Heliogabalus, to represent to him his situation as utterly desperate, treason everywhere hatching, and a convulsion ready to break forth, but, after having raised the fears of the crowned child to their utmost height, he suddenly changes his tone, tells him to take courage, *for in this eternal war between the Emperor and the city, shall the victory never be with the Emperor?* He then unfolds to him a complete, strange, and demoniacal philosophy of history; he shows him Rome in perpetual struggle with its Emperors, rendering all government impossible; Rome, always dreaming of a republic, and revenging itself upon its rulers by stoical opposition, by well-devised treason, or by bribing the Prætorians! Rome has unceasingly conspired against and massacred its Cæsars; then let Cæsar in his turn play conspirator! let him give the death-wound to his mortal enemy! The question now is not of Alexander Severus, of such a cohort, of such a senator; it is of his great and

implacable Persecutor ; it is of this *Rome*, always enraged against the successors of Augustus ;—of the Eternal City, —not, however, more eternal than Babylon or Jerusalem—both in ruins ! Let but the son of Caracalla bear himself with a strong will ; let him become that which but few heroes have ever dared to be, a DESTROYER ; let him leave this accursed place, always in rebellion, to scorpions and serpents ! The source of the eternal evil thus destroyed, he can return to the country of his birth, “Where men speak freely with the stars,” and under the bright and sunny sky of Asia he will found a new empire. Freed from his sleepless nights, High-Priest and at the same time Cæsar, like an Egyptian demigod surrounded by the odorous incense of myrrh and aloes, he will pass his happy days, the great names of the past will perish in his brighter fame, and there will no longer be senators nor jurists to dream of republics, nor daring to sneer at Mithras, or the long hanging sleeves of the Oriental costume loved by the Emperor. . . . The perspective shown is full of sublime horror, and well calculated to fire the brain of the son of Caracalla, but the most striking point in this fantastic scene is that it has its *real* side ; that it unseals a pregnant thought, to germ in future time and become an historic reality. For the hour will come when the Cæsars, step by step, will actually withdraw from the city of the Tiber ; when they will sacrifice Rome to save the empire ; when Constantine shall at last transport the capital of the world into the East ;—and it is curious to observe how skillfully the presentiment of the work of future ages is wrought into the texture of this extraordinary scene of vengeance and of folly. As to the execution of this plan of destruction, let him confidently trust in the son of Amphiloehus. He will introduce into the city the revolted troops who are about to proclaim Alexander Severus ; he will advance against them with the Prætorians who are as yet faithful, and while the two armies are slaughtering each other, he will let loose upon them the slaves, the gladiators, the barbarians, and the Nazarenes. The onslaught would be truly grand, the devastation general, Rome would be ruined, and the peace of the successors of Augustus forever secured ! Heliogabalus is fascinated by this poetry

of desolation; Iridion seems to him a new Prometheus with the stolen heaven-fire. He names him Prefect of the Prætorians, and confides to him the fortune of the Cæsars.

The only grave care now of the Greek is with respect to the Christians, the confessors of the Prophet of Nazareth, whose name we now for the first time hear, although they have for a long time been a subject of anxiety to the Son of Vengeance, for Masinissa had predicted to him that the only danger of the resurrection of Rome would arise from these despised sectaries. Aside from this dark prophecy, the Christians would necessarily enter into the plans of one about to unite all the heterogeneous elements of the empire, in order to unchain them against the empire itself. Obscure, despised, and persecuted, breathing freely only in the Catacombs, the new community had not the less attracted to itself much that was really great and living, both from among the Romans and barbarians; it had grown rapidly, and had become an imposing force. Alexander Severus had already counted upon it, and was a Christian. The son of Amphiloehus had also joined these worshipers of a crucified God; he had been baptized. Iridion for the Greeks, Sigurd for the Germans, for the Christians he was called Hieronymus. But it was only an external sign and name he had received from them. He did not understand their mystic dogmas; their doctrines of resignation and pardon only irritated him; but he intuitively saw that the most dangerous resistance to his plans would spring from them. He did not, however, despair of conquering this rebellious element. He based his hopes upon the fact that he had seen secret and involuntary curses against their butchers germinating in the souls of the young, even in the midst of words of charity and forgiveness.

From the Forum and Palace of Rome we are taken into the Catacombs. Poetry and history have alike delighted in placing the empire of Christ in opposition to that of the Cæsars; in contrasting the purity of the primitive Christians with the abject corruption of expiring paganism; from which has been drawn a glorification for the true God, which, however brilliant, is not just in its method.

The comparison would only be equitable, if, in opposition to this new world, in all the fullness of its vigorous youth and purity of origin, should be placed the old world, with all it possessed of good and true, and in the beauty of its maturity. Every living being would easily triumph if brought near a corpse! The advantage would not the *less surely* be with the *new law*; it would in fact be *far greater*, for the proportions would not have been falsified at the pleasure of the writer. The Anonymous Poet took good care to fall into no such injustice. The conception of the symbolic type, Iridion, the ideal of both ancient and modern Hellas, has enabled the poet to bring epochs widely distant in time near to each other, and place the classic genius, in its most perfect manifestation, in direct opposition with Christianity, in all its pristine vigor. From paganism in its age of decay, the poet has taken the only grand thing of the era which relieved the vices of the Cæsars: I mean the great spirit of legislation which, under the most vicious of reigns, collected the statutes of the future code, of the Roman law, for which so glorious a future was reserved. With rare skill he has managed to make the celebrated jurist, Domitian, a vigorous representative of the antique Roman virtue, as well as a decided antagonist of the Nazarenes. The soul of Cato dwells in the breast of this confidant of Alexander, for whose accession he schemes like a true son of daring antiquity. Imbued with the philosophy of the Stoics, bearing in his heart the image of Rome once so glorious and free, Domitian still does not think the return to a republic possible; it was too late for that even in the days of Cassius; he only prays the gods to give Rome a master capable of rejuvenating the decrepit empire, even if, instead of the olive branch, he be forced to bear the axe of the lictor! But let them never speak to him of a crucified God; let them never seek new vigor there! The glory of the Eternal City can never be restored but by the aid of the principles which had first raised it from the dust: "the mystic rites of the ancestors, and their inflexible courage."

This is not, however, the *supreme denial* of the doctrines of the Saviour. Their *utter negation* has been in-

carnated by the poet in the person of Masinissa, who is perhaps the most profound and original conception of the whole drama. The counselor of Iridion is not simply a "*waïdelote*," he is the Spirit of Evil, Satan himself,—but Satan ingloriously reduced to antique proportions, such as a mythology always seeking beauty and serenity, even in the darkest and saddest creations, would have pictured him. Masinissa has neither the bitter and desolating irony of Mephistopheles, nor the tempestuous rage of Milton's fallen angel; he is a grave and majestic old man. Seek not in him that "eternal and infinite negation" which Goethe has given to Evil; his hatred is, on the contrary, very determinate and very plastic. Christianity repels him by that which must have deeply wounded all minds truly and classically antique,—by its *apparent* absence of virile energy, its want of sensuous beauty. The doctrines of submission and resignation, always preached by the confessors of the Cross, appeared to him unworthy of a manly spirit, of a free man; he called them cowardice; and there was nothing in Christianity, even to its rehabilitation of woman,—one of the immense benefits of the Gospel,—which was not revolting to all his instincts. "They adore a maid," he says, "a creature whose infancy is eternal, whose old age precocious; they build a strange, mysterious worship upon the ruins of their carnal lusts, and they prostrate themselves before a *woman*,—before the *slave of the husband*." . . . Thus, as he saw it, but little fit to inspire vigorous acts, the Christian ideal seemed also to him essentially *ugly*. "They are full of admiration for this crucified body, for the features they imagine so exquisite in the hour they call the triumph of love. *They have not known him; they did not see him when he agonized, a prey to all the hideousness of suffering, faint with torture, covered with blood, and with his hair disordered by the winds which whistled round his head.*" . . . Here is indeed the beauty-seeking naturalism of the ancient world protesting against modern spirituality, which exalts the soul, even at the expense of the body. Let the reader examine for a moment the figures of the antique group which our poet has placed in contrast with the spirit of

Christianity, that he may obtain a due conception of the grand sense of justice and poetry which presides over the whole of this remarkable composition.

Thus impartial in his pictures of the classic world, our author is no less just in his sketches of the early societies of the Christians. He has taken care not to give them that beatified placidity, that detachment from all the passions of humanity, so willingly attributed to them by mercenary and conventional art. In the primitive church, as represented in our drama, the Holy Spirit alone is great and infallible; man is weak as he ever is, subject to temptation and sudden falls. Not that the association of Christians does not contain characters of sublime abnegation and sanctity, of invincible resolution, and of angelic purity, such as Bishop Victor, the true servant of God, the admirable head of a Christian community; but together with those who realize the Christian ideal in all its purity, we also meet with Christians less resigned, embittered by grief, and aspiring to sunshine, joy, and life. They are men, and as men they suffer, hope; they want a *terrestrial* base for their actions; they wish to tear the cross from the bowels of the earth, and plant it on the Roman Forum. Remark attentively Simeon of Corinth, only an episodic sketch, but drawn with a bold, free hand, as is the wont of the Anonymous Poet. Simeon had once loved; a single day separated him from wedded bliss, when a centurion tore the plighted maiden from his arms to throw her to the Flavian amphitheatre. A skull was all left to him by the tiger's teeth! Then he embraced the cross with fervor, a burning asceticism purified his soul from all dreams of vengeance, he meditated profoundly on the passion of the Lord, and was touched with boundless love by memories of Golgotha. . . . "And if God himself, to save the world, has taken a body, why should not His Bride, the Church, to save the world, also put on a body? Until now, she has been only spirit; where are her temples, sanctuaries, powers?" He exclaims in one of his solitary ecstasies, "To possess the world,—not that which glitters in gold or groans in iron; but the infinite world,—the world of souls,—and there in Thy name to reign, O God!" Here we may

already see the Spiritual contemplating the reign over the Temporal. With spirits of this stamp Iridion succeeds, and is listened to when, in place of the victory promised them by Victor, "before the face of the Lord," he incites them "to a combat and triumph which are of this world, near them, and not at an infinite distance."

Above all, however, it behooved the son of Amphilocheus to gain to his side Cornelia Metella, the saintly virgin whom the Christians loved. The poet has surrounded this noble victim with every grace, and the Son of Vengeance is himself moved by the divine charm she exhales around her, but Masinissa has designated her as the principal and indispensable instrument of his undertaking. To associate Christianity with his work of destruction, to incarnate in human passions a force which is not of this world, a woman is a necessity! These Nazarenes adore a virgin! Then let Iridion choose the purest and fairest of their maidens, inflame her with his own ideas, and like a burning brand throw her in their midst. With satanic perspicacity the terrible old man has perceived the danger incurred by the female heart in the depths of Christian mysticism, the tendency of all ecstatic love to materialize itself even through the excess of its own refinement, and he has traced for Iridion his line of conduct: "Praise her God, adore his wounds, speak tenderly of the nails which pierced his limbs, . . . and then attract her thoughts from the crucified, and fix them on yourself. . . . He is so far, He has been on the earth, but will never return to it: but you live, breathe, and are beside her. . . . You will become her God! And when her head shall rest upon your breast, then will the soul forget itself in the passion of the body,—then, O my Son, my spirit will be with you, and you will find adherents in the Catacombs." The struggle which occurs between Iridion and Metella, between the ideal of classic beauty and the ascetic spirituality of the Christian heart, is full of pathos and passion. The son of Amphilocheus breaks forth before the sainted maid in all the violence of his love, his hate; he kindles her soul with his burning breath, he explains to her the odious past of Rome, he entreats her to love, to live, and to *revenge* the

Saviour. The Christian resists, but is fascinated ; for the first time she fears the dead who lie around her ; she makes an effort to fly to Christ, to escape the Greek, who appears to her as Prophet or Archangel. At last the decisive moment comes. Before the tombs of the martyrs, and appealing to their bones to bear him witness, the Greek tears off the veil of the maiden while lost in prayer, and sullies her brow with a kiss, while she believes him now to be a messenger from heaven.

Master of Metella, Iridion hastily repairs to *Eloim*, the most holy spot within the Catacombs, where the faithful are assembled. Clad in armor, and sword in hand, he declares to the just that the time of resignation is past, the measure full ; that this is the decisive moment : division distracts the city, the son of shame totters on his throne, the Prætorians have turned away their hearts from him, the people, like a troubled sea, know not to what wind to yield. The legions throughout Asia are in insurrection ; the Germans on the Rhine revolt ; Cæsar and Alexander arm for their last combat ; but what matters it to the Christians who shall be the conqueror ? Whoever it may be, will he not murder them, and blaspheme Christ ? The signs predicted are upon them, let them be recognized ; let them *will it firmly*—and they are *free !*" . . . But who has commissioned him to lead the people of God ? ask those who hesitate. Who will assure them that the Lord has ordered them to rise ? Simeon of Corinth answers that he will bear witness to the mission of Iridion. He begs the brethren not to suffer the propitious hour to escape. From this moment, which will never return, let them strike the spark of life, for in it, and in it alone, sleeps the germ of future ages. Metella, maddened, inspired, and panting with haste, rushes in at this moment, crying : "To arms ! to arms !" This testimony from the consecrated virgin determines the doubters. The baptized barbarians are glad to find the messenger of the Messiah in the grandson of Sigurd ; the young, the strong, they who live and feel, swear to be exact at the hour and place of meeting : the old, the pure, the saints, resist and pray. The confusion is at its height, the earth yawns and trembles, the community disperses on all sides,

some applauding the avenger, others crying Anathema, and mercy! The holy place is finally empty, and Masi-nissa appears in Eloim, thus deserted by the Christians, surrounded by the infernal spirits who chant their victory. Here, and in this scene alone, the Spirit of Evil steps beyond the frame so ingeniously wrought for him by the poet. For this time only he assumes the vast proportions of the Christian Satan, and betrays the boundless hate of Lucifer; indeed, the spectacle he had just witnessed was well fitted to swell his pride. He has seen the first rupture in the Christian community founded upon peace, unity, and love; he regards it as the forerunner of all the schisms yet to be, of the persecutions in the name of faith, and of the terrible religious wars which through ages yet to come shall rend and distract that humanity which Christ had died to redeem. His soul dilates with this hope, and he hurls defiance at Christ, his enemy.

“Great Enemy! Thou knowest that the souls of men have gone astray from the beginning of the world! From this time forth no day will ever pass in which, disputing on thy nature and thy substance, they will not excite sterile, but bloody contests!

“In Thy name will they rise, revolt, destroy, burn, massacre; in Thy name will they lose human life in dreamy ecstasies, renounce the gift of speech, and die!

“And without ceasing, will they crucify Thee; as in their wisdom so in their ignorance; their reason as their folly; in their prayers of base humility, as in the haughty blasphemy of their pride!

“On Thy far Heaven heights, empty the cup of gall they hold to Thy wrung lips, until in Thy turn, Thou too shalt curse them!

“And even on the summit of Thy sky, with all Thy glory and omnipotence, Thou shalt at last feel agony, and learn to know what our hell truly is!”

The dénouement approaches, and Iridion redoubles his activity. Sent by Cæsar to treat with the revolted troops marching upon the city, and whom Severus has joined, he intentionally irritates them, and renders all accommodation impossible. When returned to Rome, he prepares the Prætorians to attack the invaders, and at the same

time marshals the slaves, gladiators, and barbarians to fall on either party, to massacre and burn the city as soon as they shall see him appear at the head of the Christians. He again visits Heliogabalus to tear from him the last symbol of power, the *imperial ring* on which the Genius of Rome is graven. Possessor of this talisman, he no longer thinks of the son of Caracalla, but *another* has thought of this crowned child :

“*Elsinoë*. Brother, what will become of him ?

“*Iridion*. It matters not. I care not for his life, nor for his death. That which he was, now glitters on my hand (showing the ring); that which he is, is scarcely worth a thought.

“*Elsinoë*. If that be so, come near, come nearer still ! Canst hear my lightest whisper now ?

“*Iridion*. What is the matter, sister ? Wherefore tremble so ? (He takes her in his arms.) Thy small hand burns in mine,—I feel thy heart throb wild against my breast-plate !

“*Elsinoë*. The eyes whose fires withered my soul, must die ! The arms which clasped my neck, must fall like mangled adders ! The lips which first touched mine, must crumble into dust !

“*Iridion*. Yes. He shall perish.”

At last the hour for the execution of the plot arrives. All have kept faith except the Christians, who do not come. What can detain them ? Simeon swore to lead them forward at the appointed time ; all hope for the avenger lies in them. Iridion’s anguish is extreme, the anguish of Prometheus, when but a cloud divides him from the heaven flame he means to seize ! “ Why are you silent ? Masinissa, speak ! Cry : Long live Hellas ! ”—“ I am silent ”—replies the old man—“ because the hour appointed has already passed ! Each feather in its wings as it flies on rustles with long-drawn sneers. ”—Iridion feels that the work of his whole life is escaping his grasp ; he hastes from his palace to unearth the Christians, his unsheathed sword in his hand, his head bare : “ To conquer, his sword suffices ; to die, he needs no helmet ! ” His fears were well founded with regard to the Catacombs. Bishop Victor had arrested, on the threshold of Eloim,

all the armed men who were marching upon the city. When Iridion enters the sanctuary, most of the men had already deserted him. Simeon persists in the revolt, and is excommunicated. Metella, too, ceases not to acknowledge the envoy of heaven in Iridion, or to cry: "To arms!" and around this deluded, wandering soul Victor and Iridion hold their last combat. Exorcised by the Bishop, touched by the cross, she grows weak and faint, and dies, renouncing the Spirit of Evil. Iridion casts a last curse at the cowards, placing their whole trust in the words of a woman, and departs to fight without a hope of conquest. Indeed, victory is no longer possible; the defection of the Christians has ruined all; the Prætorians have not resisted the troops of Severus; the gladiators, slaves, and barbarians have fallen in the streets without plan or direction, and have been everywhere repulsed. The son of Amphiloehus will sell dearly his defeat; he reunites all those still devoted to him, fights fiercely, and repels with disdain the pardon sent him by the new Emperor through Domitian. In the long and admirable scene between Domitian and himself, the combat between Hellas and Rome is renewed and brilliantly discussed,—the contest between the beautiful genius of Ancient Liberty and the harsh and cruel domination of the Romans is eloquently argued. All negotiations are broken, and the struggle is renewed; the issue is no longer doubtful. Heliogabalus has been murdered, Elsinœ has taken her own life, Rome still stands, and Alexander Severus is proclaimed Emperor. The triumph of Severus, who neither in Christian graces nor antique virtues ever soars above mediocrity, is one of the deepest lessons contained in the Drama; it is therefore intentionally that the poet has given to the son of Mammaea a character deprived of all the stronger traits. For in the sublime struggle of two titanic principles, the victory too often remains with dull mediocrity! Happy indeed if it should prove honest,—as Alexander really was.

At last Iridion, without forces, deserted even by the most faithful, his friends dead, gorged with bitterness, mounts the funeral pyre to end his days. At this moment Masinissa appears, of whom nothing had been seen after the

defection of the Christians. He takes Iridion in his arms, carries him away, and places him upon a mountain near the sea, whence he can see Rome still standing entire, "still showing its marbles to the sun like the white teeth of a tiger." Then the first doubt of the legitimacy of his work rushes upon the son of Amphiloehus; then for the first time he asks "if the God of Metella be not perchance the greatest of the gods, and if the Nazarenes do not possess the only truth in the world?" "The Nazarenes?" replies Masinissa, sneeringly, to him,—“truly you owe them much in the past; will owe them more in the future! . . . Not falsely did your mother Crimhild speak; her predictions will be all accomplished! The people of the North will yet ravage Italy, covering it with blood and ashes; but do you know who will tear the accursed city from the hands of your barbarian brothers? The Nazarene! In him the perfidy of the senate and the cruelty of the Roman people will still live, as an eternal heritage; his heart will be as merciless as that of the first Cato, although his words will often be sweet and effeminate. And the warriors of the North will be as little children at his feet, and for the second time he will make Rome godlike, above all the nations of the earth!” —“What!” cries the Greek in the accents of despair, “After Rome, will there be still another Rome? The city accursed is then to be eternal? And this is the announcement which the friend of Amphiloehus reserves for Crimhild’s son to bless his dying hour?” . . . Masinissa replies: “Do not despair! The time is coming when the shadow of the cross will oppress the nations like a tropic heat; when it too will stretch out its arms in vain to press again to its heart those who forsake it! One after another they will arise and say: ‘We will no longer serve thee!’ Then will be heard at all the city gates complaints and sobs, and the Roman Genius will veil his face, his tears will never end, his humiliation will be as great as has ever been his pride.”—The heart of Iridion again begins to beat, his eyes regain their lustre. —“O that I might see that day of chastisement and vengeance!” —“Then be it so!” replies Masinissa. He bears away his pupil from the life of earth, rocks him to

sleep upon oblivion's heart, from which he will not wake for many centuries, until the appointed hour comes: "When on the Forum only dust shall be,—the Amphitheatre hold only skeletons,—the Capitol be crumbled into infamy." The antique drama is now finished, and the epilogue transports us into modern times, into the Rome of our own days. Through centuries, Iridion has slept the sleep of Epimenides; neither the terrible days of Alaric nor of Attila, nor the renovation of the empire by Charlemagne nor the struggle of Rienzi, have been able to arouse him from his sleep; the holy masters of the Vatican have, one by one, like shadows glided by this shade: "but in our times he awakes." Masinissa has kept his word, and he again places his pupil before Rome, o'errun with creeping vines, through which a creeping people move. The *Son of the Centuries* now crosses the deserted Forum, and gazes round the desolate city, and "every ruin is to him a recompense."

"Two hoary-headed old men stand in the vestibule of a Basilica, robed in purple mantles; and monks salute them with the names of Fathers, Princes of the Church; and poverty of spirit is graven on their faces. They enter a chariot drawn by two dark, meagre horses, behind them is a servant holding a dim lantern, such as a poor widow hangs above a child who dies of hunger; on the panels of this chariot are seen what once was gilding. The creaking wheels have passed, and with them disappear two snowy, bent, and weary heads."

"The fearful leader says: 'Such are the successors of the Cæsars! Such is the Car of Fortune! Such the Victors!'

"And the son of Greece looks on, and claps his hands in joy."

As striking as may be this final picture, as closely as it may seem to respond to the preoccupations and passions of the times we are traversing, we would be mistaken if we should think to see in it the innermost thought of the drama; above all, we would be wrong not to observe closely the change which has occurred in Iridion himself; for if Rome is no longer to be recognized, the son of Amphilochous has also been transformed during his sleep of ages. He no longer *hates the Cross*; its fate appears

as sad to him as did in other days that of his Hellas; "under the rays of the moon, he has felt that the sign of redemption is holy for ever and ever; he clasps his arms round it,—and *Masinissa leaves him step by step.*" . . . Here, in truth, lies the bearing of the poem; it flashes clearly upon us in the voice from Heaven which sends Iridion to Poland, to be subjected there to another and more glorious proof.

"Go," cries the voice to him,—“go toward the North in the name of Christ! Go, and stop not until thou standest in the land of graves and crosses! Thou wilt know it by the silence of the warriors, the wails of the women, and the sadness of the children; thou wilt know it by the burning cottages of the poor and the desolated palaces of the exiled; thou wilt know it by the moans of my angels who pass there by night! *Go, and dwell among the new brothers I give to thee. There shall thy second trial be!* There thou shalt again see the object of thy love in agony; again transpierced; and thou wilt not be able to die, and the anguish of thousands of souls will be incarnated in thee! Go, and have faith in my name! Think not of thine own glory, but of the welfare of those I intrust to thee. Be calm before the pride, oppression, and the scorn of the unjust! They will pass away, but my Thought and Thou, ye shall endure forever!

“And after a long martyrdom I will kindle my dawn around thee; I will give thee what my angels have enjoyed for ages,—bliss! And that which I promised men from the beginning, from the summit of Golgotha,—Liberty! Go and act! Act, even though thy heart be withering in thy breast; act even when thou doubttest thine own brethren, when thou despairest of my aid! Act! Act without cessation or repose! And thou shalt outlive the vain, the happy, the illustrious; thou shalt arise again, not from a sterile sleep, but from the work of the centuries, and shalt become one of the free sons of the skies!”

Such is the dramatic poem of Iridion in its original and powerful unity. That such a poem should have been hitherto almost unknown in Western Europe,—so eager to know and enjoy the literary productions of all nations as almost to realize that “universal literature” (Welt litter-

atur) which was the dream of Goethe,—proves how heavily the forgetfulness of the world still weighs upon the unfortunate country of the Anonymous Poet ; it also proves how much the easy enjoyment of light productions, void of all sublime ideas, has deteriorated our tastes, causing us to turn away from all serious, even if eloquent, works. At any rate, they who pretend to penetrate the meaning of Faust and Manfred, can find no difficulty in the comprehension of Iridion. It is at least certain that Poland immediately caught the dominant idea of the drama, and easily unraveled the profound signification of its allegory. This poem told them that patriotic suffering effects nothing when it is based on negation and hatred. It further told them that an enemy might find new strength, life, and rejuvenation in the very means by which an unscrupulous vengeance sought to overthrow him or sharpen mortal arms against him ; as Rome found a second era of greatness in Christianity, which Iridion intended should become the instrument of his hatred ; as the Teutonic order encountered the like in the Reformation ; or as Russia shall perhaps yet meet in the material civilization of our century. That which Poland above all understood, was the mysterious voice which ordered Iridion toward the North, to be there subject to a second proof, that command which sent this ideal of Hellenic patriotism “ to the land of graves and crosses,” but which at the same time sent it transformed, purified from all pagan feelings of hate, illumined by the Christian faith, and holding in its arms the cross. The national ideal of *Wallenrod* thus received a complete and moral transfiguration in Iridion, after having passed through its transition in the admirable and significant character of Robak, in the Sir Thaddeus. And let us dwell for a moment upon the fact that this successive purification of the patriotic sentiment in our poetry was not accomplished at a time even relatively mild and peaceful ; it coincided with a period of the most bitter suffering ; with the epoch of the direst and most implacable punishments and persecutions, with the reign of the cruel Emperor Nicholas. The very year in which Iridion appeared saw an auction opened assuredly, at least, entirely new in the annals of the world ; at Warsaw, and in

the principal cities of the country, *the transportation of thousands of Polish children into the steppes and among the Oural Mountains* was offered at public sale to the highest bidder. Certainly if the feeling of national hate were ever to be permitted to poets, it would be to those fired by the manifold torments inflicted upon the most unfortunate of nations;—and it stamps the character of original greatness upon the Anonymous Poet to have raised, precisely at such a dark epoch, a protest so energetic against all ideas of vengeance, to have placed ETERNAL LOVE, not only as did Dante at the gates of the city of Eternal Grief, but in the very deepest of the Circles of Hell!

IV.

Hate is impotent, vengeance creates nothing; to enable us to triumph over an enemy, it is not sufficient to have just causes of complaint, we must also surpass him by moral superiority! Such was the lesson the Anonymous Poet gave to his subjugated nation. But how to attain this superiority? How to maintain it? By devotion, immolation, self-sacrifice, replies the Poet. To expect deliverance, not from the *evil* which may be called down on or inflicted upon the oppressor, but from the *good* which may be developed in the stormful bosom of the avenger; to look to God alone for decisive justice, and to renounce all measures of dissimulation and conspiracy, which only tarnish the national character and obscure the purity of the *Polish soul*; to persevere in faith, in spite of all possible trials; *to defy heaven itself by the absolute trust we repose in it*; and on great occasions to give witness of true life by receiving death without giving it, going to execution even as the early Christians, the cross in hand, and prayer and confession on the lips;—it was thus that this inspired patriot understood the duties of the enslaved Poles; duties which he summed up in the word *sacrifice*. Round this word will henceforth revolve the works of the author of *Iridion*; it will illumine them all with its rays, it will be their very soul. He passed his whole life in developing this doctrine under the most

varied forms and in the most diverse creations; it may be found in "The Temptation," as in "The Dream of Cesara;" in the "Christmas Night," as in "The Present Day;" in the "Last," as in "The Dawn," "The Psalms of the Future," and the "Resurrecturis."

Abstraction made of the genius which flashes through these various works, there is assuredly something very imposing in this perseverance in upholding an idea so completely out of keeping with the general modes of thought in the times in which we live. It required the greatest courage, and a faith no less great, to attempt to convert one of the most ardent, most impulsive, high-mettled, and fiery people on the face of the earth to such a doctrine. But what exquisite art, what passion did he not employ to persuade the nation to adopt the truths with which he was himself so fully penetrated! Let Poland be but once confirmed in this belief in pure and fruitful martyrdom, and the Poet will fear for her neither the reverses of fortune nor the temptations of despair; he accepts even with joy all that separates her from the living world, and all that renders her a stranger to the happy of the earth! What matters it to Poland that others declare her "as obstinate as she is powerless"?—that they cry out importunately to her to "fold the shroud around her dying limbs as rapidly as possible; to die at once, and not disturb the world by the protracted agony of her death-rattle"? What matters it? The time will come when both the refined and the cruel will beg her to arise and walk! Whilst waiting this, she must submit with tranquillity to the outrages always heaped on the unfortunate; look trustingly on high, "as only an orphan has the right to look;" and, to insulting pride, oppose a silent dignity. He says: "The angel of pride, before his fall, had a sister in the sky, who remained there,—and she is called *Dignity!*"

Our author did not limit himself to the preaching of this doctrine of sacrifice for the Present and Future; he extends it and applies it to the whole Past of his People, presenting it as the soul of their entire secular existence. With lofty art and perfect sincerity, he labors to prove that Poland has always realized the ideal of a Christian

nation ; has always been disinterested for herself, and ever interested for humanity, and he finds the proof of this in the very character of the calamities which have finally overwhelmed her. Here lies the sole debatable ground of his magnanimous doctrines. It cannot be denied that the seal of chivalric generosity and self-sacrifice has been set upon the history of Poland. Her people have always defended Christianity against its most dangerous enemies, never asking anything from Europe in exchange for the service rendered ; demanding no payments for troops ; showing neither astonishment nor resentment at the subsequent ingratitude. Suffer us also to remark that Poland has never known aught of the cruelties, the regicides, the revolutions of the palace, the religious wars, which have dyed in blood the annals of so many other countries ; that she has always given a generous asylum to all the victims of persecution ; that it was in her bosom the Jews found refuge, as well as the emigrants of the wars of the Hussites, of the Reformation, and of the Thirty Years' War ; that they not only found in her the widest tolerance, but even the unwonted power of governing themselves by their own laws. We must, however, confess that more than one of these merits arose from a defect as much as from a virtue ; that this policy was more the result of an impulsive generosity than the growth of a firm and logical will ! It was decidedly virtue, but virtue singularly favored by the improvidence and recklessness of the national spirit. If the thinker can scarcely accept, without protest, this high claim for the whole past of a nation, will he not exclaim against the extension of this idea, even through the times of the fall of Poland, and protest against the bold image of the "Christ of nations," to which the patriot poet has given so strange a development in "The Dawn" and the "Psalms" ? Poland, in accordance with the views of the Anonymous Poet, has not only been crucified as Christ was, to rise as he did to higher life, but perished *voluntarily* to redeem the sins of other nations, and died pure of all reproach ! Is this historically true ? May it not contain a latent poison even for those whose faith it was intended to revive in the depths of despair ?

Alas! though not so deeply burdened as other nations, Poland cannot pretend to expiate *their* faults,—she has too many of her own! She has no right to proclaim herself innocent of all her calamities; she has herself contributed to them; she went to sleep upon a volcano; she was guilty of a marvelous inertia, of a frivolous improvidence, of an incomprehensible torpidity. (Generous to others, ay; provident for herself, nay!) But these internal faults in nowise justify or excuse the assassination committed against her, and this assassination is so much the more odious in that it was consummated at the very moment in which Poland began to rise,—to waken from her anarchic torpor; at the moment in which she originated for herself the Constitution of the 3d of May, 1791; a constitution which will be her eternal defense against all the slanders of her enemies. But even this noble and generous effort, as well as all her magnanimous attempts for more than half a century, prove that Poland had much to amend, to learn, and to forget. It is not by blinding herself to her old caprices, but rather by enlightening herself with regard to her past mistakes, that she will be able to save herself from future disasters, and conciliate the sympathies of all honest minds. As Poland and her poets are so fond of quoting the Bible and of speaking of the People of God, it might perhaps be useful to remind them that it is precisely the people of Israel who have, in the Book of books, left us the example of three great prophets, whose reunion forms a complete circle of the poetry inspired by an ardent patriotism. First comes Isaiah, who scathes the faults of the nation, and predicts its chastisement; then Jeremiah, who, when the yoke grew heavy upon the people, weeps over the ruins of the city once so powerful; finally, it is Ezekiel who, in the captivity of Babylon, falls into sublime ecstasies, and sees the temple and the city *rebuilt*. Certainly Poland has had her Jeremiahs and her Ezekiels, but she needs an Isaiah with a tongue of fire, a pitiless and courageous Dante, to sing boldly in her ears some painful truths, to probe her many wounds in place of caressing them.

It is above all in his poem of “The Dawn” (1843)

that our author has exposed his views with regard to the Past and Future of his nation, in all the exaltation of his generous errors. It possesses also the additional interest of standing as a monument of a feeling of the heart. It is the only work in which the author has given utterance to his personal sentiments; effusions in nowise commonplace, but of a highly poetic and elevated form. As Dante made of Beatrice the symbol of his faith, the type of theology, the Anonymous Poet regards his Beloved as the type and ideal of his patriotic aspirations. He expressly says, like Dante, he has passed through Hell, and like him has had for guide a lady of grace and pity, . . . "a Beatrice as beautiful as the first, but far more Christian, for she has not chosen the sky as her abode to shelter herself from sufferings below; she has remained with her brother upon earth." Sad and gloomy, they have met in highest spheres, "like two dark clouds which, meeting in the air, pour forth torrents of tears, but from which flash the lightnings which pierce the vault of heaven, and for a moment show the glittering Home of God." It is this Beatrice who is the confidante of all his thoughts upon his country; it is to her he relates all his emotions, all his presentiments; his nation and his beloved melt into each other in the successive stanzas of "The Dawn." The poem begins with a description of one of those lovely nights in Italy which have before awakened so many deep emotions. Lost in a sweet ecstasy, the two lovers of their fatherland breathe the fragrant freshness of the air, and gaze into the immensity of the starry vault. What holy calm! What divine peace! The universe is an immense Lyre. . . . A sublime chant is heard,—a chant of concord,—the harmony of the spheres. . . . But in this concord is there not one tone wanting? In this sheaf of light, has not one ray been broken? "O my sister, utter the tone wanting in the lyre of life; point out the star eclipsed but not extinct; pronounce, pronounce the name: *Poland!*—our Poland! At such an hour perhaps God hearkens to us; will gather from thy lips the long-lost tone, and will again restore it in His glorious Hymn! . . . Ah! thy lips tremble, and thy breast oppressed can

only breathe a sigh. . . . My sister, God will understand thee well; He knows a *sigh* is now the only name of thy sad country." Thus begins a series of stanzas in which the Poet paints with high poetic power the misery of the Present, the glories of the Past, and the hopes of the Future. We are born orphans,—he says to his Ladye when speaking of the actual generations,—posthumous children; our only cradle has been the grave of our mother; "the sweet maternal gaze has ne'er illumined our innocent play; and our young heads have never reposed upon a warm and palpitating breast, but on the cold stones of the cemeteries."

One of the most beautiful stanzas of the poem is that in which the Poet invokes the ancient senators, the heroes, the illustrious captains and glorious kings of Poland, from their graves. Covered with their armor of steel, and wearing their rusty helmets, they march in endless train; and before this *sublime Diet of Shadows*, the Poet, at first discouraged, accusing the ancestors of having destroyed in advance the inheritance of their children, is reanimated to new hope by the words of one of the shades, Stephen Czarniecki, one of the purest heroes of the country. The poet here introduces his idea of the "Christ of nations." It is not only Poland that he sees, he embraces humanity entire. He compares our epoch to that which preceded the Christian era, and many analogies are not wanting. Then, as now, social wars had upturned the soil and destroyed the old institutions; then, as now, a Cæsar appeared (Napoleon), who arrested society upon the brink of the abyss, re-established a *material* order, and inaugurated an epoch of great expansion for a civilization thoroughly materialistic. Then, as now, discontent was general; humanity suffered in its soul, and divined the coming of a great moral change. A Man at last came to teach men the unknown law of love, to abolish slavery, to preach fraternity. He was crucified, but He rose from the dead, and His law reigned upon earth. This law still reigns, but unhappily, though the divine doctrines of the Saviour have changed and ameliorated the relations between *individuals*, they have not yet penetrated the relations among *nations*; these are still regulated by the

ancient rights, the pagan laws, those of conquest and oppression. A single People has not followed this example, her history has remained pure from all international injustice; it has always fulfilled the law in the affairs of this world; it has never enslaved nor subjugated any of its neighbors, it has only used its power to protect the feeble, it has sacrificed itself for the safety of others,—and this people has been crucified as was the Saviour. The last stanzas of "The Dawn" celebrate the resurrection of this martyr, and with her a new reign of love among all nations, the fraternity of all the Peoples crowning and realizing the fraternity of men taught by Christ. In profound emotion, wealth of imagery, purity of form, the poet has never written anything which surpasses "The Dawn," and enraptured by the vision of a near and glorious future, he bids an eternal farewell to Poetry, exclaiming in the final strophe, which so many hearts have repeated with enthusiastic fervor: "Our whole soul, O my sister, we have expressed in this hymn; let us now say farewell to the lyre, farewell to all words! Let children delight forever to warble their songs; far other ways are open before us; *let my songs perish, let my actions live!*"

Illusion of the Poet, and yet partaken by a great part of the nation, which was soon to be followed by a most bitter awakening! But this cry was not the less an expression of a true presentiment! New paths really soon opened before the Poet; we are now touching upon the last period of his poetic activity, the very saddest of all, and yet the most inextricably interwoven with the events of the day, bound up as it was with a terrible catastrophe, with a great national misfortune.

Moved and charmed by the accents of the Anonymous Poet, Poland was still very far from following him into the high, pure regions of moral life which he pointed out to her. With regard to her aspirations, she still lingered with Count Henry in the delusions of his youth, and even Pancras loomed upon her horizon without affrighting her. The revolution of 1831 had thrown thousands of Poles into France, then deeply moved with revolutionary passions. The tortured exiles drank deeply at this boiling and troubled spring, and a democratic propaganda, which has

indeed produced its heroes, even its loyal martyrs, but more than all, its blinded adepts, imbued with true revolutionary doctrines, soon acquired an immense influence over the country. That this movement had its origin in the most generous feelings, in an impetuous desire to deliver the wretched nation, in a vivid, though not enlightened interest in the cause of the peasants, we are very far from wishing to deny; but it is not the less beyond doubt that inflated declamation, and the infantile desire of imitating the radicalism of the West, had also their share in hastening the insurrection. For example, the Polish democrats imitated their French brethren in their hatred of Catholicity; and tried to sap the religious faith of the nation at the very moment when the Emperor Nicholas, more circumspect than these visionary patriots, renewed the most vigorous persecutions against the Polish Church! The "strong-minded," the leaders of the propaganda, did not hesitate to adopt the dogmas of materialism, to proclaim a cynic skepticism. "They desired the Resurrection of a People," said upon this subject, at a later date, the Anonymous Poet, "and they did not themselves believe even in the immortality of the soul!" But it was above all in preaching hate against the nobility, which it stigmatized as "a decaying and corrupt class, inimical to the people, and an eternal foe to progress," that the Polish democracy manifested how far the spirit of imitation had stifled not only all sense of justice, but even the most evident perception of reality, for if there is anything clear and manifest in this world, it is that the Polish nobility resembles absolutely in *nothing* the nobility of any country of Western Europe. It is, in the first place, utterly different in *numbers*; it is not a *class*, but an *entire population*. It was the only element which in the past had been able to develop fully in itself the consciousness of its own nationality; and at present it is the class of the proprietors, the land-owners (of which the Polish nobility consists), which bears in its breast the historic traditions as well as the vivid prevision of the Future of Poland. It constitutes the moral and intellectual force of the country; it is simply its "tiers-état,"—for Poland has had no other: and instead of being opposed to modern progress and

principles, it leans *too much for safety* to modern ideas ! To propose the destruction of such a nobility was—as the Anonymous Poet justly asserted—“to commit self-murder, in order, after our suicide, to act and conquer.” It was, nevertheless, recommended by the democratic propaganda, which called upon the people to rise as one man to deliver the country, to make way with every suspected proprietor at the commencement of the insurrection, to divide the lands of the nobles, who had no right to national life at all except in so far as they made part of the people. And what was most tragically fantastic in this melancholy attempt was, that its apostles, as well as its disciples, were themselves of the nobility, for the democratic propaganda had no influence whatever among the peasants, neither by its publications nor its emissaries ; it addressed itself to the proprietors, to the gentlemen of the country ; it was by them it was so eagerly received, and through them organized into a vast conspiracy, ready to break out at a given signal. That the Polish nobility should have so magnanimously and almost so universally accepted the word of command from Paris, which sounded for themselves the knell of spoliation and death, while it certainly argues a great want of political intelligence, also incontestably proves into what deep and hopeless despair the country had been driven by foreign domination : it must prove also above all else how cruel and unjust were the declamations then made—as indeed they still are—against the selfish and aristocratic spirit of this poor Polish nobility, generous enough to accept even communism, sufficiently devoted to what it believed to be the interest of the country to subscribe to its *own suicide* ; which spirit the Powers of the North at the time of the dismemberment, as also Nicholas in 1831, denounced as confirmed *Jacobinism*.

It is difficult to imagine the rapidity and extent of the democratic movement which then seized upon Poland, the result of which, for any clear-sighted mind, could only be a powerless insurrection, aggravated by social rupture and distraction. How heart-rending the situation of the Anonymous Poet in such events ! It cannot be denied that some of his poems, magnanimous and

sublime as they are,—especially those which appeared after “Iridion,”—have erred through an excess of spiritual optimism; that his poetry forgot too much the conditions of this world; that it evangelized and *angelized* men with too little regard to their situation and duty as citizens; and that the influence of these works is still, in more than one respect, enervating for young souls. Alas! the Poet was soon to be cruelly recalled from these ethereal and cloudy spheres by the most bitter reality; a period of two years only intervened between the entrancing visions of “The Dawn” and the heart-rending lamentations of “The Psalms of the Future” (1845). This “Christ of Nations,” proclaimed so near its Resurrection, with its mission of new life to enslaved Nations, must now be preserved from suicide! Our Poet did not shrink from this painful duty, and, if we consider his personal position and the general state of the public mind, it was in him a great act of civic courage. He brought to the fulfillment of this task all the fire, eloquence, logic, and passion of his heart. The first two Hymns are still kept in the realms of the Future; he again represents to the Nation the ideal which God created her to realize; but in the third Psalm he enters upon the fiery questions of the moment; exposes the elements of the propaganda, resolution by resolution; boldly pronounces the words, “Massacre of the nobles,” which might be found in the logic of the new doctrines, or in the progress of events. To the “conventioners” of the Convention, who were always calling for vigorous acts, he declared that murders were no *actions*; that *destruction* was not *regeneration*; that there was but one true law of public safety for the nation: “the *Polish nobles with the Polish people.*” After having recalled the eternal principles of justice and humanity, he undertakes the defense of the Polish nobility, then so loudly decried by a blinded radicalism. Was it not the nobility whose breast forever bloomed into scars and gashes? Was it not always ready to offer up itself in holocaust upon the altar of the country? Had it not even consented to suicide? In the great Diet of 1791, who opened to the people the golden doors of the Future? Was it not this

maligned race of nobles—a race which had never consented to a truce with the oppressor—which had offered itself as autumn grain to be harvested on every battlefield, and which had actually peopled Siberia?

“Everywhere, everywhere upon this globe, I see the footprints of my brothers, and your words will never be able to efface them. It is they whom the world has persecuted; it is they whom the hangmen have tortured; it is they who forever wander in the polar snows, and who crowd the dungeons of the citadels!

“Upon the arid peaks of the Alps, upon the billowy azure of the Mediterranean, upon the Italian Apennines, upon the summits of the Sierras of Spain, upon the wide plains of Germany, upon the snows and ices of the Moscovites, upon the fields of friendly France, upon every land, on every sea, they have scattered the seed of our future country; a seed divine, the blood of martyrs—and you are the sons of their agonies!”

The Anonymous Poet regards persecution as a small ill; the obscuration of truth is the real and terrible evil; the changes forced upon the true life of the national soul by constant oppression, the reign of morbid and funereal ideas, is the great misfortune. He says: “Alas! slavery distills a poison which decomposes the soul! Siberia is nothing; the knout is nothing; nothing the racks and tortures which rend the *body*; but alas for the *spirit* of the nation when it is poisoned! This is the most bitter of all woes!” The poet conjures his country to repel all evil counsels, all inspirations of despair. “Let the demagogues howl on, the sophists whisper that a high and mysterious aim may justify infamous means; that the happiness of *all* is worth the death of the *few*; that love may spring from a work of hate. . . . No! no! *We can build nothing of mire; and the highest Wisdom is Virtue!*”

Thus, invoking the most glorious memories of the Past for the salvation of the Present, passing from flashes of anger to accents of soul-subduing pity, and placing all his luxuriant imagination in the service of common sense, did the inspired patriot continue to write. But it was a voice in the desert; it was lost without echo in the pros-

tration of the clear-sighted, and the disdainful silence of the party of action. As too often happens in moments of public excitement, our author was not *judged*, he was *classed*; he was placed among the enemies of progress,—and then all was over! One man, however, broke the silence to reply to the singer of the “Psalms,” to defend the honor of the denounced propaganda, to avenge “the outraged people,” and this man was also a Bard, and formerly a friend of the Anonymous Poet. Of an ardent and wayward temperament, consumed by a sombre mysticism as well as by a haughty pride, exceedingly jealous, uniting to a splendid imagination a power of language never equaled, even by Mickiewicz, Julius Słowacki suddenly entered the lists, and gave to the propaganda what had hitherto been wanting to it—the support of his marvelous genius. Raillery, anger, disguised allusions, stormy passions, true sufferings, and fictitious complaints, all the flashing and sometimes poisoned weapons of his brilliant armory, were made use of in his “Reply to the Author of the Psalms.”

Let us cast a brief glance on this “Reply,” as it is an important element in this characteristic and almost national debate. Słowacki therein calls back the author of the “Psalms” to his visions in his “Dawn,” to the final cry in which he invokes “his actions,” at the same time cruelly satirizing the “seraphic doctrines of the *noble dreamer*.” The double-bladed sword glitters from the very commencement. “To believe thee, my *gentleman*, it would be a virtue in us to endure slavery patiently! Thou changest our sad existence in this valley of tears into a life of pure and shadowy spirits in the silver moon; with the voice of an infant thou criest: ‘Action! action! action!’ And the nation prepares for it, and thou instantly beginnest to tremble when the face of the people appears, and when the voice of God resounds from the burning bush!” Słowacki continues: “Once, the Elect of noble Poetry were the first to proclaim new truths, and to excite the masses to the combat of freedom. But now behold! a great Lord, a grand singer, shows himself as a ‘prophet of the people,’ but in the mode of the *beau monde*, as a highly *fashionable* Prophet! He

places Christ in his poetic car as Ovid did his Phaeton, and with light, rose-colored steeds, he traverses the aerial depths of a harmless ideal! When the universe is perishing in agony, when the tide of action rises high, behold! he places himself as barrier across it, forbids the century itself to move, and from his breast, shivering with fear, we only hear the hoarse, shrill cry, in the name of the *red God*, whomsoever thou mayst be: 'Kill not the nobility!' The nobility? But where may it be found? By what mark shall we recognize it?" In a celebrated stanza, Słowacki, who more than once recalls his own noble origin, denies that the Polish nobility is still in existence, making only one injurious exception for Prince Czartoryski, in attributing to him dynastic ambition,—an accusation frequently brought against a tried patriot by the ungrateful companions of his exile.

"Yes, you were once numerous; formerly there were hundreds of thousands of your nobles; nobles by heart and bearing! But in our days I have known but one noble; the whole country has never seen another. He alone, by the misery of his heart, by his intentions if not by his success; by a silent, proud, and grand sadness; by a hand always full of gifts, by an antique, quiet glory, was a noble, and had the right so to call himself. And now he, the sole and only noble, has abandoned your ranks; he has himself resigned his dignity; *he has gone down to rot among the kings!* He is no longer, and you are no more!"

It has always been the tactics of revolutionists to present their programmes as utterly harmless; and Słowacki did not fail to follow this course. He boldly asks our poet: Where he had ever heard massacre spoken of; who had threatened with the dagger? Mere visions of a troubled brain were all such idle thoughts, hallucinations of a frightened fancy. A plaintive tone had perhaps reached him through the air; a *dumka** celebrating the ancient combats of the Zaporogues; *and you were afraid, son of the noble!* or perhaps some brilliant morning a ray of sunshine pierced into the room of the *Psalmist*, made

* A Dirge from the Ukraine.

its way through the scarlet curtains of his sumptuous bed ; and the lord-poet, suddenly awaked, thought he saw *red*, —and you were afraid, son of the noble! This ironic refrain returns frequently through the poem, and has its climax in the words whose envenomed cruelty will be readily understood : “You owe respect to your parents ; now the Polish People is your father, you have no other ! *Fear it !*” Nevertheless Slowański, while defending the democracy from nourishing any thought of vengeance, takes care not to tranquillize us too completely ; on the contrary, he calls upon all the powers of his vast and fiery imagination to depict the abyss of misery and pain in which society groans ; the debasement of character, the profound eclipse of justice, the horrors of tyranny, the arrogance of the rich, the anguish of the poor. To bring back the moral world which has swung from its orbit, to tear humanity from this abyss of shame and infamy, “who knows what the Spirit may deem necessary,” —“the Spirit, the eternal Revolutionist who tortures bodies and delivers souls?” “The sun always rises in its clouds of purple, and all Dawns are bloody !”

The “Reply” of Slowański had scarcely had time to be known by the public when appalling events arose, bearing to the author of the “Psalms” a far more serious response. The insurrection so long in preparation by the propaganda at last broke out ; it proved as powerless against the enemy as murderous for the nation. It was principally, however, in Galicia that the disastrous outbreak showed in its full force, manifesting itself under entirely new forms. The bureaucracy established there, as violent as it was perfidious, had been very careful to take no measures to prevent the explosion ; it had, on the contrary, fed the subterranean fire, and had taken the time to complete the tuition of the peasants, so happily commenced by the propaganda. Since the proprietors were so decidedly, and even by their own confession, such ferocious enemies of the people, would it not be best to put an immediate end to them by a terrible justice, especially when the government was so ready to help them, even paying a good sum of florins for every head of a noble, and facilitating the undertaking still more by

a suspension of the laws of God for fifteen days? That the Court of Vienna should have thus repaid the services formerly rendered her by the country of Sobieski, is one of those flagrant ingratitude which, even after the astonishment has worn off, still leave an undying memory. And who can wonder that the Poles should see in the calamities which have successively overwhelmed the House of Hapsburg since the date of the wrongs of 1846 the just punishment of one of the greatest crimes ever registered in history? The effect of the massacres of Tarnow and Rzeszow was immense in Poland, and the discouragement greater than had ever been known there before, even after the greatest disasters. And let us say it without prevarication, Poland to this very hour still bleeds from the wounds of Tarnow and Rzeszow; the massacres of Galicia still weigh upon her as a memory and an apprehension; they have rendered her motionless during the last fifteen years; and even at this moment have not ceased to paralyze her action.

The jacquerie of 1846 was followed by a prostration of spirit which was manifested in the world of thought by a mournful silence, which lasted long, and was only broken for a moment by the characteristic phenomenon of the "Letter from a Polish gentleman to Prince Metternich," in which the Marquis Wielopolski—since become famous—for the first time proposed without disguise, and with the concentration of despair, the question of voluntary self-destruction in the bosom of a vengeful panslavism. It is difficult to imagine with what a stifling weight the sad events of 1846 pressed upon the soul of the Anonymous Poet. It was two years before he was able to write again. He then commenced a new series of Psalms, in which he tried to pour balm into the wounds still bleeding, and to light hope anew in hearts crushed to earth. A response was still due to Słowacki, and he made it with moderation, yet with force, but also with great sadness. The reproach of cowardice made by Słowacki weighed heavily upon the descendant of the Knights of Bar. "Thou hast said it was fear that spoke in my soul when I foresaw that we were moving toward the darkness, and not toward the light; and that the people might, in

this path, bring disgrace upon themselves. Thou hast spoken the truth; there is a certain kind of courage of which I cannot be proud. It is true, I do tremble at the death of my fellow-men; I love not to push them into the abyss. At the sight of shame, it is true, a *divine terror* seizes my heart; assassins will never be to me as brothers; I love the sword, but shudder at the knife!" Our Author then begins the debate, discusses all the destructive theories of Słowacki, especially that of the "Spirit eternally revolutionist" and "torturing bodies to deliver souls." He calls for a regeneration by a continuous development through love. He says, ingeniously: "It is also a great sin, O Poet, to speak only ever of the Spirit, *forgetting that He proceeds from the Father and the Son*; to abstract all the past generations, and to renounce the painful work of the ages!"

The solution of continuity between the epochs which preceded the revolution and those which succeeded it, the rupture of all traditions, the absence of all roots in the heart of history, which caused the tree of the new life so soon to wither and die, though we ceased not to water it with our tears and blood,—all this has been noticed and commented upon more than once in our time; especially after the catastrophe of February led us to scrutinize more closely the problem of modern existence, and to seek more deeply into the internal causes of the moral discontent and dissatisfaction with which we are struggling. Such truths were not generally perceived until our Poet brought them to the light in his "Psalms," and in all cases he has known how to give them ingenious and touching forms in a manner peculiar to himself. He saw, in addition, the gulf constantly widening between the upper and intelligent classes and the lower ranks; the first forced to draw back in order to preserve themselves, the second having no hope save in forever pressing forward toward the unknown; he foresaw the possible, nay, imminent conflict between the two great European factions: but he found even in this very conflict a cause for hope,—and he continued to hope for his country. He believed Poland was destined to counterbalance, by the character of her instincts and the influence of her actions, "the

atrocious cowardice of the retrograde party, as well as the frightful passions of the radicals." Thus after a long detour, and even through the bloody gulf of Tarnow, did the author of the "Psalms" return to the radiant visions of the "Dawn," exclaiming after, as before, the massacre: "O my country! watch and hope: *love without bounds is life without end!*" . . . We may judge these hopes of the Poet as we will, but we are forced to bow reverently before the faith and charity which, after such trials, were able to inspire such words!

At the date of the appearance of these new Psalms, the revolution of February broke out, and soon had its counterstroke as far as in the capital of Austria. The Anonymous Poet followed the progress of events closely, without misunderstanding their importance, but without making the least allusion to them. Faithful to his system, he regarded the present epoch as the painful birth of the second Christian era; as preparing, to use the words of M. de Maistre, "a new eruption of Christianity;" he saw even in the events of 1848 the annunciation of the judgment of God upon the two thousand years of Christianity, and of a palingenesis according to the Gospel; but in the *immediate* future he could see nothing but misfortunes. The nations appeared to him no wiser than their governments. "There is no privilege before thee, O God! Peoples as well as kings, as soon as they become unfaithful to Thee, are equally doomed to fall,—since even Thy Angels by myriads fell!"

In the first days of the revolution of 1848, he predicted the horrors of June in an eloquent prophecy. His presentiments went still further, and he believed he could announce the hour in which the West of Europe, sapped in its foundations and shaken in its faith in liberty, would at last come to believe in the "truth of him who alone remained firm and unshaken upon the rock of St. Petersburg." Then would be, affirmed the Poet, the last, yet the most cruel, trial of crucified Poland; and he conjured his country to keep her religion intact through those moments of her supreme agony; to preserve in all its purity the *Polish soul*, which would be tempted by two opposing but equally brutal forces: the Pan Slavism of the Czars, and

the radicalism of Europe! There is something strangely pathetic even in the first lines of his famous Psalm of "Good Will," in which the son of a nation still bleeding after a massacre and counted among the dead, robbed of all that is prized upon this earth, still cries to his Creator: "*Thou hast given us everything*, O Lord: all that Thou couldst grant us of the eternal treasures of Thy grace! Even after we had descended into the grave, Thou hast maintained us living in all the great struggles of the world. We no longer existed, and yet we were always present in every glorious action, upon every field of battle, with our Eagle of silver and our blade of steel; Thou hast taken from us the earth, but hast lowered to us the heavens; Thine infinite heart hath everywhere shielded us; corpses in appearance, we were in reality spirits!"

For Poland, to which the Lord has already granted *all*, the Poet only asks the final gift: a will which knows no recourse save to holy acts when extreme temptations come. . . . "To-day, O Lord, when Thy judgment begins upon the two thousand years through which Christianity has already existed, grant us, O Lord, to resuscitate ourselves only through the power given by Thee to holy acts!" This prayer returns, through varied intervals, in this sublime Psalm, through which the rhythm flows majestically slow as some vast organ's chords; it falls upon the ear at most unexpected moments, and is yet always admirably prepared, brought back rather by the musical enchainment of the thought than by its logical development; recalling the contexture of a fugue of Bach, and producing the same magical effect. The hymn is closed by a marvelous picture of Catholic sentiment. The veneration in which the Mother of Christ has always been held by Poland is well known to the world. Our Poet represents the heavenly Mother pleading to the Son for His faithful servants; offering before Him a chalice in either hand, one containing the blood of the Saviour of men, the other that of the martyred nation.

Lord, look upon Thy Mother! Look, O Lord!
 Surrounded by Thy ransomed souls she mounts
 To Thee, through the immensities of space;
 And as she passes, all the stars bow down,
 The whirling forces of the universe

Are charmed into a sudden tenderness,
 Borne upward by the pale and misty Shades
 Of our own martyrs, now she cleaves the Blue,
 Crosses the Milky-Ways, and leaves the suns behind;
 Higher and higher still she ever mounts,
 And whiter, more resplendent still she grows.

Look on her, Lord! See her as low she kneels
 Before Thy throne, midst all Thy Seraphim.
 Upon her forehead burns the Polish crown,
 Her azure mantle sweeps the depths of space,
 Tissued of rays of light. The spheres are still,
 And wait Thy word! With gentle voice she prays;
 Behind her weep the spirits of our sires;
 In either hand she holds a chalice up. . . .

O Lord, 'tis Thine own blood she here presents
 In the cup which she holds high in her right hand!
 And lower—in the left,—O, lower far,—
 Thou knowest, Lord,—the blood of those who loved thee,—
 Of Thine own faithful subjects, crucified
 Upon a thousand crosses! The blood which flows
 Unceasingly beneath a *triple* sword,
 Upon three realms which yet are but *one country*! . . .
 In the name of the Holy Cup which overflows
 With Thine own love, she prays Thy mercy for
 The chalice which is lower—lower far,—
 She prays for us,—Father, and Spirit, Son!

She prays for us, and we all pray with her,
 That Thou wouldst grant the grace of every grace!
 It is not Hope that we implore from Thee:
 It falls upon us like a rain of flowers.—
 Nor is it Death on our oppressors' heads:
 Their doom is written on to-morrow's clouds.—
 Nor is it power to rise from our red graves:
 The stone unrolled, we have already risen.—
 Nor is it arms to meet our enemies:
 The tempests bear them to us on the winds.—
 Nor is it aid; the field of action opes
 Before us now, and we must aid ourselves.—
 But as to-day Thy judgment has commenced
 On the two thousand years already lived
 By Christianity, O grant us, Lord,
 A holy will!
 O Father, Son, and Spirit, a good will!

The hymn of the "Good Will" was the last of the Psalms of the Poet; we might even say it was the last of his songs. He raised his voice only once more in his "Resurrecturis," in which he seemed to endeavor to gather together, as in a final chord, all his ideas upon sacrifice, to recommend them to the nation,—after which he was

silent. The Nation was silent with him ; she ruminated long upon the thoughts evolved in "Iridion," "The Dawn," and the "Psalms" ; she thoroughly impregnated herself with them ; she entered upon a career of painful and obscure labors for which she may perhaps be some day compensated, but which for the time only thickened around her the shroud of forgetfulness in which she was wrapped. The greatest events passed without in the least changing her lot ; even the Crimean war did not call her upon the scene of action, and in the midst of so many Peoples making their names resound, or recovering them, she rested long mute and ignored. She became, like her Poet, "*anonymous* !" During this time, the author of the "Psalms" died in a foreign land, and there was nothing, even to this untimely end, which did not bear the seal of the tragic destiny which, with its weight of lead, pressed to the very earth the whole of this mournful and pained existence. An old man, an old and brave soldier, had just expired in the midst of the indifference of his compatriots,—an indifference which was indeed only generosity ; and if the nation deigned to give a single thought to the event, it was of the respite which this death might give to the tortured life of a son who had been ever faithful to his country. But the fatal tie uniting these two lives was not to be broken even by death ; a violent illness seized the Poet, and he perished but three months after he had lost his father. He died in Paris, the 24th of February, 1859,—and Silence only came to seat herself upon his grave ! To borrow the picturesque expression of a celebrated Polish writer : "A great genius went to heaven, and in his flight he did not brush the earth, even with his shadow !"

A like silence reigned over another tomb, wider and deeper far, which was called Poland ; but on a day more than a year ago the three monarchs of the North agreed upon the "interview of Warsaw," which, rightly or wrongly, the liberal opinion of Europe regarded as the point of departure of a new holy alliance ; it was said this interview was especially directed against Italy, and the general tendencies of the West. At this news Poland trembled. The Nation, so long buried in its own grief, in its internal

toil, shook off its shroud, and sprang from its inaction. And is it known what was the signal of this sudden Polish life? It was a funeral mass celebrated upon the same day in all the churches of the country for the repose of the souls of three poets: Mickiewicz; the author of the "Psalms"; and Słowacki.

A pious thought of love and concord thus strove to reunite before God, and in the general mourning of their fellow-men, the two great adversaries who had been for a long time friends, placing above them both the great master,—“the immortal *Waidelote*.”

Soon after came the day in which the people of Warsaw rose; rose without arms, bearing only the cross and Polish flag in their hands: “They gave no death, but they received it;” and when the Ruler, frightened at an attitude so new, demanded what they wanted, they replied: “OUR COUNTRY.”

Then must the great spirit of the singer of “Resurrecturis” have leaped for joy. The *Ideal* he had dreamed was now *Reality*; and the *Poetry* which had remained so long *anonymous* was now signed by the name of an entire People.

THE "FRAGMENT,"

OR

UNFINISHED POEM.

INTRODUCTION.

Mountains in the neighborhood of Venice. Sunrise. ALIGHIERI and the YOUNG MAN, both in hunting costume, are seated upon a rock.

The Young Man. Look, friend, in what glowing purple the god of day ascends! Ah! if man were thus born, and could thus extend his dominion over earth! Look! How that last dim star is dying out! It is said to be the fate of the heart thus to die, consumed in the flames of genius! Rise! Rise, O Sun! Shine down into these depths still tenanted by darkness; throw thy glittering bridges of rainbows from bank to bank across the white torrents! How fresh is the air! I feel so strong, I see so far, my sight is so clear and piercing, I know I shall not miss a single shot to-day. The poor chamois browsing there upon that dizzy cliff will not live till noon! Dost thou not hear? The shrill horns of our hunters re-echo through the pines of the mountain. Come! let us go!

Alighieri. I will remain here.

Young Man. Alighieri, what is the matter with thee to-day? Thou hast scarcely spoken to me since sunset. When we began to climb these rocks at midnight, in silence didst thou skirt the precipices, using thy hand only to point out to me their dangers; and now when the chase is about to begin, when the trees shiver with the bayings of our dogs, when the earth, the rocks, and my

spirit tremble with eagerness, thou hesitatest and hast no desire to accompany us!

Alighieri. Knowest thou not this is the hour in which I am accustomed to pray to God?

Young Man. Then I will wait for thee.

Alighieri. Knowest thou not that I am wont to pray to the Lord only in solitude?

Young Man. Then tell me at what time I shall return for thee.

Alighieri. Thou wilt find me this evening in the same place.

Young Man. I wish to Heaven thou wouldst accompany me! Come! I cannot fire aright without thee. We will mount that naked peak where crystals form and chamois bound. The hunters say the whole world can be seen from that point: come!

Alighieri. The whole world may be seen from here also!

Young Man. How?

Alighieri. By closing our eyes, and humbling our spirits before the Lord!

Young Man. Hark! again they wind the horn. Adieu! Now on, on! over these abysses, and up those heights,—up—up, among the clouds! I am sorry from my heart, Alighieri, that thou wilt not come with me.

Alighieri. Bend not thus over the precipice,—hold by the branches! I can still see,—I see thee,—turn not towards me,—take care there on the edge of the waterfall!

He hears me no longer. He flies like a bird, scarcely touching earth. In the dawn of existence, the child, agile, light and careless, sports like the spirits whom Death will approach no more. But they know the mysteries of being, and he has scarcely wakened to the consciousness of life! As the ether which fills the infinite may condense into dark masses, form brilliant suns, or float as light vapor on through space,—so may he become all or nothing; the Elect of Heaven, or the prey of Hell!

(*He raises his hands in prayer.*)

Merciful Father! Thy ways on earth have in our days grown obscure! Thy face is veiled in clouds! Men

seek thee anew, and cannot find Thee! But even now Thou risest upon the horizon; Thou increasest! Why do they gaze forever into the heights of Heaven? Ah, if they would but look toward their own horizons!

Heavenly Father! this moment of transition is for their eyes a fearful twilight; for their thoughts a dreadful temptation; and for their hearts a terrible grief! If Thou shortenest it not, many of them must perish!

(He kneels.)

I pray to Thee, Lord, for him whose soul Thou hast committed to my charge. Graciously listen to the testimony I bear Thee of him! Unconsciously, but without ceasing, his soul strives to break a way to Thy Heaven!

The germ of all beauty, a spark from Thee, burns in its depths, but the body, like a thick veil, wraps it on all sides. The spirit over which I watch still seeks Thee through this fog, O Lord! . . .

He knows not yet, O God, that thou art also present *within* himself; Thou whom he sees above him, whom he acknowledges below him; Thou who art everywhere! Pardon him then, Lord, if he languishes for Thee!

Behold, Lord, I am sad even unto death, for the moments of his innocence are passing away,—soon must his heart be torn by the struggle of Good and Evil,—the sole but bitter source of virtue! Remember me, Lord! Show Thy mercy upon me, by showing Thy pity upon him!

(He bows his forehead to the earth.)

Merciful Father! I do not pray Thee to remove from his path any of the cares of life! I know that, like all the exiles upon earth who through this world return to Thee, he, too, must pass through the probation of evil when the hour of temptation sounds! Thy will be done! Strike him with the scourge of grief, that he may be humbled among men; let them load him with chains, let his body suffer martyrdom, if Thou wilt only spare him the shame of baseness and save him from the eternal night of the soul! Let me warn him in these last, fleeting moments!

Let this night obey me! When in Thy name I shall command it, let the winds of the valleys and the mists of

the torrents gather round me, that I may form them into ephemeral figures, and breathe my thoughts into a Dream which will only live until to-morrow's dawn!

But in it will be Thy Eternal Truth and the transitory truth of this world!

And he whom I love will one day remember Thy Eternal Truth,—and thou wilt save him, Lord!

(*Long silence.*)

Young Man (re-entering). What is this? Still in the same place, under the same pine, and still at prayer? Give me thy hand! Rise, Alighieri!

Alighieri. Thou, Henry! So soon returned?

Young Man. Thou dreamest! Did I not leave thee at sunrise? and now that sun sinks in the west, behind the crest of yonder rocks. "So soon," indeed! Since I left thee, I have thrice crossed the glacier of Hewaldyne, been on the very summit of the mountain, and to the very foot of this ravine. Thrice have I wound the horn; thou must have heard it!

Alighieri. True; it is already sunset!

Young Man. Has the day, then, passed away like a moment for thee?

Alighieri. Happy he whose life thus flows; he lives in eternity! What has happened to thee, Henry? What means this blood upon thy breast and on the handle of thy knife?

Young Man. Alighieri, a little more, and I must have perished! This is not the blood of a bounding roe or innocent chamois. I will tell thee all as we wend our way below, for I sent the hunters on in advance, and we must hasten if we would overtake them before night-fall.

Alighieri. I will listen as I follow thee.

Young Man. Hearken, then, and I will tell thee all. I fire upon a chamois; it falls and rolls to the bottom of a precipice. I call my Tyrolese, show them the spot, but they see nothing. Consequently, I must descend myself to find my prey. Three of them follow me; we make a long, winding descent, ever lower and lower, until we reach a dense wood, a thick forest of pines. But as we advance we observe something moving in the thicket be-

fore us, within range of our bullets,—it may be a deer, a stag. I look eagerly towards it, but in my haste have forgotten to reload my gun. I seize a cartridge, but in this very moment a bear starts from the thicket, stops, and scents the air. Ah! he has discovered us! My men instantly fire upon him; their balls only graze his hide; rising and roaring, he rushes upon us! They, crying loudly upon me to follow, take to flight. Still shouting as long as breath lasts them, they climb upon the branches of a tall pine. I know not why I remain alone; what possible glory can a man achieve in a wild struggle with a beast? I know not why I was ashamed to run. But my fathers never fled, whether before the wild beast or upon the field of battle!

I throw away my gun, rapidly tear my knife from my belt,—it is time, for the velvety king of the forests is already upon my breast. As if he were human, he clasps me in his arms; he buries his claws in my quivering flesh! I strike him instantly in the breast; it avails not, and again I strike him! He topples over at the third blow, bears me with him to the earth, and lies heavy and dead upon me. Throwing a glance of contempt at my hunters, I leave the skin of my victim to them in memory of their cowardice.

Alighieri. The Lord has saved thee; hast thou rendered thanks to him?

Young Man. Not in words, but truly from my heart. When I rose, shaking off the bear, and glad to find myself still living, I lifted my hands gratefully to Heaven.

Alighieri. There are moments in which the Lord exacts no more.

Young Man. It is strange that I feel no weariness; I am as fresh as I was at sunrise. Look, Alighieri, how rapidly we descend. We cannot now be far from the dwellings of man, for here is a young girl passing near us. Ha! good-evening, my Beauty! Do you not hear me? What do you fear? Do stay, and give me the lily you bear in your hand!

The Young Girl (in passing). I will not give it to you, but to the other!

Young Man. And wherefore?

The Young Girl. Because he looks like the white angel which stands on our great altar to the right of the Mother of God; but you do not belong to this country, have never been in our church, and so have never seen our angel! (*To Alighieri.*) Good-evening! I pray you, sir, accept these flowers!

Alighieri. Thanks, my child. May you be happy!

Young Man. I suppose, then, I must be very ugly, fair maiden?

The Young Girl. You too are beautiful, but not like our angel!

(*She passes on.*)

Young Man. Give me the half of those flowers; I will keep them in memory of the fact that this simple young girl felt the same impression which I experienced the first time I saw thee. What she says is true,—very true,—and it is not only thy face which is so much finer than mine, but thy high soul, Alighieri. Dost thou remember the hour in which we first met? It is as present to me as if it had been but yesterday.

Alighieri. To me too, Henry, for in that hour I became thy friend.

Young Man. Yes, I still see the old building in whose halls a thousand of my companions sat, and the professors who instructed us from their high desks. I see the winding staircase and its embrasure, with its steps of stone, on which thou first appearedst to me:—am I not right? I was a proud boy, though still a mere child and very feeble. I had just left my father's house, and was passing through the throng of students, with pride upon my brow, for I felt they hated me, though I knew not why. They crowded round me, they pressed against me, they nearly stifled me, they shouted "the little aristocrat,"—as if I ought to blush because I had more than one ancestor who had given his life for his country and the church in which he was to repose! O God! then first was hell born in my infant breast! I clung to the balustrade of iron while they pulled me down by my hands, my feet, and the folds of my mantle. Perhaps I should have rolled under their feet hadst thou not then appeared: thou descendedst from above, as pale, as slight, as thou art to day, but thine eyes

flashed fire! No one knew thee, but they must have seen thee from time to time and remembered the expression of thy brow. Thou gavest a cry; and they fell from me like dead leaves! Give me thy hand, Alighieri! Ah! I can never, never forget that moment!

Alighieri. Thou mayst forget it, Henry; but never forget the words then spoken to thee, and the first I ever addressed to thee!

Young Man. Ah! I still feel thee embrace me; I still hear thy voice: "They are unjust. Thou must be *more than just*; pardon them in thy soul, and love them in thy deeds!" Then we descended together, and as thou passedst through them, thou repeatedst, with a tranquil voice: "Shame! shame!"

Alighieri. And since that hour we have been inseparable!

Young Man. And will be until death! for since that hour I have felt thee my superior; therefore is it I so love thee.

Alighieri. Thou sayest: "even until death"?

Young Man. Yes.

Alighieri. But I must die before thee.

Young Man. Sadden not this tranquil hour with a presentiment so dark! Rather let us with full eyes drink in this softened light; with full breasts breathe this balmy air, perfumed by mountain roses. Look at the last rays of light upon those peaks of snow, at that star rising above yon crest of rocks; the smile of God is upon us,—and thou with me—and I with thee,—what would we more?

Alighieri. I must, however, repeat it: I will die before thee.

Young Man. Nay, thou art not kind! Thou knowest my father is already dead,—my mother and sister sleep in the grave,—many of those among whom I grew up left me long, long ago,—their graves ache for me in our poor and distant country! I am alone—the last of my race,—and thou wilt abandon me,—thou too, Alighieri! Thou wilt go there, where it is happier to be; thou wilt not remain with me? No, oh, no, Alighieri!

Alighieri. I feel a germ of death in my breast; but canst thou only love the *living*? My spirit will not die

in thee because my body leaves thee. In every heart into which it passes thought takes new life !

That for which I have prayed, which I have desired, thou wilt accomplish,—and I have desired that thou shouldst be a hero among men, an angel among the celestial spirits !

Looking upon these mountains in this glowing light, this lovely sky, these trembling stars, wouldst thou not be glad to stay the course of time? Thou exclaimest, "How beautiful !" But, Henry, think what a miracle in this world a soul would be which no mortal could see without crying: "How beautiful !"

Give such a bliss to thy Brothers ! Be in their midst a Master-Work !

Young Man. Art thou thus expressing to me thy last wishes? Cease, Alighieri, cease! I cannot bear it! With a breath thou hast dimmed for me the transparency of these bright skies; a veil is darkening before my eyes;—speak! Where are we? What can this mean? Were we not already near the valley? When at day-break this morning we passed this place together, I saw somewhere here, upon our right, a cross,—what can have become of it?

Alighieri. Follow me !

Young Man. Knowest thou this place better than I do? But look, friend, the moon rises, and she will solve this mystery.

Alighieri. That is well. Let us wait.

Young Man. By the living God, the more light we have the more does this country seem utterly unknown to me ! If these mists would only disperse!—there—far—far below—is a road which seems to whiten. No—it is only a belt of fog across the plain. Ho ! Halloo ! Is there no one there below us? Halloo ! Answer ! I will fire my gun ; perhaps some one will hear it.

Alighieri. The mountains hear and reply.

Young Man. Yes, in a voice of thunder. I cannot imagine how it is possible we could have gone so far astray. It seems to me we have never ceased to advance in the right direction, and yet these rocks seem doubling around us. The very sky has changed ; an ocean of cloud

surges up through the ravine! It glitters like a motionless glacier!

On this side now the vapors rise; they blind, they stifle me! My head reels! I can almost feel the darkness! Look, Alighieri! The moon mounts higher, but tawny and ghastly is her light, painful to look at, and more perplexing than the darkness! Alighieri, I cannot extricate myself from this chaos!

Alighieri. Why, then, dost thou linger? Follow me!

Young Man. Down this steep, narrow gorge to our left?

Alighieri. Such is my inspiration.

Young Man. Lead me as thou wilt! I will follow, seek, wind, climb down below,—do all thou mayst desire! But all will be in vain; we are lost, and can do nothing but wander about until the dawn of day. I have never seen so strange, so wild, a night. To find the way now, one must be the supreme master of these solitudes, or the chamois which rule these rocks!

Ho! Where art thou? Answer!

Alighieri. Here! Near thee!

Young Man. This bewildering fog! It rises now directly under my feet; it darkens my sight; I cannot see thee! Ha! now it breaks, it sails above and joins its sister bands on high!

Look, Alighieri! Is that not an old, long-bearded king upon his throne, his sceptre in his hand? After him comes an immense serpent—no—rather a dragon—no—now it is a cherub with four great wings. Look down there! Oh, far, far down, in the intervale among the rocks! there throngs a whole nation of spirits, hastening to the Last Judgment! Alighieri, what is this before me? Against what have I bruised myself?

Alighieri. It is the gateway of an ancient cemetery.

Young Man. Look at the moon! It burns like a pale purgatory of souls above the graves where their bodies rest.

But a moment ago I was so strong, so fresh, light as the air, and now I am so weary,—so ill at ease,—and I know not how nor why, unless the old dead here have cast their spells upon me! If I do not sit down upon this stone I believe I will fall asleep.

Alighieri. Lean upon me, Henry.

Young Man. Yes,—for my eyelids close;—I must rest here!

Alighieri. Come but a few steps farther: only as far as this White Chapel.

Young Man. I will. We will be more quiet under its roof than out here in the open air.

Alighieri. Why do you stop? Go on!

Young Man. Have these mists really blinded me? or am I asleep? Is this a dream?

Alighieri. What seest thou, Henry?

Young Man. Thy forehead grows strangely livid under the rays of the moon,—thine eyes look hollow,—thou art so slight and attenuated,—thou seemest older, older—but sublime! Is it really thyself, Alighieri?

Alighieri. It is really I, Henry.

Young Man. The voice alone recalls thee. It seems to me now that a crown of laurel glitters round thy brow, that it winds and unwinds, appears and disappears. Leave me! I fear thee! I will go no farther!

Sleep bows me to the earth . . . I am falling . . . let me fall! Touch me not, Alighieri! God is my witness that I have somewhere seen a face like thine . . . somewhere. . . .

Alighieri. A few steps more!

Young Man. Where are we? Where?

Ah! now I know the laurel crown, the strange fire in the eye brought from other worlds! This image stands in the great Hall of my ancestors, under the canopy strewn thick with silver stars: yes, it *is* under the green canopy in my home! My father told me that in centuries past that man had visited Hell and Purgatory, and had seen Paradise!

Master! Master! whither dost thou lead me?

Alighieri (bearing him into the chapel). Now thou mayst sleep!

II.

THE DREAM.

It seemed to the young man that the figure of Dante turned to him, and said: "From that realm where Love, Wisdom, and the Eternal Will abide, thence have they sent me to show thee the Hell of the present days! Therefore banish all fear, and whither I go, follow me!"

Like a pale column the Figure rose, and took its flight across the night of space, gliding rapidly over nebulous vapor, and through aerial waves. Sometimes a rapid meteor broke flashing under its feet, and here and there gray dawns awoke, floating away to disappear in the distance. But the soul of the Young Man was overwhelmed with sadness, for it knew not whither it was going, and it went into the Infinite:—and it felt it was the Infinite of Evil!

The Figure stopped upon the summit of a mountain, and it appeared to the Young Man that they commenced to descend within its bosom. The darkness yielded by degrees, and where the way could be discerned, it appeared bordered on either side by walls cut in the solid rock; the most terrific passes were scarcely penetrated by the doubtful twilight, and on the right and the left, all along the rocky parapet, were ranged soldiers, all arrayed in the same costume, all of the same height, all alike in the expression of their features, all in perpetual motion, sometimes leaning forward, and sometimes standing erect; all engaged in the same monotonous occupation of sedulously polishing the barrels of the muskets, which all held in their hands. Light as a sigh, the hand of the Shade swept the eyelids of the Young Man as he said: "Look! this is truly the entrance of the Hell of Earth!" And instantly he saw the Souls of the Soldiers, bent half-way out of their bodies, into which they could return no more, and from which they could not tear themselves away. And in their agony they cried: "We can neither live nor die,—we must forever go where they order us,—order us against God, and we go,—

against our brothers, and we go :”—and their tears were unquenchable ! The Shade stopped and said : “ Who are you, and what is your name ? ” But the souls of all those bodies answered nothing. “ Where is your country ? ” And the souls of all those bodies straightened themselves, full of astonishment ! “ Where is your home ? ” And among so many eyes, a few let fall a tear, as at some vague remembrance ! But the arms ceased not to move more and more vigorously, ever rubbing the barrels of their guns and sharpening the points of their bayonets, and lo ! above those mute bodies all the souls groaned out together : “ Since infancy, they have driven us about the world without our own volition ; they have forced us to forget ourselves and to murder others ; whoever resisted us, we were commanded to shoot as a traitor ; and now we know not whence we came nor whither we are going ! ”

Then the pale figure spake : “ When men of old sought the combat, they knew what cause they were serving, and why they must die ; they were like gods of war, but you perish like poor brutes ! ” And breaking with a sign the ranks of the armed people, the Figure advanced to the stairs which wound down into the depths.

Following the steps of the Seer, the young man plunged into the subterranean darkness.

Suddenly a deluge of light poured around him ; he saw the black walls, the prison grates, the rings with chains clamped into the rocks : luxurious flames blazed in lamps of alabaster, soft carpets of silk were underfoot, and a numberless crowd was gathered round a man who occupied a high seat, and who, delicate and slight as a woman, turned over the pages of a black book. Before him stood a gigantic cross, rising almost to the vault, and a figure of Christ was stretched upon it. The shade of Dante trembled from head to foot as he spake : “ I never met that sacred sign with the Condemned of old ! At least they did not know how to blaspheme God in the name of God ! Look and listen ! ”

The Official of the multitude, the slight and delicate man, bent forward, and drew many heavy bags of gold from under the base of the cross. All who were present

approached and formed a circle round him, stretching out to him their hands,—and the sweat of their cupidity streamed from their brows! And in paying, he instructed them; his voice was sharp and hissing as the grinding of a dagger over the face of a polished mirror.

“Wheresoever you may glide, be cautious and of honied sweetness!

“In the house of the old Signors, be humble and lavish of incense to their pride: in the house of the poor, flatter their poverty!

“When the husband tyrannizes over his wife, console her: when the father is hard with his sons, lend them the money of which they have need!

“The strong everywhere oppress the weak: protect the weak; and all complaints and furtive hopes, like hidden treasures, shall open before you!

“Should you find one melancholy and silent, be yourself loudly desperate: your cry of pain will awaken his voice!

“When you meet the young devoured with impatience to act, bind them on the instant by terrible oaths! Glide mysterious arms under their garments; it is with men as with grains of corn: the fuller they are, the more easily may they be hulled!

“Let your memory be eager, keen, and limitless: if the winds shake the leaves of a tree, listen to their rustling!

“Should you find a pin upon your way, pick it up and bring it here: it is of more worth than a sword, for where the sword intervenes, there is no longer time!

“Love children, and learn skillfully to play with them; as butterflies upon flowers, so repose the secret mysteries of families upon their lips!

“Knowledge is the gift of gifts. A single prison would not contain the bodies of all, but a single brain may seize upon the thoughts of all, and, like the dome of an immense dungeon, may vault above them all!

“Go and traverse the world!”

And all laden with gold, they vanished like phantoms! A rose-colored curtain was now rolled upon the other side of the subterranean abyss, and iron doors were

opened behind it. Servants entered carrying in a wretch in rags, who, as he staggered forward, roared like a beast : " Give me food, food ! drink ! drink ! My father died of hunger yesterday,—this morning my mother perished, —fever consumes me,—I must die ere night !"

The Official made a sign, a drapery of azure was suddenly opened before him, behind which stood a table, glittering and groaning under the weight of its dishes of silver, its cups of crystal. The famished man darted forward, but they held him back : " First swear fealty to us !"

" Food ! food ! afterwards I will swear !" The slight Official broke into a laugh at these words, pointed him to the cross, and the dying man fell on his knees before it.

It seemed to the Young Man that the voice of the Official sounded like the hissing of a serpent as he dictated the oath : " In the name of the Holy Trinity and the Passion of our Lord, I swear to report here all I shall see, all I shall hear, all I may divine, were it the groans of my brother, or the sighs of my sister ! Should my friends or relations imagine anything in secret, I swear to reveal it, though I know I should thus place their heads under the axe of the executioner ! Should I conceal anything from you, may I be tortured, nailed to the cross, burned by fire, and fed on poison !"

But the kneeling wretch would not repeat the words, and, falling upon the earth, he gasped : " I die !"

And the slight Official cried : " Die !" and calmly crossing his hands, he waited !

A great silence followed ; and it seemed to the Young Man that he asked the Shade : " Master, where are the souls of these men ? I do not see them, though thou hast lent me the power to perceive spirits."

And the Shade replied : " In the justice of God, no punishment has been found sufficiently severe for them, therefore, abandoned to eternal contempt, their souls are identified with their bodies. From them alone, among the myriads, has the holy gift of life been taken, and when their first bodies shall fall into corruption, these beings will no longer exist !"

At this moment the starving man, stiffening himself,

turned toward the richly-spread table : " I will swear ! " he muttered.

His eye sparkled with dying fire, while the Official stretched out his hand to him and again placed him on his knees. He began to take the oath !

Then a phantom like an angel, with a veiled brow, detached himself from space, and with outspread wings shielded the crucifix, and as long as the oath lasted, the angel thus held himself before the cross. But none of them could see him. When the last word of the oath expired, and the famished body, rising, tottered away, the face of the angel grew ghastly in its pallor, and rending the veil, he cried : " A soul, Lord, has perished ! "

This cry transpierced the heart of the Young Man, and he bowed his head under the weight of an insupportable grief.

When he again raised his eyes, he was surrounded by darkness, in the midst of which he saw unburied bones and cemeteries full of gibbets on which already swung their victims dimly floating, and they multiplied and sailed on, one after the other, like the gathering clouds of a tempest. Like whirlwinds of autumn leaves they drifted on above with mournful sighs ; thousands of voices joined the funereal murmur ; the sobs of women, the wails of children, and the hoarser groans of men ! But the Shade of Dante spake to them and said : " Unfortunate as you are, your hour will surely come, and you will live with a double immortality ; your own, and the immortality of those who have ruined you ! For, from the nothingness to which they are destined, a spirit will be disengaged which will pass into you. Calm yourselves, then, O ye unfortunate ! "

But as he spake, his own tears flowed.

And returning towards the surface of the earth, they repassed through the Armed People, who were already under arms in rows like countless statues. The blast of the trumpet and the roll of the drum, in monotonous rhythm, meted out to them time and life. Some were marched off to rest, others, stolid as stones, marched up to replace them. Some, placed in guard of prisoners, who, too weak to stand, were stretched upon the ground, watched

them breathlessly with unmoving eyes, the butt-ends of their guns upon their breasts, and their fingers upon the trigger; and at intervals the report of fire-arms, sometimes in the rear, sometimes on either side, proved that the sport of death was in process.

As the Young Man followed the steps of the Seer, the walls hollowed out through the rock began to diverge, always embracing a wider horizon, until one took its direction to the east, the other to the west, as far as the eye could follow them.

They ran on and on,—one might have said they would embrace all space,—and they increased in height and they spread in breadth, and their girdle of rock grew up into the horizon and lined the whole arch of the sky with a vault of stone, so closely that it formed a building as immense as the world, granitic, gray, without verdure, and without azure! And, far in the distance in this granite world, the Young Man perceived the phantom of a Sun nailed upon the overhanging canopy and lighting the inclosed space with its oblique rays. But its glimmer seemed rather the *sickness of light* than light itself. Innumerable throngs hurried to and fro through this wan atmosphere, as if all the nations of the earth were collected there, and, like the crossing surges of great seas, the uproar of the myriad voices broke against the granite walls of that world!

The Soul entranced by the Dream, the Soul of the Young Man, asked: "Master, where are we?"

And he answered: "In the Sanctuary which Humanity has, for the present, chosen for its Home; but from which God is absent!"

He then entered a group seated upon the threshold. Each one composing it had an open ditch before him, his own property, deep and long as a grave; and each bore upon his head a lamp which, as he stooped, lighted the dark trench before him, whence he selected the tools of various trades. Each worked with his hands, though his look was stolid as the face of an idiot; and the Young Man saw some who held in their fingers the head of a pin, and their brows were as furrowed with expressionless wrinkles as if they had passed the whole of their lives in

rounding this head of a pin ! But whenever the hour of death, tolling always in the distance, echoed nearer along the walls of this gigantic vault, here one, and then another, would bow his head, and roll with a groan into his own ditch. Then their souls became visible ; like bluish clouds, and somewhat resembling the implements of their life-long labors, they detached themselves from their bodies, and skimming along the surface of the earth, they floated on towards the yellow and distant sun !

At the approach of the Seer, the men rose, and, breaking their lamps, cried : “ If you are the gods or the demons of whom we have heard,—and it matters to us little which you are,—give us gold ! gold ! ”

And their skeletons extended their shivering hands !

The blood of indignation colored the pale face of Dante as he replied : “ Mercenary wretches, possessed by the Demon ! ” And, like inert masses, they fell to earth before the Spirit !

The face of Dante again flushed, but it was with the glow of inspiration, as he said : “ Would you understand me if I should prophesy to you of the future ? When my body advanced from the other side of the grave through the free light of the sun towards death, there were also artisans upon the earth, and the banners of their guilds floated from the terraces of the towers. They trafficked in purple, fine gold, and precious stones upon the public marts, but they carried the sword, and the rosary of prayer hung at their girdles. Their hands could guide the helm over the stormy waves, and their brains could raise invincible fortresses upon the land. They received gold ; but they washed its stain away in the blood of battle ! But you, to-day, whose fingers are as soft as wax, what could you possibly effect ? You, whose lips have never breathed a prayer ! You have no strength upon earth, no hope in heaven ! You have lost the sinews of men in the thirst for gold ! ”

A boy, beautiful as an angel, but faded before his time by the rude labor exacted from his little hands, dragged himself to him, and placing his head upon his feet, murmured, in low tones : “ Have pity upon us ! All that we can gain through the day we are forced to spend at night ;

and at the dawn of the next day we must go to work again! We have no time to pray to God, but only to work to get something to eat that we may not die of hunger; and scarcely have we eaten, when we must again work for food. Have pity upon us!"

And the Shade grew as pallid as the boy, who was wiping his feet with his fair hair, and raising his eyes, he sighed: "My child, THE PAST WILL NEVER RETURN! Pray for the FUTURE to our Father who dwells in Heaven!" And the boy went away murmuring: "In Heaven perhaps, but not upon earth."

During this time many, crawling in the dust, ground their teeth; while the Shade of Dante hurried through them like an avalanche, sweeping on elsewhere.

In the midst of this world of granite, other throngs were leaning over an immense gulf. The faces of those who looked down into it swam in a crimson light; the earth around it trembled, as if convulsed by hidden earthquakes. When the Young Man drew near, it seemed to him he saw the vast crater of a volcano, or the sunken bed of a dry lake surrounded by high and precipitous walls. The bottom was black with human heads; black as the waves in a tempest; a bloody light glowed as if from burning coals and smoking cinders like volcanic scoriæ,—and threats and curses rose continually therefrom!

As a mother folds her infant to her breast, so the Shade wound the Young Man in his arms, and glided with him into the dismal depths of this great gulf. Forms of the most savage character were there unchained, raging and seething in the abyss. Their cheeks were black with bristling beard, their sleeves tucked up to their shoulders, and their arms were blue with swollen veins like cords. Sometimes they coiled themselves into living knots; sometimes they scattered far asunder; sometimes they crawled like vipers; then stood erect in the lurid light of the flames, as men prepared for combat.

Close to the nearest fire, twelve men of gigantic size were on their knees. Their bodies were stripped to the waist, and a thirteenth advanced before them, with a dagger in the right hand and a cup in the left, and he said: "I will consecrate you!" The giants bowed their

heads devoutly, and on spots illuminated by the reflection from the coals he graved with the point of his dagger bloody letters upon their naked shoulders. None trembled, none groaned. The word EQUALITY, and the word LIBERTY, were carved in crimson wounds on every brawny shoulder. The Shade said: "Look, how carefully the thirteenth holds the cup to collect the blood flowing from the bodies of his brothers! No drop escapes him! Perhaps thou thinkest he will preserve it in testimony of the torments endured, in memory of the consecration, or show it to the People as the emblem of vengeance?"

And the Young Man whispered: "Master, will it be otherwise?"

The voice of the apparition replied, in tones like subterranean thunder: "Verily! he will sell this blood to the merchants, and at their hour of barter! Move on, and look no more."

And as they passed through, a black whirlwind of wild life, madly tossing about in the half-extinguished cinders, cried: "Are we to dwell *forever* at the bottom of this black gulf? Are we never to reach the surface of the earth, where dwell the merchants?"

Another horde of poor tatterdemalions, rekindling the coals of the furnace by the clapping of their hands, interrupted the words of the first: "Away to the Sanctuary of the Golden Sun, where the wines are sweet, the food luscious, and the garments fine! Away to the Exchange, where men always enjoy themselves, conquer power, and never once wound their hands with work, from the cradle to the grave!"

Another whirlwind of black life, pouring oil into the flames, cried: "Boldness! and we will make our way into the Banks of all Nations! Breasts of rock and claws of lions will be found among us! We can arm ourselves with iron spikes, as we have no swords."

Then the brawny masses spun together in wild whirl, clapped their hands, and cried: "In spite of all opposition from other castes, we will climb to the top of those steep cliffs! But *once*, Fate, let us sleep in the Paradise of the Rich, on their silken carpets, on their beds of down! Can it be possible to have more in Heaven than

they have upon earth? Like them, let us be happy on earth before we die!"

At this moment, the man with the dagger and the cup, leading the consecrated giants, penetrated into the midst of the howlers. The crowd saluted him with furious acclamations, crying: "When wilt thou lead us hence?" He replied: "For the present be patient; in a little while your hour cometh!" And the giants stretched forth to him their hands; their bones cracked, and the blood spurted from their fresh wounds, and their lips trembled with the oath: "With you to conquer, or with you to die!" And following their chief, they went where the long rows of gibbets, illuminated by blazing torches, glared through the gloom!

Groups of boys knelt under every scaffold, and jurists and scribes, versed in the Scriptures, were seated near them, and taught them in what way they ought to curse their fathers. The children repeated the maledictions in chorus, and if one, weaker than the rest, hesitated or wept with repugnance, the teachers fell upon him with raised lash, and the child, shielding himself with his little hands, recommenced to recite his task. The Shade of Dante, like a dark column, took a place in the midst of those kneeling rows, and seemed to listen. He suddenly uttered a loud cry, and the lesson was interrupted. The scribes and jurists grew pale, and asked: "Who spoke?" and the Shadow replied: "One of those against whom you thunder forth your imprecations. Liars and hypocrites! You are lower than the vilest reptile, for you assume a robe of moral grandeur, and you try to imitate the language of science! Look into my dead eyes, and endure if you can my glance of scorn! Ah! you are utterly ignorant of what constitutes the liberty of the spirit! Woe! woe! you understand nothing but the well-being of the body!"

Then he called the children to him, and stretching his hands above those who surrounded him and in the direction of those who were more distant, he blessed them all and said: "Do not believe the falsehoods you have been taught! It is you who are to-day slaves! The fathers of your fathers were free in the simplicity of their own

hearts. Faith in God was their buckler against the oppression of men. Their souls were as fresh as the young verdure of the spring. In the cabin of the valley, or the chateau on the hill, they were everywhere true to themselves; their love was really love, and their worship was a true combat! In this vast world of to-day, love is no longer to be found; in this vast world of to-day, there is no *true* combat!"

It seemed to the Young Man that one of the jurists rose and advanced towards Dante, grasping in his hands the double barrel of his gun, and he was blind in one eye, and he cried: "Equality! murder!"

His hat was placed awry upon his head, and the word PEOPLE was embroidered in great letters upon it. He stumbled as he walked, and when he stopped he cocked his gun and began to harangue. His one eye rolled in its socket, and the froth flowed from his lips. But the pale shade interrupted his discourse: "Thy fury exhales in vain sounds, in which there are no thoughts. Not words, but acts; not blood, but the *concord of the citizens must form and maintain* a Republic! The brute alone lives in thee; the spirit is dead! Before ten years shall have passed away, thou wilt have betrayed the People!"

The eye of the speech-maker became blood-shot, and, seized by a secret terror, he lowered the barrel of his gun. The Shade said to the Young Man: "Such souls merit contempt. The wave that flings itself most violently against the sands makes the most noise:—human bosoms are the waves of this world!"

The ground now began to descend; the light from the gibbets still shone, but ever more and more feebly. Behold! afar off appeared numberless little livid stars, like the night-lamps in a hospital. Each star was fixed above a mat of reeds, on which lay a woman: a whole People of women lay here, and groaned, sighed, and wept, and ever and anon broke forth a last cry of pain, a shriek of mortal anguish; and as they died away, again commenced low sobs and sighs and wails, and they prolonged themselves ever farther in the distance, and ever lower in the depths of the subterranean vaults!

At the sight of Dante, one of the women rose, un-

rolled her long, floating tresses, and twisted their masses round her hands; and the Young Man saw that her soul was inwoven in those meshes, and streamed down their golden length with horrible writhings of pain. And she said: "Whosoever thou mayst be, tell me—and thou, also: tell me, both of you,—why they have forced me to glide down from the warm surface of the earth to its uttermost abysses? As long as my body was graceful and fair I walked in the sunshine, and everybody was kind to me. But when like the flower I faded,—as the loveliest flower must fade,—they seized me and hurled me down among those who rot in the sepulchre where there is weeping and gnashing of teeth! When *men* grow old, the young honor them in song; but we, alas! long before the hour of our death, they order us to lie down in the grave! We complain, we supplicate, we entreat, we appeal! But they are afar; they hear us not. Then our agony begins; ah! they have gone still farther off; they hear us no longer; they will not come even to say farewell; and there is nothing left us but to die!"

As she spoke, others rose, and, standing upon their feet, cried: "Justice! justice!" And after these, others, striking their breasts, sobbed and cursed! Streams of tears flowed from their eyes, poured down their long, disheveled locks, and then fell rippling to the ground with the dull rustling of autumnal rain. Scarcely would the weaker and more exhausted among them rise when they would fall back anew; while those who had not been able to rise at all dragged themselves along upon their hands and knees, and many, veiling their faces with their hands in sad memory of their lost beauty, turned towards the apparition, and nothing but the fire of two burning eyes about to die out forever could be seen between the tapering fingers.

The Young Man then perceived some old men in long, black robes, carrying vases of holy water, which they sprinkled freely over the sufferers, while they chanted in low and melancholy cadence. Some of the women bowed their heads patiently, and at once went sweetly to sleep upon their mats. Others knelt, kissed the hands of the old men, and murmured to them the interminable

recital of their sorrows. But she who had first arisen, twisting her hair still more violently, cried to them: "Yonder, on the surface of the earth, the men would no longer listen to you; but they said to you: 'Go, and be our spies on the women we have left to perish! When their souls are tearing themselves loose from their bodies, stifle their complaints! When they break into curses against us, close their lips, for their groans are not pleasant to our ears! Often when they struggle to fling themselves forth from this gulf into which we have cast them, they spoil our festivals, and interrupt our philosophical speculations!' You obeyed, you descended, you are here! Your task is to teach us to die *silently!* But *I will not die in silence!* I will perish crying aloud: 'I had a soul; I have a soul; and on earth they would never acknowledge in me anything but a body! Be Thou the judge of it, O God! Thou who hast given me a living soul!'"

And as the eyes of the Young Man were fixed upon her, he saw her soul in a final convulsion tear itself loose from the tangled meshes of her hair, and float above the lamps athwart the gloom, like a veil of blood pierced by a thousand needles!

The Seer passed on lost in thought, as if with repugnance, and answering nothing. At last they reached a white couch in a lonely spot and at a great distance from all others. A lamp burned under a crucifix placed against a pillar of white marble, and a woman in black was upon her knees before it. Her face was turned away from the shadow of the Seer, who stopped and remained standing in silence, as if wrapped in deep melancholy.

"Master, who is she?" demanded the Young Man.

The Shade replied: "I have seen one form like that,—it was years ago,—once here, upon the earth,—a second time above, in Heaven! When she turns her head, we will know who she is."

And he remained standing there, without interrupting the prayer of the woman.

And it appeared to the Young Man that he saw kneeling by the side of the woman in black a woman in white, exactly like the first, except that in place of being quite

veiled with long hair, she had two angel wings softly bent in the form of a cross and folded above her shoulders. And these wings were furrowed with deep wounds, and in each wound a nail was deeply sunk, which kept the wings from unfolding. A moment after, these two forms melted into each other,—and once more there was only the kneeling figure in mourning.

Then the Shade said: "Lo! she has finished her prayer, for her soul of snow has disappeared." And he added, as if in spite of himself: "Beatrice!"

The woman in black turned round, and said: "She who bore this name years and years ago knew nothing but Paradise upon this earth, for she perished in the first spring of life;—and she knew nothing but Paradise beyond this earth, for Heaven immediately received her into its bosom! But, miserable me! none ever compensated me for the loss of my first spring by a second! That is not my name!"

And wringing her hands, she stood erect and white as alabaster.

And when the Seer conjured her to speak, she began in these words: "I was born in a land of milk and honey, which is to-day called the land of sepulchres and of crosses,—and which is also called the LAND OF AGONY! You have heard me spoken of there! But a thousand tongues had poisoned and torn my name before it reached your ears. At first my parents called me: Innocent, Lovely, Blessed,—afterwards they gave me another name: SLAVE!

"For in accordance with the customs of the world, while still a child and knowing nothing of love, I was given, or rather sold, to a husband. Oh! weep for me and for my sisters, who, as yet young, knowing nothing and feeling nothing, go without volition to deliver themselves up, body and soul, to those who know all and have already felt all,—to whom nevertheless knowledge has not given the light of the angel, but rather the astute decrepitude of the demon!

"I bore all,—for all may be endured in this sad world save one feeling: contempt! When like a dagger it penetrates between two beings,—the handle in the heart of

the one, and the point in the heart of the other,—how can they pursue together the same path in life? Wretched beings, only riveted to one another by this mortal blade! How can they break together every day the same bread, even until death,—then a blessing,—comes to separate them? I tried to *force* my own will,—’twas all in vain! I cried to God! He would not hear! He must have despised me!”

Ralapsing into silence, she again stood erect and immovable, pale, and white as alabaster!

And when the Seer again adjured her, she replied, with broken sobs: “Nay, I will not answer to God Himself upon the Day of Judgment! I alone know it! I alone remember it!

“I still see the Palace, the long avenue of flowering lindens, and the sun setting behind the perfumed branches. I see myself still under them; still feel myself walking about as if in a magnetic sleep! Had it not been said during the last few days that something mysterious was preparing in my country? An indefinable presentiment floated in the air, saddening the perfume of the new-mown hay, as if the plague were about to breathe upon us, or as if men were preparing to rise and combat where they must inevitably perish by thousands! My husband, delicate, white, and slight as a woman, also walked about and seemed to expect something, some one! Ah! he waited with a smile which I can never, never forget!

“Men then began to glide into the garden from all sides. I knew this one, that one, another, I knew them all! They were relations, friends, neighbors! He grasps their hands, he promises them, he swears faith! The sun sets. He begs them to lay aside their arms, sit down, and enter for the last time into consultation. They obey, and seat themselves upon the turf. But he! He claps his hands, gives a signal,—his hissing is like that of a serpent! Soldiers! . . . soldiers! . . . everywhere soldiers! . . .

“Ask me nothing,—I have borne the name of that man; . . . I have sworn to be faithful to him even to the grave! I will not give him up to you, as he has given his brothers up to the enemy! . . .

"Hear now my third name upon the earth: DISHONORED!

"Men, know ye wherefore? Because despair tore my heart—and there came a day when I was loved,—and in that day I believed in Beauty, Goodness, Wisdom, even upon earth? Because, when dying, I raised my head and cried: How blessed it is to spring from the grave into the skies!—Because I dared to love!"

Again was she silent, again motionless and white as alabaster.

And when the Seer for the third time adjured her, she murmured, in a low voice: "Then follow me!" Taking the lamp from below the crucifix, she left the place where the People of women lay prostrate behind her, and followed a tortuous path far through the subterranean space. The walls of the narrow dungeons contracted and lengthened before the thin hand as it approached them, bearing the lamp with its doubtful and uncertain light.

Everywhere around her were walls reeking with humidity; everywhere a low and stifling vault! No sound of footsteps was there ever heard; no breath ever played with the doubtful flame of the lamp! The Young Man continued to advance, although he felt ever more languid, more weary and oppressed. It seemed to him that the very air necessary for breath failed on all sides; that an invisible weight crushed him to the earth; that the blood congealed in his veins, and it seemed to him that he cried to himself: "I will go no farther!"

The lady in the funereal robes then turned round, and, lifting the glimmering lamp above his forehead, said: "Although thou art a man, and a strong and courageous one, thou canst not endure to breathe for a single hour here, where all my weary years forever flow and reflow! Go! Go, in peace!"

But the Seer sadly asked: "Tell me, where then is he who loved thee?"

Suddenly casting down her eyes, she answered: "There! where his destiny as man precipitated him! He tore me from my solitude of heart: and left me in the utter solitude of spirit! I loved him,—he has left me!"

Then showing a distant stone which whitened in the

midst of the darkness, she said: "Wrapped in its wings my soul is buried there! This which you see is only a body which has not yet been able to die!"

And, overpowered by grief, she fell upon her knees and cried: "Thou who knowest, tell us if it will be thus forever?"

And for the first time her tears began to flow.

And the Seer, placing his hand upon her brow, said: "Until now you have been as the Heavenly Lilies, which bloom knowing naught of their colors and perfumes. The day is coming when each of you will change into a Thinking Rose. The chords of inspiration will escape from the hands of the men, and will pass into yours! Kneeling at your feet, they will then implore from you a hymn of consolation, a prophecy of hope, a vision of beauty,—for their destiny will then have led them into prosaic and unendurable cares, into hard and harsh labors! But absorbed in the contemplation of God, you will not cast a glance upon them, you will not hear their sighs. Then will *their* hearts break, as *yours have done for ages!*"

"Tell me yet more!" said the lady in black, appealing to Dante with beseeching look.

He proceeded: "This will continue until the hour of a new transformation sounds for you. Then you will again stretch forth your hands to them; through love you will save the dying hearts; and you will become as their sisters,—forever their equals upon earth and in Heaven!"

But the lady in black weeping with ever-increasing emotion, he added: "Recall thy soul, and be not afraid, for if it were possible for anything to perish, it would be seen that in the judgments of the Lord the star of the glory of men would sooner be forever extinguished than the tears of *one* unfortunate woman be suffered to flow in vain!"

And when, kneeling, she appeared more tranquil, Dante left her, and, bearing off the Young Man with him, walked directly to the grave, and as they passed the tomb which whitened in the darkness, he said: "Verily, she will die in these shadows and will rest here;—for the time *will* come;—but it is not yet come!"

And, having blessed the grave, as if borne upward by his own power he rose through the air into higher regions.

Through the opening between the precipices, but very, very high above him, the Young Man saw the granite vault covering the world! And as he rose from the depths, it widened in its livid light. He could already distinguish the clangor of a thousand jarring bells, the incessant pattering of quick steps, the sound of myriads of footfalls, and the groanings of pavements echoing beneath the tread of thronging men. And when the apparition stopped on the edge of the opening, and with a sign of his hand swept the Young Man on like a whirlwind, he saw all the Nations of the Earth making their way toward the Yellow Sun; and under this sun stood a gigantic black platform, upon which many thrones glittered in the distance.

Like vapors rising into air, like rushing streams, like hunted herds, the throngs crowd, hurry, jostle one another; all, all rushing in the same direction! The sound of countless invisible bells buzzes through space; old and young men, women and children, brush and bustle on, pass and repass, scramble hurriedly onward! Vainly do the old implore the young to retard their steps, to stop a single moment and to take them with them. The young refuse to turn, they will not even listen,—they run on! Pale, weary maidens forced to stop, weep and beg their brothers, supplicate their lovers, to wait a moment for them;—they will not even spare the time to recognize them,—they run and run! Mothers with babies at their breasts join in the race; suddenly a child on one side or the other is knocked down; it shrieks aloud, stretches out its little hands, and lies upon the pavement. From all sides the crowd presses and jostles on; the mothers turn not back nor stoop to rescue;—they too run and run.

The Young Man stopped above one of these little bodies crushed under the trampling feet, and asked: "Master, is it the hour of the Last Judgment?"

The Apparition, veiling his face, replied: "It is only the hour of the Judgment of the Merchants: it is the hour of the Exchange and the Marts!"

At these words, the Apparition transported the Young

Man from side to side across the space of this world to the opposite point, where were the Yellow Sun and the gigantic black platform; and it seemed to the Young Man that, as if borne upon wings, he remained suspended at the height of the platform, and lower than the sun:—and the figure of the Master wrapped itself in bitter scorn—and disappeared!”

This sun seemed to be of gold with artificial rays, and the platform was of black marble, with stairways which led to many brilliant thrones. Upon those thrones sat the Bankers and Merchants chosen among the wandering tribes of the Orient; they were clad in flowing robes, wore long gray beards, and purple fillets round their brows;—and under their feet lay enormous sacks full of sonorous metal.

And sometimes broken cries proceeded from the sacks, as it were complaints, prayers, demands, and reproaches. The Young Man perceived that these cries came from the souls of the merchants wailing, hidden and chained, in the bags of gold. And the more the unhappy souls complained, the more the rage of the merchants increased, and, trampling and crushing the sacks underfoot, they thus silenced the moans of their own souls!

And when the Wretched souls were silenced, with careless and rough voices they commenced their consultation, designating from time to time with their hands one or other of the innumerable throngs of Peoples which approached them on every side. A dense mass of black vapor rose, overspreading space, above these hustling Peoples; it was deeply furrowed with tawny lights; and the Young Man understood it was the form of all those human souls united and overhanging their bodies, above which they lowered like mists of blood, like melting scoriæ, like immense furnaces dying into darkness.

Like ice-floes broken by tossing waves, like the rushing of wind-driven tempests, the Nations advanced under the lurid reflections of their souls, as if under a Hell floating above them! Sometimes were heard the cries of those who fell, or the dull groans of those who were crushed and stifled underfoot by the crowd. One of the merchants rose, gave a signal, and on one side of the

platform enormous slabs of stone were immediately raised, subterranean caverns opened, and long files of soldiers issued therefrom, who, mute and statue-like, with primed arms and bayonets glittering on the points of their guns, marched and placed themselves in line, three deep, on either side of the stairway of marble.

And the roaring of the crowd, the uproar, the groans, the complaints, the appeals, redoubled. Each nation, each tribe, each throng tried to thrust itself foremost in the race ; endeavored to force for itself the first passage. Masses formed of thousands of hands, heads, breasts, were overturned, prostrated, or driven forward. Sometimes the reflection of the bloody light shone luridly upon them ; sometimes the air was gray, livid, heavy. Like a deluge of waves and clouds, like water-spouts driven by the wind, they at last reached the foot of the platform. The clicking of the firelocks of the muskets was heard as the soldiers adjusted them for instant use. A dead silence for a moment ensued, and a merchant rose and cried : "The marts are open ; the sales commence !" The clangor of bells everywhere ringing again jarred upon the ear, multiplying until the sound was lost in distant space.

Then the merchant closely questioned the men on the occurrences of the days last passed, and as the voices of the Princes and Sages set over the various divisions of men replied from below, announcing the combats, the massacres, the discoveries, and inventions, his associates, standing behind him, deliberated, and concerted their plans :—and again a dead silence ensued. The murmuring of the voices of the merchants alone was to be heard in the world of granite. The red lights in the atmosphere grew pale ; the souls of the men were blanched with expectation !

Several minutes thus elapsed. The merchant then announced how much certain interests had increased in value ; how much certain others had decreased upon the earth ; and from these heady throngs, who almost held their breaths to hear, a perfect avalanche of applause, of curses, of cries, threats, and sobs hurtled through the air ! Among the masses some cried : "We must die of hunger !" while others bellowed : "Hurrah ! hurrah for

the merchants! Long live the all-powerful merchants!" Some leaped wild with joy, clapping their hands and shouting: "We have won! We have won!" And others groaned out: "O merchants! O our gods! have mercy upon us!" Then they began again to quarrel, to fight, to beat, to choke, to kill one another:—and among the bodies, some rolled upon the earth, and others trampled over them, crushing them without pity!

The Young Man saw thousands of corpses trampled underfoot in front of the platform; and passing in unbroken order over the dead bodies, he saw the living begin to ascend the steps of marble. With the sceptre in their hands, and the sword at their sides, the Princes, surrounded by the Grand Dignitaries of the Nations, marched at their heads. A glittering arch formed by the bayonets of the soldiers rose above them, and protected them as they advanced; and when they had arrived midway up the giant staircase, the merchants descended to meet them, and, clasping them by the hand, conducted them higher.

All the Workers of this world began to ascend behind them: the manufacturers and the artisans, the lenders and shopkeepers, some carrying various kinds of merchandise, some immense bags, others undulating rolls of paper closely covered with writing. As they reached the midway of the giant stairs, they were all ordered to stop, while a voice of thunder from above demanded their names. Turn by turn they replied in the denomination of the trade, the merchandise, the manufacture they severally represented, or by some adopted number; for none among them possessed or were any longer known by any proper *human name* in this world!

Behold! after this black surge of people, and following in their wake, appeared a strange group of melancholy men bowed towards the ground. They held antique swords in their hands, and wore battered and rusty armor upon their shoulders. At this moment the Young Man heard the words: "Look! those are the last descendants of the old nobility!" And glancing rapidly around him, he saw the Apparition again at his side.

This train also mounted the giant stairs until it reached

midway, and then each man took his station upon a great block of marble, and seemed suddenly to become enraged against the arms he had hitherto borne; striking, breaking, pounding, and crushing them with axe and hammer. The Apparition said: "Look at them! They are trying to extract the gold of Damascus, the turquoises of Persia, from the bucklers of their ancestors! They are tearing the diamonds, tarnished by the lapse of centuries, from those heaps of arms and sabres, in order to carry them to the merchants; they will sell to them the last remains of ancient glory!" While the Shade of Dante thus complained, they threw down the fragments of their armor; helmets, cuirasses, breastplates, and daggers rang as they fell upon the pavement, and glittered as they broke into sparkling fragments.

Then the sons of the valiant of old arose and ascended higher, stretching out their hands, full of gold and sparkling gems, toward the merchants; and thus being allowed to advance, they supplicated in humble tones that they might be permitted to enter among the merchants and princes. A sign was made to them from above that their request was granted. They proffered many thanks, and, speaking now in louder tones, they began to haggle, cavil, and bargain about the price of their merchandise, their precious jewels. The features of Dante writhed with pain; the blood burst from his torn lips, and he groaned out: "No. The Hell of the ancients never caused me so much agony!"

Placing his transparent hand upon the head of the Young Man, he said: "Remember!" . . . But at that very moment he again disappeared. Melting into the transparent air, he was seen no longer.

A funereal groan, rising into a cry of fury, now rang through this world, howling up from the depths of the abyss: floating above the nations, it broke at last, with fearful violence, against the Platform! The Princes and the Great of Earth grew suddenly pale; but the countenances of the merchants did not change; a strange smile only writhed their lips as they fondly caressed their gray beards.

Look! look! Giant forms break their way through

the very centre of the black masses; they come, they come! They grow in numbers as they draw nearer! And as they approached him the Young Man recognized the Twelve who had been consecrated, and the Thirteenth, their chief, who held in his right hand the dagger, and in his left the cup of blood.

And as he advanced, his face seemed to float above the sea of human heads, power streamed from it, and genius flashed around it. Leading his Giants to the first step, he ordered them to take their seats, and there await his return. And quite alone and asking permission from none, and motioning away with his hands the bayonets of the soldiers, he ascended,—gigantic, irresistible, and irrepressible, shaking his thick hair as if it were the mane of a lion!

One of the merchants descended to meet him, and introduced him upon the platform even into the very midst of the circle of consultation. But at this moment it seemed to the Young Man that the eyes of the Giant lost their fire, and the lion-like power of his brow grew mild. Standing boldly, however, in the midst of the merchants, he cried, in a voice resonant as thunder: "I am here for the last time, to summon you in the name of the Oppressed and Wretched! For the last time we cry: 'Share with us, or die! Division or Death!'"

The twelve martyrs left at the foot of the platform greeted this cry with enthusiastic acclaim; thousands and thousands among the multitude repeated it, and the abyss sent it back in echoes of thunder.

The giant leaned forward, and threw his double-bladed sword upon the ground; then stooping still lower, he bent and bent until his forehead had quite disappeared from the gaze of the nations. Thus contracted, he seated himself upon one of the thrones of the merchants, and said, in a low voice: "Answer without delay! How much will you give me for this cup of blood?"

When the merchants had told him the price they had fixed upon it, he said: "It is not enough for the blood I offer you to-day! Have you the slightest idea of what is going on in the abyss? Have you ever had sufficient courage to descend therein? Severed as we may have

been, we are all thoroughly united now ; they await my return, ploughing their breasts with their nails in rage ; desperate and resolute ; tearing their hair and howling with fury ! Should they be again deceived to-day after so many juggles, I cannot answer for them. They may break into open revolt. Pleasant flattery, skillful phrases, honeyed promises, will no longer appease them ; maddened in their lair, their wild arms are already raised to strike a fatal blow ! And you pause in this deadly hour to chaffer and traffic with me ? Merchants and masters of the world, is not your luxurious and fortunate position worth a handful of gold to him who risks his life to aid you to rescue it ?”

The merchants answered : “ Every day you repeat this same story in our ears ! However, on condition that you will urge no further claims, we will pay more for the blood you have now brought us.”

And after much consultation, they offered him a larger sum. But he again refused. “ It is not enough for the blood I have brought to-day !” And lifting up the cup, he pretended to be in haste to leave the throne.

One of the merchants then unloosed from the band he wore upon his head an enormous diamond, and said : “ This is a nail from the cross of Golgotha, which was thus transformed during the night in which your God expired ! It was torn from the wood at early dawn the next morning by one of my own ancestors. Since that time it has always been preserved in my family. Will this diamond repay you for the blood of your brothers ?”

The Giant cast a glance upon it ; then lowering the cup, he poured out all the blood it contained at the feet of the merchants, and said : “ The nail is mine !” The Jew threw the diamond into the empty chalice, which rang in melancholy cadence as it fell !

The chief of the Sacrifice then rose, and wended his way back to the nations of the world. He broke forth in threats and curses as he descended to his brothers, who cried to him : “ When ? Where ?”

He replied to them in angry tones : “ Follow me immediately ! Our hour is not yet ; but it will surely

come!" And inducing them to follow him, he broke away through the multitudes to the entrance of the abyss.

The merchants who had bargained with him then announced to the nations that perfect peace and absolute security reigned upon earth; that every one would now be allowed to ascend and descend, to trade, buy, and sell. Upon the thrones above sat all the merchants and all the princes; at their feet lay the company of nobles upon the marble; they supported their heads upon the sonorous sacks in which the souls of the merchants moaned, and clasped in the hollows of their hands the precious gems they had torn from their swords and armor,—and thus they lay extended, immovable, disarmed, their brows contracted and great tears in their eyes.

And the common men incessantly rushed up and down the great stairs in two contrary currents; a constant uproar prevailed among the people, disputing, haggling, and agreeing about prices: and the howling multitude below also bargained, traded, bought and sold.

Poor wretches down there were also crying that they had lost all chance of making their daily bread: but no one heeded their complaints. Countless groups were there, burning with fever or shivering with cold: but no one deigned to look at them. Crushed and mutilated bodies were here and there lying about, still moving their white lips and muttering: "Help! Help!" but no hand was stretched out to aid them!

While these things were passing upon the earth, the reflection of all those souls which had at first inundated space with a bloody light now became of a livid, ghastly hue. As if hearts were breaking, one after the other, all those fires, rays, lights, fell and died out. Then the smoke, hanging round and wreathing itself about the cornices of granite, overhung the walls of the edifice like a black cupola, obscuring the Yellow Sun, and filling the immense structure with darkness from base to pinnacle. In the heart of this gloom, the Bankers of the Orient alone still sat upon their thrones. And the world was all one black Exchange! and the merchants were kings of the earth!

All these pictures and images, mingling and fusing, began to surge, grow dim, and disappear before the eyes

of the Young Man. In the midst of this fog, always thicker and more dismal, the figure of Dante, sad but tranquil, again became visible; and the Young Man caught the tones: "Depart from this Hell of the base!" And at these words a vivifying cold, like a breath of fresh night air, swept over his temples.

The Apparition took him by the hand, and moved before him over white and silent clouds, permeated by the faint perfume of an invisible verdure! From time to time also the sapphire of the sky was seen to break, and little stars glittered in the distance. Lo! on a sudden a deep groan floated on behind the clouds, filled them, and then died away; but scarcely had it expired before a second rose,—then a third,—then a fourth,—lo! a multitudinous wail of protracted pain! And the clouds of silver opened before it like flocks of frightened swans.

And it seemed to the Young Man that he and the Seer stopped upon one of the clouds, and that from it, as from a high balcony, they looked down upon a vast plain and round a circle of pure azure illuminated by a full moon. It seemed to him that before him in the plain he saw, as it were, a forest of tall, slim trees; they resembled pines, but were cut in a most singular manner, for on each tall trunk but two branches had been left; and every tree rose upon its own mound. Meanwhile, the groans became more and more frequent,—each of them thrilled the air like a clap of thunder, and resounded and re-echoed through space, like the death-cries of thousands of men suffering together!

The Shade asked: "Seest thou the Purgatory of our present days?"

The Young Man answered: "I see nothing save this forest and the sky."

The Seer slowly raised his hands and said: "For the second time thou wilt receive the gift of vision, for with the same sight with which thou seest into the vile thou canst not perceive the generous. But first listen attentively to what I have to say to thee:

"THERE IS NO DEATH! Its frightful semblance alone *is*! The Lord formed it nowhere, nor ever: for He lives everywhere and forever! No one dies eternally save

through an *utter* and *voluntary* degradation, and for him who thus ends there is no longer existence nor tomb. He is degraded to utter nothingness; he is absorbed in his own debasement. Perhaps in the circling thousands of centuries something may yet reawaken within him. . . . But no! Such a one will never be purified nor have part in the resurrection! But whosoever is to live again must be transformed, and every transformation bears temporarily the appearance of death. Such is the probation of the grave. Full of mockery, of tears, of grief, of illusion! Individuals and races, the Humanity and the worlds, must alike submit to it,—every immortal must traverse it. He who has not been able to bear it has perished forever! Be lion-hearted, Henry, for such probations are about to open before thee!”

And placing his fingers upon his eyelids, he breathed upon them.

It seemed to the Young Man that from every pine-tree in this great forest the form of a man crucified started forth! He then perceived a multitude of bodies, palpitating and bloody, thus suspended in the air,—and at every moment their numbers augmented. Rank succeeded to rank in the wan light of the moon; they widened, they lengthened, they extended here, there, ever farther, even to the most distant limits of the horizon. All space is living, breathing, palpitating, shivering with them! And the Young Man knew it was an ENTIRE NATION extended in the Passion of Christ upon its own soil,—and his eyes swam in tears!

And the Shade said: “Look! in spite of thy horror, turn not away! To conquer suffering we must master the science of grief! Look into this limitless forest, how, by a premeditated and powerful effort, every tree, stripped of its branches, has been made into a cross! See how each cross rises from a mound of heaped ruins; and those ruins are the skeletons of churches, of homes once full of happy life!

“And everywhere between each mound there are equal intervals,—but nowhere are there bushes, flowers, nor turf! As blocks of stone are transmuted into a city, so have these forests been transformed into a vast cemetery

of torture ! None but a perfect Torturer could thus measure out grief, thus arrange the machinery of death !”

When the Young Man looked again, it seemed to him that he saw upon the mounds streamers and ribbons of fog silvered by the moon, and although there was no wind to stir them, he observed that sometimes they rose and sometimes they fell, as if they too suffered and could find no rest. And he recognized that they were bands of women and children, dressed in white and standing under the crosses. He saw their light hands raised towards the tops of the trees, like white wings, which would, but could not, soar high enough to reach them, and which, in despair of power, fell back to earth. Then began a hymn of mingled shuddering and prayer, which died away in sobs and tears !

And the warm blood trickled from above upon those snowy groups, poured upon them, and flowed, ever renewed, among the mounds, and could be heard from afar like threatening and swollen torrents. It seemed to the Young Man that the Apparition again addressed him : “ Turn not thine eyes from those multitudes, who are melting away in rivers of blood ! The Crucified are about to feel the shivering and convulsion of Death and Transition ! They cannot die, but they will be given over to the agony of death,—and you must contemplate and meditate upon it. I command it : look !”

At this moment the cry of myriads of victims broke upon the ear like claps of thunder,—the trees, even to the utmost limit of the plain, cracked and creaked,—and voices which break the heart shook the air like a hurricane. Tossed by the same whirlwind of grief, all the bodies shuddered and writhed upon their crosses,—and as the summer rain after a sharp clap of thunder pours more heavily, so everywhere spouted and fell thicker streams of blood ! Then this wild tempest of human torture began to abate ; the plain gradually sank into silence ; the crosses fell back into immobility and order ; again all was mute as death,—nothing save the incessant dropping of blood was now to be heard.

A sudden laugh rose upon and rent the air ! The Young Man cast his eyes immediately below him, and in

front of the first row of crosses, in the open plain, he saw a far higher and far larger mound ; it was black, and composed entirely of ruins and cinders,—like the wrecks of a city after a great conflagration. The remains of cannon and broken swords and arms still pierced through the surface of that vast heap of coals and ashes,—and a livid smoke oozed everywhere from it, wrapping its clouds round a Giant, who was seen standing upon the ruins !

A ray of the moon at that moment fell upon him and glittered on the points of his crown of steel, so that his soldier's cloak, bound by an iron chain, could be clearly seen ; but instead of a sword, a many-thonged whip of leather, which fell to the very feet of this monarch, hung from its heavy links. Whenever the groans of the crucified were heard, he stretched his head forward to listen ; and when the broken sobs of the women rose high upon the air, he responded by clapping his hands ! The Shade of Dante said : “ Behold, the perfect Butcher ! Listen ! he will tempt them in their agony ! ”

Then it seemed to the Young Man that the crowned Giant leaned over his mound, and stretching forth one hand toward the martyred multitude, while with the other he grasped his belt of chains and his whip of thongs as if they were a sword, he cried : “ Forget the Past : Renounce the Future ! Deny your country and your God ! It is I ! I will be your Past—your Future—your Country—your God ! Worship me ! and as I have ordained that you should be nailed upon these crosses, I will ordain that you shall be taken down ! I will call my slaves, and they shall deliver you, and I will make you a happy People ! I will give you plenty to eat, plenty to drink, and you shall have all things in abundance ! Your emaciated and mutilated bodies will regain their early vigor ; they will grow fat and whole ! ”

But the crucified multitude made no reply ; they uttered not a single plaint ! Only the blood which inundated the soil swelled into a mighty torrent, and like the waves of the sea beat against the mound, and through all the roar of the hurrying shock the Young Man caught the word : No ! The snowy clouds of women made no reply, but when the flood rolled back, they knelt, and raised their

infants in their arms : and the little voices of the children lifted in the air cried : No ! And scarcely had the murmur of the thousands of little voices risen upon the wind, when a marvelous luminosity inundated space—and the Young Man lifted his eyes !

And lo ! above, but very, very high, at the utmost summit of the wan dome of azure, it seemed as if two milky-ways were descending from the celestial vault, and they formed an immense, vast, and luminous cross, and a Form was seen extended upon this cross, which approached ever nearer and nearer. The Arms were outspread above the world, and with every moment their arc enlarged and increased its span. And upon the Brow which pierced into the Heavens was a Crown of Thorns, which, like heat-lightning, flashed in silence, and in the hollows of the Hands and Feet the Young Man saw three shining wounds, like three red moons, and from them forever flowed, as it were, rainbows of blood, and each rainbow as it fell broke into swarms of stars, which scattered through and illumined Space.

And thus in glory and in blood, crucified, but continually creating, the Figure floated down, ever lower, lower, casting sunshine into the uttermost abysses, until the milky-ways upon which it was borne grew into two immeasurable rings of silver, encircling the horizon from the East to the West, from the North to the South ; while from the blood that flowed millions of stars sprang into being, and they shrouded the Form in light, like a veil woven of stars. The Eyes alone still pierced through, like two living founts of lightning, not dispersing over the universe, but falling straight from Heaven to earth, until they lighted in their fullness upon the Forest of the Crucified !

And all the pale and bloody bodies, and all the sinking heads and corpse-like faces, with their dying eyes, were fully pictured in this Divine Gaze ! It seemed to the Young Man that he saw the whole Crucified Nation floating there in a sea of celestial light ! and he cried : " Too late ! too late ! "

The Shade of Dante, kneeling upon a cloud, then said : " Verily ! verily ! This is the Purgatory of the present

days, for each *body* here must endure its passion; but over the *soul* of this Nation watches the *Mysterious, the Beloved!*"

But as the Young Man struck his breast, wept, and refused to be comforted, the Master continued: "Weep not for these, but for those below who inhabit the world of granite, for there is dissolution, damnation, and hell! Here there is only *grief!* Have I not told thee the *spirit resuscitates from grief?* but *from infamy there is no resurrection!*"

The curtain of clouds fell low as he spake: and the plain, the forest, the heavens, and the gaze of flame of the Divine Form,—all disappeared!

The air now grew lighter, fresher, clearer. The crown which glittered upon the brow of the Seer vanished. And it seemed to the Young Man that he again saw the interior of a chapel, the fields, the mountains, and the rising sun. Stretching out his hands, he cried: "Master! master! Show me Heaven—it is the third—upon the earth!"

The Shade of Dante condensed again into a form, and appeared entire in the midst of the dawning light. But his voice had other tones; as if already from afar, and returning to the glory whence he had come, the Young Man heard: "Until the present hour there have been in your world only Hell and Purgatory. But the Spirit of the Lord has chosen His dwelling in your bosoms! You are like abysses; and in your depths also hides the blue of Heaven! Let Faith bathe it in its light, let your holy will force it to external manifestation, let it surround you on all sides, let it fill your horizon! It is the miracle of love! Then will Heaven begin to dawn upon the earth. But watch with care, for no other path will lead you there: neither blind chance, nor fatal destiny, nor the caprices of license, nor the delusions of pride. Woe! woe to the centuries, should infernal violence attack the mercy of God! For God, your Creator, has respected you to such a degree as to leave you free to attack even Himself; to conquer Him through your own evil:—but conquered, He, who is the very Being of every being, will abandon you, and in exchange for eternal life there will only remain in you an eternal void, an eternal want, an eternal

nothingness ! Watch closely, then, over the destinies of your planet !”

And vanishing in the glory of the light of dawn—leaving in the air a last trace of silver—through circles ever larger and more luminous,—like a whirlpool of agitated waters—like the breath of dying winds—like a passing dream,—the figure of Dante mounted in space,—far into the light of the sun,—then it sped on into the invisible Infinite !

THE UNDIVINE COMEDY.

“To the accumulated errors of their ancestors they added aults unknown to them,—Hesitation and Fear: therefore it came to pass that they vanished from the face of the earth, and a deep silence fell upon them.”

L'ANONYME.

“To be, or not to be, that is the question.”

HAMLET.

(WRITTEN IN 1834-1835.)

Translation collated from the version in German by R. Batornicki, Leipzig, 1841; from the version in French in the Revue des Deux Mondes, Oct. 1, 1846; and from that published by Ladislas Mickiewicz, in Paris, 1869: “Œuvres Complètes du Poète Anonyme.”

IN this drama, or rather *dramatic vision*, our Author desires to point out to his countrymen the two rocks which he dreads for them: the first, is that alluring enthusiasm which is born of the imagination rather than of the heart, which seduces by its antique and brilliant forms, but is powerless to understand, and consequently to create, anything in the Present; the second, is that excess of material force which destroys without rebuilding, which pulls down without reconstructing, because, like the baseless idealism, it also lacks the vivifying inspiration of the heart. These two excesses are represented in the persons of Count Henry and Pancras. The one, led astray by the phantoms of love and glory, sacrifices the happiness of his family, the interests of his country, to a double chi-

mera ; the other, after having conquered the world by the power of his intellect, and having multiplied ruins and piled corpses around him, is overwhelmed by the conviction of his own impotence, totters and expires in the face of a superior power, which he, as well as the Count, had not acknowledged. Is it necessary to name that power ? It is Christianity, which, subjecting both the imagination and the intellect to the heart, places its ideal in the union of these three Divine forces. Thus not without design does our Poet represent the Count and Pancras in mortal combat,—the dreamer, whose imagination is fascinated by a false ideal, and the thinker, whose intellect has proclaimed to him the blind rule of force. The logical tendencies of the two natures inevitably urge them to serve two inimical principles ; to arm, one in the name of the dreams of the Past, and the other in the cause of the supposed realities of the Present. Both are doomed to perish, and, in their fatal duel, our Poet evinces no preference for either champion.

Each part of "The Undivine Comedy" is preceded by a prologue, in which the general thought is foreshadowed. In the following invocation, our Author addresses himself to such poets and poetry as sacrifice the heart and its duties to a baseless imagination. We are about to see the peace of domestic life ruined by this false enthusiasm, and our Author indicates in this lyrical invective the principal traits in the character of Count Henry, who represents the fatal victory of imagination over duty.—*Revue des Deux Mondes*, 1er Octobre, 1846.

THE UNDIVINE COMEDY.*

INVOCATION.

STARS circle round thy head, and at thy feet
Surges the sea, upon whose hurrying waves
A Rainbow glides before thee, cleaving the clouds !
Whate'er thou look'st upon is thine ! Coasts, ships,
Men, mountains, cities, all belong to thee !
Master of Heaven as earth, it seems as naught
Could equal thee in glory !

To ears which heed thy lays, thou givest joys,
Raptures ineffable ! Thou weavest hearts
Together, then untwin'st them like a wreath,
As wild caprice may guide thy flame-lit fingers !
Thou forcest tears, then driest them with a smile ;
Then scar'st away the smile from paling lips,
Perhaps but for a moment, a few hours,
Perhaps for evermore !
But thou !—What dost thou *feel*, and what *create* ?
A living stream of beauty flows through thee,
But Beauty thou art not ! woe ! woe to thee !
The weeping child upon its mother's breast,
The field flower knowing not its perfumed gift,
More merit have before the Lord than thou !

Whence com'st thou, fleeting shadow ? to the Light
Still bearing witness, though thou know'st *it* not,

* The appropriateness of this name must excuse its coinage. It has been thought best not to attempt to alter the occasional irregularities in the rhythm of this metrical translation, lest a weakening of its vigor might be the result.—ED.

Hast never seen it, nor wilt ever see !
 In anger, or in mockery wert thou made ?
 So full of self-deceit, that thou canst play
 The angel to the moment when thou fall'st,
 And crawlest like a reptile upon earth,
 Stifled in mud, or feeding upon dust !
 Thou and the woman have like origin !*

Alas ! thou sufferest, too, although thy pangs
 Bring naught to birth, nothing create, nor serve !
 The groans of the unfortunate are weighed ;
 The lowest beggar's sighs counted in Heaven,
 Gathered and sung upon celestial harps,—
 But thy despair and sighs fall to the earth,
 Where Satan gathers them ;—adds them with joy
 To his own lies, illusions, mockeries !
 The Lord will yet disown them, as they have
 Ever disowned the Lord !

Not that I rise against thee, Poetry,
 Mother of Beauty, of ideal Life !
 But I must pity him condemned to dwell
 Within the limits of these whirling worlds
 In dying agonies, or yet to be,
 Doomed to sad memories, or prophecies,
 Perchance remorse, or vague presentiments,—
 Who gives himself to thee ! for everywhere
 Thou ruinnest wholly those who consecrate
 Themselves, with all they are, to thee alone,
 Who solely live the voices of thy glory !

Blesséd is he in whom thou mak'st thy home,
 As God dwelt in the world, concealed, unknown,
 But grand and mighty in each separate part ;
 The unseen God, before whom creatures bow,
 And kneeling, cry : “ Behold Him ! He is here ! ”
 A guiding star, he bears thee on his brow,
 And no unfaithful word will sever him

* Imaginative and emotional : not working in the world of Actuality.
 —TR.

From thy true love ! He will love men, and be
A man himself, encircled by his brothers !

From him, who keeps not with thee *perfect faith*,
Betrays thee to the hour, or his own needs,
Devotes thee to man's perishable joys,
Painting the sensual with thy hues divine,—
Thou turn'st away thy face, while scattering
Perchance upon his brow some fading flowers,
Of which he strives to twine a funeral crown,
Spending his life to weave a wreath of death !
He and the woman have one origin !

FIRST PERIOD.

“ De toutes les choses sérieuses, le mariage est la plus bouffonne.”
BEAUMARCHAIS

SCENE I. *Morning. The castle of Count Henry is
seen. The GUARDIAN ANGEL descends.*

Guardian Angel. Peace upon earth to all men of good
will !

Among the created, blessed ever be
The man who has a heart ; he may be saved !
Wife, good and pure, reveal thyself to him,
And a fair child be born unto their House !

(The angel vanishes.)

(EVIL SPIRITS appear.)

CHORUS OF EVIL SPIRITS.

Rise, spectres, phantoms, rise ! Hover above,
Surround him !

Thou his first beloved in youth,
Buried but yesterday, come from the grave ;
Head them and lead them ever swarming on !
In morning vapors bathe thyself anew ;
Wreath thy dead brow with perfumed buds of spring :—
Thou, his lost love, float on before the Poet !

Rise, Glory, rise! forgotten Eagle kept*
 For centuries in Hell, well stuffed, preserved,
 Descend from thy long-crumbling perch, unfold
 Thy wings gigantic, whitened in the sun,
 And dazzling wave them round the Poet's head!

Come from our vaults, thou rotting masterpiece
 Of Beelzebub! Thou wildering semblance of
 An earthly Eden by his pencil sketched;
 Get in thy canvas the old rents reglued,
 The holes and cracks with varnish all refilled;
 Wrapping thyself in webs of rainbow clouds,
 Shimmer, unroll, and float before the Poet!
 Mountains and seas, wild cliffs and forests dim,
 With crimson dawns and golden purpling eyes,
 Cradle and lull the Poet in vain dreams!
 O mother nature, closely hold thy son!

SCENE II. *A village. A church with towers. The
 GUARDIAN ANGEL floats above it.*

Guardian Angel. If thou wilt keep thy oath, thou
 shalt my brother be
 Before the face of God, our Father!

SCENE III. *Interior of the church. Wax-lights blaze
 upon the altar. Many witnesses are standing round it;
 a Bride and Bridegroom kneel before it.*

A PRIEST (giving the Nuptial Benediction). Remember
 well my words. . . .

*The BRIDE and GROOM rise. The GROOM kisses the hand
 of the BRIDE and leads her to a kinsman. All leave the
 church save the GROOM.*

Bridegroom. I have descended to an earthly marriage,
 Because I've found the bride my spirit dreamed.
 If I should ever cease to love her, may
 God's malediction fall upon my head!

* Not the *true* glory of self-sacrifice is here designated, but that of
 pride and egotism.

SCENE IV. *A saloon filled with guests. Music, dancing, lights, and flowers. The BRIDE, after waltzing a few turns, accidentally meets the BRIDEGROOM, joins him, and rests her head upon his shoulder.*

Bridegroom. How beautiful thou art in thine exhaustion,
While orange flowers and pearls in soft confusion,
Fall through the wavy masses of thy hair!
Oh! thou shalt ever be my song of love!

Bride. Yes, as my mother taught, my own heart teaches;
I'll ever be to thee a faithful wife! . . .
How many guests are gathered here! How warm
It grows! how wearisome the noise they make!

Bridegroom. Go, join the dance again, that I may watch
Thee as thou floatest like a spirit round;
Thus have I seen the angels in my dreams!

Bride. I will if so thy wish; . . . but I am tired,
And my heart throbs. . . .

Bridegroom. Dearest, I pray thee, go!
(*Music and dancing.*)

SCENE V. *An EVIL SPIRIT appears in the form of a maiden. Midnight. The castle in the distance; a garden and cemetery.*

Evil Spirit. At the same hour, and in such a night,
Not long ago, I also coursed the earth.
To-day the Demons drive me forth; command
Me to assume a saintly form.

(*He floats over the garden.*)

Ye perfumed flowers, break from your fragile stems
And deck my hair!

(*He alights among the graves.*)

Fresh charms of buried maids,
Scattered in air and floating o'er these graves,
Gather upon, and paint my swarthy cheeks
With roseate hues of hope and youthful love!

Under this mossy stone a fair-haired girl
Moulders in rottenness—will soon be dust,—
Gold tresses, come! Shadow my burning brow!

Under this fallen cross two lustrous eyes
Of heavenly blue lie in their sockets dead,—
To me! to me! the pure and lambent flame
Which filled them once, and glimmered through their
lashes!

A hundred torches burn within those bars
To light the worms where kings repose in state;
They buried a young princess there to-day,—
Ye costly robes of snowy satin, come!
Fluttering like downy doves, fly through the grate;
Leave with the dead, undraped, the virgin corpse,
And cling around my scathed and fleshless form!
And now, on! on!

SECOND PERIOD.

SCENE I. *Midnight. A sleeping-apartment in the castle.
A night-lamp stands upon a table, and shines upon the
face of the HUSBAND.*

The Husband (dreaming). Ha! whence com'st thou
whom I no longer see,—
Will never see again? What weary years!
As water softly flows, so glide thy feet,
Like two white waves of foam!
A holy calm is on thy blessed face;
All I have dreamed or loved unites in thee!

(Awaking suddenly.)

Where am I? . . . Ha! I'm sleeping by my wife!

(Gazing long upon her.)

That is my wife!

Ah! once I thought thou wert
My Early Dream,—but there I was deceived:

It has returned. Mary, thou art it not,
Nor like it! Thou art mild, and pure, and good;
But she . . .

My God! what see I there? Am I awake?

The Phantom. Thou hast betrayed me!

(*Vanishes.*)

Husband. Gone! Stay! stay, my Dream!

Curst be the hour in which I took a wife,

Deserted and betrayed the love of youth,—

Thought of my thought, myself, soul of my soul!

Wife (awaking). What is the matter? Breaks the
morn so soon?

To-day it is we make our purchases:

Is that the coach already at the door?

Husband. No! 'tis far from morning. Go to sleep.

Wife. I fear that you are ill. I will arise
And get some ether for you.

Husband. Nay, nay; sleep!

Wife. My darling, tell me what the matter is!
Your voice is changed; your cheeks with fever burn.

Husband (rising). Air! air! I cannot breathe! For
God's sake, sleep!

Mary, I pray you not to follow me.

(*He leaves the room.*)

SCENE II. *The church with its adjoining grave-yard.*

*The HUSBAND is seen standing in the garden of the
house, lighted by the moon.*

Husband. Ay, since my marriage, I've dozed life
away,

Eating and drinking in a lethargy,

And sleeping like a German artisan!

The world around me sleeps in my own image! . . .

We've visited relations; gone to shops;

And for my child, yet to be born, I've sought

A nurse. . . .

(*The great bell of the church tower strikes two.*)

It is the hour when I was wont to mount

My throne. Back! back to me, my glorious kingdom!

Ye shadowy forms, obedient to my thoughts,
 Visions and images of grandeur, grace,
 Come, throng around me as in earlier days!

(He walks up and down, convulsively wringing his hands.)

In very truth, my God, dost Thou make marriage?
 Dost Thou give consecration to the vows
 Binding two beings "until death shall part"?
 And hast Thou surely said that naught shall break
 The bondage blessed by Thee in highest Heaven,
 Even when the souls with constant, violent shocks
 Repel each other? When, to advance at all,
 They must upon opposing pathways move,
 While their two bodies, chained, grow stiff, and freeze
 Into two corpses? . . .

(The PHANTOM suddenly appears.)

Thou here, Belovéd? Thou who art mine own,
 Oh, take me with thee! If thou'rt but a dream,
 A child fantastic of my seething brain,—
 Then, child who temp'rst thy father, wait for me
 Until I, too, am shadow,—one with thee!

Phantom. When, where I call, wilt swear to follow
 me?

Husband. At every moment of my life, I'm thine!

Phantom. Remember!

Husband. Stay! Melt not like mist away!

If thy dear beauty is above all beauty,
 If thought of thee above all other thought,—
 Why dost thou vanish like a dream away?

(A window in the house is opened.)

Voice from the window. Dear heart, the night is chill;
 you will take cold.

I fear to stay alone in this vast room;
 The curtains sway; the shadows frighten me.
 Come back, mine own!

Husband. Yes, Mary, yes. I come. . . .
 Vanished the vision! . . . But she will return:—
 And then farewell my House, my Garden, Wife,
 Created for such things,—but not for me!

Voice from the window. Henry, for God's sake, come!
 it grows so cold.

Husband. My child! Must I forsake the child? Oh,
God!

SCENE III. *A saloon in the castle richly furnished. Candelabra stand upon an open piano, at which the WIFE is seated. A cradle is near it, in which lies a sleeping infant. The HUSBAND reclines upon a couch, his face buried in his hands.*

Wife. I've been to Father Benjamin; he said
He would be here at the appointed hour.

Husband. Thanks!

Wife. I have also ordered the confections:
The cakes will have GEORGE STANISLAS upon them.

Husband. Thanks! Thanks!

Wife. Nay, God be thanked, the rites will soon
Be all complete, and our boy quite a Christian!
The water may be poured upon his head
And yet, methinks, there may be something lacking.
I hope you have invited all our friends
To see our son baptized.

(She goes to the cradle and arranges the covering.)

Sleep, darling, sleep! What is it troubles thee?
Why dost thou toss the covering off thee so?
So, now, I tuck the cradle quilt around,
And cover thy bare arms. What! off again?
My little baby, canst thou dream so soon?
Lie still, my pretty George! My baby love!

(She addresses her husband.)

I wonder why our infant cannot sleep?

(She returns to the cradle.)

My little George, my darling baby, sleep!

(She sings.)

Husband (aside). A storm approaches! Heavens, what
stifling heat!

There strikes the lightning! Here my own heart breaks!

(The wife seats herself at the piano, strikes a few chords, ceases, and again begins to play, rises suddenly, and stands beside her husband.)

Wife. You have not spoken to me once to-day,
Nor yesterday, nor during all this week ;—
O God ! a month has passed since you've addressed
A word to me, save answering a question :
And all who see me think me so much changed.

Husband (aside). The hour is on me—cannot be
delayed !

(To his wife). I do not think so. You look very well.

Wife. Ah ! that is quite indifferent to you ;
I think you never hear, nor look at me !
When I come near, you turn your head away,
Or bury deep your face within your hands.
Oh, husband, tell me what I've done amiss !
Oh, that I could divine what is my fault !
I to confession went but yesterday,
Examined my whole soul, probed all my thoughts,
But nothing found which could offend you, Henry.

Husband. Nor have you me offended.

Wife. Oh, my God !

Husband. I feel I ought to love you !

Wife. Oh, not that !

I cannot bear those drear words, "ought to love !"
They freeze my very heart, I know not why !
Tell me you do not love me ! Truth is best,
If bitter ; then I would at once know all !

(She goes to the cradle and holds up the child.)

Forsake him not ! Not mine, he is your son !
Oh, let your anger fall on me alone !
Look on your child ! our boy ! My pretty George !

(She kneels before him, with the infant in her arms.)

Husband (raising her from the ground). Forget it,
Mary ! dreams and gloomy hours . . .

Wife. It is forgotten ! Promise ! . . . one word more : . . .
Say that you ne'er will cease to love your son !

Husband. Nor him, nor you,—I'll love you both,—
believe !

*(He kisses her brow. She throws her arms around him ;
rests her head upon his shoulder. At that moment a loud
clap of thunder is heard, followed by wild and melancholy
music.)*

Wife. Look! What is that?

(She presses the child to her bosom; the music ceases.)

Phantom (entering). Hail, my beloved! I come
To bring thee peace and bliss. Throw off thy chains,
The earthly fetters which enslave thee here!
I come from a free world, great, limitless,
Where casts the Past no shadows. I am thine!

Wife. Mother of God protect me! Guard my George!
This ghost is ghastly,—pallid as the dead;
The eyes are dying out,—the voice is harsh
As when the death-hearse grides the corpse within the grate!

Husband. Thy brow is radiant, my Beloved! Thy
curls
Are gemmed with sweetest flowers!

Wife. A dismal shroud
For drapery!

Husband. Thy form is streaming light!
Let me but hear thy voice again—then die!

Phantom. She who impedes thee is but an illusion;
Her life is fleeting as a passing sigh;
Her love, a dying leaf condemned to fall
With myriad other fading, blasted leaves!
But I will live forever.

Wife (throwing herself into the arms of her husband).

Save me, Henry!
Save yourself! the air is thick with sulphur;
Heavy with vapors from the charnel-house!

Husband. Blaspheme not, child of clay! Insult her
not,

Nor envy! Lo! The ideal in which God
Conceived you! You let the Serpent tempt you,
Became what now you are!

Wife. I leave you not!

Husband (to the Spectre). Beloved, I forsake house, wife,
and child
To follow thee!

(He goes.)

Wife. O Henry! Henry! . . . Gone!

*(She falls fainting to the floor with the infant in her arms.
The storm without grows wilder.)*

SCENE IV. *The Baptism. Kinsmen and Guests.* FATHER BENJAMIN *the Priest; Godfather and Godmother; Nurse with the Child in her arms; the sick Wife reclining upon a sofa. Relations and Servants in the background.*

First Guest. I wonder that the Count should not be here.

Second Guest. He may have been detained; forgotten it,

Absorbed in writing verses,—who can tell?

First Guest. How pale and tired the young Countess looks!

She speaks to no one, welcomes not her guests.

Third Guest. This christening reminds me of a ball I once attended. The host had lost that day His whole estate at cards; was bankrupt quite, Yet he continued to receive his guests With perfect, if despairing, courtesy.

Fourth Guest. I left my lovely princess, and came here

Expecting a good breakfast, merry company,
But I have only found, as Scripture says,

“Weeping and wailing, gnashing of the teeth!”

Father Benjamin. George Stanislas, I sign thee with the cross!

Wilt thou receive our Holy Baptism?

Godfather and Godmother. I will.

A Kinsman. Look! look! the Countess awakens up;—
How her eyes glare! She rises wildly,—moves
As in a dream,—comes slowly toward the priest. . . .

Second Kinsman. She stretches out her arms toward the child.

What is she murmuring? Poor thing, how pale!
She totters—she will fall! give her your arm!

Father Benjamin. George Stanislas! Dost thou in truth renounce

The Devil and his works?

Godfather and Godmother. I do renounce them.

First Kinsman. The Countess tries to speak. Her white lips writhe

And twist, . . . her eyes roll. . . . Hush! what does she say?

Countess. Where is thy father, George, my pretty boy?
(*She lays her hand softly on the head of the infant.*)

Father Benjamin. I pray you let the sacred rite proceed!

Countess. I bless thee, George! I bless thee, O my child!

Become a Poet, that thy father's love
May cling to thee! that he may leave thee never,
Nor ever drive thee from his changeful heart!

Godmother. Mary, be calm! You will disturb the priest!

Countess. George, be a Poet, that thou may'st deserve
Thy father's love! Perchance then he'll forgive
Thy mother, and return . . .

Father Benjamin. You interrupt
The ceremony, and cause scandal, Countess!

Countess. I curse thee, George, if thou art not a Poet!
(*She falls to the ground in a fainting fit,—the attendants bear her out.*)

Guests (whispering among themselves). What can have
happened here? 'Tis very strange!
Come, let us leave the house without delay.

(*During this time the ceremony is completed. The crying infant is replaced in the cradle.*)

The Godfather (standing beside the cradle). George Stanislas, you now have been received
Into the pale of Christianity,
Into the bosom of society.
In after-years, you will be citizen,
And through your parents' training, help of God,
You may become a Statesman, Magistrate!
Remember, you must love your native land;
Know, for your country it is sweet to die!

SCENE V. *An enchanting site. Hills and forests, mountains in the distance.*

Count Henry. Lo! all I have so long desired, so sought,
So prayed for, now is almost in my grasp!
I've left behind me far the world of men.

The human pismires there may throng their ant-hills,
 Struggle for prey; perish with rage and pain
 When it escapes them,—naught is it to me!
 I am alone; will crawl with them no more.

Spectre (showing itself and disappearing). Come this way! Come! . . .

SCENE VI. *Mountains, crags, peaks, and precipices above an angry sea. Clouds, wind, and tempest.*

Count Henry. But where is my beloved? I see her not.
 The breath of morn, the song of birds, all gone!
 What sudden gusts of wind! How black the sky!
 Where am I? Have these mountains any name?
 What giddy stairways leading to the sky!
 I stand alone upon the highest peak:
 What a wild world of ruin lies around!
 How soughs and howls the wind up this bleak pass!
 Heaven! What abysses yawning at my feet!

Voice of the Spectre in the distance. To me, my best beloved, come to me!

Count Henry. Where art thou, love? thy voice sounds from afar!

I've climbed the peak, and hang midway in air:—
 How can I follow thee through this abyss?

A Voice near him. Where are thy wings?

Count Henry. Spirit of evil, why thus jeer at me? I scorn thee!

Another Voice. What! a soul,—
 Thy grand immortal soul, that with a bound
 Could leap to Heaven, dreads to cross a chasm!
 The quailing wretch implores thy feet to stay.
 O valiant soul that longed to scale the infinite,
 And cowers before a precipice of earth!

O dauntless soul! O manly heart! Fear conquers thee!

Count Henry. Appear! take body! something I can seize,

Bend, break, crush, overthrow,—and if I quail,
 May I lose what I love for evermore!

The Spectre (from the other side of the abyss). Here, grasp my hand, and swing thyself across!

Count Henry. What wild and sudden change comes
over thee!

The flowers leave thy temples—fall to earth,—
Touching the ground, they turn to reptiles,—run
Like lizards,—crawl and hiss like vipers!

Spectre. Haste!

Count Henry. Great God! the wind tears off thy lus-
trous robe,—

It hangs in squalid rags!

Spectre. Come! linger not!

Count Henry. The water oozes from thy clammy
hair,—

Thy naked bosom grows a skeleton!

Spectre. Come! thou hast sworn to be forever mine!

Count Henry. Horror! the lightning burneth out thine
eyes!

CHORUS OF EVIL SPIRITS.

Thy task is done: return to Hell, old Fiend!
A great proud soul thou hast seduced, undone;
Admired by men, a marvel to itself!
Thou, ruined spirit, follow thy Belovéd!

Count Henry. God! wilt thou damn me thus, because
I thought

That my ideal, reflex of Thy Beauty,
Surpassed all other beauty on this earth?
Because I have pursued it, for it suffered,
Until I have become a jest for demons,—
Wilt *Thou* condemn me, God?

An Evil Spirit. Hear, brothers, hear!

Count Henry. My last hour strikes! Tornadoes
sweep the clouds

From Heaven, to plunge them in the angry sea!
Higher and higher rise the hurrying waves;
Soon they must reach me here! The earth heaves, sinks!
Forces unseen drive to the precipice!
Whirlwinds of spectres mount my shoulders, drag
Me to the verge

Evil Spirits. Brothers, rejoice! He comes!

Count Henry. Useless to combat; vain to struggle
more!

The giddy rapture of the abyss attracts :
 My brain is reeling to the fatal plunge !
 O God ! the Enemy is conqueror !

(*The GUARDIAN ANGEL appears floating above the sea.*)

Guardian Angel. Lord, let Thy Peace descend on
 these mad waves,
 And calm this raging sea !
 (*To Count Henry.*) In this same hour baptismal waters pour
 On thy pure infant's head. . . . Husband, return
 To thy deserted home, and sin no more !
 Father, return to thy forsaken child,
 And never cease to love him !

SCENE VII. *The saloon in the castle in which stands
 the piano. COUNT HENRY enters. Attendants follow,
 and servants bring in lights.*

Count Henry. Where is your lady?

Servant. She is ill, my lord.

Count Henry. She is not in her room.

Servant. She is not *here*.

Count Henry. Not here ! left home ? When did she
 go away ?

Servant. She did not *go*, my lord : they *carried* her
 away.

Count Henry. "She did not go ! they carried her
 away !"

Who ? Where ? . . . reply at once !

Servant (taking flight). The Doctor came ; he took
 her to the mad-house !

Count Henry. That is not true,—that were too horrible !
 Mary, thou hid'st perchance to sport with me ;
 Perchance to punish me. . . .

Did he say *mad* ?

(*Calls loudly.*) Speak, Mary, speak ! Mary ! my Mary,
 come !

I suffer . . . Come to me !

Nothing. . . . She is not here ! . . . No word of answer !

(*He calls.*) Jacob ! John ! Catherine ! . . . there's no
 one here !

The house is deaf, and dumb, and desolate !

Can it be true? . . .

I would not wrong a fly,
 Yet I have plunged the heart that trusted me,
 The innocent creature whom I swore to love
 And guard from evil, into Hell itself:
 All whom I breathe upon I blight,—and will
 At last destroy myself! Escaped I not
 From Hell to do its work, and be on earth
 Its burning image for a few short hours?

Upon what pillow lies that saintlike head!
 What cries and horrors wound the shrinking ears!—
 The shrieks and howls of madmen in their cells,
 Chained, scourged, and uttering frightful blasphemies!
 Mary, this is the home I've made for thee!

I see her there; her brow so pure and calm
 Is wrung with pain—sunk in her little hands!
 Her mind is gone astray, in search of me
 To wander through the desert—and is mad
 With anguish!

A Voice. Poet, thou chant'st a Drama!*

Count Henry. Ha! again my Demon speaks to me.

(He rushes to the door and opens it violently.)

Ho! Jacob! my Arabian! Haste! Haste!
 My cloak and pistols!

SCENE VIII. *A hilly country. A house for the insane, surrounded by a garden. The WIFE OF THE PHYSICIAN, with an enormous bunch of keys in her hands, is seen opening a barred door for COUNT HENRY, who follows her into a corridor.)*

Wife of the Physician. Perhaps you are a kinsman of
 the Countess?

* Through this voice we read the design of the Polish poet. The Count remains faithful to his character. Being a man with whom imagination has killed the heart, everything, not even excepting his own domestic miseries, assumes to him the garb of poetry, so that even when deploring the madness of his wife, he is still composing a drama.—*Revue des Deux Mondes.*

Count Henry. I am her husband's friend ; he sent me here.

Wife of the Physician. There's little hope of her recovery.

I'm sorry that my husband's not at home ;
He could have told you all about the case.
Day before yesterday they brought her here
In strong convulsions. (*She wipes her face.*)

Oh, how warm it is !

We've many patients here, but none so ill as she.
We gave two hundred thousand florins for this place ;
'Tis healthy, and the mountain views are fine.
Are you impatient, sir, to see the Countess ?
Some say the Carbonari came at night
And carried off her husband ; others say
It was a woman,—and that crazed her brain :
Are you in haste ?

(*She places the key in a heavy door and unlocks it. A room with a grated window, a table, bed, and chair. The COUNTESS is lying upon a low couch.*)

I beg, sir, you will wait.

Count Henry (entering). Leave us ! I wish to be alone with her.

Wife of the Physician. My husband will be angry ; I must stay.

Count Henry (closing the door upon her). I wish to be alone : leave me, I tell you !

Voice through the ceiling. You've chained up God !
You've put one God to death

Upon the cross,—I am the other God,—
And I am given to the hangman !

Voice through the floor. Off to the guillotine with lords
and kings !

Through me alone the people can be free !

Voice from the right. Kneel down before the King,
your Lord and Master,
Your true legitimate Sovereign ! Kneel !

Voice from the left. A comet sweeps in fire across the
sky !

The trump of Judgment sounds—The Day of wrath.

Count Henry. Look at me, Mary! Dost thou know me, love?

Countess. Have I not sworn thee faith till death us part?

Count Henry. Give me thy hand. Rise, rise, and leave this place!

Countess. Yes, but I cannot stand. My soul has left my body; only in my brain it seethes.

Count Henry. The carriage waits—'tis but a step—I'll carry thee.

Countess. Some moments more; and then I will become more worthy thee!

Count Henry. I do not understand.

Countess. I prayed three days and nights: at last God heard me.

Count Henry. How did He hear thee?

Countess. After I lost thee,

There came a change o'er me. I cried Lord! Lord!

And prayed unceasingly, and struck my breast,

And placed a blessed candle on my heart,

Did penance, cried: "Send inspiration down,

Within me light the flame of Poetry!"

And on the third day I became a Poet!

Count Henry. Mary!

Countess. Thou surely wilt no more disdain me, Henry;

Nor leave me when the shades of evening fall,

Now that I am a Poet!

Count Henry. Nor night, nor day!

Countess. See if I do not equal thee in power;

Grow like to thee.* I understand all things,

I am inspired, flash forth in words, in songs

Of victory! I chant the seas, stars, clouds,

Battles and skies: yes, seas, and stars, and clouds,

And skies—but battles?—No. I never saw one.

An unknown word has fallen from my lips!

Take me where I can see one!—watch men die!—

* The Countess being mad from love, has but one thought in her delirium: to grow worthy of her husband in gaining his poetic powers, and winning the affection of him who had scorned her for their want. Under the mysterious influence of this passion the imagination of the husband has actually passed into herself and made her mad.

I must describe them all! The night-dew, moon,
Corpses, black plumes, hearses and swords, shrouds, blood,
Coffins and funerals,—I must sing them all!

Infinite space will spread about me ;

I must seek the farthest star,
Cleaving swift the air around me,
Seeking Beauty near and far.

Like an eagle onward cleaving
All the past behind me leaving,
Chaos dark around me lying,
Through its dimness lightly flying,
Through its infinite abysses,
On through darker worlds than this is,
Till I vanish in the depths
Of limitless black nothingness.

Count Henry. Horrible!

Countess (throwing her arms around him). Henry, I am
so happy now!

Voice through the floor. With my own hand I've mur-
dered three crowned kings ;

Ten still remain : headsman and block await them.

I've killed a hundred priests who chanted mass. . . .

Voice from the left. The sun is going out : the stars
have lost

Their way and hurtle madly in the dark.

Woe! Woe!

Count Henry. The Day of Judgment is upon me!

Countess. Drive off the gloom that darkens thy dear
face!

It saddens me. What can be wanting still?

I know a secret which will make thee glad.

Count Henry. Tell me! I will do all thou wouldst
have done.

Countess. Thy son will be a Poet!

Count Henry. Mary! Mary!

Countess. The priest, when he baptized him, gave him
first

The name you chose : you know, George Stanislas ;

Then I rushed forward,—blessed him from my soul ;

Baptized him POET! Poet he will be!

This is my work ; I have won this from God!

At last I cursed him should he not be Poet !

Oh, how I love thee, Henry !

Voice through the ceiling. Father, forgive ! they know
not what they do.

Countess. Hark ! Did you hear him ? *He* is surely
mad.

Is it not very strange men should go mad ?

Count Henry. Ay, strange indeed !

Countess. He knows not what he says ;

But I can tell you how it all would be

If God went mad !

The worlds would lose their way in space, and mount,
and mount ;

Then fall, and fall, crashing against each other !

Each creature, worm, would cry : " LO, I AM GOD ! "

Then they would die, and lie in rottenness !

The comets and the suns would all go out ;

Christ would no longer save us.

Tearing His bleeding Hands from the great nails,

He'd fling His cross into the infinite Dark,

And with it blast the hopes of myriads of souls.

Hark ! how it crashes as it strikes the stars !

Bounding, rebounding, as it flashes, breaks,—

Its ruined fragments falling everywhere,

Until the dust darkens the Universe !

* * * * *

Only the Holy Virgin still prays on ;

The stars, her servants, keep their faith with her ;

But she must plunge with all the falling worlds !

Christ throws away his cross, and God is mad !

Count Henry. Mary, hast thou no wish to see thy
child ?

Come home !

Countess. He is not *there*. I gave him wings,
And sent him through the Universe to find

All that is terrible, sublime, and grand ;

Have dipped him in the sea, and in the clouds. . . .

He will return some day, and make thee happy.

Ah, me !

Count Henry. Dost suffer pain ?

Countess. Some one has hung

A lamp up in my brain : it sways and flickers
So wilderingly ! Ah, me !

Count Henry. Beloved, be calm !

Countess. When one is Poet, life cannot be long !

(She faints.)

Count Henry. Help ! Help ! Send the physician
quickly here !

(Many women enter, followed by the wife of the physician.)

Wife of the Physician. Pills ! Powders ! No ; she
cannot swallow them.

Run, Margaret, run quickly ; find the Doctor !

(To the Count.) This is your fault, sir ; you have made
her ill.

My husband will be very angry with me, sir !

Countess. Henry, farewell !

Wife of the Physician. Then you, sir, are the Count ?

Count Henry. Mary ! Mary !

(Takes her in his arms, covering her with caresses.)

Countess. Darling, I'm well ! I die upon thy heart !

(Her head falls.)

Wife of the Physician. Her face is flushed ! The blood
o'erfloods her brain !

Count Henry. There is no danger, none ! This will
be nothing. . . .

(The PHYSICIAN enters and stands by the couch.)

Physician. Your words are truth,—for there is NO-
THING here !

All's over ! She is dead !

THIRD PERIOD.

"Gemisch von Koth und Feuer."
 ("Compound of clay and fire.")

FAUST: *Goethe.*

Oh, child! why lie thy toys neglected round thee?*

Why never leap astride a cane for horse
 And gallop off? Why not impale the bright
 Winged butterflies, enjoy their dying glitter?
 Why never sport upon the grass, turn somersaults,
 Steal sugar-plums, rob apple-trees, and wet
 Thy alphabet, from A to Z, with tears?
 Thou king of rabbits, dogs, bees, flies, and moths,
 Of cowslips, daisies, marbles, kites, and tops;
 Thou royal friend of birds, of Punch, and puppets;
 Outlaw of petty mischiefs,—why resign
 Thy kingdom? Poet's son, oh, wherefore art
 Thou sad,—so like an angel in thy guise?

What meanings haunt the depths of thy blue eyes?
 Why do they seek the ground, as if weighed down
 By drooping lashes, mournful memories,
 Though they have only watched the violets
 Of a few springs? Why heavily sinks thy head
 Upon thy small white hands? . . .
 Like snow-drops burdened with the dews of night
 Thy brow seems bent with weight of mystic thought.

And when thy pale cheek floods with sudden flush,
 Red as a rose amidst its hundred leaves,
 And, tossing back thy golden curls, thou gazest

* This Invocation is addressed to the son of the Count. This child, whose father was the lover of phantoms, is himself but a phantom; one of those frail beings in whom the excessive development of internal life exhausts and consumes the external envelope. His soul, even before quitting the body, is almost free from its ties with the body, and already visits the invisible world. Two moral maladies, too common in our time, are seen in the characters of the father and son. In the first, the perception of the ideal is falsified and distorted; in the second, it is exaggerated. The Count is a dreamer; the son a clairvoyant.—*Revue.*

Into the skies,—tell me, what seest thou there,
What hearest, and with whom thou holdest converse?
For then the light and quivering wrinkles weave
Their living mesh across thy blue-veined brow
From distaff all unseen; from viewless coils,
Like silken threads, the changeful web is wrought,
While in thine eyes still gleams an unknown flame,
Which none can ever trace or understand.
Thy nurse may call; thou seemest not to hear;
She vainly weeps, deeming thou lovest her not.
Thy cousins, friends, then cry to thee unheard,
And think thou dost not wish to recognize them.
Thy father speaks not, but observes thee closely,
Gloomy and silent, while the gathering tears
Swell 'neath his eyelids,—soon to disappear—
Perchance to fall upon his heart!

When the physician comes, he feels thy pulse,
Says thou art nervous as he counts its throbs.
The old godfather brings thee sugar-plums,
And pats thee on thy shoulder, saying: “George,
Thou’lt be a statesman in thy native land!”
The learned professor takes thee, runs his hand
Among thy ringlets, says thou wilt possess
A talent for the exact sciences!
The beggar, whom thou never pass’st without
Casting a coin into his tattered hat,
Foresees a lovely wife, a heavenly crown for thee.
The crippled soldier, tossing thee in air,
Declares thou art to be a general.
The wandering gypsy scans thy tender face,
Traces the lines upon thy little hands,
Seeking in vain to read thy destiny,
Looks sadly at thee, sighs and turns away,
And will not take the gold-piece offered her.
The magnetizer strokes thy sunny curls,
And makes his passes round thy wondering face,
But stops affrighted as he feels that he,
Instead of thee, is falling into sleep.
And Father Benjamin, preparing thee
For thy confession, felt like kneeling down

And casts it at thy feet ! Thou floatest on,
As though the ocean waves bore thee along !

Count Henry. George ! George !

George. Do not be angry with me, father !
When these words come to me, they hurt my head,
And I *must* say them.

Count Henry. Rise, George ! Such prayers will never
reach our God.

Thou hast no memory of thy mother ; so
Thou canst not love her. . . .

George. I often see mamma.

Count Henry. Thou seest mamma ! Where dost thou
see her, George ?

George. In dreams,—not quite in dreams,—before I
sleep !

I saw her yesterday.

Count Henry. What say'st thou, boy ?

George. She looked so pale and thin.

Count Henry. But did she speak ?

George. It seemed to me she wandered up and down
Alone in a vast Dark ; but she was white.
She sang to me last night ; I know the song :
Say, shall I sing it, Father ?

(*Sings.*) “ I wander through the Universe,
I search through infinite space,
I pass through chaos, darkness,
To bring thee light and grace :
I listen to the angel's song,
To catch the heavenly tone ;
Seek every form of beauty,
To bring to thee, mine own !

“ I seek from highest spirits,
From those of lower might,
Rainbow colors, depths of shadow,
Burning contrasts, dark and bright ;
Rhythmed tones and hues from Eden
Floating through the heavenly bars,
Sages' wisdom, seraphs' loving,
Mystic glories from the stars ;

That thou mayst be a poet, richly gifted from above,
To win thy father's inmost heart, and ever keep his love."

Thou seest my mother dear *does* speak to me ;
That I remember all she ever says !

Count Henry (*leaning against one of the pillars of the tomb*).

Mary, wilt thou destroy thine own fair child,
And crush me 'neath the weight of two such sepulchres?

* * * * *

I rave ! she is as safe and calm in Heaven
As she was sweet and pure upon the earth ! . . .
My poor boy dreams ! . . .

George. I hear her now, but cannot see mamma !

Count Henry. Where? . . . Whence comes the voice?

George. It seems to come

From yon two cypress-trees, now glittering in
The sun's last rays :

(*Sings.*) "I pour through thy spirit
Music and might ;
I wreath thy pale forehead
With halos of light ;
E'en if blind, I would show thee
Blest forms from above,
Floating far through the spaces
Of infinite love,

Which the angels in Heaven, and men on the earth
Know as Beauty. I've sought since the day of thy birth
To waken thy spirit,
My darling, my own,
That the hopes of the father
May rest on his son !
That his love warm and glowing
Unchanging may shine ;
And his heart, infant poet,
Forever be thine !"

Count Henry. Do the last thoughts of dying mortals live
And torture them in their eternal homes ?
Can blessed spirits still be mad in Heaven,

And take their place among Thy angels, God?
Insanity make part of immortality?

George. Her voice grows ever fainter and more faint:
Father, it dies behind the grave-yard wall.

Father, down there! . . .

Mamma is still repeating as she goes:

“That his love warm and glowing
Unchanging may shine;
And his heart, little poet,
Forever be thine!”

Count Henry (kneeling). O God, have pity on our innocent child!

Hast Thou predestinated *him* in wrath
To sickness, madness, to an early death?
Oh, rob him not of reason! Leave not void
The sanctuary Thou hast built, O God,
In Thine own Image for a holy temple!
Look down upon my restless agony!
Yield not this angel to the fiends in Hell!
I pray not for myself, for Thou hast given
Me strength to bear the weight of passions, thoughts;
But pity him! poor fragile little being!
One thought would snap his slender thread of life!
O God! my God!
For ten long years I've known no hour of peace!
Many have envied me my happiness;
They did not know how fast as cutting hail,
Tempests of agony Thou'st driven on me;
Gloomy presentiments, illusions, woes!
My reason Thou hast left, but Thou hast stricken,
Hardened my heart! Thy benefits have been
All for my mind; none for my freezing soul.
God! suffer me to love my son in peace!
And let a covenant be made between
The Creator and His creature. . . .

* * * * * (Rises.)

My son, now cross thyself, and come with me.
Eternal rest be with thy mother's soul!

(Exit with *George*.)

SCENE II. *A public square. Ladies and gentlemen walking about.* A PHILOSOPHER. COUNT HENRY.

Philosopher. I must repeat it, and it is in me
An absolute, intuitive conviction,
The time is near for the emancipation
Of negroes and of women.

Count Henry. You are right.

Philosopher. And from a social transformation, both
In general and particular, I deduce
A great regeneration of our race,
Through bloodshed, and destruction of old forms!

Count Henry. You think so?

Philosopher. As on its axis oscillates
Our globe, lifting itself and sinking, by a course
Of sudden evolutions, we . . .

Count Henry. See you this rotten tree standing beside
us?

Philosopher. With the young leaves upon its branches?

Count Henry. Yes.

How long do you suppose it still will stand?

Philosopher. How can I know? Perhaps a year or two.

Count Henry. Although its roots are dead, it still puts
forth

A few green leaves.

Philosopher. What does that prove?

Count Henry. Nothing, except that it will surely fall,
Be cast into the fire, because not fit
To bear the moulder's chisel, rotten at heart.

Philosopher. I cannot see how that concerns our sub-
ject.

Count Henry. I pray you pardon me: it is your image,
As that of your disciples, theories,
And of our century. . . . (*They pass out of sight.*)

SCENE III. *A gorge in the midst of the mountains.*
COUNT HENRY alone.

Count Henry. I've sought through many weary years to
find

The last word of all science, feelings, thoughts,
To solve the problem of our destiny;

And in the depths of my own heart I've found
 The tomb's dark nothingness!
 I know the *names* of all the human feelings,
 But I *feel* nothing!
 Nor faith, desire, nor love throbs in my soul!
 Some dim presentiments still haunt its desert:
 I know my son will soon be wholly blind;
 That this society in which I live
 Is even now in pangs of dissolution:
 And I am wretched as our God is happy;
 That is to say in me, and for myself alone.

Voice of the Guardian Angel. Comfort thy hungry and
 despairing brothers!

Love thy poor neighbor as thou dost thyself!
 And thus thou shalt be saved.

Count Henry. Who was it spoke?

Mephistopheles (passing). Your very humble servant.
 Sometimes I

Amuse myself by drawing the attention
 Of travelers by a gift I hold from nature.
 I'm a ventriloquist.

Count Henry (touching his hat with his hand). It seems
 to me

That I have somewhere seen that face before:
 In an old picture, or a print.

Mephistopheles (aside). The Count
 Has a good memory.

Count Henry. May God be praised*
 Forever and for evermore! Amen.

Mephistopheles (disappearing among the rocks). Curses
 on thee, and thy stupidity!

Count Henry. Poor child! condemned to an eternal
 blindness

Because thy father sinned, thy mother lost her senses:
 Being without a passion, incomplete,
 Living but in wild dreams and visions, thou
 Art never destined to maturity!
 Thou shadow of an angel thrown on earth,
 Driven by illusions, suffering infinite sorrow!

* * * * *

* Form of salutation common in Poland.

Ha! what a monstrous eagle rises there,*
Just where the stranger vanished by the rock!

The Eagle. All Hail! All Hail!

Count Henry. He flies to me. I hear
The whirrings of his great black wings; they stir
Me like the hail of musketry in fight.

Eagle. The sword once wielded by thy ancestors,
Draw from its sheath! Maintain their glory, power!

Count Henry. His black wings circle me and fire my
blood!

He plunges in my eye his gaze of basilisk!
Ha! now I understand thee!

Eagle. Never yield,
Never retreat, despair; and thus thy foes,
Thy craven foes, conquered, shall bite the dust!

Count Henry. What, gone? Then I salute thee from
the rocks

Which witnessed our encounter! Come what may,—
Whether the Future be or true or false,
Or triumph, or defeat,—I trust in thee,
Herald of glory! Genius of the Past,
Come to my aid! And even if thy breath
Into God's bosom has returned, let it
Detach itself, descend in me, become
Thought, force, and action!

(*Crushing a viper with his foot.*)

Go, reptile, go! And as no sigh for thee
Will heave from nature's heart as thou liest crushed,
Thus shall they all too plunge in the abyss,
Nor leave regret, nor fame, nor memory!
Not one of all yon hurrying clouds will pause
A moment in its flight o'er heaven, to look
In pity on the army of earth's sons
Whom I will wrap in general destruction.

* * * * *

First they will perish . . . afterwards myself!

* * * * *

* The eagle is the symbol of ambition, evoked, as it will be remembered, by the demons in the first period of the Drama.

Oh, boundless azure of aerial blue,
 Cradling the earth : she, new-born infant, wails,
 Weeps, sobs ; but thou, ever impassible,
 Nor hear'st, nor heed'st—whatever be her moan,—
 Rolling forever toward the infinite !
 Farewell, O mother nature ! . . . I must go,
 Become a man, take arms against my Brothers !

SCENE IV. *A chamber in the castle.* COUNT HENRY,
 GEORGE, and a PHYSICIAN.

Count Henry. All science yet has failed. My last
 hope rests
 In you alone.

Physician. You honor me too much.

Count Henry. Speak, George, and tell us how and
 what you feel !

George. I cannot see you, father ; cannot see
 The gentleman to whom I hear you speak.
 Bright sparks, black threads, pass and repass before
 My eyes unceasingly. Sometimes it is
 As if a shining snake crawled out of them,
 Sometimes a golden cloud. This cloud will rise,
 Or fall ; a rainbow then will seem upon it ;
 Sometimes they disappear—and all is dark.
 I do not suffer, father ; they give no pain.

Physician. Come, George, beneath the shadow of this
 arch !

How old are you ? (*He examines his eyes.*)

Count Henry. Almost fifteen.

Physician. Now turn

Your eyes directly to the light !

Count Henry. What hope ?

Physician. The lids are sound ; the white of the eye
 is clear ;

The nerves and muscles not at all enfeebled ;
 The blue is deep ; the veins are as they should be.

(*To George.*) Be not uneasy ; you will soon be cured ;

(*To Count Henry, aside.*) There is no hope ! look at
 the pupils, Count ;

There's no susceptibility to light :
The optic nerve is wholly paralyzed.

George. A black cloud seems to shroud all things
around me !

Count Henry (aside). It is too true ! his lids are raised,
his eyes

Are opened wide and gazing at the light,
But they see nothing ! blue and lifeless—dead !

George. But when my lids are shut, I can see more
Than when they're open, father !

Physician. Have a care ;
His mind has killed his body ! we must guard
The boy from catalepsy.

Count Henry. Save him, Doctor !
The half of my estate shall be your own.

Physician. That which has perished cannot be revived !
(*He takes his hat and cane.*)

Accept my sympathy ! I cannot stay,
I've an engagement with a lady, Count,
To couch a cataract. Farewell !

Count Henry. For Heaven's sake, stay ! Something
may still be done !

Physician. Perhaps, sir, you would like to know the
name

Of this disease ?

Count Henry. Is there no ray of hope ?

Physician. We call it *Amaurosis*, from the Greek.
(*He departs.*)

Count Henry (throwing his arms around George). But
you still see a little, my poor George ?

George. Father, I hear your voice.

Count Henry. The sun shines clear ;
Look through this window, George ! What do you see ?

George. Between the pupils of my eyes and lids
A crowd of moving figures pass, re-pass ;
Places I know, and faces I have seen,
Pages of books I've read . . .

Count Henry. Then you *do see* !

George. With my soul's eyes ; my body's have gone
out,—

I'll see no more with them forever, father !

Count Henry. (*He falls upon his knees as if to pray,—
rises after a short silence.*)

Before whom have I knelt? . . . From whom shall I
Ask justice for the woe will crush my child? . . .

(*He rises.*)

Best to bear all in silence!

God mocks our prayers, as Satan mocks our curses!

A Voice. Thy son a poet is;—what wouldst thou more?

SCENE V. *An apartment in the castle.* PHYSICIAN
and GODFATHER.

Godfather. It is a great misfortune to be blind.

Physician. Unusual too at such an early age.

Godfather. His frame was always weak. His mother
died

Somewhat so, so . . . (*touching his forehead.*)

Physician. How did his mother die?

Godfather. A little—so—not quite in her right mind.

Count Henry (entering). Pardon me that I've sent for
you so late;

But during some time past my poor boy wakes

At midnight, rises, walks as in a dream.

The Doctor ought to see him: Follow me!

Physician. I'm anxious to observe this strange phe-
nomenon.

SCENE VI. *The sleeping-apartment of George.* COUNT
HENRY, GEORGE, PHYSICIAN, GODFATHER, RELATIONS,
and NURSE.

First Relation. Hush! Hush!

Second Relation. He wakens, but nor sees nor hears us.

Physician. I pray you, gentlemen, let no one speak!

Godfather. I think it very strange.

George (rising). My God! my God!

First Relation. How noiselessly and slowly he glides
on!

Second Relation. Look at his thin hands crossed upon
his breast!

Third Relation. His lids are motionless, eyes open
wide,

His lips move not,—but what a clear, shrill cry!

Nurse. Jesus of Nazareth!

George. Darkness, depart!

I am a child of light and harmony,
And what have you to do with such as I?
I will not yield to your dominion, though
My sight is lost, borne off by the wild winds
To float in the immensity of space!
It will return to me one day, enriched
With all the light of all the burning stars!
My pupils will rekindle with a flash of flame!

Godfather. He's mad as was his mother! He knows
not what

He says! 'Tis most remarkable.

Physician. It is.

Nurse (kneeling). O Holy Mary! Mother of our
Lord!

Take out my eyes, and give them to poor George!

George. Mamma! mamma! pray send me sunny
thoughts

And lovely images, that I may live
Within myself, and there create a world
Like that which I have lost!

First Relation. Were it not well to call the family,
And hold a consultation?

Second Relation. Be silent! Wait!

George. Mamma, thou answerest not. . . . Do not
desert me!

Physician (to the Count). My duty is to tell you the
whole truth.

Godfather. To speak the truth is a physician's duty.

Physician. Your son is threatened with insanity.

Excessive sensibility of nerves,
Combining with excitement of the brain,
Has caused this state of aberration, dream;
Being awake, asleep at the same time!

I will explain the symptoms if you wish.

Count Henry (aside). This man, my God, would read
Thy laws to me,

Explain Thy judgments!

Physician. Give me pen and ink.

Cerasis laurei: two grains enough.

I'll write it down.

Count Henry. In yonder room you'll find
All things required. And now, kind friends, good-night!
I fain would be alone!

Many Voices (as they retire). Good-night! good-night!

George (awaking). Father, how can they wish *good-night* to me?

I think 'twere better they should say, *long night*;

Eternal night without a dawn!

And not *good-night*, which means a happy night!

Count Henry. George, take my arm, and lean on me;

I'll lead

You to your bed.

George. What does this mean, my father?

Count Henry. Cover yourself up warm; sleep calmly,
George!

The Doctor says you will regain your sight.

George. I feel so ill. . . . Strange voices wakened
me. . . .

I saw mamma knee-deep among the lilies. . . .

(*He falls asleep.*)

Count Henry. My blessing rest upon thee, blighted
boy!

Except a blessing, I can give thee nothing;

Nor light, nor happiness, nor glory!

Alas! I cannot give thee back thy sight!

Already strikes the hour of combat for me,

When I must lead the few against the many.

What will become of thee, O infant Poet!

Without protection, helpless, sick, and blind?

There will be none to listen to thee then,

Thou harmless little singer, with thy soul

In Heaven, yet chained to earth by thy frail body!

Thou most unfortunate of all the angels!

My son! my son!

(*He buries his head in his hands.*)

Nurse (at the door). The Doctor sent me here to tell
my Lord

That he desires to see him.

As ways grow slippery with blood, they fall !
The Dance of Death goes on : Blood everywhere !
New couples join the ring ! Abyss of blood !
The world is crimsoning ! . . . I speak the truth.

What throngs of people seize the city gates,
Surround the hills, press through the sheltered vales !
Beneath the shadows of the trees great tents
Are spread ; long boards are placed on pikes, on clubs,
And fallen tree-trunks ; these as tables serve,
And soon are filled with food, meat, bread, and drink.
The excited masses seat and help themselves ;
The full cups quickly pass from hand to hand,
And as they touch the eager, thirsty mouths,
Threats, oaths, and curses pour from heated lips.
Faster and faster fly the ruby cups,
Beaded and bubbling, ever emptying, filling,
Striking and clinking as they pass, repass,
With their metallic ring and brilliant sparkle,
Among the thirsty millions. Hurrah ! hurrah !
Long live the cup of drunkenness and joy !

Fierce and more fierce the agitation grows.
They wait impatiently ; murmurs increase,
Break into riotous shouts and dangerous cries.
Poor wretches, scarcely covered even with rags,
The stamp of weary labors deeply ploughed
Upon their sunburnt, rugged faces, set
With uncombed, shaggy, bristling, matted hair !
Great drops of sweat start from their knotted brows ;
Their sinewy, horny hands are armed with spades,
With axes, hammers, shovels, scythes, and flails.
Look at that stalwart man who holds a pick ;
At that stout youth who brandishes a club ;
One holds aloft a gun with glittering pike ;
With brawny arm another hurls a hatchet.
A boy with one hand crams his mouth with cherries,
The other thrusts an awl into the tree.
Look, how their women crowd by thousands on !
Maids, wives and mothers, famished as themselves,
Faded before their time, all beauty gone,

With hair disheveled, tarnished and soiled with dust.
 In deep, dark sockets sunk, their rayless eyes
 Gleam dead and sinister, as if they mocked
 A living, human look!
 But they will soon be brighter, for the cup
 Flies full from lip to lip; they quaff long draughts:—
 Hurrah! Hurrah! Long live the foaming bowl
 Of drunkenness and joy!

Hark! murmurs rustle through the living mass!
 A cry of joy or terror? Who can read
 The meaning of a sound from myriad mouths,
 Monstrously multiform?
 A man arrives, he mounts a table, speaks,
 Harangues and sways the noisy multitude.
 His voice drags harshly, grates upon the ear,
 But hacks itself in short, strong, racy words,
 Easily heard, and easily remembered.
 His gestures suit his words, as music, song.
 His brow is broad and high, his head quite bald;
 Thought has uprooted his last hair. His skin
 Is dull and tawny, and the tell-tale blood
 Ne'er lights its dingy pallor;—feeling ne'er
 Painted its living secrets there. Between
 The bone and muscle of his parchment face
 Deep wrinkles form and weave their yellow lines.
 A heavy beard, like garland black, unwreaths
 The face where no emotion ever throbs.
 He gazes steadily upon the crowd,
 Nor doubt nor agitation ever clouds
 His clear cold eye, delays his strident voice.
 He lifts his arm, and holds it stiff and straight
 Stretched o'er the swaying throng who lowly bow,
 Ready to kneel before him to receive
 The blessing of a powerful intellect,
 Not that of a great heart.
 Down, down with all great hearts! Away with them!
 Away with all old castes and prejudice!
 Hurrah for consolation, joy, and murder!
 This is the people's idol, whom they love
 With passion, rage; he is their autocrat,

Rules all the tides of their enthusiasm ;
 They swear by him ; he plays on all their stops.
 He tells them they shall have bread, sports, wine, gold :—
 Their cries swell like the rushing of a storm,
 And echo everywhere repeats the applause :
 “ Hurrah for Pancras ! Bread, and wine, and gold,
 For us, our children, wives ! Hurrah ! Hurrah ! ”

Leaning against the table where he stands,
 And at his feet, is seen his servant, friend,
 Disciple ; one whose dark eye, glittering through
 Long, dusky lashes, marks his Orient race.
 His shoulders droop, he sways from side to side,
 As if his indolent limbs could scarce support his frame.
 His lips are full, voluptuous, and cruel ;
 His fingers gleam with rings and precious stones.
 With deep and guttural voice, he also cries :
 “ Hurrah for Pancras ! ”

The orator looks down
 Upon him, smiles, and says to him : “ Give me
 My handkerchief, Citizen Neophyte ! ”
 Meantime, the tumult ever louder grows :
 “ Death to the nobles ! ” “ To the merchants, death ! ”
 “ Death to the speculators ! ” “ Bread ! Wine ! Blood ! ”

SCENE I. *A tabernacle. Lamps. An open book. Neophytes, that is to say, Jews newly baptized.**

Neophyte. Humiliated, loved, degraded brethren !
 From holy pages of the blessed Talmud,
 As from its mother’s breast a new-born child
 Sucks nourishment, let us draw life and force !

* Our author here refers to a numerous sect, forming not one of the least of the elements of trouble fermenting in the bosom of Polish society. The *Frankists*, for such is the name of this sect, are converted Jews, converted not to the spirit of Christianity, but merely to its external rites. They are in appearance Christians, have been baptized and go to mass, but are still really Jews, and only await the proper moment to make use of their equivocal position to gratify their implacable resentment. It is the Frankists, therefore, and not the genuine Hebrews, whom our author here depicts.—*Revue des Deux Mondes.*

From it flow strength and honey for ourselves ;
But gall and bitterness for all our enemies !

CHORUS OF NEOPHYTES.

Jehovah is our God, and only ours ;
Therefore He hath dispersed us through the earth,
To twine us, like the folds of serpent vast,
About the blind adorers of the cross.
Our coils are wound around our ignorant foes,
The haughty, weak, but still defiant nobles.
Thrice spit upon them all ! Thrice curse them, God !

Neophyte. Rejoice ! the Cross of our Great Enemy
Is more than half hewn down, rots to its fall,
Projects athwart a wild dark sea of blood.
Once fallen—it can never rise again !
The nobles are its sole defense on earth—
And they are ours !

CHORUS OF NEOPHYTES.

Our work, our long, long work
Of anguished centuries is almost done !
Death to the nobles who defend the cross !
Thrice spit upon them all ! Thrice curse them, God !

Neophyte. Upon the liberty of all disorder,
Upon this slaughter which will never end,
Upon the pride of the nobility,
The license and the madness of the mob,—
We'll build anew the strength of Israel !
First we must drive the nobles on to death,
And with their corpses hide the ruins of the cross.

CHORUS OF NEOPHYTES.

The cross is now our symbol, and the dew
Of baptism leagues us with the Christian host. . . .
The scorning trust the love of those they scorned !
The freedom of the Peoples is our cry,
Their welfare is our aim. . . . Caiaphas holds
The sons of Christ fast in his sinewy arms !

Ages ago our fathers crucified
 Our Enemy. To-day again we raise
 The cross; again we nail Him there in agony:
 But He will never, never more arise
 From that deep grave in which we bury Him!

CHORUS OF NEOPHYTES.

Jehovah is the God of Israel,
 Of it *alone!* Thrice spew the Peoples forth
 To ruin! Let them perish in their sins!
 May threefold curses light upon them, Lord!

(Knocking is heard at the door.)

Neophyte. Brethren, resume your work.

(He hides the Talmud.)

Thou, Holy Book,
 Away from sight, that glance of none accursed
 May soil thy spotless leaves!

Reply: who knocks?

Voice without. A friend. Ope, Brother, in the name
 of freedom.

Neophyte. Quick, Brethren, to your hammers, looms,
 and ropes!

Leonard (entering). You're working for to-morrow;
 that is well;

Whetting your swords, preparing for the fight?

(Approaching one of the men.) What are you making in
 this corner!

One of the Neophytes.

Ropes.

Leonard. Right, friend, for he who falls not by the
 sword,

Must surely hang.

Neophyte.

Is it decided, then,

The affair takes place to-morrow, citizen?

Leonard. He who among us is most powerful
 By thought and eloquence, calls you through me;
 He waits you, and will answer to your question.

Neophyte. I'll follow you to serve our citizens.

(To the men.) Quit not your work. Yankel, take charge
 of them. *(Exit Leonard and Neophyte.)*

CHORUS OF NEOPHYTES.

Ye ropes and daggers, clubs and hatchets, swords,
 Works of our hands, ye only will appear
 When needed to destroy our deadly foes !
 The nobles will be strangled in the fields,
 Hung in the forests, gardens, by the people.
 And when their work is done, our turn will come :
 Then we will hang the hangers ; strangle those
 Who strangled, murder those who murdered !
 The scorned will rise in judgment on the scorner,
 Array themselves in thunder of Jehovah !
 His word is life : His love is ours alone ;
 Destruction, wrath, He pours upon our foes ;
 He is our refuge, blasts our enemies.
 We three times spew them forth to sudden ruin !
 Our threefold curses be upon their heads !

SCENE II. *A tent. Flasks, cups, flagons, and bottles scattered in confusion. PANCRAS alone.*

Pancras. Hundreds of brutes howled here an hour ago,

Ending with shouts their orgies. At each word
 I uttered they would cry : Hurrah ! Hurrah !
 Vivats at every gesture,—worthless praise !
 Is there a single man among them all
 Who really understands the aim and end
 Of *that* inaugurated here with such loud joy ?
 Oh ! *fervide imitatorum pecus !*

(*Enter LEONARD and the NEOPHYTE.*)

(*To Neophyte.*) Know you Count Henry ?

Neophyte. Citizen, by sight

I well remember that I met him once,
 On Corpus Christi, as I went to mass ;
 He cried, “ Out of my way ! ” and glared at me
 With that proud look peculiar to the nobles,—
 For which I in my soul vowed him a rope !

Pancras. Seek him to-morrow at the break of day ;
 Tell him I wish to visit him at night, alone.

Neophyte. How many men are to accompany me ?

Without an escort, 'twould be dangerous!

Pancras. The mission secret, you must go alone;
My name will be an all-sufficient escort.

The lantern post to which you yesterday
Hung up the Baron, doubtless will support you.

Neophyte. Aï! Aï!

Pancras. Tell him that two days hence I'll leave my
camp,
To visit him at midnight, and alone.

Neophyte. And if he keeps me bound—and tortures
me?

Pancras. A martyr in the people's cause you'd die!

Neophyte. All for the people, yes! (*Aside.*) Aï! Aï!

Pancras. Good-night! and tarry not upon the way!

(*Exit Neophyte.*)

Leonard. Why, Pancras, these half-measures, inter-
views?

Mark, when I swore to honor and obey you,
I deemed you hero in extremities,
An eagle flying straight unto his aim,
A man who stakes upon *one* throw his fate
And that of others; stout of heart and brain!

Pancras. Hush, child!

Leonard. All things are ready. Sturdy arms
Have forged our weapons, spun our ropes; our men
Are drilled, the eager millions but await
The lightning of your word to burst in flame,
Consume our enemies.

Pancras. You're very young,
And through your brain the heated blood pours fire,
But when the hour of combat comes, will you
Be found more resolute than I? Restraint
You've never known;—rashness is not true courage!

Leonard. Think what you do! The exhausted nobles
now

Are driven for refuge to their last stronghold,
The Fortress of the Holy Trinity,
Where they await us as men wait the rope
Or guillotine suspended o'er their heads.
Attack without delay—and they are yours!

Pancras. Of what importance is the hour we strike?

They've lost their corporal strength in luxury ;
 Wasted their mental powers in idleness ;
 To-morrow, or the next day, they *must fall* !

Leonard. Whom do you fear ? What can arrest your
 force ?

Pancras. No one and nothing. My own will alone.

Leonard. Must I obey it blindly ?

Pancras. You have said it :

Blindly.

Leonard. Should you betray us ?

Pancras. Betrayal winds

Up all your sentences, like quaint refrain

Of some old song. Lower ! for one might hear us. . . .

Leonard. Here are no spies. What if I should be heard ?

Pancras. Nothing, . . . save perhaps a dozen balls

Fired at your heart for having raised your voice

Too high when in my presence !

(*Coming close to Leonard.*) Cease to torment yourself, and
 trust me, Leonard.

Leonard. I will, I do ; I've been too hasty, Pancras.

But I've no fear of punishment ; and if

My death avails to serve our cause—then take my life !

Pancras (aside). He is so full of life, of faith, of hope ;

The happiest of men, he loves and trusts !

I do not wish his death.

Leonard. What do you say ?

Pancras. Think more ; speak less ; in time you'll un-
 derstand me !

Have you the powder for the cartridges ?

Leonard. Deyitz conveys the stores, his escort's strong.

Pancras. The contribution from the shoemakers,

Has it been yet collected ?

Leonard. Yes. They gave

With right good will,—one hundred thousand florins.

Pancras. I will invite them to our feast to-morrow.

Have you heard nothing new about Count Henry ?

Leonard. Nay, I despise the nobles far too much

To credit what I hear of him. I know

It is impossible the dying race

Should summon energy to cope with us.

Pancras. Yet it is true that he collects and trains

Friends, peasants, serfs, and drills them for the fight ;
 And trusting their devotion to himself,
 Will lead them to the very jaws of death.
 He has intrenched himself within the walls
 Of the old fortress, " Holy Trinity."

Leonard. Who can resist us, when incarnate live
 In us the ideas of our century ?

Pancras. I am resolved to see him, read his eyes,
 And penetrate the secrets of his soul,—
 Win him to join our cause !

Leonard. A born aristocrat !

Pancras. True, but a poet still ! Leonard, good-night.

Leonard. Have you forgiven me ?

Pancras. Go ! rest in peace !

If you were not forgiven, you would sleep
 Ere this the *eternal sleep* !

Leonard. To-morrow,—nothing ?

Pancras. Good-night, and pleasant dreams !

(*Exit Leonard.*) Ho ! Leonard, ho !

Leonard (re-entering). Chief Citizen ?

Pancras. When comes the appointed hour

You'll go with me to seek Count Henry's camp.

Leonard. My chief shall be obeyed. (*Exit.*)

Pancras (alone). Why does the boldness of this haughty
 Count

Still trouble me ? Me, ruler of the millions !

Compared with mine, his force is but a shadow.

'Tis true, indeed, some hundreds of his serfs

Cling round him as the dog stays by his master

In trusting confidence. That is sheer folly ! . . .

But why do I so long to see this Count,

To subjugate him, win him to our side ?

Has my clear spirit for the first time met

An equal ? Does he bar its onward flight ?

Arrest it in its full development ?

The only obstacle before me now

Is his resistance ; that I must o'ercome !

And then . . . and afterwards . . . and then . . .

O cunning intellect, canst thou deceive

Thyself as thou dost others ? . . . Canst not ?—No ? . . .

O wretchedness ! . . . Why dost thou doubt thyself?
 Shame ! . . . thou should'st know thy power ! Thou art
 the thought,
 The reason of the people ; Sovereign Lord !
 Thou canst control the millions, make their wills,
 With all their giant forces, one with thine !
 The might of *all* incarnate is in thee ;
 Thou art authority and government !
 What would be crime in others, is in thee
 Glory and fame ! Thou givest name and place
 To men unknown ; a voice, a faith to brutes
 Almost deprived of mental, moral worth !
 In thine own image thou hast made a world,
 An age created,—art thyself its god !
 And yet thou hesitatest,—doubt'st thyself ?
 No, no ! a hundred times ! . . . Thou art sublime !
 (*Absorbed in his reflections, he sinks in his chair.*)

SCENE III. *A forest with a cleared plain in its midst, upon which stands a gallows, surrounded by huts, tents, watchfires, casks, barrels, tables, and throngs of men and women.*

COUNT HENRY, *disguised in a dark cloak and liberty cap, enters, holding the NEOPHYTE by the hand.*

Count Henry. Remember !

Neophyte (in a whisper). On my honor I will lead
 Your Excellency right ! I'll not betray you.

Count Henry. Give one suspicious wink ; raise but a
 finger ;

And I will blow your brains out like a dog's !
 You may imagine that I can attach
 But little value to *your* worthless life,
 When I, thus lightly, risk *my own* with you.

Neophyte. You press my hand as in a vice of steel.

Aï ! Aï ! What would you have me do ?

Count Henry. To treat me as a comrade just arrived,
 And so mislead the crowd. What is this curious dance ?

Neophyte. The merry dance of a free People, Count.

(*Men and women leap, dance, and sing around the gallows.*)

CHORUS.

Bread, meat, and work! Hurrah! Hurrah!
 Wood for the winter! Hurrah! Hurrah!
 Rest for the summer! Hurrah! Hurrah!
 God had no pity upon us! Hurrah!
 Kings had no pity upon us! Hurrah!
 Our lords had no pity upon us! Hurrah!
 We give up God, kings, nobles! Hurrah!
 Had enough of them all! Hurrah! Hurrah!

Count Henry (to a girl). I'm glad to see you look so fresh and gay.

Girl. I'm sure we've waited long enough for such a day as this! I've scrubbed, and washed the dishes, cleaned knives and forks for many a weary year, and never heard a good word said to me. 'Tis high time now I should begin to eat when I am hungry, drink when I am dry, and dance when I am merry.

Count Henry. Dance, citizeness, dance!

Neophyte (in a whisper). For God's sake, Count, be careful, or you will

Be recognized!

Count Henry. Should they discover me,

'Tis you shall die! We'll mingle with the throng.

Neophyte. The Club of Lackeys sits beneath that oak.

Count. We will draw nearer; hear what they are saying.

First Lackey. I've killed my master.

Second Lackey. And I seek my Count.

I drink to the health of the club!

Valet de Chambre. In the sweat of our brows,

Whether blacking the boots, or licking the dust from the feet

Of our arrogant lords, we have never forgotten our rights; we have felt we were citizens, equals, and powerful men. Let us drink to the health of our present society!

CHORUS OF LACKEYS.

Let us drink the good health of our President!
 One of ourselves, he ascends

On the pathway of honor ; 'tis evident
 He will conduct us to fame :—
 All hail to his glorious name !

Valet de Chambre. Citizens, Brothers, my very best
 thanks are your due !

CHORUS OF LACKEYS.

From dressing-rooms and antechambers,
 Kitchens, parlors, full of strife,—
 Prisons where they held us captive,—
 We are rushing into life !
 We have been behind the curtains,
 Know how brilliant shams may be,
 We've read all our masters' follies,
 Vices, crimes, perversity :
 All their falsehood, cunning, meanness,
 We have suffered one by one ;
 We are rushing into freedom,
 Now our shameful work is done ;
 Brothers, drink in the light of the sun !

Count Henry. Whose are the voices harsher than the
 rest,
 More savage, from the mound upon our left ?
Neophyte. The Butchers meet, and sing their chorus
 there.

CHORUS OF BUTCHERS.

The cleaver and axe are our weapons ;
 In the slaughter-house pass we our lives ;
 We love the blood-hue, and we care not
 What we strike with our keen-bladed knives :
 Aristocrats, calves, lambs, or cattle,
 All die when our blade slits the throat.

The children of slaughter and vigor,
 To cut quickly the whole of our knowledge ;—
 He who has need of us has us ;
 We can kill without going through college !
 For the nobles, we'll slaughter fat cattle ;
 For the People, we'll slaughter the nobles !

The cleaver and axe are our weapons,
 In the slaughter-house pass we our lives ;
 We love the blood-hue, and we care not
 If cattle or nobles fall under our knives.
 Hurrah for the shambles, the shambles !
 Hurrah for the bright hue of blood !
 Hurrah for the butchers, who fear not
 To stand in the crimson, hot flood !

Count Henry. Why, that is well ! At least there's no
 pretense

Of honor and philosophy. But who
 Comes here ? Good-evening, Madame !

Neophyte. You forget !
 Your Excellency ought to say : " Woman
 Of freedom, citizeness."

Woman. What do you mean
 By that word, " Madame" ? Fie ! You smell of
 mould !

Count Henry. I pray you, pardon me, fair citizeness !

Woman. I am as free as you ; as free as air ;
 I freely give my love to the community
 Which has emancipated me. My right
 To lavish it in my own way is now
 Acknowledged by the world !

Count Henry. Oh, wise new world !
 Did the community give you those rings,
 That purple necklace of rich amethyst ?
 Thrice generous and kind community !

Woman. No. They are not from the community.
 My husband gave them when I was his wife ;
 I seized and kept them when I was made free.
 You know my *husband* means my *enemy* ;
 The enemy of female liberty.
 He held me long enslaved ; now I am free !

Count Henry. Good-eve ! A pleasant walk, free citi-
 zeness !

(*They pass on.*)

Who is that curious warrior leaning on
 A two-edged sword, a death's head on his cap,
 One on his badge, another on his breast ?

Is it the famous soldier, Bianchetti,*
 Now hired by the *people* for the combat,
 As he was wont to be by *kings* and *nobles*,
 To lead the condottieri? Is it he?

Neophyte. It is. He joined our forces recently.

Count Henry. (To *Bianchetti.*) What is it you examine with such care,

Brave *Bianchetti*? Can you see the foe?

Bianchetti. Look through this narrow opening in the woods,

You'll see a Fortress on that mountain crest ;
 With this strong glass I scan the ramparts, walls,
 And the four bastions, brother Citizen.

Count Henry. I see it now. It will be hard to take.

Bianchetti. By all the devils! No. It can be mined,
 Surrounded first by covered galleries . . .

Neophyte. Citizen General . . .

(*He makes a sign to Bianchetti.*)

Count Henry (in a whisper to the *Neophyte*). Look
 'neath my cloak—

My pistol's cock is raised !

Neophyte (aside.)

My curse on thee !

(To *Bianchetti.*) How would you deem it best to plan
 the siege ?

Bianchetti. In freedom you're my brother, Citizen ;
 But not my *confidant* in strategy !

After the capture, all shall know my plans.

Count Henry (to *Neophyte*). Take my advice, Jew,
 strike him dead at once ;

Such men begin all aristocracies !

A weaver. Curses ! curse them ! Ay, I curse them all !

Count Henry. What are you doing here, poor fellow,
 'neath

This tree ? Why do you look so pale and wild ?

Weaver. Curses upon the manufacturers !

Curses upon the merchants ! my best years

* *Bianchetti* is the type of those cosmopolitan warriors who are ready to draw their swords in any cause whatever, provided *it pays*. All countries passing through a revolution (especially Poland) are familiar with such military adventurers.

Of life, when other men make love to maids,
 Or walk abroad, and meet their fellow-men
 On pleasant plains, or sail upon the seas,—
 The sky above, around, fresh air to breathe,—
 I've passed in gloom, in dark and stifling dens,
 Chained to a silk-loom, like a galley-slave !

Count Henry. Drink down the wine you hold in your
 thin hands ;

Empty the cup—you're faint—it will revive you !

Weaver. I've no strength left to bear it to my lips.
 I am so weak I scarcely could crawl here,
 Although it is the promised Day of Freedom !
 Too late ! too late ! it comes too late for me !

(*He falls and gasps.*)

Food ! wine ! rest ! sunshine ! all too late for me !
 Curses upon the merchants who buy silks !
 Upon the manufacturers who make them !
 Upon the nobles ! all who wear them, curses !

(*He writhes on the ground, and dies.*)

Count Henry. Heavens ! what a ghastly corpse ! Pol-
 troon of freedom,

Baptized Jew, look at that lifeless head
 Lit by the blood-red rays of setting sun !
 What now to him are all your promises,
 Your sounding words that bear no heart within ;
 Perfectibility, equality,
 The universal bliss of free humanity ?

Neophyte (aside). May such a death soon seize your-
 self, proud Count,—

And dogs tear off the flesh from the rotting corpse !

(*Aloud.*) I humbly beg you will dismiss me now ;
 I must give answer on my embassy.

Count Henry. Are you afraid ? Say that, believing you
 To be a spy, I forcibly detained you.

(*Looking around him.*)

The tumult of this orgie dies away
 Behind us, while before, there's nothing save
 Great firs and pines which wave in crimson rays
 Of sunset. Lurid, ominous, that light !

Neophyte. Clouds gather thick and fast above the trees :
 A storm will soon be on us,—hear the wind !

You should return to your attendants, who
Have waited long for you within the Pass
Of Saint Ignatius.

Count Henry. Oh, I'm safe enough,
I do not fear the storm. I thank thee, Jew,
For so much loving care. But back, sir, back!
I choose to see these citizens to-night.

VOICES UNDER THE TREES.

Good-night, old Sun! Ham's children say: Good-night!
Here's to thy health, old enemy! Hurrah!
Thou long hast driven us on to unpaid work,
Awaked us early to unceasing toil:
To-morrow thou wilt find thy slaves asleep,—
Not caring whether thou get'st up or not,—
Or eating, drinking, full of flesh and wine!

A Peasant (throwing away his glass). Off to the devil,
empty glass! Hurrah!

Neophyte. These bands of peasants will obstruct our
way.

Count Henry. You shall not leave me! Stand behind
this tree;

And if you value life, be silent, Jew!

CHORUS OF PEASANTS.

On! on! to meet our brothers
Under the white tents' row,
Or 'neath the giant shadows
The great oaks throw below!
To pleasant sunset greetings,
To rest, to sleep, to wake;
The girl we love is waiting
Our hand in hers to take!
We've killed the fattest cattle
With which we used to plough,
They are waiting us to eat them,—
No weary labor now!

A Voice. I drag and pull him on with all my strength;
He will not come—he turns—defends himself.
Come on, old fool! (*strikes him.*) Down! down among the
dead!

Voice of the dying Noble. My children, pity! pity!

Second Voice. Why, you had none!
Come chain me to your land, and make me work
Again for nothing, will you?

Third Voice. My only son
You lashed to death! Now wake him from the dead,
Or die and join him!

Fourth Voice. The children of Ham drink thy health,
old Lord!
They kneel to thee,—pray for forgiveness, old Lord!

CHORUS OF PEASANTS (*passing out of sight*).

A vampire sucked our blood, and lived upon our strength;
We caught him with his bloody lips,—he's ours at length!
As is a great Lord's due, we swear thou shalt swing high;
Yes, far above us all, by the devil, thou shalt die!

To every noble, death! the tyrants! they must fall!
Drink, food and rest for us; they've starved and wronged
us all!

For shelter, meat, and land, and wine we mean to have;
Though naked, we are men! Off, vampires, to the grave!

OTHER PEASANTS.

Your bodies shall lie as thick as the sheaves
On our fields; and the drifting wrecks
Of your castles shall fly like the chaff beneath
The flail, as we twist your necks!
They shall perish as bundles of straw in the flames,
While the children of Ham by the light
Will warm themselves by the great bonfire,
And merrily dance all night!

Count Henry. I cannot see the murdered noble's face,
The crowd has grown so dense!

Neophyte. Perhaps he was
A friend of yours, a cousin, Count.

Count Henry. No more!
Him I despise; you I detest! Bah! Bah!
And yet, perchance, may poetry some day
Gild even this wild horror! Forward, Jew!

(*They disappear among the trees.*)

Another part of the forest. A mound, upon which fires are burning. A procession of men bearing torches.

COUNT HENRY *appears at the base of the mound with the*
NEOPHYTE.

Count Henry. The thorns have torn my scarlet cap to tatters!

What lurid flames are those, like fires of hell,
That rise among the trees and fringe with light
The gloomy forest's long and darkening aisles?

Neophyte. We lost our way in seeking for the Pass.
We must retrace our steps into the wood,
For Leonard here will celebrate to-night
The rites of this New Faith. I pray you, back!
To advance is death!

Count Henry. I am resolved to try;
This is precisely what I wished to see.
Fear nothing, Jew; no one will recognize us.

Neophyte. Be prudent! here our lives hang on a breath!

Count Henry. What monstrous ruins strew the ground
about us!

There lies the dying world; colossal form,
Which lasted centuries before it fell!
Columns and capitals, and fretted roofs,
And slender shafts, and statues, cornices
With golden bands, rose windows and stained glass,
Upturned and broken, crashing 'neath my feet!
Painting and sculpture, relics, bas-reliefs
Upheaved in ruin! . . . Heaven! is that the face
Of God's dear Mother shining in this gloom?
'Tis gone! There gleams a cherub's head; a shrine
With railing carved in bronze;—Ha! by yon torch
I see a knight in armor sleeping on
An upturned tomb! Crosses and monuments
As thick as flakes of snow! . . . Where am I, Jew?

Neophyte. We cross the grave-yard of the latest church
Of the Old Faith. For forty days and nights
We labored to destroy it; built it seemed
To last eternal ages!

Count Henry. Ye New Men,
Your songs, your hymns, grate harshly on my ears!

Before me and behind, on every side,
 Dark forms are moving ; fitful shadows, lights,
 Are driven to and fro by soughing gusts,
 And float, like clouds of spirits, midst the throng !

A Passer-by. I greet you, Citizen, in the name of Freedom.

Another. I greet you in the slaughter of the nobles.

Third Passer-by. The praise of Freedom's chanted by the priests ;

Why haste ye not to join the chorus ?

Neophyte. Flight

Is now impossible ; we must advance !

Count Henry. And who is that young man who stands in front

Upon the ruins of an ancient altar ?

Three flames are burning at his feet ; his face
 Shines strangely through the crimsoning fire and smoke,
 His gestures wild, excited, while his voice
 Rings like a maniac's shriek ?

Neophyte. 'Tis Leonard, young,

Inspired prophet of our liberty.*

Philosophers and poets, artists, priests,
 Stand round him with their daughters and their loves.

Count Henry. I understand,—your aristocracy !

Point out the man who sent to me to seek
 An interview.

Neophyte. I do not see him here.

Leonard. Fly to my arms ! Come, let our burning lips
 Cling to each other till our breath grows flame !
 My beautiful, my love ! Come, fly to me,
 Disrobed of veils, of antique prejudices,—
 My chosen 'mid the daughters of the free !

Voice of a Girl. I come, I fly to thee, my well beloved !

Second Girl. Look upon me ! I stretch to thee my hands,

But in the frenzy of the rapturing bliss,

* In Leonard is personified the impotence of a man who desires to found a religion through himself alone. The worship which he preaches is a monstrous chaos. It is supposed the Poet intended to reunite in this character traits common to several modern Utopians.—*Revue des Deux Mondes.*

I faint and fall, belovéd, at thy feet !
I cannot rise,—can only turn to thee !

Third Girl. Look, Prophet, look ! I have outstripped
them all,
Through cinders, ashes, flame and fire and smoke !
I clasp thy feet, belovéd, to my heart !

Count Henry. Her long dark hair floats far upon the
wind,
With heaving breast she leaps upon the altar.

Neophyte. Thus is it every night with our young
priest.

Leonard. To me, my bliss ! Come, child of freedom,
come !

Thou tremblest with divinest inspiration.
Lend me a share that I may teach my brethren !
Prophetic words thrill through my quivering lips !

Count Henry. Her head is bowed, she falls as in con-
vulsion.

Leonard. Ye People, look on us ! We offer you
An image of the race from trammels freed.
We stand upon the ruins of the Past.
To us be honor, glory ! We have trampled
All into dust, the God of old is dead !
His limbs are torn asunder, and our mind
Is borne triumphant to his seat, whence falls
His spirit to eternal nothingness !

CHORUS OF WOMEN.

Happy and blest is the loved of the Prophet :
We stand at her feet, and we envy her lot !

Leonard. A new world give I you ; to a *new* God
I give the heavens,—a God of freedom, bliss,
The *People's God* ! Let every tyrant's corpse
His fitting altar be ! The pile would reach
The sky ! A sea of blood will flow, and sweep
Away the pangs of past humanity !
Our tears all shed, we will inaugurate
Perpetual happiness ; the Day of Freedom !
Damnation and the gallows be to him
Who would reorganize the Past, conspire
Against the perfect brotherhood of man !

CHORUS OF MEN.

The towers of superstition, tyranny,
Have fallen! fallen!
Death and damnation be to him who'd save
One stone from that old, crumbling edifice!

Neophyte (aside). Blasphemers of Jehovah, thrice I
spew

You forth to swift destruction!

Count Henry. Keep but thy promise, Eagle, I will build
A temple to the glorious Son of God
On their bowed necks, and on this very spot!

A confused cry of Voices. Freedom! Equality! and
perfect bliss!

CHORUS OF THE NEW PRIESTS.

Where are the lords, and where the haughty kings,
Who ruled with cruel pride, and walked the earth
Adorned with crown and sceptre? Where are they?

Voices. Gone! Gone! forever gone! Hurrah!
Hurrah!

An Assassin. I killed King Alexander.

Another Assassin. I, King John.

Third Assassin. I murdered King Emmanuel. Hurrah!

Leonard. March without fear! Murder without re-
morse!

Ye are the elect of the elect, the sons
Of that God whom the *People* have *elected*!
Martyrs and heroes of our liberties!

CHORUS OF ASSASSINS.

We glide in the darkness of night,
We move in the gloom of the shadow;
Dagger and sword in the clutch of our might,
We strike for the good of our brothers!

Leonard (to the young girl). Rouse thee, my love!

(*A loud clap of thunder is heard.*)

(*To the throng.*) Answer this living God who speaks in
thunder!

Ye vigorous sons of freedom, follow me!
Sing hymns, and let us once more trample down

The dead God's Church.

Awake, beloved! lift up thy drooping head!

Girl. I glow with love to thee, and to thy God!

Oh, I would share my love with all mankind,

With the great universe! I glow! I glow!

Count Henry. Who is that blocks the way! He falls
upon

His knees, he lifts his hands, and, groaning, speaks.

Neophyte. He is the son of our philosopher.

Leonard. What wouldst thou, Herman?

Herman. Pontiff, I would ask

For consecration as a murderer.

Leonard. Hand me the oil, the poniard, and the poison!

With this, the sacred oil once used to anoint

Earth's kings, I consecrate thee to their murder!

I put into thy hands the ancient arms

Of knights and nobles,—use them for their death!

I hang upon thy breast this flask of poison,

That where the sword can never reach, it may

Corrode, and burn the bowels of our tyrants!

Go! thou art consecrated to destroy

Despots in every quarter of the globe!

Count Henry. He goes. He heads his bands of mur-
derers!

They climb the hill,—they surely come to us,—

Leonard is at their head. . . .

Neophyte. We must withdraw.

Count Henry. No. I will dream this dream out to
its end!

Neophyte (aside). Jehovah, hear! Doom him to swift
destruction!

(*To Count Henry.*) Leonard will surely know me. See
you not

The dreadful knife that glitters on his breast?

Count Henry. There, hide thee, Jew, beneath my
mantle's folds.

Know you the women dancing round the man

Whom you call Leonard?

Neophyte. All I know by name.

The wives of princes, counts, who have forsaken

Their former lords, and then embraced our faith.

Count Henry. Women I once deemed angels! idolized! . . .

The crowd surrounds and hides him from my sight,
But as the music ever fainter grows,
He must be moving from us with his train.
Jew, follow me! We can see better here!

(*He climbs the parapet of a wall.*)

Neophyte. Woe! woe! here every one will surely know us!

Count Henry. I see him now; but other female forms,
Convulsive, pale, and haggard, throng around.
I see the son of the philosopher;
He foams and gestures, brandishes his dagger.
They reach the northern tower, dance round the wreck,
Trample the ruins, rend the Gothic shrines,
Throw fire upon the holy prostrate altars,
The sacred pictures and the broken crosses!
The fire blazes,—clouds of smoke arise
That darken all before me!
Anathema on these blasphemers! Woe!

Leonard. Woe! woe to men who still bow lowly
down,
In adoration to a lifeless God!

Count Henry. The blackening masses of the People
turn—

They drive upon us now!

Neophyte.

Oh, Abraham!

Count Henry. Eagle of glory! this is not mine hour!

Neophyte. We're lost. Escape is none.

Leonard (stopping them). Who are you, brother, with
that haughty face?

Why are you not with us?

Count Henry.

But yesterday

I of your final revolution heard,
And hastened from afar to lend my aid.
I'm an assassin of the Spanish club.

Leonard. Who is this man who hides his face beneath
Your ample cloak?

Count Henry.

My younger brother, who

Has sworn an oath never to show his face
Until he kills a noble!

Leonard. Whom can you
Boast to have killed?

Count Henry. It was but yesterday
My brothers consecrated me to murder.

Leonard. Whom will you strike the first?

Count Henry. The greatest tyrant;—
Yourself, should you prove false!

Leonard. Here, brother, take
My dagger for such use!

(*Hands it to him.*)

Count Henry (drawing his own). My own is sharp
Enough to strike a traitor to the heart!

Many Voices. Hurrah for Leonard! for the People's
friend!

Other Voices. Long live the assassin of the Spanish
club!

Leonard. Meet me to-morrow in our General's tent.

CHORUS OF PRIESTS.

We here salute thee, friend, in Freedom's name,
Within thy hands thou bear'st our safety's pledge;
Who fights unceasingly, assassinates
Without misgiving, never yields to doubt
Of victory—such one is sure to conquer.

CHORUS OF PHILOSOPHERS.

We have at last awaked the human race
From long and childish dreams, unveiled Truth's face;
We've dragged her from the Darkness into Light;—
Go thou to kill, to die, to exalt her might!

Son of the Philosopher (to Count Henry). Comrade and
friend, out of this hollow skull
Of ancient saint, I drink to your good health.

(*He flings away the skull.*)

A Girl (dancing up to Count Henry). Wilt kill King
John for me?

Another. For me, Count Henry!

Children. Bring us some nobles' heads: we want new
balls!

Other Children. Good fortune guide your daggers to
their hearts!

CHORUS OF ARTISTS.

We'll build our church upon these Gothic ruins ;
No images shall stand within its walls.
Sharp pikes and blades shall form its vaulted arch.
The pillars borne upon eight human heads,
Thick locks of hair shall form the capitals,
Seeming to gush with crimson streams of blood !
Our altar shall be white as new-fallen snow,
Our only God will rest upon the stone :—
The scarlet cap of Liberty ! Hurrah !

Other Voices. On ! on ! the morning dawn already
breaks.

Neophyte. They'll surely hang us, Count, on yonder
gallows.

Count Henry. They follow Leonard ; us they heed no
longer . . .

This time,—the last, I see with my own eyes,
Embrace with my own thought the wildering future,
The chaos quickening in the womb of Time,
The black abyss that menaces destruction
To me, my brothers, all the reverend Past.
I gaze once more—ere it engulf me !
Driven by despair, urged on by bitter grief,
My soul awakens to new energy.
O God ! give me again the fiery power
Which Thou of old wert wont not to refuse me,—
And I will in one burning word reveal,
Incorporate this new and monstrous world,
Which does not know itself, its destiny,
And this Word will become the Poetry
Of all the future years !

Voice in the air. Thou chantest a Drama !

Count Henry. Thanks for the information—friend or
foe !

The desecrated ashes of my sires
Shall be avenged ! . . .
Anathema on these new generations !

Their whirlpool seethes around me, but it shall
 Not draw me in its ever swifter course,
 The widening circles of its mad abyss.
 Eagle! my Eagle! keep thy promise now!
 Jew, I am ready to descend the Pass.

Neophyte. Behold the dawn: I may no farther go.

Count Henry. Put me upon the path; I will release you.

Neophyte. Ah! why thus drag me on through fog and
 briers,

O'er embers, ruins? I pray you, let me go!

Count Henry. On! on! descend with me!

The last mad songs

Of that bewildered people die behind us;

Their scattered lights scarce glimmer through the gloom!

Under these hoary trees, through this pale fog,

I see the giant shadows of the Past. . . .

Do you not hear those melancholy chants?

Neophyte. All things are shrouded in the curdling
 mists;

At every step still deeper we descend.

CHORUS OF SPIRITS IN THE FOREST.

Weep! weep for Christ,—the exiled, suffering Lord!

Where is our Holy Church? Where is our God?

Count Henry. Unsheathe the sword! quick to the
 combat! I

Will give Him back to you! Will crucify

His enemies on thousand, thousand crosses!

CHORUS OF SPIRITS.

Day and night we watched the altar,

Guarded all the saintly graves:

Bearing on our wings sweet echoes,

High along the vaulted naves,

Vesper bell, or matin chiming

Falling on the faithful ear,

Swelling tones of pealing organ,

Which the angels stooped to hear;—

In the gleaming of the storied,

Heaven-hued, rainbow window panes,

Haloed heads and virgins sainted;

In the shadows of the fanes;

In the holy golden glitter
 Of the world's redeeming cup ;
 In the whiteness of the wafer
 Which the blessing Priest held up ;
 In Consecration, Benediction,—
 Centred all our happy life :
 Aï ! Aï ! who can aid us ?
 Who will end this wretched strife ?
 Where shall we now seek for shelter ?
 Altar, incense, priest, are gone !
 Man now deems himself Creator !
 Dreams the twilight is the dawn !

Count Henry. Day breaks ! Their shadowy forms dis-
 solve ! they melt

In the red rays of morn !

Neophyte. Here lies your way.

We've reached the entrance to the Pass at last.

Count Henry (calling). Holà ! Holà ! Our Lord, and
 my own sword !

(*He tears off the Liberty cap, throws it upon the ground, and
 casts pieces of silver in it.*)

For memory, take the thing and emblem ! they
 Belong together.

Neophyte. You have pledged your word ;

He shall be safe who visits you to-night ?

Count Henry. A noble ne'er repeats,—nor breaks a
 promise,—go !

Hail ! Jesus and my sword !

Voices from the Pass. Long live our Lord !

Our swords and Mary !

Count Henry (to Neophyte). Citizen, adieu !

To me, my faithful ! Jesus, Mary, aid !

SCENE IV. *Trees and bushes.* PANCRAS, LEONARD,
 and attendants.

Pancras (to his attendants). Lie on this spot, your faces
 to the turf ;

Be quiet, beat no signal, light no fires ;

If you should hear my pistol, fly to me !

If not, you must not stir till dawn of day.

Leonard. Once more, I must implore you, Citizen !

Pancras. Rest at the foot of this tall pine, and sleep !

Leonard. Let me go with you ! Should you trust
your life

To this Count Henry, this aristocrat ?

Pancras (*motioning him to remain*). The nobles rarely
break a plighted word !

SCENE V. *Night. A vast feudal hall in the castle of Count Henry. Blazons, and pictures of knights and ladies hang along the walls. A pillar is seen in the background bearing the arms and escutcheons of the family. The Count is seated at a marble table, upon which are placed an antique lamp of wrought silver, a jewel-hilted sword, a pair of pistols, an hour-glass, and clock. On the opposite side stands another table with silver pitchers, decanters, and massive goblets.*

Count Henry. Midnight ! It was at this same solemn
hour,

Surrounded by like perils and like thoughts,

The latest Brutus met his Evil Genius :

And such an apparition I await !

A man who has no name, no ancestors,

Who has no guardian angel, faith, nor God,

Whose mission is destruction to the past,

Will yet—unless I'm strong enough to hurl

Him back into his primal nothingness—

Destroy society, its laws and faith ;

Found a new era in the fate of man !

Such is the modern Cæsar I await !

* * * * *

Eagle of glory, hear ! Souls of my sires,

Inspire me with that fiery force which made

You rulers of the world. Oh, give to me

The lion heart which throbbed within your breasts !

Your austere majesty gird round my brow !

Rekindle in my soul your burning, blind,

Unconquerable faith in Christ, His Church,

The inspiration of your deeds on earth,

Your hopes in Heaven ! Light it again in me,

And I will scathe our foes with fire and sword,

Will conquer and destroy all who oppose me,
 The myriads of the children of the dust.
 I, the last son of hundred generations,
 Sole heir of all your virtues, thoughts, and faults !

(The bell of the castle strikes.)

It is the appointed hour :—I am prepared.

Enter JACOB (an old servant fully armed).

Jacob. Your Excellence, the man you wait is here.

Count Henry. Admit him, Jacob. *(Exit Jacob.)*

(He reappears, announces PANCRAS, and again retires.)

Pancras (entering). I salute you, Count.

Yet that word *Count* sounds strangely on my lips.

(He seats himself, takes off his cloak and scarlet cap, and fixes his eye upon the pillar on which the armorial bearings hang.)

Count Henry. I thank you for the ready confidence
 Placed in the honor of this ancient House.
 Faithful to our old rites, I drink your health.

(He fills a goblet and hands to Pancras.)

Pancras (still looking at the pillar). If I am not mistaken,
 noble Count,

This blue and scarlet shield was called a coat
 Of arms in the lost language of the dead ;
 But all such trifles vanish rapidly
 Forever from the surface of the earth.

Count Henry. God aiding, they will shortly reappear !

Pancras. Commend me to the old nobility !

You answer like a chip of the old block.

A nobleman learns nothing from the times,
 Always confiding in himself, high, bold,
 Though without money, credit, arms, or men.
 Proud, obstinate, and hoping 'gainst all hope,
 E'en like the corpse in the fable, threatening
 The driver of the hearse with vengeance dire
 At very gate of fatal charnel-house !

Trusting in God—at least pretending trust—
 When trust in self is found impossible !

Count Henry, give me but one little glimpse

Of all the lightnings God keeps stored above
 For your especial benefit, to blast
 Me and my thronging millions! Show me one,
 Bnt *one* of all the hosts who fill the sky;
One of the mighty angels who are soon
 To encamp upon your side, and in whose force
 You trust to win the victory over me,
 And, without loss, subdue the human race!

(*He empties the goblet.*)

Count Henry. Chief of the People, you are pleased to
 jest;

But atheism is an *ancient* formula,
 And I hoped something *new*, from the New Men.

Pancras. Laugh if you will, Sir Count, at your own wit;
 My faith is far more firmly based than yours,
 My formulas far wider than your own.
 My central dogma is most holy, true:

The emancipation of humanity!

It has its source in wild, despairing cries
 Forever rising to the throne of God
 From weary hearts of millions of oppressed:

The famine of degraded artisans;
 The poverty of peasants, woes of serfs;
 The desecration of their daughters, wives;
 The general degradation of the race;
 The unjust laws, the brutal prejudice!

My dogmas spring from infinite agonies;
 Such woes give me the aid of all our race!

I am resolved to establish my new creed,
 Written by God upon all human hearts!
 Men know He made them equal, gave them all
 A birthright; right to happiness, to ease;
 Possession of the earth, and liberty!

This is my power! These thoughts, my God! A God
 Pledged to give rest, bread, glory, bliss to man!
 This creed proclaimed, oh, what can stay its course?

(*He fills and empties the goblet.*)

Count Henry. The God who gave all former power
 and rule
 To my strong sires!

Pancras. And can *you* trust Him still,
 When He has given you as a plaything to
 The devil all your life? A jest for friends?
 But let us leave discussions such as these
 To theologians, should there linger still
 Such fossils upon earth. To facts! stern facts!

Count Henry. Redeemer of the People, Citizen God!
 What can you seek from me? why visit me?

Pancras. In the first place, because I wished to know
 you:
 And in the next, because I wished to save you.

Count Henry. Thanks for the first; and for the second,
 trust my sword!

Pancras. Your God! Your sword! Vain phantoms
 of the brain!

Look at the dread realities about you!
 The curses of the myriads are upon you,
 Millions of brawny arms already raised
 To hurl you down to death! Of all the Past
 You so much vaunt, nothing remains to you
 Save a few feet of earth; scarcely enough
 To offer you a grave!

The Castle of the Holy Trinity,
 Your last poor fortress, only can hold out
 A few days more. You know you have no men,
 Artillery, appliances of war,
 Nor powder, shot, nor food for garrison.
 Your men may *fight*, but will not *starve*, and will
 Desert you in the hour of utmost need.
 I speak the truth; you know as well as I,
 There's nothing left on which to hang a hope!
 If I were in your place, heroic Count,
 I know what I would do.

Count Henry. Speak on. You see
 How patiently I hear. What would you do?

Pancras. Were I Count Henry, I would say to Pan-
 cras:

“You speak the truth; there's not a single hope.
 I will dismiss my troops; my few poor serfs,
 Nor seek to hold the ‘Holy Trinity,’—
 For this, I will retain my title, lands,

And you will pledge your honor to the deed,
As guarantee of that agreed upon!"
How old are you, Count Henry?

Count Henry. Thirty-six.

Pancras. No more? Then fifteen years of life are
all

You have a just right to expect, for men
Of temperaments like yours always die young.
Your son is nearer to the grave than to
Maturity. A *single* case like yours
Could do no serious harm to our Great Whole.
Remain, then, where you are, last of the Counts;
Rule while you live in your ancestral home;
Have, if you will, the portraits all retouched;
The armorial bearings of your line renewed;
And think no more of that most wretched remnant
Of your fallen order, which deserves to fall!
You *know* the People have been long oppressed;
Stay not the sword of justice as it falls
On *their* oppressors! Here's a health! I drink,
The last of all the Counts!

(He fills and drinks another goblet of wine.)

Count Henry. Cease! cease! Each word you utter
breathes new insult!

Can you suppose, to save a wretched life,
I would submit myself to be enslaved,
And dragged in chains behind your car of triumph?
Desert the nobles, whom I have sworn to aid?
No more! no more! I can endure no more!
I cannot answer as my spirit prompts;
You are my guest, and shall be sheltered from
All insult 'neath the shadow of my roof!
My Lares guard you; plighted my knightly honor!

Pancras. "Plighted and knightly honor" in our
days

Swing oft upon a gallows! You unfurl
A tattered banner, whose worn, faded rags
Seem out of place among the brilliant flags,
The joyous symbols of humanity
And universal progress. Flaunt it no more!

I know your generous spirit, and protest
 Against your course, self-sacrificing Count !
 Still full of life and manly vigor, you
 Would bind your heart to putrefying corpses,
 Cling to a vain belief in privilege,
 In worn-out relics, and in dead men's bones,
 Mouldering escutcheons, and the word of country !
 Yet in your inmost soul you're forced to own
 Your brother-nobles have deserved their doom,
 And that forgetfulness for them were mercy !

Count Henry. You, Pancras, and your noisy followers,
 Tell me what you deserve !

Pancras.

Life ! Victory !

For we acknowledge but one living right,
 One ceaseless law : " the *law of eternal progress !*"
 This fatal law seals your death-warrant. Hark !
 Through my just lips it cries to you and yours :
 " Mouldering and rotten aristocracy,
 Full crammed with meat and wine torn from your serfs,
 Effete with luxury, worn out with ease,—
 Give place to the young, the strong, the hungry, poor,
 Whose vigorous blood will found a nobler race !"
 I *will* save you, and you alone, Count Henry !

Count Henry. No more ! I will not brook your haughty
 pity !

I know you too, and your new riotous world ;
 I've seen your camp at night, and looked upon
 The swarms upon whose necks you ride to power !
 I saw it all ; detected the *old* crimes,
 But thinly veiled by *newer* draperies,
 Far wilder and more savage than of yore ;—
 I saw *old* vices shining through *new* shams,
 Whirling to strange new tunes, voluptuous dance,—
 The robes were changed, but the old ends were there,
 The same which they have been for centuries,
 And will forever be while man is man,—
 Adultery and theft, murder and license !
 I did not see you *there* ! You were not with
 Your guilty children, *whom you know you scorn* ;
 And if you do not soon go mad with horror
 'Mid the wild riots of the cruel people,

You will despise and hate yourself, Great Citizen !
Oh, torture me no more ! . . .

(He rises, moves hurriedly to and fro, then seats himself under his escutcheon.)

Pancras. 'Tis true my world is in its infancy,
Unformed and undeveloped ; it needs food,
Rest, ease and pleasure ; but the Giant grows,
Grows rapidly ; the time is coming fast
When it will its maturity attain,

(He rises, approaches the Count, and leans against the armorial pillar.)

The consciousness of its all-powerful strength,
When it shall say in giant tones : I AM !
And there will be no other voice on earth
Able to answer : LO ! I ALSO AM !

Count Henry.

And then ?

Pancras. Then from the masses quickening 'neath my
breath,

Of whom I am the representative,
A stronger race will spring, higher than aught
The earth has yet produced. They will be free,
Lords of the globe from frozen pole to pole ;
A blooming garden will they make of earth,
Redeem the desert, tame the wilderness.
The sea will gleam with floating palaces,
With argosies of wealth and varied commerce ;
The exchange of all commodities will bear
Desires of mutual recognition on,
While civilization speeds from clime to clime,
And loving hands stretch far across the waves
To clasp each other !

Cities will cluster upon every height,
Bearing rich blessings over every plain.
The sons of earth will all find happy homes,
Her helpful daughters move in active bliss,
The world will be one vast united house,
Of joyous industry, creative art.

Count Henry. Pancras, your words and tones dissemble
well,

But I am not deceived. Your rigid face

Struggles in vain to assume the generous glow,
The love of good, your cold soul cannot feel.

Pancras. Nay, interrupt me not ! for men have begged
Such prophecies from me on bended knees,
And I would not vouchsafe them to their prayers !
The *coming world* will yet possess a God
Whose highest fact will not be death, defeat,
And agony upon a helpless cross !
This God, the People, by their power and skill,
Will *force* to unveil his face ; the children whom
He once in anger scattered o'er the earth,
Will tear him from the infinite recess
Of the dim heavens in which he loves to hide !
Babel will be no more. Nations and tribes
Will meet and understand their mutual wants ;
A *universal language* will unite
All in the bonds of charity and peace.
The children having reached majority,
Assert their *right to see* their Maker's face ;
They loudly claim the just inheritance
Due from a common Father to His Sons :
“*The right to know all truth !*”
The God of the humanity at last
Reveals Himself to man !

Count Henry. Yes. He revealed Himself some centu-
ries ago !
Humanity through Him already is redeemed !

Pancras. Let it delight in *bliss of such redemption !*
Let it rejoice in all the agonies
Endured by His disciples night and day,
And vainly crying to Him for relief
Through twice a thousand years which have elapsed
Since his inglorious defeat and death !

Count Henry. Blasphemer, cease ! I've seen His
sacred cross,
The holy symbol of His mystic love,
Stand in the heart of Rome, eternal Rome !
Ruins of former powers, greater than yours,
Were crumbling into dust around its base :
Hundreds of gods, stronger than those you trust,
Were lying prostrate on the haunted ground ;

Trampled by careless feet, they did not dare
 To raise their crushed and wounded heads to gaze
 Upon the Crucified! . . . *It* stood upon
 The seven hills, the mighty arms outstretched
 From east to west, as if to embrace the world;
 The golden sunshine lit the Holy Brow,
 The perfect calm in utter agony
 Told man that Love was still the Conqueror,—
 All hearts acknowledged Him Lord of the world!

Pancras. An old wife's tale! as hollow as the rattling
 Of these escutcheons. (*He strikes the shield.*) Discus-
 sions are in vain;

I read your heart, and know its secret yearnings.

If you would *really find the Infinite*

Which hitherto has baffled all your search;

If you love *Truth*, and would sincerely seek it;

If you are really *man*, created in

The image of our common brotherhood,—

And not the empty hero of a nursery song,—

Oh, list to me! Let not these fleeting moments

Pass thus in vain! they fly so rapidly,

Yet are the *last* in which you can be saved!

Man of the Past, *the race renews itself,*

And of the blood we shed to-day, no trace

Will stain to-morrow!

If you are really what you once appeared,

A *man*, stand firm in all your former might,

Aid the down-trodden masses; help the oppressed;

Emancipate your fellow-men; work for

The common good; give up your false desire

Of personal glory; quit these tottering ruins,

Which all your pride and power can never prop,—

Desert your falling house, and follow me!

Come, help to make an Eden of the Earth!

Time flies. Resolve! for the last time I speak!

Count Henry. Oh, youngest born of Satan's flatter-
 ing brood!

(*Visibly agitated, he paces up and down the hall, talking to
 himself.*)

Dreams! Dreams! They never can be realized!

Who has the power to mould them into fact?

The first man, exiled, in the desert died,—
The flaming sword still guards the Eden-gates,—
Man never more re-enters Paradise! . . .

Pancras (aside). I have him now! Have driven the
probe to the core

Of his high heart! Have struck the electric nerve
Of Poetry, which quivers through the base,
And is the life-chord of his complex being!

Count Henry. Eternal progress! Human happiness!
Did I not, too, believe them possible? . . .
Here, take my head, provided that may . . .

(*He remains silent, absorbed in reverie, then raising his
head, gazes steadily at Pancras.*)

The vision dies—and I can dream no more!
Two centuries ago it might have been:
Mutual accord—but now it is too late!
Accumulated wrongs on either side
Have dug a gulf of separating blood.
Nothing but murder now will satisfy!
A change of race is your necessity.

Pancras. Then join our cry: “Woe to the van-
quished! Woe!”

Seeker of happiness, say it but once;
Join us, and be the *first* among the victors!
Man’s onward path lies through the People’s camp!

Count Henry. You boast, but do you know the track-
less ways,

The unseen chances of the gloomy Future?
Did Destiny at midnight visit you,
And, drawing back the curtains of your tent,
Open before you all her hidden secrets?
Placing her hand upon your scheming brain,
Did she impress on it her seal of victory?
Perchance at mid-day, when o’ercome with heat
All others slept, the pitiless Form appeared,
Assured you of your conquest over me,
That thus you threaten me with sure defeat?
Are you not made of clay fragile as mine?
You may be victim of the first ball thrown!
The first bold sword-thrust may transfix your heart!

Your life, like mine, hangs on a single hair ;
Like me, you've no immunity from death !

Pancras. Dreams, idle dreams ! Be not deceived by
hopes

So baseless ! *men live until their work is done !*

No bullet aimed by man will e'er reach me,
No sword will pierce me, while a single one
Of all your haughty caste remains to thwart
The task it is my destiny to fulfill !

And so whate'er my final doom may be,
On its completion it will be too late
To offer you the least advantage !

(The bell of the castle strikes.)

Hark ! time flies fast, and flying, scorns us both !
If you are weary of your own sad life,
Yet save your hapless son !

Count Henry. His pure soul is
Already saved in Heaven ; on earth he must
Share in his father's fate.

*(His head sinks heavily and remains for some time buried
in his hands.)*

Pancras. Can you reject
All hope for him ? Doom your own son to death ?

(He pauses for an answer, but Count Henry does not speak.)

Nay, you are silent . . . hesitate . . . reflect . . .
Why, that is well . . . reflection suits the man
Who stands on brink of ruin ! . . . Save the boy !

Count Henry. Away ! away ! Back from the mysteries
Now surging through my spirit's passionate depths !
Back ! Back ! profane them not with one vain word,—
They lie beyond your sphere !

The world is yours,
The world of bodies, hungry flesh and blood !
Gorge it with meat, flood it with ruby wine,
But press not in the secrets of my soul !
Leave me, thou seeker of material bliss,
To my own thoughts ;—I fain would be alone !

Pancras. Slave of *one* phase of thought, chained to
one form,
The corpse of the dead Past rots in thine arms !

Shame, Poet! Warrior! Prophet! Scholar! Sage!
My plastic fingers mould the world at will,
 I can reduce both thought and form to naught,
 And out of nothingness mould them, like wax, anew!

Count Henry. You cannot read my heart, follow my thoughts,

Will never understand me, man of yesterday!
 Your sires were buried in a common ditch,
 Without distinctive spirit, like dead things,
 And not as men of individual stamp.

(*He points to the portraits of his ancestors.*)

Look at these pictures! Love of country, home,
 Race, kin,—feelings at war with your whole past,—
 Are written in each line of their brave brows!
 These things are in me as my vital breath,
 Their spirit lives entire in their last heir,
 Their only representative on earth!
 Tell me, O man without ancestral graves,
 Where is your natal soil, your proper country?
 Each coming eve you spread your wandering tent
 Upon the ruins of another's home;
 Each morn you roll it up, again to unroll
 At night; where'er you pitch, anew to blight and spoil!
 You have not, nor will ever find a *home*,
 A *sacred hearth*, as long as valiant men
 Still live to cry with me: *All glory to our sires!*

Pancras. Yes, glory to our sires in Heaven, on earth,
 If there be aught *worthy* to glorify!—
 We'll test the claims of your own ancestors.

(*He points to one of the portraits.*)

This noble was a very famous Starost;
 He shot old women in the woods, like wrens,
 And roasted living Jews: this other with
 The inscription CHANCELLOR, and a great seal
 In his right hand, forged acts and falsified,
 Burned archives, murdered knights, and gained and
 stained
 His vast inheritance with blood and poison;
 And through him came your villages, serfs, power!
 This dark man with the flashing eye played at

Adultery with wives of trusting friends :
 This one with Spanish cloak and Golden Fleece
 Served other countries with his own in danger !
 This lady pale, with long curled raven locks,
 Intrigued with her handsome page,—they murdered *him* !
 This charming woman with the lustrous braids,
 Reading a letter from her loving gallant,
 Smiles archly,—well she may, for night is near—
 And love is bold—and husband trustful, absent !
 This timid beauty with the deep-blue eyes
 And golden curls, that clasps a Roman hound
 In her round arms, where ruby bracelets glow,
 Was mistress of a king, and soothed his softer hours.
 I like this fellow with a jolly face,
 In shooting suit of green ; he ne'er was sober,
 Amused himself all day drinking with friends,
 And sent his serfs to hunt the tall, red deer,
 With hounds for company !
 Such is the true account of your most pure,
 Unsullied line ! Oppression everywhere !
 The noble deemed the serfs' stupidity
 His own best safety ; thus he gave the world
 Convincing proof of his own intellect !
 The Day of Judgment breaks in gloom upon you ;
 I promise you not one of your great sires
 Shall be forgotten in the dark award !

Count Henry. Son of the people, you deceive yourself !

You and your brethren never could have lived
 Had not the nobles given you their bread,
 Defended you, and for you shed their blood ;
 Like beasts, you would have perished on the earth !
 When famine came, they gave you grain ; and when
 The plague swept over you with breath of death,
 They found you nurses, built you hospitals,
 And had physicians schooled to snatch you from the
 grave.

When they, from unformed brutes, had nurtured you
 To human beings, they built churches, schools,
 And shared all with you save the battle-field,
 For fierce encounter, fiery shock, they knew

You were not formed to bear!
 As lances sharp of pagan warriors
 Were wont, shattered and riven, to recoil
 From the bright armor of my ancestors,
 So fall your idle words, flung quickly back
 By dazzling record of their glorious deeds,
 Disturbing not the dust that sleeps in fame!
 Like howls of rabid dog that froths and snaps,
 Until he's driven from the human pale,
 Your accusations die in their insanity!

(The castle bell again strikes.)

'Tis almost dawn—and time you should depart
 From my ancestral halls. In safety pass
 From this old home, my guest!

Pancras. Farewell, until we meet again upon
 The ramparts of the Holy Trinity!

And when your powder, shot, and men are gone? . . .

Count Henry. Then we must draw within sword's
 length! Farewell!

Pancras. We are twin Eagles, but your soaring nest
 Is shattered by the lightning!

(He takes up his scarlet cap and wraps his cloak about him.)

In passing from your threshold, I must leave
 The curse due to decrepitude: I doom
 Yourself, your son, to swift destruction!

Count Henry. Jacob, holà! *(Enter Jacob.)* Call up
 the guards! Conduct

This man in safety through our outmost post.

Jacob. So help me God, the Lord!
(Exeunt Pancras and Jacob.)

FIFTH PERIOD.

" Bottomless perdition."

MILTON.

Perched like an eagle, high among the rocks,
 Stands the old fortress, " Holy Trinity."
 Now from its bastions nothing can be seen,
 To right, to left, in front, or in the rear,
 But morning mists, unbroken, limitless ;
 A spectral image of that Deluge wrath
 Which, as its wild waves rose to sweep o'er earth,
 Once broke o'er these steep cliffs, these time-worn rocks.
 No glimpses can be traced of vale beneath,
 Buried in ghastly waves of ice-cold sea,
 Wrapping it as the shroud winds round the dead.
 No crimson rays of coming sun yet light
 The clammy, pallid, winding-sheet of foam.*

Upon a bold and naked granite peak,
 Above the spectral mist, the castle stands,
 A solitary island in this sea.
 Its bastions, parapets, and lofty towers
 Built of the rock from which they soar, appear
 During the lapse of ages to have grown
 Out of its stony heart (as human breast
 Springs from the centaur's back),—the giant work
 Of days long past.

A single banner floats
 Above the highest tower ; it is the last,
 The only Banner of the Cross on earth !

A shudder stirs and wakes the sleeping mist,
 The bleak winds sigh, and silence rules no more ;
 The vapor surges, palpitates, and drifts

* Not without design has the Polish Poet given such confused proportions and indefinite limits to the scenery of the last act of his wondrous drama. His aim is to prepare the mind of the reader for the solemnity of its close: the Poet cannot give too much grandeur to the scene in which Christ is to appear.—*Revue des Deux Mondes*.

In the first rays shot by the coming sun.
The breeze is chill ; the very light seems frost,
Curdling the clouds that form and roll and drift
Above this tossing sea of fog and foam.

With Nature's tumult other sounds arise,
And human voices mingling with the storm,
Articulate their wail, as it sweeps on.
Borne on and upward by the lifting waves
Of the cloud-surge, they break against the towers,
The castle's granite walls—voices of doom !

Long golden shafts transpierce the sea of foam ;
The clinging shroud of mist is swiftly riven ;
Through vaporous walls that line the spectral chasm
Are glimpses seen of deep abyss below.
How dark it looks athwart the precipice !
Myriads of heads in wild commotion surge ;
The valley swarms with life, as ocean's sands
With writhing things that creep and twist and sting.
The sun ! the sun ! he mounts above the peaks !
The driven, tortured vapors rise in blood ;
More and more clearly grow upon the eye
The threatening swarms fast gathering below.

The quivering mist rolls into crimson clouds,
It scales the craggy cliffs, and softly melts
Into the depths of the infinite blue sky.
The valley glitters like a sea of light,
Throws back the sunshine in a dazzling glare,
For every hand is armed with sharpened blade,
And bayonets and points of steel flash fire ;
Millions are pouring through the living depths,—
As numberless as they at last will throng
Into the valley of Jehoshaphat,
When called to answer on the Judgment Day.

SCENE I. *The cathedral in the Fort of the Trinity. Lords, Senators, and dignitaries are seen on either side of the nave, each seated at the foot of a statue of a king, knight, or hero. Compact masses of Nobles stand behind the statues. The Archbishop is seated in a chair of state, in front of the high altar, and holds a sword upon his knees. Choir of Priests around the altar.*

COUNT HENRY *enters, holding a banner in his hand. He pauses a moment upon the threshold of the church, then advances up the aisle to the ARCHBISHOP.*

CHORUS OF PRIESTS.

We, Thy last priests, in the last Church of Christ,
Implore Thee for the glory of our fathers:
Oh, save us from our enemies, our God!

First Count. See with what pride Count Henry glares
at us!

Second Count. As if the universe were at his feet!

Third Count. He has done nothing yet but cut his way
Across the peasants' camp, and there has left
Two hundred of our men dead on the field.
He slaughtered but one hundred of those wretches.

Second Count. Suffer him not to be appointed chief!

Count Henry (kneeling at the feet of the Archbishop).
This flag, torn from our foe, lies at thy feet!

Archbishop. This sword, once blessed by Florian's
holy hand,
I offer thee!

Voices. Vivat! Vivat! Count Henry!

*Archbishop (making the sign of the cross upon the brow of
Count Henry).*

Brave Count, I seal thee with this holy sign
Commander of the castle,—our last rampart:—
In the name of all, I here proclaim thee chief.

Voices. Long live our chief!

A Voice. I must protest. . . .

Many Voices. Be silent!

Away with him! Long live our chief, Count Henry!

Count Henry. If any man has aught to urge against
me,

Let him come boldly forward and advance it,
Nor hide himself, thus skulking 'mid the crowd.

(*No one responds.*)

Father, I take the sword! God punish me
If I should fail to save thee with this blade!

CHORUS OF PRIESTS.

Give him Thy might, O God!
Thy Holy Spirit pour upon him!
Save us from all our foes, Lord Jesus!

Count Henry. Swear to defend the glory of our sires,
Their faith and God! . . . Swear that though hunger,
thirst,

May drive to death, they shall not to dishonor!
Swear that no pain shall force us to submission,
Capitulation, betrayal of our God!

All. We swear!

(*The Archbishop kneels and lifts the cross. All then kneel.*)

CHORUS OF PRIESTS.

May Thy wrath strike the perjured,
May Thy wrath strike the craven soul,
May Thy wrath strike the traitor,
O Lord, our God!

All. We swear!

Count Henry (*drawing his sword from its scabbard*).

And I—I promise to you, glory!
For victory—yourselves must pray to God!

SCENE II. *A court-yard in the castle of the Holy Trinity.*

COUNT HENRY, *Princes, Counts, Barons, Nobles, Priests.*

A Count (*leading Count Henry aside*). What! is all lost?

Count Henry. No. Unless courage fail!

The Count. How long must courage last?

Count Henry. Even unto Death!

A Baron (*leading him off on the other side*). Count, it
is said you've seen our dreadful foe;
If we should fall alive into his hands,
Will he have pity on us?

Count Henry. Such pity as
Our fathers never dreamed that men could dare
To show to them: the gallows!

The Baron. Naught then's left
But to defend ourselves to our last breath!

Count Henry. What say you, Prince?

Prince. A word with you alone.

(*He draws Count Henry aside.*)

All you have said does well to soothe the crowd,
But you must *know* we can hold out no longer!

Count Henry. What else is left us, Prince?

Prince. You are our chief;

It is for you to arrange the proper terms,
Capitulate . . .

Count Henry. Hush! not so loud!

Prince. Why not?

Count Henry. Your Excellency thus would forfeit life!

(*He turns to the men thronging around him.*)

Who names surrender will be put to death!

Baron, Count, and Prince (together). Who names sur-
render will be put to death!

All. Punished with death! with death! Vivat! Vivat!

(*Exeunt.*)

SCENE III. *The gallery of the tower.* COUNT HENRY.

JACOB.

Count Henry. Jacob, where is my son?

Jacob. In the north tower,
Seated upon the threshold of the vault,
Before the grate that opens on the dungeons,
Chanting wild songs and uttering prophecies.

Count Henry. Put more men on the bastion-Eleanore,
And move not from this spot. Use your best glass,
And watch the movements of the rebel camp.

Jacob. So help us God! Meanwhile our troops are faint;
Some brandy might restore them to new life.

Count Henry. Open the cellars of our princes, counts;
Give wine to all who stand upon the walls.

(*Exit Jacob.*)

(*Count Henry mounts some feet higher, and stands under the
banner upon a small terrace.*)

At last I see you, hated enemies !
 With my whole power I trace your cunning plans,
 Surround you with my scorn. No more we meet
 Within the realm of idle words, of poetry,
 But in the *real world* of deadly combat,
 Sharp sword to sword, the rattling hail of bullets
 Winged by the concentration of my hate !
 No more with *single* arm and voice I meet you ;
 The strength of *many* centres in my will :

* * * * *

It is a joyous thing to govern, rule,
 Even were it solely at the price of death :
 To feel myself the sovereign arbiter,
 The master of so many wills and lives ;
 To see *there* at my feet my enemies,
 Leaping and howling at me from the abyss,
 But all bereft of power to reach me here :
 So like the Damned, who vainly lift their heads
 Toward Heaven !

* * * * *

I know . . . I know a few hours more of time,
 And I and thousands of yon craven wretches
 Who have forgot their fathers and their God,
 Will be no more forever ! Be it so !
 At least I have a few days more of life
 To satiate myself with joy of combat,
 The ecstasy of full command o'er others,
 The giddy daring, struggle, victory, loss !
 Thou, my last song, swell to a chant of triumph,
 For death's the latest foe a man can conquer !

* * * * *

The sun sets fast behind the needled cliffs,
 Sinks in a darksome cloud of threatening vapors ;
 His crimson rays light luridly the valley.—
 Precursor of the bloody death before me,
 I greet you with a fuller, gladder heart
 Than I have e'er saluted ye, vain hopes
 And promises of joy or blissful love !

* * * * *

Not through intrigue, through base or cunning skill,
 Have I attained the aim of my desires ;
 But by a sudden bound I've leaped to fame,
 As my persistent dreams told me I must.
 Ruler o'er those but yesterday my equals,
 Conqueror of death, since willingly I seek him,
 I stand upon the brink :—Eternal life, or sleep !

SCENE IV. *A hall in the castle lighted by torches.*
 GEORGE seated upon a bed. COUNT HENRY enters, and
 lays down his arms upon a table.

Count Henry. A hundred fresh men place upon the
 ramparts !

After so fierce a fight my troops need rest.

Jacob (without). So help me God, the Lord !

Count Henry (to George). Thou must have heard
 The musketry, the noise of battle, George ?
 Keep up thy courage, boy ; we perish not
 To-day, no, nor to-morrow !

George. I heard it all ;

It is not *that strikes terror* through my heart.

The cannon-ball flies on, and leaves no trace,—

There's something else that makes me shiver, father !

Count Henry. Thou fear'st for me ? Is't that makes
 thee so pale ?

George. No, for I know thine hour is not yet come.

Count Henry. My heart is solaced for to-day at least.
 I've seen the foe driven from their attack,
 Their ghastly corpses scattered o'er the plain.
 We are alone ; come, tell me all thy thoughts
 As if we were once more in our old home,
 And I will listen thee.

George (hurriedly). Oh, father, come !

A dreadful trial is prepared, rehearsed,
 Re-echoed every night within these walls !

(He goes to a door hidden in the wall, and opens it.)

Count Henry. George ! George ! Come back ! Where
 art thou going, George ?
 Who showed thee this dim passage into vaults

Hung with eternal darkness, damp with death?
 This dismal charnel-house of mouldering bones,
 Of ancient victims stricken in days long past?

George. There where thine eye cannot perceive the
 light,
 My spirit knows the way. Follow me, father!
 Gloom roll to gloom—and darkness unto darkness.
 (*He enters the door, followed by his father, and descends
 into the vault.*)

SCENE V. *Subterranean galleries and dungeons; iron bars, grated doors, chains, handcuffs and broken instruments of torture. The COUNT holds a torch at the foot of a great block of granite upon which GEORGE is standing.*

Count Henry. Return! I beg you, George, come back to me!

George. Dost thou not hear their voices, see their forms?

Count Henry. The silence of the grave surrounds us, George,
 Almost its darkness, so this torchlight flickers;
 Its feeble rays fail to dispel the gloom.

George. They're coming nearer. . . . Now I see them, father. . . . *
 I see them one by one file slowly on
 From the far depths of these long narrow vaults,
 Through broken grates, through cells with iron doors, . . .
 They seat themselves so solemnly below . . .

Count Henry. Thy mind is wandering, my poor boy.
 Alas!

It makes the things, thou only *dream'st* thou seest!
 Nor voices, forms are here! Unman me not
 When I have utmost need of all my force!

* The Count is punished by the two victims of his own folly, his wife and son. He has already been punished by the death of his wife for the sacrifice of his domestic duties to a false ideal; the vision of his son is about to punish him for the sacrifice of true patriotism to a false ambition.—*Revue des Deux Mondes.*

George. I see their pallid forms, grave and severe,
Collecting to pronounce a fearful judgment—
The culprit comes before the dreadful bar—
I cannot see his face—his features float and flow,
Sad as a winter's mist. . . . Hark, father, hark!

CHORUS OF VOICES.

In the name of the right and the strength which once
forced upon us
Our manifold agonies, we, the beaten, immured,
The broken 'neath irons, the tortured, the fed upon
poisons,
The prisoned, the living built up in the tombs of the
walls:—
The time for our vengeance is here:—in our turn we will
torture,
Probe, judge, and condemn,—and Satan is our execu-
tioner!

Count Henry. What seest thou, George?

George. I see the prisoner.

He wrings and clasps his hands. Oh, father! father!

Count Henry. Who is he, George?

George. My father? . . . Oh! my father . . .

A Voice. In thee the race accursed hath reached its
close!

It has in thee united all its strength,
Its wildest passions, all its selfish pride,—
Only to perish utterly in thee!

CHORUS OF VOICES.

Because thou hast loved nothing but thyself;
Revered thyself alone, and thine own thoughts;
Thou art condemned,—damned to eternity!

Count Henry. I can see nothing, but on every side,
Above, below me, I hear sobs and wails,
Judgment and threatening, and eternal doom!

George. The prisoner! he lifts his haughty head
As thou dost, father, when one angers thee! . . .
He answers with proud words, as thou dost, father,
When thou scornest! . . .

CHORUS OF VOICES.

In vain ! in vain ! what use of pleading ?
 Hope will wake for him no more !
 In earth or Heaven, there's no salvation :—
 Close the trial,—all is o'er !

A Voice. A few more days of vain and passing glory,
 Of which your sires robbed us in life, in story,
 And then your name shall vanish from the earth !
 You perish, but shall have no burial proud ;
 No tolling bell your death-hour peals aloud ;
 No tears of kinsmen fall, no train of friends
 Bears your escutcheoned coffin to the grave,
 Nor pride, nor courage will avail to save.
 Sad, desolate as ours your death will be,
 Transfixed on the same rock of agony !

Count Henry. Spirits accursed ! . . . at last I recog-
 nize you !

(He advances into the darkness.)

George. My father ! go no farther ! I adjure
 You in the name of Christ ! Oh, father, stay !

Count Henry (he stops). Speak, George ! quick ! tell
 me what you see below !

George. The prisoner . . .

Count Henry. Who is it, George ?

George. Father !

Another father ! . . . it is thyself . . . O father !
 It is as white as snow . . . heavy with chains . . .
 And now they torture thee . . . I hear thy cries . . .

(He falls upon his knees.)

Forgive me, father ! . . . but my mother comes . . .
 She lights the Dark . . . she orders me . . .

(He falls in a fainting fit.)

Count Henry (catching the falling boy in his arms). Ay,
 this last blow alone was wanting still !
 My only child must lead me to the brink of Hell !
 Mary, inexorable spirit ! . . . God ! . . .
 Thou other Mary, whom I oft have prayed . . .

Here then begins the infinite of pain,
Eternal darkness, doom! . . .

* * * * *

Rouse thee, my soul! Back, back to life again!
One day of glory still is left for me.
First the fierce battle with my fellow-men . . .
Then comes the eternal combat . . .

(*He carries away his son.*)

CHORUS OF VOICES (*dying away in the distance*).
Because thou hast loved nothing but thyself!
Only revered thyself, and thine own thoughts!
Thou art condemned—damned for eternity!

SCENE VII. *A large hall in the castle of the Holy Trinity; arms and armor hang upon the walls.* COUNT HENRY. *Women, children, old men, and nobles are kneeling at his feet. The GODFATHER stands in the centre of the hall; a crowd of men in the background.*

Count Henry. No, by my son; by my dead wife, I will not!

Voices of Women. Oh, pity! pity! Hunger gnaws our bowels!

Our children starve! we die of fear and famine!

Voices of Men. There still is time, if you will hear the Herald

Who brings us terms;—dismiss him not unheard.

Godfather. I've passed my whole life as a citizen,
And I fear no reproof from you, Count Henry.

If I am here as *his* ambassador,
It is because I know our age, and read
Aright its glorious mission. Pancras is
Truly its social representative,
And if I dare to speak . . .

Count Henry. Out of my sight, old man!

(*Aside to Jacob.*) Bring here forthwith a hundred of our troops!
(*Exit Jacob.*)

(*The women rise and weep; the men retire a few steps.*)

A Baron. It is through your fault we are lost, Count Henry.

Second Baron. Obedience we renounce. Capitulate!

A Prince. For the surrender of the Fort, we will
Ourselves arrange the terms with this good citizen.

Godfather. The chief who sent me pledges life to all,
Provided you will join the People's cause,
And recognize the needs of this, our century!

Voices. We join the People's cause! We own their needs!

Count Henry. Soldiers, when I was chosen to take
command,

I swore to perish on this castle's walls
Rather than yield this Fort. You also swore
A solemn oath before the shrine of God.
The vow was mutual,—we must die together!
Ha! nobles, can you really wish to live?
Then ask your fathers why, when they were living,
They ruled with such oppression, cruelty?

(Addressing a Count.)

Count, why did you oppress your cowering serfs?

(Addressing another.)

Why did you pass your youth in dice and cards,
Travel for pleasure o'er the earth, and quite
Forget the claims of your own suffering land?

(Another.)

Why have you always crawled before the great,
And scorned the lowly?

(To a lady.)

You, fair dame, had sons;
Why did you not make warriors of them, men,
That they might aid you now in your distress?
No, you have all preferred your pleasure, ease,
Dealings with Jews and lawyers to get gold
To spend in luxury:—go call on them for aid!

(He rises and extends his arms towards them.)

Why hasten ye to shame, wrap your last hours
In shrouds of infamy? . . . On! on with me!
On where swords glitter and hot bullets hail!
Not to the gallows with its loathsome coil,
Where ready stands the masked and silent hangman
To throw his noose of shame around your craven throats!

Some Voices. He speaks the truth. On with the bayonets!

Other Voices. We die of hunger: there is no more food!

Voices. Pity the children! Are they not your own?

Godfather. I promise life and liberty to all!

Count Henry (approaching and seizing the Godfather).

Go, sacred Person of the Herald! go,
And hide thy gray hairs with the neophytes,
In tents with base mechanics plotting murder,
That thus I may not dye them in thy blood!

(Enter Jacob with a division of armed men.)

Aim at that brow, wrinkled with folly's folds,
That scarlet cap, which trembles at my words,
That brainless head!

(The Godfather escapes.)

All. Seize! bind Count Henry! seize!
Send him to Pancras!

Count Henry. Nobles, ye'll bide my time!
(He goes from one soldier to another, as he addresses them in turn.)

Do you remember when we scaled a cliff,
A savage wolf followed our steps, and when
You, startled, slipped, I caught you on the verge
Of the abyss, and saved your life, my friend,
At peril of my own? Then you seemed grateful!

(To others.)

Have you forgotten, men, when driven by winds,
Our boat upset among the Danube's crags,
And we young swimmers braved the waves together?

(To others.)

Jerome and Thaddeus, you were both with me
On the Black Sea:—you were brave sailors then!

(To others.)

When fire destroyed your homes, who built them up?

(To others.)

Soldiers, you fled to me from cruel lords,
And I redressed your wrongs,—will you desert me?

(*He addresses the men generally.*)

Say, will you arm to combat for our rights,
Or will you leave me here to die alone,
Smiling with scorn that midst so many men
I found no single MAN?

Men. Long live Count Henry!

Count Henry. Let all the meat and brandy now be
shared

Among the men;—and then upon the walls!

Men. Yes, meat and brandy! then upon the walls!

Count Henry. Go with them, Jacob! In an hour hence
They must be ready to renew the fight.

Jacob. So help me God, the Lord!

Women. Our children starve!

We curse Count Henry in their innocent names!

Voices. We curse thee for our fathers!

Other Voices. For our wives!

Count Henry. And I breathe curses on all coward souls!

SCENE VII. *The ramparts of the Holy Trinity. Dead bodies are lying scattered about, with broken cannons, pikes, and guns. Soldiers are hurrying to and fro. COUNT HENRY leans against a parapet, and JACOB stands beside him.*

Count Henry (*thrusting his sword into its sheath*).

There's no intoxication can compare
With that of danger; thus to sport with life,
To win the fight, or if it must be, lose!

Well! we can lose but once—and all is said!

Jacob. Our last good broadside drove them back a
moment,

But they are gathering to renew the storm.

What can we do? for since the world was world,

None ever yet escaped his destiny!

Count Henry. Have we no cartridges? Our last shot
fired?

Jacob. No balls; no grape-shot; powder;—all are gone!

Count Henry. Bring my son here! for the last time I
would

Embrace him. . . . (*Exit Jacob.*)

The smoke has dimmed my eyes—I cannot see,—
 The valley seems to rise up to my feet—
 And then sinks to its place,—the rocks, cliffs, crack—
 Break in fantastic angles—totter—fall!
 My thoughts assume the same fantastic forms
 Before my spirit—flicker like a lamp!

(He seats himself upon the wall.)

It is *too little* to be born a man!
 Nor is it worth the pain to be an Angel:
 Since e'en the highest of them all must feel,
 After some centuries of existence past,
 As we do after our few years of life,
 Immeasurable ennui, desire
 Of greater Power. . . . Spirits must long as we do! . . .
 One either must be God Himself . . . or nothing! . . .

(Enter Jacob with George.) Count Henry (to Jacob).
 Take some men with you; through the castle go,
 Drive all before you out upon the walls!

Jacob. Counts, princes, barons?

(Exit Jacob.)

Count Henry. Come to me, my son!
 Put thy thin hand in mine, and let me press
 Thy forehead to my lips! Thy mother's brow
 Was once as pure and fair. . . .

George. Before thy men took up their arms to-day,
 I heard her voice . . . It seemed so far, far off . . .
 Like perfume, light and sweet it floated on . . .

“George, thou wilt come to-night, and sit beside me!”

Count Henry. George, tell me,—did she utter not my
 name?

George. She said: “This evening I expect my son!”

Count Henry (aside). Must my strength fail me ere I
 reach the end?

Forbid it, God! . . .
 Give me one moment's fiery vigor now,
 I'll be thy prisoner through eternity!

(To George.)

Forgive me, son, the fatal gift of life!
 We soon must part! . . . Ah! who can tell us, George,
 How long shall last that parting? . . . Fare thee well!

George. Father, hold fast to me! do not desert me!—
I love thee! I will draw thee on with me!

Count Henry. Our paths lie widely sundered! Midst
the choirs
Of Angels thou'lt forget me! Thou'lt not throw
Me down one drop of heavenly dew! Oh, George! my
son!

George. What are those cries? I tremble . . . they
appal me!
Louder and nearer comes the thundering crash,
The cannon's roar! Father, the time draws near,
The last hour prophesied.

Count Henry. Haste, Jacob, haste!
(*A band of counts and princes, in confusion, rushes across
the court-yard. Jacob follows them, with the soldiers.*)

A Voice. You give us broken arms—force us to fight.

Another Voice. Have pity on us, Henry!

A third Voice. We are starving!

Other Voices. O God! Why do they drive us?
Where?

Count Henry. To death!

To George (folding him in his arms).
With this long kiss I would unite myself
To thee for all eternity! . . . It cannot be! . . .
Fate forces me upon another path!

(*Struck by a ball, George sinks, dying, in his arms.*)

A Voice from on high. To me! to me! pure spirit!
Son, to me!

Count Henry. Holà there! Give me aid!
(*He draws his sword and holds it before the lips of George.*)

The blade is clear!
His breath and life were carried off together!
My George! my son! . . .
Forward, men! on! They mount the parapet!
Thank God, at last they stand within the reach
Of this keen blade!
Back! back into the abyss, ye sons of freedom!

(*Rushing on of men, confusion, attack, defense, struggle.*)

SCENE VIII. *Another part of the ramparts. Cries of combat are heard. JACOB lies upon a wall. COUNT HENRY, covered with blood, hastily approaches him.*

Count Henry. Faithful old man, what is the matter?
Speak!

Jacob. The devil seize you for your obstinacy,
Pay you for all that I have suffered here!
So help me God, the Lord! *(He dies.)*

Count Henry (throwing away his sword).
I never, never more will need thy aid,
Sword of my sires! Lie there and rust forever!
Mine are all gone! My son is safe in Heaven,—
And my last servant at my feet lies dead!
The coward nobles have deserted me;
They kneel before the victor, howl for pardon.
(He looks around him.)

The foe are not yet on me,—there is time
To steal a moment's rest before . . .
Ha! Now the new men scale the northern tower!
They shout Count Henry! Seek him everywhere!
Yes, I am here! Look! Look! I am Count Henry!
But you are not to judge me! I alone
Must march that way my faith hath led;—it is
To God's tribunal I will go, to give
Myself into his hands!

(He mounts upon a ruin of the wall, above the precipice.)

I see thee, O my dread eternity,
As rapidly thou floatest on to me,
Like an immensity of Darkness; vast,
Without or end or limit—refuge, none!
And in the centre, God—a dazzling sun—
Which shines eternally—but illumines nothing!

(He gazes for a moment, takes a step down, and stands on the verge of the precipice.)

They see me now—they run—they scale the cliff—
The new men are upon me! Jesus! Mary!
I curse thee, Poetry! as I shall be
Cursed through eternity! . . . Grow long, strong arms,

And break a way through yonder sombre waves !
(He springs into the abyss.)

SCENE IX. *The court of the castle.* PANCRAS, LEONARD ; BIANCHETTI *standing at the head of the soldiers.* *The surviving Princes, Counts, accompanied by their wives and children, in chains, pass before* PANCRAS.

Pancras. Your name ?

Count Christopher. Count Christopher of Vosalquemir.

Pancras. For the last time on earth you've said it !
 Yours ?

Prince of the Black Forest. Prince Ladislas, of the
 Black Forest, Lord.

Pancras. It shall be heard no more. And what is
 yours ?

Baron. My name is Alexander of Godalberg.

Pancras. Struck from the number of the living ;—go !

Bianchetti (to Leonard). They have repulsed us for
 the last two months

With worthless cannon, mounted on crumbling walls.

Leonard (to Pancras). Are many of them left ?

Pancras. I sentence all !

Let their blood flow as lesson to the world :—
 But he who tells me where Count Henry hides
 Shall save his life.

Many Voices. He vanished from our sight.

Godfather. As mediator, lo ! I stand between you
 And these, our prisoners, illustrious citizens,
 Who gave into our hands the castle keys.
 Greatest of men, I ask their lives from you.

Pancras. Where I have conquered by my proper
 force

I want no mediator ! You will yourself
 Take charge of their *immediate* execution.

Godfather. Through life I have been known as a good
 citizen ;

I've often given proof of love of country.
 I did not join your cause with the intent
 Of choking with the rope my brother nobles,
 All gentlemen of . . .

Pancras (interrupting him). Seize the tiresome pedant,
And let him join forthwith his noble brothers!

(The soldiers surround the Godfather and prisoners, and bear them away.)

Has no one seen Count Henry, dead or living?
A purse of gold—if only for his corpse!

(Armed troops arrive from the ramparts.)

(To the troop.) Have you seen nothing of Count Henry?

The Leader of the Band. By the command of General
Bianchetti

I went to explore the western rampart. Just
Beyond the parapet on the third bastion
I saw an unarmed, wounded man, who stood
Near a dead body. To my men I cried:
“Hasten to seize him!” Ere we reached him, he
Descended from the wall, and sought the brink
Of a steep rock which overhangs the vale.
Pausing a moment there, his haggard eyes
He fixed on the abyss which yawned below,
Then struck his arms out as a swimmer would,
About to make a sudden, desperate plunge,
Threw himself forward with a mighty leap,
Cutting the air with his extended arms!
We heard the body bound from rock to rock
Into the abyss below. We found this sword
But a few paces from the very spot
On which we saw him first.

(He hands the sword to Pancras.)

Pancras (examining the sword). Great drops of blood
are thickening on the hilt:

Here are the armorial bearings of his House:—

It is Count Henry's sword. Honor to him!

Alone among you he has kept his oath;

Glory to him—to you the guillotine!

Bianchetti, see the Holy Trinity

Razed to the ground. Give the condemned to death.

Come, Leonard, come with me.

(Leonard accompanies him; they mount upon a bastion.)

Leonard. After so many sleepless nights, you need
Repose. Pancras, you look fatigued and worn.

Pancras. The hour of rest has not yet struck for me!
 The last sad sign of my last enemy
 Marks the completion of but half my task.
 Look at these spaces, these immensities
 Stretching between my thoughts and me.
 Earth's deserts must be peopled, rocks removed,
 Swamps drained, and mountains tunneled; trees hewn
 down;
 Seas, lakes and rivers everywhere connected,
 Roads girdle earth, that produce circulate,
 And commerce bind all hearts with links of gold.
 Each man must own a portion of the soil;
 Thought move on lightning wings rending old veils;
 The living must outnumber all the hosts
 Of those who've perished in this deadly strife;
 Life and prosperity must fill the place
 Of death and ruin ere our work of blood
 Can be atoned for! Leonard, this must be done!
 If we are not to inaugurate an age
 Of social bliss, material ease and wealth,
 Our deeds of havoc, devastation, woe,
 Will have been worse than vain!

Leonard. The God of liberty will give us power
 For these gigantic tasks!

Pancras. *You speak of God!*
 Do you not see that it is crimson here?
 Slippery with gore in which we stand knee-deep?—
 Whose gushing blood is this beneath our feet?
 Naught is behind us save the castle court,
 Whatever is, I see, and there is no one near—
 We are alone—and yet there surely stands
Another here between us!

Leonard. I can see nothing but this bloody corpse!

Pancras. The corpse of his old faithful servant—*dead!*
 It is a *living spirit* haunts this spot!
 This is *his* cap and belt—look at his arms,—
 There is the rock o'erhanging the abyss,—
 And on that spot it was his great heart broke!

Leonard. Pancras, how pale you grow!

Pancras. Do you not see it?
 'Tis *there!* Up *there!*

Leonard. I see a mass of clouds
Wild-drifting o'er the top of that steep rock
O'erhanging the abyss. How high they pile!
Now they turn crimson in the sunset rays.

Pancras. There is a fearful symbol burning there!

Leonard. Your sight deceives you.

Pancras. Where are now my people?
The millions who revered, and who obeyed me?

Leonard. You hear their acclamations,—they await
you.

Pancras, look not again on yon steep cliff,—
Your eyes die in their sockets as you gaze!

Pancras. Children and women often said that He
Would thus appear,—but on the last day only!

Leonard. Who? Where?

Pancras. Like a tall column there He stands,
In dazzling whiteness o'er yon precipice!
With both His Hands He leans upon His cross,
As an avenger on his sword! *Leonard,*
His crown of thorns is interlaced with lightning. . . .

Leonard. What is the matter? . . . *Pancras,* answer
me!

Pancras. The dazzling flashes of His eyes are death!

Leonard. You're ghastly pale! Come, let us quit this
spot!

Pancras. Oh! . . . *Leonard,* spread your hands and
shade my eyes!

Press, press them till I see no more! Tear me away!
Oh, shield me from that look! It crushes me to dust!

Leonard (*placing his hands over the eyes*).
Will it do thus?

Pancras. Your hands are like a phantom's!—
Powerless—with neither flesh nor bones!

Transparent as pure water, crystal, air,
They shut out nothing! I can see! Still see!

Leonard. Your eyes die in their sockets! Lean on
me!

Pancras. Can you not give me darkness? Darkness!
Darkness!

He stands there motionless,—piercéd with three nails,—
Three stars! . . .

His outstretched arms are lightning flashes! . . .
Darkness! . . .

Leonard. I can see nothing! Master! Master!

Pancras. Darkness!

Leonard. Ho! Citizens! Ho! Democrats! aid! aid!

Pancras. VICISTI GALILÆE!

(He falls stone dead.)

IRIDIION.

(WRITTEN IN 1836-1837.)

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PROLOGUE.

THE old world stands on the brink of the grave.¹ Everything which once had life falls into corruption, crashes into ruins; and gods and men together rave!

As Jupiter, sovereign of Olympus, expires, Rome, mistress of the earth, writhes in her death agonies—and raves! Fate (“*Fatum*”) alone, the inflexible and immutable Reason of the world,² stands calm above the hurrying whirlpool of Earth and Heaven!

In the heart of this chaos begins my song; my song, which gushes forth in irrepressible strains! Spirit of Destruction, come to my aid! kindle my inspiration until all bonds and fetters dissolve before it! Let it flash forth as impetuously as the lightnings of that tempest which, gathering for centuries, whirled all that then had life into the abyss! And like all force after the accomplishment of its work, let it also perish!

The orient is bright with light, a new world appears; but it is not for me to sing its glory!

O Rome! where are now the stately forms once wont to wander with such haughty pride over thy seven hills? Where are thy high patricians, with their knives of sacrifice, and javelins in their hands? Where are thy hearts of mystery, thy brows of menace, thy "Patres familias," the oppressors of the people, the conquerors of Italy and Carthage?

Where are the long-veiled Vestals, bearing the sacred fire in pure and consecrated hands, who were wont so silently to mount the broad steps of thy Capitol?

Where are thine orators, the leaders of the millions, encircled by a sea of heads and rocked upon the waves of popular applause, wooing the fickle mob, and only living in the storm of tumultuous plaudits?

Where are thy indefatigable legions, virile and powerful, whose faces, bronzed by the rays of the sun, were cooled in the sweat of action, and brightened by the reflection of their naked swords?

Gone! One by one, all have vanished. The Past has taken them, and like a mother has lulled them to sleep forever on her bosom.

And no one will ever be strong enough to tear them from the Past!

Gone! . . . Other forms take their places, but they have no longer the austere beauty of the Demigods, nor the gigantic force of the Titans. Though glittering with gold, these figures are distorted and fantastic; crowns wreath their brows, and garlanded cups are in their hands, but daggers gleam through the rosy bloom, poison beads their goblets, and convulsive spasms mar the grace of their dances. One sees only a life of luxury, without law or limits, in which songs and groans mingle with the cries of gladiators and the howlings of hyenas! Accursed be the spring which blooms in flowers of blood, perfumed only by the unholy incense of base flattery! Accursed be such an existence! It can be but transitory. It can create nothing, and will leave nothing behind it but infamy and the record of its impotent agony!

Populace and Cæsar,—lo! the whole of Rome!³

Isis, mother of science and of silence, with thy feet washed by the foam of the sea and swollen with thy long

wanderings,—foreign tongues are sounding round thee! Solitary and deserted thou standest upon the Roman Forum, as yet scarcely recognizing thyself, knowing not where thou art, nor where are the banks of the Nile!

Mithras, Lord of Youth and Death, thou too hast been drawn from the plains of Chaldea, the hills of Armenia, to Rome! Thou standest in the vaults of the Capitol, having taken thy place amidst the other gods; and in the gloom of night thou wavest thy sacrificial knife above the corpses of thy victims!

Through Grecian halls, and under the shadows of Corinthian pillars, sound thy barbaric footsteps, O wild son of the North! At times thou pausest, leanest upon thine axe, and with thy blue eyes seekest if thou mayst perchance find there the god of thine own race,—strong Odin!⁴ But Odin, the Cimbrian, has not yet appeared in the Capitol. Loath to leave them, he still lingers amid his boundless forests of pine, his broad fields of stainless snow, his gray skies, and the choirs of Valhalla.

But in a little while he too will begin his pilgrimage to Rome!

On! On, ye gods and men! Rage as ye will—'tis your last raving upon earth! From sunrise to sunset will your paths cross; from north to south, from midnight to mid-day, will you hurry on, scarcely finding room for all your throngs. Hasten on then! Go and come, turn and return! Thus is it always before a world falls into ruins.

On, on, ye gods and men! Rave as ye will, it is your last course upon earth. Fate scorns you, and repulsing your errors, unfurls a new banner;—sooner or later you will all fall before that symbol,—the Cross!

From this world which is stifling and destroying itself, I tear away a single THOUGHT,—a thought of vengeance. My love will dwell in it, and give it life, although it is the child of madness, the presage of perdition.

On, on, ye gods and men! forward in your giddy whirl around my spirit! Be the tones in which my dreams are set; the storm which flashes its lightning around my THOUGHT! I will give it a name, a form; but though conceived in Rome, the day in which Rome will perish will not be the day of its death. It will last as

long as the earth and the nations of the earth. And it is therefore, O my THOUGHT, that there will be no place for thee in the Heavens!

Where art thou, Son of Vengeance? In what land rest thy bones? And with what spirits now wanders thy spirit?

I evoked the shadows of the dead from the world of ruins; before me on the Roman Forum at midnight stood the Roman Senate,—phantoms cowering under the sense of their depravity and cowardice,—but thou wert not among the shrinking shades!

At my voice a gladiator rose from the vaults of the Colosseum. He called his murdered brethren from their rest, advancing at their head; the moon shone down upon their pale faces; on every bosom yawned a gaping wound, and in the sleep of death the blue lips still repeated: MORITURI TE SALUTANT CÆSAR!—but thou wert not among them!

Upon the sacred Palatine, the hill of ruins and of flowers, the ashes of the Rulers of the world started from the dust at my command and stood before me. They passed before my eyes, each with a diadem held fast to his head with clots of blood, and under the diadem each bore the sign of damnation upon his forehead; round each form floated in heavy folds the royal purple; through the gashes made by the dagger of the murderer glittered the stars:—I looked for thee, but thou wert not among them!

I heard the solemn prayers and chants of the Christian martyrs; the tones burst from the catacombs⁵ and rose directly into Heaven; sadder and sweeter, clearer than the rest, I heard a maiden's voice once known and dear to thee,—but severed now from thine, it sought the sky alone!

Where, then, art thou, Son of Vengeance, Son of my Song? It is time for thee to rise and tread upon the giant's corpse,—the corpse of Rome! Remember thou hast sworn to renounce faith, hope, and love *forever* to

gaze but *once* upon the utter ruin :—then to go down where there are millions, millions of souls.

The hour is here, the death-bell tolls ! Where once the Eternal City ruled yawns a wide grave of ruins, bones and ashes ; the creeping ivy twines around it, and creeping people crawl beside it. Arise ! Come from the grave ! The death-knell tolls and tolls ! I call thee forth ! I—and the fearful Power from whom I may not ransom thee : but thy name I will tear from his grasp ! Thy name shall not perish with thee in thy desolation !

Leave me ! these rough and savage paths are not for you, my friends ! Remain on the Campagna at the foot of the Apennines. I must go alone ; must see him once ere he descends into the abyss, sinks to eternal death !

In the dim twilight of a narrow cavern, stretched on a couch of stone within the vault, quite without breath he rests ; no palpitation tells of human sleep ; dreamless he lies and waits his waking,—that promised and terrible awakening, with the dark Day of Judgment nearer to him than to the rest of the world !

Fallen trees, rotted into tinder, glimmer like the eyes of the sphinx around him, and a serpent with glittering scales, which has lain through centuries beside him, is coiled at his feet. His features are dark as if bronzed by fever ; the sleep of ages has failed to pour a cooling stream over their lurid glow.

His form is like the Demigods of Greece ; such shapes are seen on earth no more. His feet, white as a Parian statue, rest on a block of black marble ; moss and long ivy-wreaths twine above and below them. A white tunic covers his breast, his right hand grasps a shattered lamp ; a sword, dim with mould and rust, lies beside it ; the left hangs stiffened down ; its fingers are spasmodically cramped, as if sleep had overcome him while still struggling with despair.

Motionless between sleep and death he lies,—between the last thought which passed centuries ago through his soul and that to which he will awaken,—between the cursing of a whole life and the damnation of eternity !

Son of my Thought, before thou wakest, I will recount thy history !

In the Cimbrian Chersonesus,* along the foaming streams of Silver Land,† thy father loved to stray hand in hand with the Sea-Kings, although his home was in a far and sunny clime, his speech was in an alien tongue, and his face like that of the gods of Phidias.

Men and women loved him, for with the beauty of his tales he could make short the longest night, or charm the day at festivals and combats. The windings of the trackless seas were well-known paths to him; he could read fair weather or storm in the glittering stars of Heaven; he could fling the heavy javelin over the top of the highest mast, and his brow lost not its calm even under the blast of the black hurricane.

And on the land his horn was heard o'er hill and valley: no bear nor wild beast could escape him; when he returned from chase or battle he could stretch his tired limbs on moss and scented ferns, and, emptying foaming cups, recount his combats, dangers, and adventures. His Palace stood upon the shore of the wide waves; it looked upon a sea thickly strewn with islands bright as stars; it was inlaid with gold and ivory, and under the shade of its white grove of pillars, slaves stood upon its threshold and watched for his return. But thy father tarried long, for he had learned to love the conch-shell horn and the song of the young Priestess of Odin. He devoted his youth to constant wandering that he might gather means to achieve a great design. He raised the foaming beaker to his lips, and drank the health of the king of men, Sigurd, the Sea-King. And he said to the daughter of Sigurd:

“Crimhild, daughter of Sigurd, my people have worn fetters for centuries, and sigh! And with my people lie hundreds of others upon the stony coasts of the Sea of the South, and sigh! To free them I need energy and inspiration from thy firm breast. I am myself a slave by my nation; but my soul lives as an Avenger. My foes are

* The Romans called the peninsula of Jutland the Cimbrian Chersonesus; the Scandinavian races were known as Cimbrians.

† The Cimbrian Chersonesus was called Silver Land by the barbarians, on account of the white glitter of the snow and the many sparkling streams.

numerous as the sea sands and strong as Titans;—to destroy them, maiden, I require thy prophetic soul. Virgin, the consecrated of Odin, come! Enter my threshold, be the companion of my life, the helpmate of my struggles!

“And our descendants shall one day end the task which may extend to distant centuries!”

Then was thy father silent, but he had flashed upon her the magic of his glances, and had daily woven his spells of eloquent speech and eloquent silence more closely around her. The young Priestess stood upon the cliffs and gazed with loosened hair and gloomy eyes down into the gray infinity of the sea, rapt and dreamy, mad with love! The shield of Odin no longer protected her, she was willing to fly from the very steps of the altar,—to follow the stranger to distant shores!

“Hermes, our boldest warriors have as yet ne'er dared to gaze upon my brow, and thou? Thou seemest to me a hero just descended from Valhalla,—thou but callest Crimhild, and lo! I must become thy slave!

“Unknown to me thy Fatherland, unknown to me thine enemies; even in dreams I've never seen the clime to which thou leadest me,—but I go, unhappy one! I go, disgraced among my virgins, cursed by the wrath of Odin! But once more must I seat myself upon the holy stone, once more chant the hymn of the Virgin Priestess before the God of my fathers!”

Amphilochus Hermes follows the maiden over beds of moss, steep granite cliffs, through gloomy forests, and down the paths of mountain torrents. Tall pines rustle above, and sometimes the skeleton of a great oak wreathed with mistletoe looks down upon him. The sky is gray and gloomy, and countless paths open to bewilder and entice them into the boundless wilderness, but the fearless maiden knows the way which leads to the god she worships, to whom she is about to bid farewell forever.

Leaders of tribes, Lords of the Land, and Kings of the Sea, with their companions and attendants, stand in a

semicircle round Odin and await his Priestess. Sigurd, sprung from the gods and king of men, alone sits; his throne is the trunk of a fallen pine, and he gloomily covers his face with his massive hand; the scales of his armor heave as his huge breast swells beneath them. But he remains silent, and his warriors are silent around him. Nothing is heard save the sighing of the trees and the roaring of the sea as it flings its great waves against the rocks beyond the forest.

Crimhild suddenly bursts through them, her eyes fastened upon the gloomy face of Odin,—she hurries on to her god with solemn earnestness.

The stranger, surrounded by his own retainers, remains behind; his hands are folded upon his Corinthian armor; absorbed in thought, he leans against a tree.

Under a low arch overhanging a cavern the Priestess seats herself upon a great stone deeply cut with mystic symbols, and seems lost in meditation. The god of the people of the North stands above her; his beard and hair are stiff with ice and powdered with snow, his eye is dazzlingly bright and cold, he holds a club in his giant hands sprinkled with the blood of his victims; in his breast yawns the ghastly wound which he inflicted upon himself when the days of his incarnation were completed and he burned with desire to return to the bloody festivals of Valhalla.

Long rests the Priestess lost in thought; then gradually awaking, she slowly raises her arm, and speaks in muffled tones:

“I know thee, Lord, among thy heroes! Thy spirit flows in dark streams into my breast,—it rages through me like a cataract shattering the rocks on which it pours,—I am with thee there in the very midst of the whirlpool,—there in the wild night of thy scorn,—thy power is mine! Listen all to the Priestess!”

Suddenly she lifts the golden-fringed lids veiling her flashing eyes, stretches out her hands to the throng before her, shudders as if in the death-spasm: and then her words ring clear as the tones of heroes who have already scaled the clouds, and who, floating above the storm, cry through it to the children of their children.

“Whither are you running by day and by night, O my Brethren? Sons of my people, who is driving you forever forward? Who calls you on to leave the Silver Land of streams?”

“The chained Giants start from the snowy rocks on which they should lie until the end of the world; half rising, they strike their clanging fetters upon the ice crests, and scent afar the smell of blood!”

“Hark, how the hammer of Thor breaks through shield and helmet! How it crushes the breast and shatters the skulls of men!”

“The laughter of the Dwarfs rings through space,—the lance of Horgiebruda floats over the whole earth!”

“Who can resist you, O my successors? Ever faster and faster you hurry on to the Eternal City,—there is the banquet spread for you,—the cups foam to the brim with the blood of your enemy! Honors and places await you there.—Take them with glory, my sons!”

The clear tones of her voice suddenly sink in dim murmurs; her eyes seek something in the world of visionary forms outspread before her, her lips struggle to utter a word. This word comes, grows almost to consciousness in the depths of her soul, twines like a serpent round her heart, then like a serpent buries itself in its folds,—vainly she seeks it—pale—wretched—fainting! A moment of suspense—she will yet tear it from her breast,—her eyes kindle into flame, and her face flashes with higher inspiration:

“The city—the city of the seven hills is in flames,—precious metals and clear gems melt and flow in the heat, corpses fall in the blood and float away,—the great city crashes down—and with it a great god! . . .

“Help! Odin, help!—I perish unless I can utter thy secret! . . . The name! the name! who will tell me the name?”

Then sinks the head of thy mother, her eyes close, her lips are motionless; the king still covers his face with his hand, not daring to look at his daughter; the warriors stand as if turned to stone, for no one ventures to approach the holy rock.

Young Priestess, thy god is dumb, and an eternal

silence is fast settling upon thine own lips ; darkness is shrouding thy soul, and the snow of death is on thy brow ! But he who had promised thee another Fatherland and fairer gods forsakes thee not ; he starts from the shadow of the oak, and boldly advances to thee. A cry of rage echoes through the skies ; the sea-kings angrily rattle their javelins against their shields ; hoary skalds fling curses on the air ! But he has already crossed the threatening circle ; he bends over thee ; he gives thee his hand and says :

“ In the name of ROME, the name of thy enemy and mine, I call thee back to life ! Crimhild, arise ! ”

Then turning to the warriors, he cries loudly : “ ROME ! ROME ! ROME ! ” The reviving maiden rises, repeats after him the mystic word in clear ringing tones ; repeats it again with the sweet voice of woman in a tone of farewell ;—and follows the stranger, as a wife the husband !

Slumbering Son of my Thought, thy father now stands on the deck of his ship, and with an incredulous smile upon his curved lips, pours full cups into the sea in honor of Poseidon ; then turning to his slaves he says : “ Tighten the white sails ; ply more rapidly the oars ; and the God of the Trident will still the waves before us ! ”

And the planks tremble under their feet ; darkness settles itself in level lines along the horizon ; and waves rise hurrying from the depths to meet the skies, and then lose themselves in the heart of the sea—as the Serpent Python before being prostrated by the arrows of the Sun :—capriciously they pour into each other, breaking in snowy foam, while the wind roars like distant thunder, or sobs in wild shrieks as it whistles above them.

Under a canopy supported by the swaying masts, Hermes reclines upon the soft skins of the beasts captured by himself in the Chersonesus, the land of the Cimbrians ; and with gentle voice describes to the maiden at his side the land she is now approaching, painting to her the island

near the mainland, with its vine-clad hills and shady groves, among which stands her new home. He tells her of his laborers and tradesmen, of his palace, ships, his stores of arms and treasures,—and *these all have their allotted destination!* For the people there rejoice not under the leadership of their own chosen chiefs, but are bowed under a heavy yoke,—clothing their shame in gold, in silks, in sculptured marbles, and licking the dust before the city which rises between the two seas.

This city, as is well known to the world, is the Queen of lies and oppression. Under the spell of her poisonous breath, brother rises against brother, and son against father, and traitors against the land which has given them birth; and as untiringly as Time, she swallows up all the kings of the earth. The calm flies from the brow of thy father as he speaks; it darkens like the tempest breaking over the flying ship.

“Once was my Hellas the soul of the nations; her songs and oracles ruled the world! But the haughty barbarians from the East rushed in multitudinous hosts upon her, with the clang of swords and the whir of arrows. The heavenly fire, torn from the gods, was her only portion. Alas! my beautiful, unfortunate Hellas trusted in the accursed city seated upon the seven hills; rough hordes pressed from it to her happy isles and myrtle-crowned shores; cruel and false, it seized my wretched country, not by might of arms and glorious war, but divided her by the poison of treachery, and intoxicated her with the nectar of false promises!”

At this moment the clouds break away, a few stars flame from the heavens; but when Hermes again looks forth the heavenly eyes are dimmed with scudding vapors and exhalations from the land, and he cries to the steersman: “To the right! Steer all night to the right, and at dawn we shall float in the Straits of Gades!”

Then folding thy mother closely to his bosom, he tells her of his mighty ancestors; of Philopœmen, justly called the last of the Greeks, who fought against the plots of the accursed city, then of the barbarian king who, after the losses of thirty years, at last fell by his own hand, since which time no man had been bold enough to undertake

the protection of the enslaved world. After a short silence dedicated to the memory of the great Mithridates, he resumes his account, while thy mother listens motionless and with her blue eyes fastened upon him.

“Crimhild, through thy inspiration thy god has revealed what was divined in the vague foresight of my fathers, what I myself have dimly seen and felt in the flames of my own hate. Hail, daughter of the sea-king! The city of sin, after the destruction of the free and the living, has at last turned the sword against her own breast!

“Her treasures, collected from every part of the earth, are no longer sufficient to satisfy her lusts; her arms are already slipping from her hands, her last hours are tolling in the midst of carousals and murders.

“Laugh at the storms and waves, my wife, for we are not to die here,—we are to take our part in that mighty destruction!”

After these words the voice of the hero is still fuller of scorn and bitterness; he speaks of the gods of Hellas, once so mighty, but in whom men have lost all faith: their oracles have long been dumb, but their forms still stand, for the world grown old cannot readily forget the customs of her youth. All the gods of the earth are to be seen in the accursed city; some of exceeding beauty from the hand of the Greek sculptor, worthy of immortality; others distorted, monstrous, grown up without form from the sands of the desert, hewn from the peaks of distant hills,—but he tells her that he knows there is but ONE GOD, who in the beginning laid his hand upon the night and whirl of chaos, and conquered it for ever and ever!

“His name?” cries the Priestess of Odin. “Fate,” he replies, as he goes to the helm of the vessel, for the night is dark and the storm is again upon them.

Son of my Thought, dost thou remember the lovely isle of Chiara, upon which passed thy childhood with thy sister, the divine *Elsinoë*? Rememberest thou the expeditions of thy father, when, spreading his mast with sails,

—not the three-cornered sails of the Greek, but the tall sheets of the Barbarian,—with the Dacian helmet on his head, and the battle-axe of the Cimbrian in his hand, he would, favored by the night, slip out of the cove and steer boldly on through the windings of the Archipelago? All the thoughts of Jugurtha and Mithridates burn in his soul, his intents of Vengeance lead him to seek the wildest Barbarians; now he visits the swamps of the Palus Mœotis, the wastes where horses fly fleet as the wind; now he goes to the deserts of Africa where range the Syrtians dipping their arrows in the deadliest poisons; anywhere and everywhere he hurries where he deems it possible to raise enemies against his enemy. He presses the hand of savage kings, learns their tongues and the use of their arms, lavishes rich gifts upon them, and stimulates their desires by promises of pleasure and booty.

During these long absences, the days pass in pain for thy mother. But no stranger nor slave ever reads a trace of anguish in her noble features, nor do her lips quiver when she bids them to be still.

But often, taking thee and *Elsinoë* by the hand, she leads you through the long halls to the interior of the palace where, amid niches covered with moss and shells, stands a fierce warrior of rock.

Immortal rage wrinkles his broad low brow, his hands hold the skull of a slaughtered enemy, at his feet are piled long icicles and blocks of ice cut from Parian marble. Thy mother bows her head before him, and thinks of her vanished Fatherland.

“Iridion, my Sigurd, thou wilt never see the Silver Land of streams, nor thy Grandfather, the King of Men! Look! there stands my holy God! My dreadful Inspirer! The Lord of Valhalla! the invincible Odin!” Then pressing thy sister to her bosom: “Where is thy father, *Elsinoë*? Speak, and tell me where he lingers. I hear the roaring of the winds and the dull sobbing of the waves; his tall bark rocks on the fathomless abyss of waters, or, stripped of its wingéd sails, drives on some coast accursed! . . . But no, he will chain the storms, escape the Barbarians, and return home with the fame of a demigod!”

And when the horn of the returning hero is heard winding over the sea, nearer and ever nearer through the myrtle groves; when Hermes, bronzed by the sun and weather-beaten by the tempests, throws himself into the arms of his wife, his dark eye glittering with passion and flashing with triumphant hope;—happy, happy days return to Chiara; the Priestess forgets her dark forebodings, and peaceful and glad you all wander together over grass and flowers, white sands and shells, through halls of marble, among tripods and perfumed incense, and when evening comes, you rest upon the lap of your mother, or in the strong arms of your father, and when he blesses you at night before you go to rest, with his hand upon your bowed heads, he says: *Remember to hate Rome! When grown up pursue her with a curse! You, Iridion, with fire and sword! You, Elsinoë, with prophecies and woman's art!*

Ofttimes comes a Proconsul, Praetor, or officer of the Emperor to Chiara; then long couches are laid and tables spread with luxuries; the wine of Lesbia pours in streams, and the voices of the female slaves, accompanied by the lutes of the males, chant the hymns of old Homer:—“Anacreon! Anacreon!” cry the Romans. With scornful smiles thy father beckons to the singers, fills the cups of the Romans, gives fresh wreaths, and when they fall into uproar and merriment, he boldly recounts the deeds of the Past, relates the glories of the contest with Carthage, sings of the slaughtered legions of Varus, of the revolt of Sertorius in Spain, and drinks the health of the Emperor while he crushes the cup in his clinched hand.

The thirteenth anniversary of the day on which the Priestess had forsaken her god is now rapidly approaching. Her voice grows wild when she calls her children; her looks are sad as she presses them to her breast. She speaks of her father, her mother, her sister, the Chiefs of her People; half-broken farewells thrill her quivering lips; but in the presence of Hermes she tries to collect her thoughts.

“Crimhild, daughter of kings, what is it oppresses thee?”

“Hast thou never heard of the vengeance of the immortal Spirits, Hermes? For a happy time I have been only

thine,—on the farthest confines of the world is an island covered with ice,—a flaming mountain rises from its heart,—the Giant of Death lies there enchained,—his arm is already stretched forth to grasp me,—his hand will soon hang over the depths to hurl the white web of my life into the bottomless abyss!”

Hermes fondly stretches his hand above her temples ; its shadow falls like a stream of peace upon her brow, and presses into her soul.

“Crimhild, look up to the glowing sky of Greece, and out upon its blue sea ! Turn not back to the gray clouds of the North, nor to its harsh God ! The star of Amphilo-chus shines upon and guards thee ! He will not suffer thee to be betrayed to the Evil Spirits !”

But a heavy weight is on his heart !

What cry is that which breaks from the interior of the palace, echoing through the vaults, and losing itself among the pillars of the hall ? The slaves hasten to the inner rooms, enter the apartment of their lord ; there, stretched upon a couch of porphyry, lies the Priestess ; Hermes, the Greek, with bowed head stands beside her, and crushes with his feet a cup whose rim is still beaded with pearly drops. The slaves veil their eyes with drooping lids, stand, listen, wait ; but when Amphilo-chus lifts his face, and turns it towards them, they shiver ; for the first time in his life anguish which he cannot master distorts the godlike features of their lord.

“Go, bring Iridion with his sister here !

“Crimhild, I bid defiance to thy savage god ! There, where surrounded by his heroes he drinks hot blood from human skulls, on the highest throne of his dread palace,—even there shall press the blasting curse of the Greek Amphilo-chus ! . . . Oh, leave me not, my wife ! in vain ! in vain ! But a few drops remain of the accursed draught,—the whole cup of poison seethes in thy white breast ! Oh, Crimhild ! Crimhild !”

She raises her head ; her face is as white as a pale statue resting upon a sarcophagus :

“I saw him thrice last night,—he came from Valhalla like an ocean of gloom, and cried to me : My Priestess !

“He stretched out his strong arm, loaded with iron,

over the sleeping Iridion, the sleeping Elsinoë, and menaced them with his resistless power. He threatened to curse and blast their whole being unless I came to him!

“For a time I was only thine,—but see! there at his feet lie the knife of sacrifice, the black veil, and the death-wreath of a priestess! When I die, place the knife at my side, shroud me in the black veil, and wind the wreath around my brow!”

She rises, mounts the marble steps on the top of which stands Odin; she bends her noble form before him; she stretches out her white arms, trembling as if she would fain wave away the shadow of death, while the folds of her long white robe sweep the steps on which she stands; then she descends and supports herself upon her husband; he winds his arm around her, and together they enter the sanctuary. He totters, for he battles with an unseen, unknown power, casting such looks to Heaven as Prometheus from his rock of pain, or as Laocoon in his anguish lifts reproachfully to the gods from the fatal coast of the sea; but he stoops not to tears, and is silent in his woe.

Fate seizes both in an irresistible grasp!

Then for the last time, Iridion, her look rests upon thy young head! At the feet of Odin she greets thee, as a last farewell, with the name of thy grandfather: “Sigurd! be the terror of the Proud!”

“Elsinoë, my spirit will be ever with thee! Remember the Silver Land of streams, and forget not my god! My children, I die for you!”

Her lips grow pale, blue shadows fall around her azure eyes,—now she calls you both,—and then waves you away from her poisoned breast! Suddenly her thoughts wander,—they fly afar to other places and to other times,—her gray-haired father bows his head upon his powerful hand,—the curses of the sea-kings are in her ears,—she stretches out her arms, and, dying, utters prophecies as the young Priestess of Odin was wont to do:

“To Battle! To Battle, my Brothers! Raise your tents upon the seven hills,—upon the Capitol itself your feast is spread,—the skulls of blood await the sons of Odin,—far below you, gnashing her teeth and wailing,—pros-

trate—ruined—trodden in crimson pools,—lies ROME ! ROME ! ROME !”

She falls exhausted at the feet of her god ; Amphilochns raises her in his close embrace ; she tries to wind her arms around his neck, but they sink powerless ! She falls backward,—her hair hangs lower, lower to the ground,—and a lifeless corpse at last sinks from the trembling hands of Hermes upon the marble floor !

He kneels beside it, places the knife of sacrifice in its hand, shrouds the black veil about it, and twines the death-wreath of the priestess round the cold brow !

Then swiftly rising, as if seized by sudden madness, he cries : “Slaves, bring the axe from the Cimbrian Chersonesus !”

They bring it, trembling as they give it to their lord ; he grasps it firmly in his powerful hands, gathers all his mortal strength to combat the Immortal, and strides to the dread image ! He looks upon it,—lifts the heavy axe,—waves it thrice round his head,—it falls ! The god is shattered to the earth, and Amphilochns, in despairing silence, tramples the fragments of his enemy under his feet.

Such is thy lineage, thy Past, descendant of Philopœmen, grandson of Sigurd, king of men,—O slumbering Iridion !

Thy father leaves the home of his ancestors upon Chiara’s isle, and with the urn of Crimhild goes to Rome ; having lost what he loved, he will live with his enemies, that he may at least hate with all the passion of his soul. And ever and ever more nearly approaches the longed-for day of Vengeance and Destruction.

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

HELIOGABALUS, *Emperor of Rome.*

ALEXANDER SEVERUS, *his Cousin and Successor.*

IRIDION, *son of Amphilochns, the Greek, and Crimhild,
Priestess of Odin.*

VICTOR, *Christian Bishop.*

SIMEON, *Christian Priest.*

ULPIAN DOMITIAN, *Consul.*

MASINISSA, *an Old Man from the Desert of Mauritania.*

EUTYCHIAN, *Prefect of the Prætorian Guard.*

ARISTOMACHUS.

LUCIUS TUBERO.

CUBULLUS.

RUPILIUS.

A Philosopher.

SCIPIO, *first known as Sporus; Slave and Gladiator.*

VERRES.

ALBOIN.

PILADES, *a Slave, Master of Iridion's Household.*

EUPHORION, *Chief of the Gladiators of Iridion.*

ELSINOË, *Sister of Iridion.*

MAMMEA, *Mother of Alexander Severus.*

METELLA, *a Roman Maiden.*

Votary of the Temple of Venus.

Female Slaves.

Female Chorus.

Christian Priests, Priests of Mithras, Old and Young
Christians, Soldiers, Gladiators, Barbarians, Attendants,
Slaves, Ethiopians, and Infernals.

IRIDION.

ACT I.

SCENE I. *The palace of Iridion in Rome. A vast hall adorned with a double row of pillars stretching in perspective until they vanish in the distance. A fountain sparkles in its midst; incense and perfume burn on tripods scattered through the hall. IRIDION, in Greek costume, is seen lying at the base of the statue of his father, Hermes Amphilochns. Slaves are passing to and fro, kindling lights in lamps of alabaster.*

First Slave. The son of Hermes sleeps; his weary head

Rests at the feet of great Amphilochns.

Second Slave. On the cold marble he has sunk to rest.

Third Slave. His sister, our young mistress, wrings her hands,

And in the Gynceum ever weeps.¹

Fourth Slave. By Pollux! I, from good authority, Have heard she will be carried off to-night By the fierce Moors of Heliogabalus.²

First Slave. Peace with Iridion! Let us retire That he may still repose.

(Exeunt Slaves.)

Iridion. My faithful slaves!
Like silent shadows have they stolen away
With wishes for my rest. Yet I but seemed to sleep.
Thou knowest, Father, I must wake and watch
For them, for all! Twilight already here?

(He rises from the base of the statue, and advances to a brazen shield from which hangs a sword.)

The dark hour is upon me! They come to seize . . .
 Ha! did not Brutus offer his own sons? . . .
 But Elsinöë! Elsinöë! Woe!

(He strikes the shield.)

She comes! Sad as an image of despair she glides;
 A cypress-wreath wound round her broad white brow,
 Such as her mother wore when Odin came
 In wrath to tear her from us.

Elsinöë (entering). Are the Moors here?
 Has the Accursed already sent his chariots
 To capture me?

Iridion. Not yet, O Elsinöë!
 I called thee hither, sister, but to breathe
 The spirit of our sire into thy soul
 For the last time. Be brave! we part to-night!

Elsinöë. Iridion! Brother! Shame and infamy!

Iridion. Nay, know'st thou not that Cæsar's mad with
 love?

That statues rise to thee throughout imperial Rome?
 That the grave Senate has proclaimed thee Goddess?³
 Hope of our House, and jewel of my heart,
 My sunny-haired,—thou art no longer mine!
 Thou innocent victim born to avenge our wrongs,
 Our sire's dishonor, and our country's shame!

Elsinöë. Yes. I have known it all from childhood's
 hour,

And am prepared for direst sacrifice!
 But not to-day—no—nor to-morrow—let it be!
 I must have time to collect my utmost strength;
 To be taught by Masinissa; time to drain
 The cup of poison held to shuddering lips
 By thee! My brother! The vilest criminal
 Has time to prepare for death!
 Save me at least to-night, Iridion!

Iridion. I cannot, virgin victim! chosen Bride!
 Prepare for doom! The whirlwind knows no rest!
 Haste drives us o'er the path we must together tread.

Elsinöë (throwing her arm round his neck).

Have you forgotten how we used to sport
 The live-long day o'er bright Chiara's plains?
 How oft I've wreathed thy head with roses sweet,

And myrtle flowers? How dearly I have loved thee?
Have pity, brother! Send me not to shame!

Iridion. Tempt me not to compassion! Tears are vain!

Elsinoë. Why thus complain, thus suffer? Has not power
Been always given man to release himself
At will from gods or men, by seeking death?
(*She draws out his dagger.*) See how thy dagger glitters,
bright and keen;—

Let us dull it in my heart, Iridion!

Iridion. And scorn the aim for which our father lived!
No, we must bear with life and misery,
That the great spirit of Amphiloehus
May joy among the shades. Once the strong arm
Of *one* brave man might save a nation; now
All that has passed away! We're born in times
When even *honor* must be sacrificed.
My *Elsinoë*, Fate is hurrying on,
But few, few moments more are thine and mine;
Then must this sunny hair be gayly wreathed
With bridal roses; thou must robe thyself
In magic and bewildering loveliness.

(*He clasps her in his arms.*)

Lay thy doomed head once more upon my breast,
Thou most unfortunate of all the victims!
For the last time I hold thee to my heart!
So soon to leave thy home, thy father's hearth,
Come, take my parting kiss, and give me thine
In all the unbroken charm of happy girlhood!
Sister, farewell! I ne'er again shall see
Thee joyous, young,—ah, never! He will blast
Thy virgin bloom, wither thy innocent life!
Ha! dost thou understand it all aright?
The Accursed shall surely die! and with him falls
The Eternal City into ashes, dust!
All this shalt *thou* achieve, my glorious one,—
Thou canst not call this shame!

Elsinoë.

I know. I know.

My brother, let me rest upon thy heart!
Time flies so fast,—in a few moments more—
And on whose breast shall I dishonored lie!

Iridion (looking wildly around him).

Mark, how these pillars totter to their base !

Dark shadows slowly glide or writhe along

The dim perspective of our ancestral hall !

Gods of my sires, let me not faint and fall

Upon the threshold of the arena vast

Which I this hour enter ! Nerve my soul

With hope of vengeance ! Come, Masinissa, come !

A Voice from behind the pillars. Who totters now was
born for words, not deeds.

Meet the Accursed with smiles, and with smiles part !

Masinissa (entering). Cæsar has sent his messengers ;
they wait

Even now for Elsinœ at thy gates.

Iridion. Power rests upon thy brow ! On the grave's
verge

Thou stand'st sublime,—strong as in days of youth.

Oh, give me strength to meet this fateful hour !

Masinissa. Is this the chosen virgin ? . . . Where is
the wreath

Of fresh-blown roses for proud Cæsar's bride ?

(He throws off the cypress from the head of Elsinœ.)

Child of the Priestess Crimhild, know'st thou not

Our work begins to-day ?

Elsinœ. I know life ends !

*(Female slaves are seen advancing from behind laden with
costly gifts, which they offer to Elsinœ.)*

CHORUS OF FEMALE SLAVES.

Fair as Aphrodite rising

From the deep-blue Grecian sea,

With the snowy foam uplifting,

And the Zephyrs floating free,—

We bring thee strands of opals, pearls,

To crown thy peerless brow :

Bring roses, perfumes, rainbow gems,—

Less sweet and bright than thou !

Iridion (to Masinissa). Lend her your arm, old man !

(He leads his sister to the statue of Amphiloehus.)

Sister, be firm ;
 Listen to me as if I spoke in death !
 Soon must thou cross a threshold laden with shame,
 Live with the Accursed ; thy virgin body yield
 In its chaste beauty to damnation's son ;—
 See to it that thou keep'st thy shuddering soul
 Pure, high, and free ! Veil it in mystery !
 Make it as cold and inaccessible
 As the shrine of ice in which thy mother knelt
 When Odiń's prophecies thrilled through her lips !

Elsinoë. Iridion, pity me,—poor helpless orphan !

Iridion. Give Cæsar no repose upon thy breast !
 Startle him constantly with frightful cries
 That the Prætorians arm, Patricians rise,
 The People storm his gates, will murder him !
 Affright him more and more each passing hour,
 Suck the young life-blood from his girlish heart,
 And drive his craven soul with terror mad.
 Come, *Elsinoë* (*He lays his hand upon her head*), closer
 to me cling,

Rest thy long sunny curls upon my heart.
 In thirst of vengeance did thy life begin,
 And in that hope hast thou reached womanhood.
 Doomed from thy birth to ruin and disgrace !
 Kneel, sister ! kneel before Amphilochus,
 While here I consecrate thee to his Shade :—
 Father, behold and bless the innocent victim !

Elsinoë. Voices from Erebus are floating round !
 The air is dark with shadows ! Mother ! Come !

(*The women surround Elsinoë and robe her.*)

CHORUS OF WOMEN.

Why tremble thy white limbs as winds the veil ?
 Why pants thy heart beneath the purple bands
 Girding its snow ? Why clutch the bridal wreath
 With grasp so wild and fierce ? Thy brow is broad,
 Fit for an Empress in its regal sweep ;
 Why whiter than the lilies is its pallor ?

Iridion. Help ! Help ! She faints !

Masinissa. Fear not,—she will not die !

She but begins to live as she must live.
See how her lips writhe and foam with some strange pas-
sion !

Elsinoë. I leave the threshold of my sires ; but may
Not bear away with me my Fathers' gods !
(*She crushes the myrtle wreath.*) I crush my virgin
wreath, unsullied, pure,

In the dim ashes of the hearth of home !
My father doomed me ere my wretched birth ;
My brother drives me forth to infamy ;
Alas ! I never, never can return !
Haste, mother ! pray to Odin for thy child !
Ask not for life for the unfortunate,
But pray for inspiration, gift of prophecy !
Already whirls it through my burning brain !
No mortal children ever will be born
From this doomed breast. . . . O mother, show me
more !

The *Future* will be generated there,—
Rome trusting in my love, and sleeping in my arms !
(*Enter EUTYCHIAN, Prefect of the Prætorians, leading a
band of Ethiopians in scarlet, who bear presents, which
they place at the feet of ELSINOË.*)

Eutyichian. The holy, blessed Emperor, Augustus,
High-Priest and Tribune, Consul, greeting sends
To the son of great Amphilochus, the Greek.
To *Elsinoë*, the Divine, he sends
A hundred shells of purple, a hundred cups
Of amethyst, a hundred strings of pearls.

Elsinoë. Courage, O mother, in my martyrdom !

Iridion. All now is over !

(*He takes Elsinoë by the hand and leads her to Eutyichian.*)

Bear my sister hence !

Eutyichian. The ivory chariot waits for Fortune's
child !

Iridion. As gift to Cæsar I will send my band
Of gladiators ; *Elsinoë* loves
To see their skill. Go ! they will follow her.

(*The women surround Elsinoë and bear her away, escorted
by Eutyichian and the Ethiopians. After their exit, Iri-*

dion strikes the shield. His band of gladiators enters. They wear black tunics edged with scarlet, their arms and legs are bare, and they carry naked swords.)

CHORUS OF GLADIATORS.

Are there wild beasts to throttle, men to kill?
Or will thy sister need our deadly skill?

Iridion. Brothers, Barbarians and Greeks, whom I
Have rescued from the bloody jaws of Rome,
Go with the sunny-haired; give life for her;
Be true until the Day of Vengeance dawns!

Euphorion (chief of the gladiators). Until our bodies,
rolled in sand and blood,
Lie prostrate in the arena, gashed and scarred,
They're lithe, strong, active, sworn to serve thee, Greek!

Iridion. I trust my sister to your valiant arms,—
Obey her as you would Iridion!
Hear you the sound of the retreating steps?
O'ertake them, follow to the imperial hall,
And in the Emperor greet your present Lord.

(The gladiators retire, waving their swords.)

CHORUS OF GLADIATORS.

Gods, may he perish! die before his hour!
Iridion! Long live Iridion!

(Exeunt gladiators.)

Iridion. Ye murderers of Hellas, of the world,
Ye sons of falsehood and of perfidy,
I've sacrificed to you a spotless virgin!
Immortal Gods, wherever you may be,
Hearken my prayer! Grant she may be the last,
Except myself, thrown to the Roman wolf!
Among so many miserable wretches
Driven by threats and tortures from their country,
Let me be *last* of *all* the writhing victims,—
Forgotten after death and martyrdom!

(Exeunt.)

SCENE II. *A hall in the palace of Heliogabalus.*

HELIOGABALUS, ALEXANDER SEVERUS, MAMMEA, soldiers, retainers, slaves, etc. HELIOGABALUS is robed with great splendor.

Heliogabalus (to Alexander). Cousin, it is with me a festal hour,

The Greek girl hither comes a bride this day.

Alexander (starting). What! Elsinoë? Has she given consent?

I thought Iridion scorned and hated Rome.

Heliogabalus. Could she refuse? Why, she will Empress be,

My senate name her Goddess—as she is!

Alexander (aside). My ears deceive me, or I hear strange sounds;—

The moans of shame, the sobs of wild despair,

Strife, tumult, death, seem floating in the air.

(EUTYCHIAN enters and bows before the Emperor.)

Eutyichian. The gold-haired Greek is in the ivory chariot

At your gate. By Mithras, how she queens it!

Her maidens she dismissed . . .

Heliogabalus. Escort her here!

She comes, my goddess, with her sunny hair.

(*He moves joyously forward, as if to meet Elsinoë, but starts back in surprise as the gladiators of Iridion, with drawn swords, enter. They approach and salute the Emperor, who clutches Eutyichian in his sudden fright.*)

Heliogabalus. Where is the Greek? Who are these savage men?

Eutyichian (laughing hoarsely). A present from Iridion to the Bride!

It seems our Empress loves to watch their skill;

Her brother sends them greeting in her train.

(*As he speaks, the entering ranks of gladiators open and Elsinoë appears in their midst. She is magnificently attired in the Greek costume, but bands of the imperial purple cross her breast. She wears the wreath of bridal roses, but the long veil is thrown backward, and the haughty*

face quite uncovered. The Ethiopians of Heliogabalus file in after the gladiators. Elsinoë stands in their midst, with perfect self-possession, but her eyelashes suddenly droop on perceiving Alexander.)

Mammea (aside to Alexander). See how she stands,
like a Diana pale,

But shows no terror, no obeisance makes.

Ah! now her fringing lashes fall to veil

The deep-blue eyes, unused to meet the gaze

Of men.

Heliogabalus. Fair daughter of Amphiloclus,
Approach, and fill a throne worthy your charms!

Alexander (aside to Mammea). Look, mother, now
the hot blood dyes her cheek!

How haughtily she lifts her golden head

As if already Empress! See the flame

Indignant flashing from her dazzling eyes

As Cæsar calls her to him! She neither stirs

Nor speaks; as fierce and motionless as the Greek gods!

Ice flashing fire—fire curdling into ice!

Heliogabalus. Mammea, lead her to the inner room.

All unaccustomed to be seen by men,

Immured within the Gynæceum's bounds,

The maiden would have greater privacy;

And I must seek to soothe this startled fawn.

Eutychnian, marshal the prætorian guard,

And house the gladiators with my slaves.

Fling the sestercii freely to the crowd,

And bid them shout the Emperor's coming bliss!

Good-night, fair friends! the Empress will receive

You as befits her state to-morrow morn.

(Heliogabalus approaches Elsinoë, who remains haughtily immovable, but accepts the proffered hand of Mammea.

The Ethiopians make a profound obeisance to the Emperor as they leave the hall, preceded by Eutychnian.)

Euphorion (leader of the gladiators, kneeling before Elsinoë).

Do we depart to rest, or watch near thee?

Elsinoë. Depart! I'll learn to conquer fate alone!

(On a signal from Elsinoë, the gladiators follow Euphorion.

Exeunt Mammea, leading Elsinoë, Heliogabalus, Alexander, slaves, and retainers.)

SCENE III. *The hall of Amphiloehus, as in Scene I.*
 IRIDION is alone, reclining upon a couch.

Iridion. My sister! It is bitter to my soul,—
 But Rome must perish, or all men be slaves!

Masinissa (entering). Still sighing, Sigurd? Calm
 thee, king of men!

Iridion (springing to his feet). Call me not Sigurd, or
 give me the waves

Of the old sea-kings! Give me but the men
 Who fought with my brave ancestors of yore,
 And not a shred remains of Cæsar's purple!
 But my path lies through Darkness! If I stretch
 My arm, it meets with barriers strong as iron,
 Yet movable and lithe as serpents are;
 And I must crawl among them, and not *strike*,—
 Creep without force or life,—I scorn myself!

Masinissa. Trust in the baseness, weakness of man-
 kind!

Fate brought you here, and placed you at the gates
 Of crumbling Rome: use the new forms of power
 To combat with the rotting Past, of which
 You are no part. Now is the time to act!
 There will be time to weep hereafter . . . time . . .

Iridion. Shame! Shame upon the Nazarenes who fall
 Like beasts, rather than fight and die like men!
 They hold me back, and . . .

Masinissa. Alexander is
 Forever plotting with their subtle priests.
 He will dethrone the Emperor, seize the crown,
 Bring in the Christians, make their faith the law;
 Then Rome will rule to the last centuries!

Iridion. By Odin, no! He never shall be Cæsar!

Masinissa. The catacombs decide the fate of Rome.
 You bear the Christian seal upon your brow,
 And feed with them upon their mysteries;
 Inspire them with *vengeance* in the name
 Of their own Crucified, still unavenged.
 Ask where His altars are, His reign o'er earth!
 Fire, arm, and lead them! When they wield the
 sword

Forbidden them, then, O my son, my spirit
Shall be with you!

(He approaches Iridion and leans upon his shoulder.)

Iridion, remember you the night
In which your dying father said to me:
“I trust my son to you, with my *one thought*”?
You swore to give up hope, love, happiness,
And live alone for vengeance.
Then bending over him, as now o'er you,
I said to him: “Amphilochus, when thou
Shalt meet the Shades to whom thou art descending,
And ask of Masinissa, they will tell thee,
He ne'er forsakes those he has sworn to follow;
Once his, they are his forever!
Amphilochus! Thyself, thy son, and I,
Will be united in a trinity
Which never can be parted!”

Iridion. Yes, thus it passed; he died in the same hour:
But Elsinoë was with me, and wept
Within my arms!

Masinissa. Now I repeat to you
The words then said: “Believe and trust in me!”
Together upon earth—in the Hereafter—
Before Rome's ruin—after its certain fall—
We will be one forever and forever!

Iridion. Waves of resolve stream from thy withered
breast
And give me force! Give me thy hand, old man!
Together upon earth—in the Hereafter—
Before Rome's ruin—after her agony—
We will be one forever and forever!

(He throws himself at the base of the statue of Amphilochus.)

Yes, it befell in such an hour as this,
With Elsinoë weeping in my arms,—
Sad, large as setting stars, the dying eyes
Of Hermes gazed upon me,—then I swore . . .

(Shouting and acclaim heard without.)

(He starts to his feet.)

Hark! Hearest thou that frightful, brutal cry?
Cæsar throws gold to keep his bridal feast;

They shout and share his rapture !
 Innocent victim ! Elsinoë ! Gods !

(He wraps his head in the folds of his toga.)

Away, old man ! I must be left alone
 With the wild hell that rages in my heart !

ACT II.

SCENE I. *A temple in the vaults beneath the capitol. A golden-rayed statue of Mithras. Music is heard approaching, and again dying away in the distance. Priests and augurs move in procession. HELIOGABALUS, robed as a High-Priest of the Sun, enters with ELSINOË. After the passing of the procession they remain alone.*

Heliogabalus. Thou seest my power, O haughty nymph ! I hold
 Communion with the God of Light, the Stars,
 The Genii of the Night : the High-Priests of the East
 Adore my gifts and wonder at my words.

Elsinoë. The daughter of the North, of clouds and winds,
 Feels naught but scorn for weak, voluptuous gods
 Immersed in perfume, lulled by the soft lute,
 Sprinkled with blood of deer, or new-born babes.
 The diamond sun upon thy purple breast
 Compares not with the light of my own North
 Flashing from ice and snow and javelined men.

Heliogabalus. Fair serpent whom I love, what wouldst thou more ?

Elsinoë. Odin, my mother's god, lives in the North.
 Fearless, immovable, he stands through storms,
 Frost, winds, because he is of rock and glittering steel.
 He holds in his strong hands a foaming cup
 Filled with the blood of heroes.
 His throne is set upon the craggy cliffs,
 From whence he looks far o'er the Sea of the North,

Whose icy mirror breaks beneath his feet.
He is the god of warriors,—not of trembling boys!

(*She picks up a wreath of hyacinths and throws it upon
Heliogabalus.*)

Go, withered flowers, and grace a marrowless stalk!—
The child of the Cimbrian Priestess ne'er can love
A weak, effeminate son of luxury.

(*She attempts to go.*)

Heliogabalus. Stay! By the mysteries of Baal, stay!
I am High-Priest! The Delian Apollo is
Less beautiful than I. The legion chose
Me Cæsar for my faultless face and form.
I am Augustus,[†] Antoninus, and
Aurelius, Lord of Rome, India, and Africa!
Why stand'st thou silent? Why that piercing look?
I've showered upon thee ear-rings, bracelets, gems,
Purple and precious sapphires; set thee feasts,
Richer than ever dreamed by the beloved
Of Sardanapalus; a hundred lions fought
Before thee yesterday; I've sent away
Thy rivals from my palace,—the fair nymphs
Who loved me,—yet thou art still immovable,
Colder than marble; glittering, hard as steel!

Elsinoë. Boy, fed on peacocks' livers, brains of
birds,

Thou vexest me! Valhalla is my home,
Where my bold fathers sit on steel-girt thrones;
Each foot placed on the coffin of a foe!
Thy childish words disturb my distant thoughts,
Arrest my mystic visions. What canst thou wish,
Or what require from me? The hour is late;
'Twere better I should pray to my stern gods.
Farewell, Augustus! Cæsar! Antonine!

Heliogabalus. O sunny-haired! most lovely! exqui-
site!

I do implore thee, stay! I tremble, gasp;
See how I die, shivering at thy cold feet!
Nor god nor goddess ever saw before
Such clouds of golden hair, such bosom fair,
Such deep-blue eyes,—I do entreat thee, stay!

Elsinoë. Wild boy, be still! I hear my mother's
voice :

It pierces through these vaults.

Heliogabalus. I'd lay me down
Upon the altar's steps to kiss the tips
Of thy white feet!

(*He approaches Elsinoë, who repulses him.*)

Elsinoë. No. I want iron arms, and manly lips
That chant a fearful hymn of blood and death!
Slave of the prætors, seek the prætorians!

Heliogabalus. Accursed nymph, bitter shall be thy
end!

I'll have thee nailed upon a cross, and ask
All Rome to see thee suffer, writhe and die! . . .
O goddess, if too beautiful for man,
If Cæsar's self is not sufficient for thee,
Mithras shall have thee! Thou shalt be the Bride
Of the great Sun Himself! I can do this,
For I am able to do all I will!
Stay but a moment with me, even if
Thou wilt no nearer come!
I'm happier if I may but see thy face.
I am so wretched! Still so fair and young,
So eager for delight, yet round me stand
Treason, blood, doom and death! Already life
Disgusts, and Fate is maddening me! The ends
Of the earth are mine; yet they avail me nothing!
The consecrated incense, breath of flowers,
The light of Mithras, blood of beasts, of men,
Charm Heliogabalus no more!

Dost hear?

Say, wilt thou love, or wilt thou drive me mad?
Wilt see me die here at thy cold, soft feet?
Come, *Elsinoë*, we are both so young,
So fair, so weary, so unfortunate!
Here near thee, I will with thee, hand in hand,
And cheek to cheek, now go to sleep!

Elsinoë. Then sleep,—
Sleep till the centurions come to murder Cæsar!
Unhappy boy! What arms, what strength hast thou?
With these weak fingers, white and soft as wax,

How canst thou grasp the handle of a sword?
Rest! I will go and ask my gods if aid
May yet be found for thee.

(*Exeunt El̄sinoë.*)

Heliogabalus. Help! Haste to me!
Eutyichian, Priests, come, aid your Emperor!

(*Enter priests, augurs, and EUTYCHIAN.*)

CHORUS OF PRIESTS.

Child of the Sun, what has befallen thee,
The Lord of mysteries and sacrifice?
Thy lips are white with foam, thy bosom pants,
The diamond star bursts from the purple bands
Across thy breast! Thine eyes, dilated, roll
Wild in their sockets, while their wandering gaze
For pleasure seeks, and then asks blood,—then sink
They wearily as in eternal sleep!

Heliogabalus. The Furies tear my limbs! I know, I
know . . .

Eutyichian. Evoe Bacche! my disciple is
As drunk as thou, when thou didst conquer India.

Heliogabalus. Alexian soon will draw the steel across
My breast, crying: "Cæsar, reach me your throat!"
Save me—and you shall have ten talents all!

Eutyichian. Cæsar himself I'd strike for that ten
talents!

Heliogabalus. Pity! The Sun Himself is pledged to
avenge my death!

CHORUS OF PRIESTS.

Arouse thee, godlike Cæsar! Thou art our Lord,
And the whole earth belongs to thee alone.
Gods envious of thy fame torture thy soul
With horrid visions! These phantoms melt away
In fires eternal, in Mithras' purest rays,
As the gray waves into the deep-blue sea,
The clouds into the sky, or the fair form
Of Semele into the light of Jupiter!

Heliogabalus (recovering himself). Give me your hands!
(*Rising.*) What brought you hither, slaves?

It is my will she *shall* come to my couch !
 Let her fair body tremble in my arms,
 Or you shall all—as many as stand here—
 Be given to the claws of the new leopards !

Eutychiean. Me Hercule ! I think that I at least
 Deserve a lion !

Heliogabalus. Silence ! I'll bear no jests !
 Where is she, Priests ?

CHORUS OF PRIESTS.

Her tall form lights the dark. The stranger's god
 Struggles with Mithras !

Heliogabalus. Silence ! My Greek girl comes !
 (*ELSINOË enters from the background, and stands on a stone
 covered with hieroglyphics.*)

Elsinoë. I've asked them all. At first they would not
 speak,
 Sleeping upon their thrones after their meal of blood.
 The armor clashed of one who was awake,
 Who raised the crimson skull to his calm lips.
 I asked them all,—my cry awakened them !
 Where lip and cup touched, fell a drop of blood,
 Which flying through the heavens dropped on my brow . . .

Heliogabalus. Speak, godlike Priestess ! I am not
 condemned ?
 Am not to die before the allotted time ?

Elsinoë. The doom of the gods is storming through
 my soul !
 Kneel to receive it, mortals !

Heliogabalus (kneeling). Mithras, forgive !

Eutychiean (kneeling). Good-night, great Mithras !

Priests (kneeling). Strike the cursed sorceress dead,
 Great Mithras, with thy beams !

Elsinoë. I saw a man
 Stand on the earth, with steel and terror armed ;
 Calm as a mountain lake his godlike brow,
 The sword of victory flashed in his right hand !
 I knew him,—but I nothing understood,—
 I could not trust my sight !
 The night winds then caught up the well-known name,

And all Valhalla echoed with the cry :

“He shall deliver Cæsar !”

Heliogabalus. His name ! His name !

Elsinoë. Sigurd, the son of Crimhild !

(*She descends from the stone, and approaches Heliogabalus.*)

Writhe and crawl

No longer in the dust ! Stand up and be a man !

Go, courtiers, priests ; the Emperor needs you not !

(*Exeunt.*)

Couldst thou mount on the shoulders of thy gods,

And on them hunt, as if on untamed colts ?

Drink blood from skulls, and ride on meteors' beams ?

Lie on the snow, with ghostly ruins round,

And gaze all night in the icy eye of the moon ?

Thou poor, luxurious boy, with purple robes,

And rosy gods, what is it thou canst do ?

But tremble not ; the Greek will rescue thee,

And tear thee from the jaws of the abyss !

Heliogabalus. Iridion ? Thy brother ? True, a fierce

And magic fire flashes from his dark eye,—

Oh, that the People had a single neck,

That I might kill them *all* with *one* strong blow !

Then, *Elsinoë*, I might rest my head

Upon thy heart for happy, quiet hours !

But my good Genius will Iridion be ;

Repeat it,—*he* is my deliverer !

Elsinoë. Give me thy hand, child ! I will watch thee sleep.

Fear nothing while my gods keep guard o'er thee !

(*She leads him out.*)

SCENE II. *Another part of the palace of the Cæsars. A peristyle² in which MAMMEA is sitting before a sacrificial altar ; ALEXANDER SEVERUS is at her side. An open antechamber is visible in the background.*

Mammea. Tears often fill his eyes, he rarely smiles,
His features are like Plato's in the form,
But sadder in the expression ; even his foes
Cannot resist his holy influence.

Alexander. My heart hangs daily more upon his doctrines.

Mammea. The sum of earthly wisdom, only hope
Of life eternal, bliss beyond the grave,
Lie in our Bishop's creed.

(DOMITIAN *is seen in the antechamber.*)

(*Mammea rises.*) Domitian! can it be?

Alexander (throwing himself into the arms of Domitian).
Dearest of men! My earliest teacher! friend!

Domitian. Be of good cheer,—I bring great news,
Mammea.

Mammea. How long you have been silent! Darkest
fears

Filled my wrung soul; I thank the gods they are
Not to be realized!

Domitian. I did not write
From Antioch, because I had no messenger
Whom I could trust. The nearer grows our work
To its allotted end, the more we need
Caution and silence,—soon our aim we'll reach!

Mammea. Speak! speak!

Domitian (looking carefully around him). Are these
walls deaf and dumb?

Alexander. Fear not!

But yesterday Roboam, the Emperor's dwarf,
Brought me a basket filled with poisoned fruit,
Which I spurned with my foot. Our breach is open;
My disgust is known.

Domitian. Be patient, Alexander,
That here your foes may deem you still a child.
Great changes always generate in calm!
What would have been the consequence if I
In Laodicea, Smyrna, Ephesus,
And Antioch had cried aloud for vengeance,
Proclaimed the Emperor unfit to reign
Or live? . . . I spake no word, was silent everywhere,
But closely watched the People, Legions, Cohorts.
I marked the general murmurs; when convinced
The germs of hate were ripe, that all hearts longed for
change,—
Then only did I whisper to myself:

The time has come, the spark is widely thrown,
 All Asia kindles into flame! Then first
 Did I hold secret converse with the Tribunes,
 Questors, Prætorians. The hour to speak
 Had struck, and, shaping my temptation to
 The individual wishes of each man
 Whom I desired to win, my course began.
 To some I offered gain; some, higher rank;
 Some, wider influence; thus I gained friends,
 Closed contracts for efficient services.
 But when I heard that Heliogabalus
 Had named you Consul, I began to fear
 Some dark design lurked 'neath this specious favor;
 I hurried back to Rome to offer you,
 In the legions' name, a hope, nay, promise of
 The highest destiny! Be patient; let
 But a short time pass *quietly* away,
 And then our day of liberation comes!

Alexander. But why delay, even until to-morrow?

Domitian. Because in Rome the Emperor is thronged
 By men devoted to him, on account
 Of his new shows, and by the prætorians,
 Who worship him as the very god of gold
 And vast expenditure.
 The people always *love*, until they *murder*, Cæsar!
 The men encamped *without* the city gates
 Favor our project.

Alexander. Aristomachus said
 This very day, that he would risk his life
 To serve Mammea or myself.

Domitian. And when
 The hour of tumult strikes there's none like him;
 Until it does, he must be cautious, silent!
 He can but serve us in the day of combat;
 And there is much to do ere it begins.
 Think of the swarms of guards around the palace;
 The soldiers scattered everywhere through Rome;
 And the whole East against us! The Syrians ne'er
 Forget Heliogabalus, as the bright
 And beautiful boy they knew in Emesa;
 Or later as their glittering High-Priest

In the Temple of the Sun. Remember too
 There is a potent force but in the *seeming*
 Of regal power; the *name* of Potentate
 Compels long after real strength and might
 Have passed away,—for empty sounds and words
 Rule men when all they typified is dust!

Mammaea. You speak the truth, Domitian, yet haste!
 We are surrounded by his tools and slaves!
 The grave yawns at our feet!
 Poison at any hour may drive the blood
 From my own cheeks; my son, my joy, my pride,
 May bow his bright head on my breast, and die
 On the heart of his wretched mother!

Domitian. This very day
 I'll see Aristomachus, Tubero . . .

(*He approaches Alexander.*)

Successor of Augustus, have no fear
 That the wise Fates will cut your thread of life
 Until you've reigned o'er men! Surely the gods
 Will pity this oppressed and wretched realm!
 But when you rule this mighty Empire, then
 Beware of the poison hidden in the true shirt
 Of Dejanira,—the purple of the Cæsars!

Mammaea. Do you not know that Rome's last glory,
 hope,
 Rests in my son alone? From Plato's words,
 And Christ's diviner teachings, I've instilled
 Into his soul love for his fellow-men,
 And pity for outraged humanity.
 To the oppressed and wretched he will stretch
 A Brother's hand.

Domitian. Better he had been taught
 To punish rebels! In all the Asian marts
 I've seen the Roman knights with the freedmen fraternize!
 Placed on the bench of law and justice, with
 The scales and swords committed to their charge,
 They ruled the world; but only used their power
 To advance themselves! They sent swift messengers
 With false intelligence to depress or raise
 The prices of commodities to suit their views,
 Robbing poor wretches of their property,—

Then, from the Roman senate winning aid,
 In gloomy prisons they immured their victims,
 Or nailed them to the cross! Oh, I have seen
 Their torments,—turned away mine eye in horror!

Alexander. The descendants of our Consuls, famed
 Dictators!

Domitian. Yet these enormities now serve our cause,
 Will form the steps to lead you to the throne;
 When firmly seated on it you may fling
 The stairs into the bottomless abyss:
 More than Christ's lessons here will be required!

Alexander. I know the difficulties in my path,
 But my nights pass in studying Trajan's deeds;
 I hope to equal him or else die young!

Domitian. Think also of the Republic; of the men
 Who wore the Toga! Ah! what remains to us
 Of all their glorious examples? Where
 Is that great Roman people, whose just laws
 Made sweeter, higher music to my ears
 Than Plato's subtle dreams or Homer's songs?
 Who now can see in Rome a face unstained
 By shame, or hear a laugh of hearty joy?
 Gray hairs on heads without a deed of honor;
 Oppression adding weight to hapless years!
 Augurs and dancers, singers, sophists, fools,
 Burden the Forum; centuries have flown
 Since the brave Julius crossed the Rubicon.

It is impossible to turn back now;
 Even in Cassius' days it was too late;
 The gods have left us nothing but to pray
 A Ruler shall be sent us, in whose love
 Of justice, right, the Empire may regain
 Its youth, even if the lictor's axe must fall
 Where the green olive-branch should bud and bloom!

Mammea. I have known earnest, holy men in the
 East,
 Who say that better times are dawning o'er us,
 And that in spite of all its present woe,
 The Empire will rejoice under the rule
 Of a just Cæsar, knowing the true God.

Domitian. A Nazarene! I pass my life, Augusta,

In thoughts upon divine and human things,
And have no time to follow all the worms
Burrowing and undermining this old earth!

Mammea. Still groping in the night of ancient prejudice?

Domitian. Great Jupiter, heed not her godless words!
I'm an old Roman; brought up to revere
Our memories of freedom, fame, although
Before my day such glories were no more!
Now bending to its fall, the kingdom bears
This brood of Nazarenes: to purge it quite,
They must be all destroyed!

(*Advancing to Alexander and seizing him by the arm.*)

And by such means alone
As made Rome great, can it be renovated;
Through dauntless courage, and the forms severe
Of its ancient fathers;—foreign creeds and laws
Must be destroyed and banished!

Alexander. My mother loves,
Reveres the Christians; patience and fortitude,
Mild but heroic virtues, mark their creed.
Domitian, look, her eyes are full of tears!
She loves the Christians; they would die for me!

Domitian. Use them as tools to be destroyed when
done with,
Is my last counsel with regard to them.
(*Music heard approaching.*) Hark! Syrian flutes! Does
the High-Priest of Mithras
Perchance announce a visit to his brother?

Mammea. Not so, for at this hour he daily visits
The gardens of the Palatine with Elsinoë.

Domitian. Many reports, all evil, circulate
In the East about this Greek; it was said there
Her brother labored long to enhance her price;
Then shamefully to Cæsar sold his sister.

Mammea. Did you believe it?

Domitian. My gray hairs long ago
At baseness ceased to wonder; your dark locks
May fail to understand it!

Mammea. You knew Amphiloclus,
And must remember the still dignity

With which he bore himself when he arrived,
 In the time of the great Septimius.³ Abroad,
 Or in the walls of his own palace, calm
 And majesty ruled all his words and acts,
 And made him seem a second Cæsar in
 Our haughty city.

Domitian. All you say is true,—
 Yet it proves nothing! The sons of noblest sires
 Now crawl in dust, and eat the bread of shame.
 For proof of this, look at the Roman senate,
 The fallen People.

Alexander. I can say naught against Iridion.
 Although no youthful frankness marks his moods
 Nor plays upon his pale and chiseled face,
 Yet something noble breathes from his whole being!
 I cannot read what throbs at the core of his heart,
 But I am sure there's neither fear nor baseness!

Domitian. How is his conduct then to be explained?

Alexander. Necessity inexorable, blind
 And pitiless; inevitable Fate!
 Sometimes the Emperor met Iridion
 With Elsinoë in the street; sometimes
 Their chariots met in Flavian's circus; I
 Have seen the blue veins swell upon my brother's brow,
 The golden reins with which he drives his lions
 Fall from his hands at sight of Elsinoë.
 By Venus! all there present gazed with him;
 A virgin more divinely beautiful
 Was never seen by men!

Domitian. When I was wont
 To visit brave Amphiloachus, she was,
 As is the custom with the Greeks, immured
 In the Gynæceum, only seen by women.

Alexander. She has no equal in this Empire vast!
 The night of her arrival, I was in
 The Hall of Narcissus with the Emperor;
 I was in favor then, he leaned on me,
 And clasped me in his arms, and gnashed his teeth,
 Impatient as a boy. I trembled with
 Compassion for the maid; sometimes I thought
 I heard strife, struggle, and the sobs of pain,

Then the Prætorian Prefect, the Court Fool,
 Eutychnian, entered, murmured to his master :
 "The gold-haired Greek in the ivory chariot
 Waits at your gate." Then male and female dwarfs,
 With the Ethiopians, and Lydian flutists,
 Thronged in to welcome the imperial Bride.
 The Emperor danced about in childish glee,
 Crying: "She comes! she comes! the sunny-haired!"
 Still Elsinoë came not! in her place
 Entered a band of brawny gladiators,
 All clad in black, and armed with naked swords,
 Unknown at court. My brother hung his head,
 And bit me in his sudden fright; meanwhile
 Eutychnian announced with a wild laugh,
 Iridion, son of great Amphiloclus,
 Had sent these bands as present to his sister.
 Their close ranks opened as he spake, and lo!—
 Surrounded on all sides by this wild escort,
 Appeared for the first time fair Elsinoë.

Domitian. Fainting with terror in her women's arms?

Alexander. No. In the Hall she stood erect, and gave
 No signs of terror, reverence, nor obeisance.
 Perhaps her head a moment sank, but soon
 Recovering herself, she raised her brow
 As haughtily as if already Empress,
 Her dazzling eyes filled with indignant flame.
 Then Cæsar called her to him, but the Greek
 Neither approached, nor answered. Cæsar then
 Dismissed us, and Mammea led her forth.

Domitian. The old Hellenic blood is in her veins,
 Down which the fiery strength of the gods still flows!
 But stays her brother at the court? sees he his sister?

Mammea. The rumor is that he once visited
 The Emperor; was closeted with him
 For many hours; but he avoids society,
 Remains secluded in his palace with
 Barbarians and slaves, on whom he never tires
 Of showering benefits.

Domitian. So did his father.

Mammea. Pleasure can win him not, nor wealth mis-
 lead;

Though one may see that fierce distracting thoughts
Torture his soul, yet is he strong enough
To rule himself, command them into silence.

Domitian. These stormy thoughts may be his fierce
desires

To avenge his sister's shame! 'Twere best to win
His confidence, and lure him by false aims,
Until prepared to reveal the true. Perhaps
His pride and treasures yet may aid *our* cause!
But tell me why the Monster rages still,
Having achieved the height of his desires?
Is it not strange this Greek girl keeps her power?
Once won with him, was whistled down the wind!

Alexander. Eutylian says she will not yield herself
To her new lord; that since she left her home,
Cæsar secludes himself in the peristyle
Of Agrippina, and no more festivals
Are held in the palace.

Domitian. This mystery cannot last:
He'll murder her, that he may burn her on
A pyre of rich perfumes from Araby,
And while directing this new spectacle,
He will accuse *you* of high treason; rob
You of your wealth; deprive the First, the Best,
Of life;—this shall not be,—he shall himself . . .

Mammaea. Domitian! No! He must not die the
death
Of his poor predecessors! The reign of love,
Of mercy, wisdom, must not thus begin
With cruel murder of my sister's son!
Withdraw him gently from the throne, and like
A sleeping child, bear him to banishment!

Domitian. That would require a Nazarene! Not far
From this same spot, did Brutus kill his father:
And this light soul shall not be sent below,
Where the troubled, but great shade of the first Cæsar
went?

Mammaea. Ah, woe is me!

A Slave (entering). Iridion, the Greek,
Sends greeting to Severus, Consul, Cæsar,
And to his noble mother.

Domitian. He comes in happy hour !

Mammea. Escort him here.

(*Enter IRIDION.*)

Welcome, Iridion !

Thy brow is clouded still with gloomy thoughts ;
Cannot the cheerful rays of the divine
Sophia* brighten it with hope and trust ?

Iridion. Ask the proud Roman who at Philippi fell
With how much confidence she him inspired ?
I cannot answer for my face, Augusta ;
I know my soul is ever cold and tranquil,
Fearing, desiring, hoping, mourning nothing !
How fares it with you, Cæsar ? Are the gods
Propitious to your prayers ?

Alexander. This very day
My wishes are fulfilled ; they've given me
Domitian back from Antioch.

Iridion. Roman,
I greet you home. If I am not deceived,
I've seen you often 'neath my father's roof.

Domitian. Even now the voice of brave Amphilochus
Seems sounding in my ears ! The gray-haired man
Who made his home with him,—does he still live ?

Iridion. Is it Masinissa ?

Domitian. I think that was his name.
I've heard your father say he met him first
Upon a tiger-hunt in Syria,
After a day of heat, when faint and lost.

Iridion. My father's friend still sits beside my hearth,
As when my father lived.

Domitian. I ask for him,
Because he often used to startle me
With wondrous thoughts, sarcastic, bitter words.
I've heard him say Tiberius was the greatest
Of all the Cæsars !

Alexander. By the sacred shade
Of Antoninus, how could he prove that ?

Domitian. I have forgotten how, but I remember well
That he debated with such skill, brought out

* The Greek *Σοφία*, Wisdom.

Such fearless thoughts, such bold conclusions from
The destiny of men, that I grew still,
Silent in horror.

Mammea. I would not like to argue
With such a fearful, subtle reasoner!

Domitian. When from the magic of his presence freed,
And flow of logic irresistible,—
My mind grew calm, returned to its own thoughts,
As men from drunken dreams restored to soberness!
How is it possible not to curse those
Who oppress humanity and serve injustice,
Who crush our citizens, because they shame
To yield as brutes? Freemen must curse the lictors'
Rods, taunts, axes! Son of Amphiloehus,
Speak I not truth?

Iridion. It may be yes—or no,—
As many souls, so many hearts and wills!

Mammea (aside to Alexander). Look at the fiery lips,
The motionless face,
Pale as a statue's, though the eyes are flame!

Alexander. Mother, I'll speak strong and true words
to him.

Mammea. Not yet!

Domitian. You have the right of life and death
Upon your slaves, Iridion, and yet
You do not beat, chain, or imprison them!
The Marcomanni, Suevi, Dacians, all
Who beg in our streets, are never turned away
Unaided from your door,—so says report.

Iridion. My mother was Barbarian!

Domitian. And would her son
Persuade us that he is an Epicurean?

Iridion. By the Olympic Zeus, the times are not
Propitious for a Stoic!

Mammea. I shall not live to see the better days;
But you, Iridion, and Alexander,
Are entering life through the golden gates of youth,
Which like a lovely dream floats o'er your heads,
Inviting you to trust all sweet presentiments.
Iridion, despair suits not my son, nor you!

Alexander. Give me your hand,

Son of Amphilochus! Misfortune links
Men often close as love; let us be friends,
That we *together* may rejoice in happier hours.

Iridion. Thanks, noble Roman! I am sure the gods
Must love you well to leave you such sweet hopes!
Sooner or later yet awaits us both
The same sad end,—death and oblivion!

Domitian (to Mammea). Either he cheats us with
Hellenic art,
Or Jupiter has moulded him of wax.
(*Aloud.*) And if the present fraud should change to
truth,

And if the shadows now so thick o'er earth
Were to disperse, as clouds before the wind,
And virtue brighten the abyss of crime,—
What course would you pursue, Iridion?

Iridion. Honor the gods by thanks and sacrifice!

Domitian. Would you do nothing to advance so blest
A day? We play with suppositions now,
As men with dice; speak of the improbable
Simply for pastime: do you understand me?

Iridion. Better than you do me!

Domitian. Well, what reply?

Iridion. By Odin! Order such a day to call on me,
And I will answer it in trumpet tones!

Domitian. Do not forget!

Alexander. Remember, Greek!

Iridion. Romans,
I never will forget this hour! Consul,
We meet again!

Domitian. Where now, Iridion?

Iridion. Some friends await me on the Aventine.
A festival will there be held; new songs
Be given by the Sicilian Poet. I go
To pass the time which hangs so heavily upon us!

Domitian. Young Greek, you go to drown the gener-
ous thoughts
Prompting your inmost soul, in riot and unrest!

Iridion. Why, Lucius Mummius left us Greeks naught
here
Save death or pleasure!

Long life to Alexander

And Augusta!

(*Exit Iridion.*)

Domitian (looking after him). No, Mammea, from that
clay

We mould no solid support to our cause.

SCENE III. *Another part of the imperial palace. A long atrium with its impluvium in the midst. Fauns, satyrs, and nymphs adorn the walls in mosaic and fresco; tortoises, scorpions, and crocodiles carved in stone stand upon pillars of jasper; statues of Venus and Bacchus near the entrance; here and there are groups of courtiers, prætorians, dancers, musicians, and dwarfs. EUTYCHIAN, Prefect of the Prætorians; RUPILIUS, CUBULLUS, and his parasites.*

Eutychian. By Bacchus! it is of no consequence; Nothing can wean the Emperor from me; But I don't choose to have such guests at court,— And yet to-day the Emperor will see him, And sent me here to receive when he should come.

Rupilius. Eutychian is a demigod, and . . .

Eutychian. Yes,

Demigod; the Emperor is a god Entire,—I am the first after the Emperor!

Rupilius. Then, Demigod Eutychian, suppose We rob the Greek of the light of day, so that “*Dulces moriens reminiscitur argos!*”

Eutychian. Evoe! Only spare me Maro's verses! The Augustan poets had no sense of art!

(*He seems lost in thought.*)

Rupilius. Nay, no conception of true art at all.

Cubullus. And no idea of true poetry.

Rupilius. No knowledge of the drama.

Cubullus. Or aught else.

Eutychian (recovering from his reverie). I've thought it out,—friend, we must build his way To the shades!

Meanwhile, list to this stirring song
Composed by the godlike Nero for his dwarfs.

Rupilius. He was the pride of music, lord of rhythm.

Cubullus. True brother of the nine sweet sisters.

Eutychnian (recites the chorus written for the dwarfs).

We stand at his side while our glorious Lord on his tower
Wreathes with red roses his golden-strung lyre ;
Starless night glooms around him with heavy and ominous
clouds ;

While the home of the gods upon earth at his feet
Shudders and throbs in its mantle of smoke !

He kindled these brightening fires ! He would see for
himself

How old Troy trembled once in devouring flames !
He could not remain a mere mortal, and so made a crown
Of hot light, and created a Drama of fire !

His strong hand wakes the lyre, and entranced by his
marvelous tones,

The lithe flames leap from hill unto hill !

They care not for sighs nor for tears in their merciless joy,
While high o'er the city which crackles and glitters and
falls,

Another Rome burns in the air !

How frightful the glare with the pyramids tall of hot flame,
And the long rows of pillars ablaze !

We shrieked in our joy ! we clapped loudly our hands !
for the day

Of Destruction had come in the fire !

In the hot waves of Phlegethon, temple and palace go down,
Crashing and crackling they vanish forever away
In the arms of the beautiful fire !

Danger and woe are around us,—but we are all safe !

Delivered from death by the powerful Lord of the Lyre !
The master of art, and the glorious sovereign of tones !

Philosopher (approaching Eutychnian). Eutychnian, you
know everything, and are

A very god in Rome ; grant my request.

Have Anaxagoras, the Neo-Platonist,
Appointed to read lectures twice a week
In the Caracallan Baths !

Eutygian. What axioms hold you?
What gods do you confess? Say, are you drunk
Or fasting when you teach your fellow-men?

Philosopher. My god is unity, and all non-unities
Arise from unity, which conquers, holds them all.
It alone is, embracing in itself,
Being divine, all the non-unities.

Eutygian. Oh, satis est! Your doctrines won't o'er-
throw
The realm! (*To Rupilius.*) Tiresias⁴ down in Hell
himself,
Could never understand them!

Rupilius. Surely not;
No, nor the triple-headed Cerebus.

Cubullus (to Rupilius). What wrote you in your tablets
yesterday?

Rupilius. Read, friend!

Cubullus (reads). The gladiator Sporus fights
After to-morrow with the tiger Ernan.

Rupilius. Thrice happy memory, great Eutygian!

Eutygian. Why so?

Rupilius. I have an offering for you!

Eutygian. By Isis! Anubis! or any gods
Of Egypt, I will be most grateful for
The gift. Rupilius, tell me what it is!

Rupilius. From Mauritania I brought with me
A royal tiger, with a skin of gold
Spotted with ebony, nostrils of blood;
Of iron muscles, of terrific power:
I have a gladiator too more skilled
Than any at the court; a man who sold
Himself to me rather than die of hunger,
A real Crotonite;⁵ then I asked all
My friends to supper, made a bet with Carbo
My gladiator Sporus would subdue
My tiger Ernan,—but to conquer Fate,
I must use Sporus first to kill a man!

Eutygian. Hush! Hush! (*To the prætorians.*) Evœe
to your leader sing
With flutes and lyres united!

CHORUS OF PRÆTORIANS.

Live wine, and dice, and games! Roses and gold!
 When the cup foams and Plutus smiles, our feet
 Are ready for the dance, our hands for combat!
 Live Venus! give us maidens, Syrian girls,
 And sunburned women from the German woods!
 Wiser than men of yore, we go no more
 To battle with the Parthians and Goths.
 Our sires are in their graves, and we with them
 Have buried deep their old and gloomy customs!
 We stay in Rome, upon soft couches stretched;
 Rose-wreaths and ivy wound around our brows.
 If we have foes—why, let them come to Rome!
Here we will meet them,—tear ourselves away
 From the soft arms of dark and fair-haired girls,
 And clink of foaming cups, and raise the shield,
 Wield the sharp battle-axe, bathe the bright sword
 In blood, revel in slaughter!
 Evoe! Now for wine, and dice, and games,
 Roses, and women fair and dark, and gold!

Eutychian (to Rupilius). If you should fail, we'll need
 a perjury!

Rupilius. Oh, I can summon all the gods in Rome,
 Chaldea, Syria, to bear us witness!

Eutychian. *Jacta est alea,**—even to-day . . .

Rupilius. Hush! Hush! here comes the Greek!

(IRIDION *enters and advances toward Eutychian.*)

Eutychian (aside). Fear seizes me!
 The flames of Hell burn in his dazzling eyes!
 I've heard it said his father was a sorcerer.

Rupilius (stepping back). A demigod should know no
 fear!

Iridion. The hour
 Appointed by the Emperor is here:
 Lead me to him!

Eutychian. Without delay, great Greek.
 (*To Rupilius.*) What pride and scorn! *Væ capiti ejus!†*

* "The die is cast." The words of Cæsar as he crossed the Rubicon.

† An imprecation common in Rome: "Woe upon his head!"

Rupilius (to Eutychian). The Lethean waves will cure
his arrogance!

Iridion. I know that time is squandered willingly
In the court of Cæsar,—but I am in haste!

Eutychian. Cæsar awaits your presence, noble Greek!
I'll lead the way.

(*Exeunt Eutychian and Iridion.*)

SCENE IV. *Another part of the palace of Cæsar. The
pinnacle of a tower, surrounded by pillars and a balus-
trade.* HELIOGABALUS and ELSINOË.

Elsinoë (going). I trust you to the gods, and to his
power.

Heliogabalus. O dreadful nymph, go pray to Odin for
me!

(*IRIDION enters, Elsinoë stops.*)

Elsinoë. The moon is up; the fires blaze; the poison
seethes!

(*Exit Elsinoë.*)

Heliogabalus. Save me! Oh, save! or if that may not be,
Deceive me not with idle hopes of safety!
Confess at once that my last hour is near,
And I myself will drive this glittering blade
Through my white breast!

(*He takes a dagger from one of the pillars.*)

Didst ever see before such emeralds?

Iridion. But why should Cæsar think of death to-day?

Heliogabalus. H-s-t, friend! You are mistaken if you
think

That Cæsar lacks the strength to kill himself.
From this bright goblet he might drink himself
Into the Elysian Fields.

(*He takes a cup from a tripod.*)

Look at these pearls,
Matchless on earth! A hundred divers died
To fish them for me from the salty sea.

Iridion (taking the cup). To Mithras let us drink from
this rich cup,—

But under other skies, with better men!

Heliogabalus. Here, Greek! Look me directly in the eye,

That I may read if you are true or false.
 Oh, turn away those mystic flashing orbs!
 The gods have written in their gloomy blaze
 Your mother was a mighty sorceress!
 Step closer to the pillars, clasp the rails,
 Look down! What do you see in the gulf below?

Iridion (*looking over the balustrade*). I see a glittering
 pavement in the depths,
 All made of precious stones; the golden ground,
 Of a deep, brilliant grave!

Heliogabalus. I chose them all myself;
 Beryl, and bloody onyx, and amethyst,
 Topaz, and sharp-edged chrysolite,—rare gems!
 Through one whole day and night my men worked hard
 Setting the jewels there. I never slept,
 Nor turned away to rest till all was done,—
 And then I had them murdered—every one.

Iridion. Murdered! What! all the men who served
 you, slain?

Heliogabalus. Why ask for them? They were but
 wretched slaves,
 Who've gone, as they should do, before their Lord!
 Was it for Rome to know its Emperor
 Prepared for death?—not many of them fell,—
 Only one hundred,—and two little boys.
 Why do you look so sternly at me, Greek?
 I will not give my white, smooth limbs into
 The jaws of wolves, to be torn with claws and teeth!
 I will myself strike off my sacred head,
 And fall in that deep grave of precious stones;
 My blood shall flow o'er priceless gems to Erebus!

Iridion. What threatens Cæsar thus unceasingly?

Heliogabalus. My brother Alexander! dreadful name!
 He comes to cut me off before my time!
 He! he! Alexis! treason plots and death!
 To the thrice mighty Hecate I devote his head!

Iridion. My watchful eye is on him and his mother.

Heliogabalus. Appal me not! And if you love your
 life,
 Protect him not! Hearken! that you might know
 It all, I sent for you. My spies report,

He with Domitian plots, that he grows pale,
Straightens his hair, then rolls it round his finger;—
Domitian, just returned from Antioch—

Ha! Greek, you know it all! and what they plot?

Iridion. Men say Domitian is a wondrous jurist.

Heliogabalus. Immortal gods! and you can dare to
praise him!

I tell you that for the last thirty years
No treason has been hatched in Rome without
The aid and sanction of this "wondrous jurist"!
Although his bearing is so smooth and fair,
He is a most uncompromising Stoic,
Ready to murder those who are in power,
And strong enough to turn, if he should fail,
The sword in his own breast! I know the man.

He's an embodied treason, breathing curse
Against all governments, living to destroy;
An eating, drinking, and incarnate revolution!
Damocles' sword hangs by its single hair
Above my head—and you can praise my foe!
"A famous jurist!" Mithras! Proh Jupiter!

I would I might not only take *his* head,
But murder with him *all* the accursed thing
Which men call Jurisprudence!

Speak, Greek! What can I do to escape their plot?

Iridion. While all is quiet, doubt not nor despair;
Should danger really come, rely on me!

Heliogabalus. What if the omens of my sudden doom
Already speak? And what if stronger gods
Should combat, conquer Elsinö's Odin!

(*Opening a roll.*) Here Symmachus Niger gives me an
account

Of prodigies occurring on the Danube,
Signs even in the sky!
At sunrise there appears the holy train
Of Bacchus; consecrated hands swing high
The thyrsus, and the heads are ivy-crowned;
And in their midst, on an extended plain,
Is seen the Macedonian Alexander,
The dazzling armor on his manly breast
Worn by him when he conquered India;

A golden helmet glitters on his head ;
 The rulers whom he conquered follow him ;
 The people of Mœsia, Thrace, bow down
 Before the passing hero, crowds on crowds
 Pursue him to the borders of the sea,
 The air is full of shadows, of the dead . . .

(*He leans against a pillar for support.*)

Quick ! hand me the Falernian ! I faint !
 (*He takes the cup.*) Thus, aided by the Macedonian,
 Will Alexander take my kingdom, life !
 Diſ avertite omen !*

Iridion. Have you forgotten that Septimius,⁶
 Son of the Macedonian, loved your mother once ?
 That Alexander's soul throbbed in his noble breast ?
 And when the hero comes back from the dead—
 Your father's guardian spirit—to announce
 You victory, you shiver and turn pale,
 Grow faint, and need the hand of a new friend
 To prevent your falling prostrate on the earth !
 O son of Caracalla, shame upon you !

Heliogabalus. No, no. 'Tis Alexander whom he
 smiles on
 With his dead lips ! He greets the rising sun !
 Each secret wish, voice, gesture, look and word,
 The Senate, people, Rome entire, the world,—
 Seek, plot even *now* my sudden dreadful death !
 The golden-haired, and you, Iridion, you,
 Conspire with them to tear me from the earth,
 The sun, my gems and flowers, all things I love,
 And hurl me into the abyss of hell !

Iridion. In the eternal strife between the man and
 State,
 Is it not possible the man for once
 Should conquer ?

Heliogabalus. I know not what you mean !

Iridion. I speak
 Of the strange fate of all the Cæsars, which
 May be your own to-morrow ! They all fall,

* "The gods avert the omen !" A standing formula among the Romans to avert evil auguries.

Either by suicide, driven by despair,
 Or by the hands of traitors, sword, or poison ;
 But all go down in shame to death, betrayed
 By those they've trusted! Must this ever be?
 Rome treason plots, and kills her Emperors,
Suppose her Emperor should turn on her,
Become himself the chief conspirator,
Might he not save his life, avenge his wrongs,
And murder Rome, even while she plots his murder?

Heliogabalus. How? Murder whom? What do you
 mean? Speak, Greek!

Strange fire burns in your eye and lights your brow—
 I do not understand you.

Iridion. Has Fate decreed
 These palaces and amphitheatres,
 Temples and shrines, already thrice destroyed by fire,
 Shall stand forever? Shall Jupiter ne'er fall?
 Have you ne'er heard of cities in the East,
 Stronger, more beautiful than Rome now is,
 Beloved by gods, and wondered at by men?
 Now clouds of sand drift o'er their haughty halls,
 The fierce hyena stalks along their streets,
 And herds of wolves howl on their lonely walls!
 Jerusalem, with her devoted people,
 With her *one* God, as powerful as Fate,
 Could she resist the doom of her destruction?
 Go—ask the desert when they'll rise again!
 These palaces upon the seven hills,
 Are they immortal gods? No—mortal foes!
They are the veritable Alexanders,
 They your true enemies, now lying stretched
 Out at your feet, but creeping day and night,
 Ever more near to plunge you into ruin,
 Unless you hasten to prevent it *now!*
 Merciless giants will arise therefrom
 To plunge their daggers in your royal heart,
 Or throttle you with grasp of monstrous hands!
 (*Seizing him by the arm.*) Kindle a lofty will in your
 young breast,
 Challenge your murderers to instant combat!
 Become what few on earth have ever been—

Destroyer ! and villas, monuments and domes,
 Temples and idols on the seven hills,
 Holding but your assassins, we'll devote
 To snakes and scorpions—fitting heritage !

Heliogabalus. Ha ! I have sometimes felt such things
 might be !

Mithras would glory if his own High-Priest
 Should force proud Jupiter to bite the dust !
 But who is strong enough to do this work,
 Or lift his hand against eternal Rome ?

Iridion. The son of Odin's priestess, of Amphilochnus.

Heliogabalus. In the decisive hour do you believe
 A single soldier would declare for us ?

Senate and people, prætorians, against us !

Have you a plan ?—Do you not fear the gods ?

Iridion. My plan will make the gods themselves save
 Cæsar !

Heliogabalus. Rome's Guardian Genius conquers all
 her foes !

You would make Jupiter my enemy !

I dare not tempt the gods—I shiver ! fear !

Iridion. Live then in fear, until you die in torment !

Heliogabalus. O mighty Greek, obey the will of the
 gods !

If you succeed, you shall wear purple robes,

And I will take the sandals off my feet

And bind on yours. Oh, stand by me with help

In your strong hands ! Save me from death, Iridion !

Iridion. I only see one way to save your life.

The Senate must be sent to banishment,

The prætors throttled, and the court removed !

Heliogabalus. The Senate might be scattered speed
 ily,—

But the prætorian guard, the Roman people ?

Iridion. Of old, keen Catiline ; Nero, in later days,
 Planned Rome's destruction through the aid of fire !

Easier to ruin that which stands to-day

Than to build that of stone shall stand to-morrow !

The few who linger midst the smoking embers

Will call themselves still Romans ; while the rare

Buildings here left to crumble and decay,

Will still be Rome, and we may safely leave
 The gray-haired children the great name they worship ;
 But all creative or destructive power,
 All living force will surely vanish from
 This place accursed forever and forever !
 On the dread day of death and slaughter, I
 Will furnish faithful troops, and stand beside you.

Heliogabalus. Where will we stand? and who will stand
 with us?

Iridion. Oh, deem not, Cæsar, that to you alone
 Has Rome made wretched the sweet days of life!
 Remember all the gladiators, slaves,
 The humble followers of the Nazarene,
 And the barbarians from every clime!
 You are the Head indeed; they are the feet;
 Together you may doom Rome's haughty Genius
 To a life of anguish and a death of shame.
 High as you are, a common wretchedness
 May join you all for the hour of retribution
 Into a living coil of deadly vengeance!
 Think you the lords of the amphitheatres,
 The hired soldiers and prætorians,
 Could stand before the thousands of the wronged
 And hungry men, raging with bitter hate,
 Maddened by cruelty, all eager for revenge
 And urged to combat by such burning passions?

Heliogabalus. True! true! But if these savage men
 should turn
 Upon ourselves? Where should we shelter find
 In the hour of bloody turmoil? Who could set bounds
 To their wild rage, or quench their thirst for blood?
 Ever insatiate when fairly kindled in
 The breasts of lawless, vicious, cruel mortals!

Iridion. At first, while Rome is burning, blood and
 gold
 Will satisfy our men; but as they're held
 Together only by their hate of Rome,
 When that is glutted, they will fall apart,
 Each will return to early prejudice,
 The customs of his nation, race and creed;
 Hate will be generated, they will fight

Over the common plunder, kill each other;
 Exhausted by unbridled license, some
 Of them, in hope of richer spoils abroad,
 Will go with us to the East, where they will die
 Under the burning heat, or fall a prey
 To that licentiousness, so fatal to
 Barbarians and brutish conquerors!
 Or should a few remain, they will be lost
 Among a people serving you alone,
 Worshiping you and your great God of light!—
 On without fear! Be silent as the dead,
 That thus you may secure the right to live!

Heliogabalus. Prometheus, you have stolen the fire
 from Heaven!

Io triumphe! Greek, you cannot fail!

(He claps his hands joyously together.)

I'll build a glorious fane at Emesa,
 And live in peace with my own prophets there!

Iridion. Yes, in the sunny regions of your birth,
 You'll go to found new empires. Sleepless nights
 And anxious days will trouble you no more.
 High-Priest and Cæsar both, sweet hours you'll pass,
 Like the old demigods upon the Nile,
 Lulled by the lilies', aloes', myrtles' breath,
 And the soft tones of flutes and lyres. Where'er
 Your glance may fall, your slaves will throw themselves
 Prostrate before you; your white feet will shine
 Upon their dusky throats!

Whatever you may wish will be your own;
 What you desire forgot, shall be forgotten;
 No fame shall live on earth except your own;
 What you command men think, alone be thought!
 No Senate there will venture to debate;
 No jurist dare to dream mad dreams of fierce
 And free republics; none will dare to scorn
 The gold-rayed Mithras; mock the snowy robes
 Sweeping the earth, you wear as his High-Priest!

Heliogabalus. The wretched quirites! As if their
 antique

Tunics, and togas, fibulas, were half
 As beautiful! O Mithras, hear me swear!

Thy golden rays shall pleasure me no more,
 The genii of the night shall rend my limbs,
 If I lead not these gods of Rome in chains,
 And throw them at thy feet!

What you advise,
 Son of Amphilochns, is wise and good!
 By Baal and Ashtoreth, we'll storm and burn
 The city of our foes! What more, brave Greek?

Iridion. Collect your treasures, send them secretly
 To Emesa; amuse with games the people,
 And the prætorians with gifts; order
 The Vindelician legions back to Rome;
 From Goth the mercenaries; the Cheruski
 From the Rhine; as they return, 't will be
 My task to know them all, secure their aid:—
 The rough speech of the North my mother taught me.

Heliogabalus. But the Italian legions, those in Ephesus,
 In Tarsus, in Pergamus? what of them?

Iridion. Dispatch a messenger to Varius
 With orders to collect and lead those troops
 By rapid marches to attack far Parthia;
 And if the news from Rome should reach them, when
 Engaged in war upon the Caspian Coasts,
 Some would continue to harass the foe,
 Many disperse, a few come back to Rome,
 Or join with you,—hoping to live in peace,
 And find high favor at your royal court.

Heliogabalus. Bold cohorts—likely to be dangerous—
 Is it not so, Iridion?

Iridion. Not so!
 Rome once destroyed, there's nothing else to fear.
 Men safely tread a corpse from which they've driven the
 soul.

We will tear out the soul of Rome; the soul
 Of the world,—and crush it 'neath our feet!

Heliogabalus. But what if Alexander should precede us?
 The soldiers murmur loud without the walls,
 Forever chant his courage in fierce strains;
 Domitian draws the Senate to support
 His claims—Iridion! at dead of night
 They will rush in upon, and murder me!

Iridion. "Salve Eternum"* you shall surely say
First over them!

Trust not Eutychian,
Preserve a calm cold mien, visit Mammea,
Alexander; use gentle words and keep
A quiet bearing; if they confide in you
Or not, *that* for the present will prevent
Recourse to stronger measures. Silence and prudence;
Heliogabalus. Smile, gods! Mithras, clear up thy
clouded brow;
O Venus, mother of delights, repose
Softly on the white foam of the blue waves
While rosy Cupids sport around thee! Drink,
Bacchus, drink my health in blood-red wine;
Bring perfumed roses and Falernian!
Dearest of men, come let us rest our limbs
On down and purple, drink, and praise the gods,
For they will bring swift ruin on our foes.

(He throws himself into the arms of Iridion.)

From Cæsar take this kiss! Is it not true
My brow is smooth, my lips are soft and ripe
As those of fairest virgin found in Rome?
Come, Greek! With Elsinoë I will rule
In Syria, my country, where the stars
Stoop from the skies to speak with man, reveal
To him his future: Iridion, come.

(Exeunt together.)

SCENE V. *A garden of the Cæsars upon the Palatine Hill, adorned with fountains, vases and statues. ELSINOË and IRIDION are seen standing by a marble Diana. Twilight, with the moon in the sky.*

Elsinoë. I can no farther go. I must return
To watch the Accursed when he wakes from sleep.
Yet, brother, stay a moment longer with me:
Do not so soon forsake me!

Iridion.

Fate urges haste:

* "Eternal rest," a chant commonly sung at Roman funerals over the body of the dead before it was placed upon the funeral pyre.

Look ! the last rays of daylight fade away
 Over the amphitheatre, and I must see
 The prætorian guard before I seek my home.

Elsinoë. I ask not *hours* from thee, Iridion :
 Spare me *one moment* to refresh my soul :

(She lays her head at the feet of Diana.)

Look into this unsullied virgin face ;
 How soft the veil of twilight drapes its snow ;
 As chaste as Dian, I might once have loved,
 When leaning on her bow she floated down
 At midnight hour, to bless Endymion :
 My life is blasted—and I dare not dream !
 Son of Amphilochus, go, ask of men,
 “Where is my *Elsinoë* ?” They will point
 In scorn to where her altars stand between
 Poppea’s, Messalina’s !—Brother, go !
 How could I beg thee stay to share my shame !

Iridion. Self-sacrifice is *glory*, and not *shame* !
 Souls strong enough to offer up themselves
 To save their fellow-men, need never heed
Human opinions, thoughts. The only Son
 Of the Eternal thus redeemed the world,
 Endured the shame of the accursed cross,
 A death of agony !
 Such fate is thine and mine, O *Elsinoë*.

Elsinoë. Hast thou assumed another faith, and sought
 For consolation in a world-scorned creed ?
 ’Tis rumored Alexander has embraced it.
 Dost know him, brother ? Men say he’s great and
 good ;
 Will equal Trajan, and at last save Rome.
 I met him late in Dejanira’s Hall ;
 At first his look was flickering and vague,
 Soon it grew clear and searching ; then he turned
 Away in silent scorn. Oh, brother, save !

(She buries her face in her hands and sobs.)

Iridion. Scorn ! scorn ! Why, he and all who live
 within
 These walls accursed, are doomed to instant death !

Elsinoë (throwing herself into Iridion's arms).

Unsay! Recall! I ask for no revenge:

Let me alone be victim!

Iridion.

Poor child, be calm:

How pale and faint thou art! How is it with thee?

Elsinoë. The gods could never doom me to such
grief;

Iridion, go! See—I am better now.

I must return where thou hast sent me, brother,

There where the Furies wait to torture me:

To amuse the reptile writhing, crawling round me—

Stinging my soul! *There* where an early death

Were best reward for shame and agony;

I go to struggle with fell spasms of

Resistance and abhorrence! . . . What canst thou know

Of secret tortures in a virgin's soul?

Iridion. My *Elsinoë*! thou whose young life flamed

In such unequalled splendor, beauty's own;

How has thy bloom been blasted! See, these tears,

Raining so fast over thy perfect face,

Are all for thee!

(*He folds her in his arms.*)

I shed none for myself,

Though I am blighted in the self-same storm:

Go, sister, go. Remember the decrees

Of Odin, and endure until the end!

Elsinoë. O brother, save! It is not yet too late.

Iridion. In flame the madness of the Accursed; de-
stroy

His mind and life! Farewell, my sunny-haired!

Elsinoë. Shades of Amphilochus and Crimhild, guard
Your wretched children! Vale, Iridion!

(*They embrace, and depart on different sides.*)

SCENE VI. *The great hall of Amphilochus as in Scene I.*

IRIDION enters with MASINISSA, followed by PILADES,
an old servant and now overseer of the slaves. *Night.*

Iridion. What wants he, Pilades?

Pilades. I do not know;

He has not spoken since he came, my lord.
As is the custom of your house, he has
Had bread, meat, wine.

Iridion. Go, bring him here.

Masinissa. Beware!

Iridion. Of what?

Masinissa. His mission is to kill. Take this (*hands a sword*).

Iridion. If you divine aright, I do not need
That glittering Carthaginian steel. I'll break
His head with this Corinthian cup, from which
Amphilochus was wont to drink.

(*Takes a cup from a tripod.*)

(*Enter GLADIATOR.*)

What want

You, slave?

Gladiator. To see Iridion alone.

Iridion. This is my friend: speak boldly before him.

Gladiator. My master said to me: "Murder the Greek
Instead of fighting with the tiger Ernan,
And I will give you freedom." But he who sent
Me here is worse than you.

(*He throws his sword on the ground.*)

Curses on slavery!

Iridion. My friend, who sent you here to murder me?

Gladiator. One of the new men, coward and plebeian,
Blood-hound and despot.

Iridion. Then it was a Roman.

Gladiator. You've read aright; it was Rupilius.

Iridion. Court-fool of the court-fool! I thought as
much.

Look at these prongs upon this master-piece

(*Shows him the cup.*)

Of Grecian art; they would have broken your skull,
Scattered your brains, if . . .

Gladiator. Son of Amphilochus,
I fear you not. The desert kings on which
I set my feet are stronger far than you;
I've throttled tigers in the arena sands:
But I was hungry, you have given me food;
Was thirsty, you have given me golden wine;

And as I waited for you in your hall,
I heard your gladiators bless your name.
I cannot kill you. To-morrow I will fall
Into the famished tiger's jaws,—Farewell!

Iridion. That shall not be! Live, and avenge your
wrongs!

Ho, Pilades! Give to this man a tunic,
An iron ring, as worn by all my household,
And add a hundred sesterces. Your name?

Gladiator. I'm only known as Roman Sporus now.

Iridion. A certain pride lies latent in your speech;
A smouldering fire, shining like lamps through rents
In sepulchres, speaks of a better past;
You're more than slave,—give me your real name!

Gladiator. Like gods, my sires were once revered in
Rome

And in the Senate. The past is past forever!
My name is Lucius Tiberius Scipio.

Iridion. Slave, you dream! That race has long since
perished.

Gladiator. Perished but in its country's memory!
The last of us they chose to recollect
Was robbed of wealth at home and fame abroad;
Then Nero stole his wife and banished him
To the Chersonesus; after many years
His son returned, a beggar, back to Rome,
Since which we've been in utter poverty;
My father was a gladiator, Greek.

Iridion. Why have the older Romans not received
you?

Gladiator. Why, who would aid an old patrician's
son?

The children of the lictors, now rich Lords,
The Emperor, sworn foe of all the past?
Dragged from the sands of the amphitheatre,
My father in the spoliarium died,*
Cursing the gods. Oh, may the city which
Has thus betrayed the children of her consuls,

* "Spoliarium." The place close by the amphitheatre, in which the gladiators who had received mortal wounds were dragged to die.

Fall into ruin! (*He takes up his sword.*) Say but the word, and I

Will kill Rupilius,—that upstart Roman!

Iridion. To murder *one* where *thousands* are required,
Were folly! Save your strength for nobler work!

Gladiator. Should such work come with vengeance in its grasp,

I can bring Cassius, Verres, Sylla, men
Of races old as mine, wretched like me,
Who only dream revenge.

Iridion. Bring them all here.
They shall find support, and a home with me.

Masinissa. The infernal gods never refuse revenge
To those who seek it with their heart and soul!

(*Exit Gladiator.*)

Iridion. Old man, I conquer! I shall surely conquer!
Ha! ha! ye fierce old tyrants! Ye who led
My ancestors in chains to grace your triumphs,
Who ruined Carthage, Syracuse and Corinth,
The last of your proud Scipios is the slave
And tool of the Greek! He came to-day to beg
For bread, and murder! (*Laughs.*) Drain this cup, old
man,

To the health of the noble Scipios! Ha! Ha!

(*He fills the cup, and hands it to Masinissa.*)

Masinissa. Long life to the Scipios!

(*He returns the cup to Iridion.*)

Iridion (*drinks and flings away the cup*). Thus may the
pride
Of Rome lie shattered 'neath our vengeful feet!

Masinissa. Sigurd, we're hourly gaining force and
power,

But until Nazareth be won to aid us,
We never can succeed.

Iridion. Old man, the God to whom they bend the knee,
Stretched out his arms to die for them, beneath
The darkened vaults of Heaven. His Spirit came,
Descended on my brow in holy water
Full of high power and mystery! . . .
A band of pallid brothers stood around

Chanting my new name ever and again :
 "Hieronymus! Hieronymus!" as sad
 As if a funeral train swept through the sky
 Unseen by mortal eye, their voices tolled ;
 And yet the solemn chant seemed full of hope.

Masinissa. You hung their cross upon your warlike
 breast ?

Iridion. I did.

Masinissa. And pressed it to your lips ?

Iridion. I did.

Masinissa. Well done ! Now can we rend their hearts
 asunder !

Iridion. Dissension is already busy with them.

I can do nothing with the older Christians ;
 They've suffered torture, seen the martyrs die,
 The Heavens open, and will not be taught
 To wreak retaliation on their foes !
 Monotonous as is the dash of waves
 Forever breaking on the self-same rock,
 Their words recur perpetually : "Forgive
 Your enemies ! Forget all injuries !
 Pray for your foes, and love your murderers !"
 To them I dare not even speak of vengeance !
 But with the young disciples, the new converts,
 Barbarians, pilgrims from the desert, slaves
 And soldiers, I am more successful far.
 Stronger vitality throbs in their veins ;
 Eyes flash at the words shame and martyrdom ;
 They thirst for life and bliss. When I approached
 Them first, they too would pray for foes and murderers,
 But now the wild blood throbs against their wills
 In their full veins, and I can sometimes catch
 Even a furtive curse upon their trembling lips !

Masinissa. To incorporate a force in human passions,
 A force not of this world, we need a woman.
 Ah ! they adore a *woman* ; a frail being,
 Precocious in old age, yet an eternal infant !
 Upon the ruins of their carnal lusts
 They build a strange, mysterious worship, and bow
 Before a woman, slave to her husband's will !
 Virgins there are who pass their lives in prayer ;

Choose from among them one for sacrifice !
 Stamp on her soul yourself, your being, thoughts,
 Through her alone they'll germ into brave deeds !
 She will not understand their hidden scope,
 But well reflect them to the outer world,
 Borne on and overpowered, almost crazed
 By that male power which burns in the heart of a man !

Iridion. I know a maiden, holy, blessed, pure ;
 She gladly talks to me of faith and Heaven.

Masinissa (aside). I've touched the strings, they
 answer !

(*To Iridion.*) Her eye is dark,
 Dewy and lustrous ; in years almost a child ;
 And with her dies the old Metellus line.

Iridion. Why do you ask me, since you know it all ?

Masinissa. Do not forget to praise the Crucified,
 To kiss the cruel nails that pierced His flesh ;
 She loves that body with its ghastly wounds,
 The features which she dreams so fair, the eyes
 Which in their sockets die through might of love.—
 She never knew Him ; did not see Him when
 He agonized in hideous contortions,
 Livid with pain : nor saw the thorn-crowned face
 All stained with trickling blood, convulsed and drawn,
 Its shuddering anguish darkening into death ;
 Nor heard the black storm whistle through the hair
 Streaming disordered in the wind ! . . .

Lead all her thoughts from Him, and fix them on
 Yourself ! He is far ! far ! Though once upon
 The earth, He never will return—and you
 Are near, in the young flush of life, and full
 Of love,—and you must win her soul, and be her god !
 O Alma Venus ! Eros to our aid !

Iridion. Ah ! who can comprehend her mystic life,
 Who read the secrets of her virgin soul ?
 Within the gloom of the sad catacombs
 She lives unknown to earth, and vowed to pain,
 Surrounded by that sovereign majesty
 Which ever marks its voluntary victims.
 Her face is calm ; so full of heavenly light

Phidias himself could ne'er have caught its charm.
 With her last sigh passes away this beauty,
 With its divinity of pathos, from the earth.
 Against her I am powerless, old man.

Masinissa. Why do you linger? doubt? She must be
 yours!

Not for voluptuous pleasure, idle jest,
 But that I *know our cause exacts her ruin*,
 As question demands answer, tones their chord.
 Son, when her head shall rest upon your breast,
 Her bosom throb, as throbs man's simple slave,
 Her heavenly soul forget itself, and sink
 In vain illusions of the flesh,—then
 True friends will aid us in the catacombs!
 My spirit will be with you, and revenge
 Take flesh; embodied—ruin Rome! (*He retires.*)

Iridion. Stay, Masinissa!

Masinissa. What would Iridion?

Iridion. Answer as friend—nay more—as judge severe!
 Examine every act, word, thought, wish, hope,
 From boyhood's happy days—when I could laugh
 Unconscious of revenge, my country's shame—
 Recall them all! Dost understand, old man? . . .

Masinissa. Why is your voice so broken? face so pale?

Iridion. All that is sweet and holy for a man,
 Is sacrilege for me—yet I have borne it!
 Have I not always kept the utmost faith,
 With the ferocious virtue which I pledged
 The vengeful Furies? immolated all?
 Has there till now been found on me a stain
 Of useless pity or compassion? Speak!

Masinissa. To know nor pity nor remorse, is yet *not*
action.

Words are for boys! *deeds* are for full-grown men.
 You have as yet brought forth no fitting act;
 Your children sleep in swaddling bands of nothingness;
 You rest unknown to fame and therefore weak!
 Incorporate your soul in daring deeds,
 Then in your work you'll *live!* your work in you!

Iridion. Alas! the gods have planted in my breast
 That which must be forever useless to me!

I feel the subtle poison swell my heart,
 Burn round my brow, and press beneath my eyelids :—
 Women would call it tears! . . . Is it that I
 Am never destined to become a man ?

Masinissa. This coward weakness marks you most as
 man !

Do you not know that each of you might be
 Omnipotent through invincible intellect,
 Implacable and never-swerving will ?
 Your mortal enemy foresaw this power ;
 To neutralize your force he placed a heart
 Within your breast—a dread—and an illusion
 You caress as slaves who have 'accepted their own shame !
 This gift makes slaves of women ; boys of men ;
 Divides the being, and erects itself
 In opposition to the mighty brain ;
 And thus both heart and brain are paralyzed,
 And endless war weakens the human soul !
 Thus the Great Foe perpetuates his rule,
 Making you wretched, miserable, weak,—
 Although to hurl this Foe from His high Throne
 If men should will it, might be possible.

Iridion. Who makes me wretched, miserable, weak ?
 Where is the *Enemy* whom you denounce ?
 I know but *one* Great Foe :—his name is Rome !

Masinissa. There is another, a far higher Rome :
 Not weakly stands It on the seven hills,
 But reigns o'er infinite worlds and endless stars.
 Not puny, driveling men, but countless hosts
 Of glorious angels, has It doomed to woe.
 Like fools men bend before It, chant its praise
 For leave to be so wretched, while the wronged
 And beautiful Immortals loudly call
 Upon them for revenge on this Great Foe !

Iridion. Incomprehensible and fearful one,
 What is it that you thus proclaim to me ?

Masinissa. Eternal war !

Iridion. When ? Where ? For what ? With whom ?

Masinissa. Throughout the eternal ages ! Every-
 where !

Before, and at, after the fall of Rome !

Wherever spirits think, or feel, or act :
And with the infinite God !

Iridion. But without end ?
Forever ? Everywhere ? and with the Infinite ?

Masinissa. I will myself conduct you in the strife :
Meanwhile among the Fallen play your part,
Live on the earth which our Great Foe has cursed.
But one day you shall raise your head in all
The plenitude of a great intellect
Against *Him* and His servants !

Iridion. But victory ! Will victory smile at last ?
If never here, at least on some far star
I am at last to take my armor off ?
At last to lay down quietly my head
Upon some cherished breast in utter trust,
To love and be beloved ; to guard, not doom ?

Masinissa. Seek not to know before the appointed
hour !

On ! on ! and learn to rule your faltering heart,
To be alone on earth, as He above the stars,
To endure as spirits mightier far than man !
Before you can attain the utmost height
Which man may reach, a thousand times
His hot fires will break over and consume you :
A thousand times death will transform, and fit
For wilder pangs ! You are a foaming wave,
One moment scaling Heaven in utmost bliss,
Then dashed to Hell in uttermost despair !
He smiles on this eternal surge of souls,
Sentient and quivering, breaking at His feet
In ever-changing, writhing agony !

Iridion. My spirit does not quail before this foe—
God should be generous to what He makes :
But it grows late—I'm weary—so good-night !
Early to-morrow come to me again.
I had no pity on my *Elsinoë*,—
And shall I spare the unknown virgin now ?

Masinissa. Think on my words ! The nations of this
earth

All pass away—my spirit never dies.

(*Exit Masinissa.*)

Iridion (throwing off his chlamys). Off! off! You burden me!

(Flinging away his ring.) Circle of flame, away!

I'd tear the very hairs out of my head! . . .

They are not I! . . . they press and overwhelm me! . . .

The air is stifling . . . is my soul on fire? . . .

Where art thou hid, Iridion? Oh, show

Thyself to me! . . .

Torment that livest in my heart, come out! . . .

Who art thou? . . . I must see thee! . . . I must know . . .

(He draws his sword from its sheath.)

Say, blue and glittering steel, say, gloomy fire,
Canst find me there, and save me from myself?

But mark me, it must be for evermore!

No! no! Thou too art only an illusion!

Cato once tried thee; doubtless when he waked,

He found some Cæsar there, with swords and chains!

(He throws down the sword and tramples upon it.)

Liar, who hast deceived so many suffering souls

By thy false promises of nothingness,

Lie there! I scorn thee! . . . I never can know rest!

Here or hereafter, I must be a slave!

Serpent of falsehood, lie there in the dust!

(He wipes his forehead.)

What anguish must be borne by one who cannot die!

Eternal agony which never ends,

Immortal combat with an infinite foe!

(He walks up and down.)

Never to bless a being whom I love,

Never to rest my weary head in peace!

* * * * *

What solitude! and what a desert here,

Where all is silent! Alone! alone! I fill

It with my thought,—a thought that ne'er will sleep!

The night has bound my brows with crowns of fire,—

Thanks, Hell-gods, for such royal diadem! . . .

(*He stands before the statue of Amphilochnus.*)

When I gaze in thy face, again I hear
 Thy holy promises, Amphilochnus!
 Unhappy Hellas! Thou wilt render me
 Back life and peace when thou shalt press me to
 Thy breast maternal! . . .
 Father, the victor hastens to thy heart!
 Thou wilt embrace him, for his chariot wheels
 Are thronged by haughty Romans; their strong forms
 Crouching in chains around his glowing axles!
 Oh, what would signify eternal torments,
 Provided such a day should e'er arrive?
 Provided such a day, *one day* alone,
 Should wreath my brow with the laurels of revenge?
 (*He kneels.*) But must I also ruin her? *her too?*
 Shade of my father, pardon her! Oh, spare!
 She suffers not as we; she has her faith
 And her eternal Future, God of Pain!
 Poor Elsinoë pours her virgin blood
 In sacrifice to thee for Hellas' sake!
 To abase the proud, to fling the oppressors down,
 To drive by thousands wretches into hell,
 Destroy the city, offer the sunny-haired,—
 I knew all that was in my destiny!
 But to destroy the happy; desecrate
 The pure; tear from her hopes a being full
 Of faith; put out a radiant light;
 Defile the Cross, and break her simple heart, . . .
 (*Rises.*) Amphilochnus, thy son, shall he be chased
 By Furies, like Orestes? . . .

(*Walks up and down the hall, and at last takes a lamp
 from a tripod.*)

To sleep! The Benediction of the Lares rest
 Upon my father's House, his city, country!
 Here it is good and fair,—for here is Hellas!
 The star of bliss once shone upon my cradle!

(*Exit Iridion.*)

ACT III.

SCENE I. *The catacombs. An antique lamp hangs in the centre of a dimly-lighted vault. Two sarcophagi stand in the background. Rows of heavy stone pillars line each side, until they are lost in the darkness. The walls are covered with tombstones, ranged one above another.*

BISHOP VICTOR and ALEXANDER SEVERUS. ALEXANDER is wrapped in a soldier's cloak, with the hood drawn round his face.

Bishop Victor. Past centuries were the childhood of mankind!

The creature, as he ever nearer draws
To his Creator, loves Him and man more.
A day will come when there will be on earth
Nor sword nor executioner.
Blesséd is he who trusts in such a future,
And labors to advance it!

Alexander. Oh, if I could

But realize it in a *single* day,
This work of justice, reign of good on earth!

Victor. Son, dream not to attain so easily
Realization of this blessed hope!

For in the infinite sea we call the world
Each one of us is but a single wave,
And whether its course be weak or powerful,
Its surge will last but a few fleeting hours!
Live then, and pass away, as do thy brothers,
But always act according to the light
Which has been given thee! Consoler be
For all who grieve; that, placed on Christ's right hand,
Thou mayst see through coming centuries
Thy brethren, still inspired by thee, pursue
The work which thou beginn'st to-day in faith!

Alexander. Father, thy blessing rest upon my head!

(*He kneels to receive it.*) Cæsar will ne'er deny this benediction!

Prepare thy people for a coming change;
Accustom them to hear me named. It is
Mammea begs!

Victor (*placing his hand upon Alexander's head*).

As I thus bless thee now,
So may thy people bless thy memory
And thee, from age to age! Hear us, O Christ!
Rise, Alexander! By the Lord anointed!

Alexander. Be my good genius in the hour of strife!
Hark! I hear steps! Forget us not! Farewell!

(*Exit Alexander at the one side as Iridion enters on the other. Iridion is wrapped in the long cloak of the prætorians. He lays down lance, helmet, and breastplate at the entrance.*)

Iridion. Glory to God on high! Let earthly power
Intrude not on His Sanctuary here!

Victor. I've waited for you long, Hieronymus!
Early this morn your servants brought to me
The body of a brother, martyred at
Cecilia Metella's mausoleum.²

The Faithful have received it from their hands;
The funeral procession soon will move:—
My thanks are due to you, my valiant son!

Iridion. No thanks are due for simple duty done.
Father, I have just left the hall of Cæsar;
Fear is upon the face of all the courtiers;
The prætors storm against the Emperor,
Tumult and strife are raging . . .

Victor. Son, I know
The solid earth is changeful in its pride
As are the waves before the breath of winds,—
But that must not disturb peace 'midst these graves!
We'll pray beneath the shade of the martyrs' palms;
Those broken newly by Athanador.

Iridion. Father, our future lies with *you* alone!
Your words throw men by thousands in the scales;
Victory is won where they preponderate.

Victor. In the invisible kingdom of the Lord,

By prayer and sacrifice I can combat
 The princes of the earth ; if you will all
 Unite your prayers earnestly with mine
 To the Most High—I promise victory !

Iridion. I speak of *instant* combat, *certain* triumph !
 Father, we are but men ; must suffer, feel,
 And hope as men ; and must as men require
 A base *terrestrial* for our daring acts !
 Until this hour a cruel power enslaves us ;
 We have chosen woe and death rather than crime,
 Or to bow low before debauch, corruption !
 Insensate pride, senile decrepitude,
 Oppressing all the nations of the earth,
 Are now the forces ruling this great city :
 The Emperor has not sufficient strength
 To keep what yet he holds ; nor Alexander
 Weight enough to inaugurate a government ;
 The power possessed by both will be destroyed
 In the approaching conflict. We cry to you !
 Will any of you, *leaders in the faith*,
 Strengthen your souls for struggle ; tear the cross
 From these dark vaults and bowels of the earth ;
 Plant it in glory on the Roman Forum ?
 I see the storm-clouds gathering on your brow ;
 Forgive me that I feel my brothers' shame,
 And know the hour is come to hurl down Jove !

Victor. I've heard your words in grief, Hieronymus.
 Baptismal waters have I vainly poured
 Upon your head, and vainly taught you of
 The blessed world beyond the dreary grave ;
 You do not understand the truth, nor cast
 The old man, full of sin, from out your heart.
 Your fault is deep. You place your hope in steel,
 And thirst for temporal success.

(*Funeral chants are heard in the distance.*)

Hear you the chants now echoing through these graves,
 Like the last sighing of the pitiless storm
 In which the Son of God, bowing His head,
 Gave up the Ghost in direst agony ?
He called not hosts of angels to His aid,
 Nor asked for *vengeance* on His murderers !

Iridion. Then creeping shame and misery are to be
Our everlasting portion?

Victor. In your impatient pride,
You err to call a *moment everlasting*.
I tell you it is true "that only guests
Sleep in this House."* Not only within Heaven,
But on our fields of Pain, Love will at last
Be conqueror! All peoples shall bow down
Before Him, and no Cæsar shall there be
Who bendeth not the knee before the Lord!
Know you this figure, son?

Iridion. A Grecian lute,
Such as my fathers used, with four chords strung;
It is the Lycaonian Orpheus.³

Victor. It is a type of Christ. As Orpheus tamed
The wild beasts with his lyre, so our dear Lord
By His harmonious word unites in love
The thronging millions. When we see this lute
We think of the innumerable choirs
Of spirits acting on this earth, we seize
The harmonies that from the Cross's foot
Already penetrate to distant nations.
The Son of God lives by His own great Power,
And has no need of men at arms. (*He makes the sign of
the cross upon Iridion's brow.*) Believe,
And sin no more. As father truly pained
By a son's fault, I've given you this warning;
Should you renew the error, I must act
As shepherd of my flock, and punish you
As judge and guardian of this Christian people.

(*Chorus heard advancing.*)

CHORUS.

We call upon thee from the depths, O Lord!
Receive the martyr's soul into Thy bosom;
Christ Jesus, let him in Thy glory rest!
In dying, prayed he for his murderers.

(*The funeral train appears, bearing the martyr on a bier; the*

* An inscription graven upon the catacombs: "Cœmeterium est domus
in qua hospites dormire solent."

decapitated head rests on his breast; men in long black robes bear torches; the procession is closed by women clad in white, wearing close veils.)

Victor. Give me the symbol of his martyrdom,
Sign sacred upon earth as in the Heavens!

(The Pro-Christum is brought to him.⁴ He takes it with emotion and places it upon the breast of the corpse.)

Thine own blood, shed by thee for the Son of man,
I give thee in thy coffin, that thou mayst
Arise with it upon the Judgment Day!

(He kneels at the side of the corpse; all kneel with him.)

O Thou who took'st upon Thyself the form
Of the wretched, that the wretched might be saved,
Deliver us from sin! Wash in Thy Blood,
O Christ, receive into eternal rest,
Thy servant's soul whose pilgrimage is o'er,
Whose wanderings are ended upon earth!

The Voice of a Virgin. Let him behold Thy sacred
face, O Lord!

Another Virgin. And give him such a spring as earth
ne'er knew!

Iridion. From all temptation to avenge him, save us,
Lord!

Chorus. Who speaks of vengeance in this holy hour?

Victor (rising from his knees). Happy are they who
die in the Lord; they rest

From their labors: their works do follow them!

(He lifts up his hands over the kneeling people.)

Rise! bear the body to Faustinus' tomb!

(All rise. He places himself at the head of the procession, which moves slowly on, Iridion alone remaining. As the Virgins pass, CORNELIA METELLA leaves their ranks and stands before Iridion.)

Metella. Will you not join us, Hieronymus?

Iridion. I cannot. I must elsewhere pass this night.

Metella. Where? Where?

Iridion. Where you would tremble for your soul,
Although the Christian star were rising there!

Metella. Some plot, I know, is ripening 'midst these
graves!

Simeon of Corinth stumbled against me
 But yesterday; he did not even see
 Me as he passed; a lion's skin around
 His shoulders hung, and his eyes gazed in space,
 Glaring with rage and tumult. Ah, wretched me!

Iridion. Why "wretched," sister? The Pastor of the
 flock

Declares you purest of the Christian maids,
 Nay, one of the Elect: what would you more?

Metella. Brother, such words seem strange upon your
 lips.

Iridion. Metella, seem they so?

Metella. Yes,—you are changed!

Are you the brother whom I taught to pray,
 With whom I knelt upon Euphemia's grave?
 The very same *baptized* Hieronymus?

Iridion. The same. Metella, see!

Metella. I've prayed so long;

Fasted so many days and nights, and . . .

Iridion. And you will thus win Heaven, I do not
 doubt.

Metella. I prayed not for myself,—no, not myself.

Iridion. For whom? Metella, speak!

Metella. A brother who . . .

Iridion. A brother? Speak!

Metella. How terrible you are!

Iridion. Tell me his name! Ay, whosoe'er he be,
 He shall be yours. It were far better so!
 But hasten, maiden! There will be no time
 Left for betrothals by the Cross you love;
 But I will see you married, richly dowered,
 And sent to Thebes, where you may live in peace.
 Passion has gained the soul of the Elect!

(*He laughs scornfully.*)

Metella. Why, brother, are you mad?

Iridion. His name! His name!

Metella. His name *was* Hieronymus! such as
 I knew him once, devout and calm, not he
 Who like a very madman stands by me,
 Whose eyes roll wildly in their sockets. Apage!

Iridion. Pure, blesséd maiden! Nay, Metella, look,
I'm calm and tranquil now!

Metella. And gentle as of old?

Iridion. Humble and calm near thee!

Metella. But humble before God?

Iridion. See, I will kneel here at your feet and call
Upon the name of Christ!

Metella. Then promise me
You will not join these men; you will not arm
For worldly strife or aim.

Iridion. You know not what you ask.

Metella. But promise me!

Iridion. I am myself to lead them!

Metella. Woe! Woe is me!

Iridion. Have you not heard it said
By holy men the appointed time draws near?⁵
Remember the words spoken by the Lord
To His disciples, when about to leave them,
That He would come again, and rule o'er them.
Revealed He not to His beloved John
On Patmos' lonely shore, that Babylon
Should surely fall; the Just inherit Earth?

Metella. Yes, at some future time. Not now! not
now!

Iridion. Metella, now or never it must be!

Metella. Victor condemned Eugene for teaching thus!

Iridion. The Romans killed Eudore for teaching thus!

Metella. Come to the Bishop and confess your sins,
And, like a faithful child, be ruled by him.

Iridion. Nay, I can only be a child with you,
And that but for a fleeting moment, like
A flying wave that never can return.

Beyond your gaze, and I must bathe in blood!
No grass must grow where my horse sets his hoof!

Metella. My brother, you blaspheme!

Iridion. Not so. I but
Divine the coming triumphs of your God!

Metella. His lessons teach not bloodshed nor re-
venge.

He pardons all. Did He not bless the poor
Because of their humility? Did He

Not promise Heaven itself to little children,
For their docility and innocence?

Iridion. That was at first! The weak have now grown
strong;

The children now are men.

Metella. Have mercy, Heaven!

Strike him not dead before my pitying eyes!

What do I say? Am I not vowed to God?

* * * * *

For the first time I dread the unseen world!

Who is this standing close beside me here?

The wings spread o'er me like a monstrous pall!

How dark it grows! How cold! I shiver! fear!

Iridion. Let me support you! Lean on my strong
arm!

Metella. Brother, I see it all! Grace will be given!

Angels and fiends in combat,—love will win!

I know that I was born to save your soul!

Iridion. Not you nor any other can slake the thirst

That burns, destroys my soul. Even if our God

Called not so audibly upon us now,

And if the saints had promised not their aid,—

I would commence the work unseconded, alone!

Metella, do not start away from me;

Perhaps we'll never meet on earth again!

I have related you my mother's fate,

But the great object of my father's life

I have not yet revealed to you. Be strong,

And drop by drop prepare to drink with me

The secret poison that consumes my soul!

Metella. "Perhaps we'll never meet on earth again"?

The *last time*, did you say? Hieronymus!

Iridion (*seating himself at the foot of the sarcophagus
against which she leans*).

Upon the thirteenth anniversary

Of Crimhild's death, Amphilochus sent for me,

Wishing to speak with me without delay.

For many days before I had remarked

A mortal pallor on his suffering face.

"My son," he said, "let them prepare a feast

Within the Delphian Apollo's Hall;

For the last time in life we sit to-day
 At the same table. Thy mother's God pursues
 Me still in vengeance, and before the sun
 Again pours his full radiance over earth,
 I shall have gone forever and forever!"

Great sadness seized me as I left his room
 To obey his command. He spent the day shut up
 With the old man from Mauritania.
 Sometimes their voices swelled upon the ear;
 Then died away like a retreating fight,
 Till all was lost in long and utter silence.
 At last they came together to the hall
 Of festival.

Metella. A shiver like a cold snake chills my veins!

Iridion. My father pressed my sister to his heart,
 Then gently putting her aside, he said:
 "That which thy brother shall command thee, do
 For love of me!"

No other word he spake to the weeping girl,
 But pouring a libation to the gods,
 He drank from a Greek goblet, myrtle-crowned:
 "The memory of great men!"

A freedman read to him from Plato's Phædon.
 After the reading ceased, he ordered up
 A hundred slaves, and gave them all their freedom.
 In answer to their thanks, he said: "As I
 Now break your chains, remember you must break
 The chains of slaves, your brothers! Ever remain
 To my House faithful! Always obey my son!
 What he shall order, you will do for me!"

His face glowed with a radiance soft as eve
 When shadows first begin to dim the sky,
 The purple hues still lingering in the west.

(*A moment of silence.*)

Then in the Palace of my Fathers fell
 That gloomy night which sealed my fate forever!
 Fire flashed from every tripod, while from time to time
 Old Masinissa cast fresh incense on them.
 My father's manly head at last reposed
 Upon the bosom of his friend; his life
 Went slowly out;—suffering could not destroy

His dignity, although on his calm face
 We read the anguish of resigning plans
 Long cherished,—far from their accomplishment!
 Vainly the agonies of death increased,
 The cold scorn on his lips alone revealed
 His suffering as it ever deeper grew:
 He died as the gods live! . . .

Metella. I see! I see him! Where is his guardian
 angel? . . .

Iridion. 'Twas then he left to me his plans of ven-
 geance,

And traced that future which he longed to mould.
 Laying his hand upon my head, he said:
 "Thou shalt not bow thy head to aught on earth!
 Thou shalt not lose thy faith in evil hours!
 Thou shalt not pardon ever!—Thou shalt pursue
 Thy vengeance always! Thou shalt keep back naught
 In weak compassion, but trample o'er the forms
 Of those already fallen, so to reach
 And ruin those who still may stand beyond!
 Thy soul shall never know weakness nor pity!
 Never despair! As the young moon in Heaven,
 So wax the nations upon earth, again to wane.
 The star of Rome stands at this very hour
 Upon the horizon's verge, ready to sink
 In the abyss of darkness, ruin, death!"
 And thus he spake and taught me all that night,
 Revealing to me a new life:—meanwhile,
 Ever more heavy grew the vengeful hand
 Of a fierce God upon my dying sire.
 And when the kindling rays of that sunrise
 Which he was not to see lighted the East,
 He held his hands above my head:—I swore
 To obey him,—never to know a hope;
 Never to yield to pity! Never to love!
 To offer my young bloom on Hellas' shrine!
 I've sworn to live but to destroy, Metella!

Metella. Forgive him, Christ! He knows not what
 he says!

Iridion. Then Masinissa poured a smoking cup
 Of blood upon my head, and on my father's hands.

The first rays of the sun shone on the bed
 Of the dying Greek: "Hellas! Remember Hellas!"
 He cried in tones of quivering passionate love;
 Then looked around him like a conqueror
 Through victory transfigured to a god!

* * * * *

Metella, vengeance is my heritage,
 And with this vengeance I will live—or die!
Metella. But upon whom will you revenge yourself?
 Who injures you? injured Amphilochnus?
Iridion. Who drives *you* down into these catacombs?
 Would give you to the lions, were it known
 You were a Christian? Who assails your God,
 And tramples the divine out in the soul?
 Know you naught of the history of the past?
 I'll teach it you, Metella, as Christ taught
 The hidden meaning of the Holy Scriptures
 To the disciples on their way to Emmaus.
 The night of the world was near; the innocent flowers
 Of morning withered, and the fire of youth
 Died into misery on the shores of Egypt;*
 Once more the voices of the Free swelled on
 From the wild North;† then they died out again,
 And slavery ruled the world. A single man,
 Amphilochnus, stood boldly up, and cried:
 "I will bring back again your ancient glory:
 We will destroy the Destroyer of the world!"
 Daughter of Christ, the Merciful, could you
 Condemn this man, whose constant task it was
 To strike the fetters from the limbs of slaves,
 Restore the wretched, teach the deaf and dumb
 The sweet speech spoken in their Father's house,
 And bring the oppressed and wandering exiles home?
 Has He not thus announced the coming of
 The God of love? John cried out from the depths
 Of the wide desert that the Son of man,
 The Lord of hope, was coming to the world,
 But that He would be crucified, and die

* Allusion to the reign of Lagides.

† Allusion to Mithridates.

In agony ! My father has declared
 His second coming, and made straight the way
 Before Him who comes conquering and to conquer ;
 Before Him who will rule in justice, peace ;
 In whom, Metella, you do not believe !

Metella. I not believe ?

Iridion (*seizing her by the arm*). No. You believe
 that He

Will give His world a prey to cruel Rome ;
 Nor e'er be satiated with the blood
 Of His adoring, faithful, murdered people !

Metella. Lost soul ! eternal fire shines in his eye . . .
 The lambent flame of God's own cherubim !

Iridion. Believe ! You know not what a day may
 bring ;

Nor what I may effect even on the morrow !
 Believe,—I am the Leader of your People !
 Believe, and the great Jupiter shall fall
 Forever from the Forum—to rise no more !

(*Footsteps are heard approaching.*) There Victor comes,
 the unbeliever ! Stay

And meet him here ! I will return ere long.

(*He disappears in one of the dark passages.*)

Metella (*kneeling*). Poor heart, no longer mine !
 throbbing so like

A stranger in my breast,—whence these wild bounds ?
 I'll pray to Christ

O Lord, look down upon and answer thy handmaid !
 I've never turned my looks away from the Cross
 To gaze into the face of mortals, yet
 Two mortal eyes are burned into my soul !
 His eyes, O Lord ! He stands before me like
 One of Thy prophets, saints, or holy angels,—
 He speaks—I hear his words—and long to die !

(*She buries her face in her hands.*)

Have pity on me, Christ ! Deliver me !

(*VICTOR enters, followed by the procession. It passes on,
 while he remains.*)

Victor. “As oft as in my name ye shall together
 meet,

I will be in your midst." (*To Metella.*) Daughter, you
have

Not been with us to-day, to hearken to His Word.

Simeon and others I have missed from prayer.

Leave solitary ways to wicked men,

And turn away from those who furtively

Lurk through these graves, weaving their plots of guile,

Sowing dissension even 'midst the saints.

Metella. Father!

Victor. Hast thou been praying here?

Metella. I pray.

Victor. Hast thou been quite alone?

Metella. I am alone.

Victor. Thou flutterest like a flickering, dying lamp!
Metella, what means this?

Metella. I seek the Lord,
My God,—and cannot find Him. Pray for me!

Victor. The greatest saints have moments of despair,
A sign the Fiend is near. Watch then and pray;
The spirit is willing, but the flesh is weak.

Metella. Father!

Victor. What is it, daughter?

Metella. Is it near dawn?

Victor. Nay, daughter, the long night is just begun.

Metella. But, Father, is the Day of Judgment near?

Victor. The Son of man may come at any hour,
To call us to His bar. Art thou afraid?

Metella. No: but I am so weak,—I fain would know. . .

Victor. I will remember thee at sacrifice.
Thy soul is sad; thy body weak with fasts:
Rise, daughter, and fear nothing! Try to sleep.

(*Exit Victor.*)

Metella. Why did I not detain the Bishop? . . . Hark!
I hear light steps (*Enter Iridion*), the footsteps of the
tempter!

(*She turns toward him.*) As perfect as a Seraph! Beautiful!
Victor! Victor!

Iridion. He is too far to hear you.

Metella (*throwing her arms round the sarcophagus*).
O ashes of the holy dead, protect
Metella through this lingering, dreadful night!

Iridion. What do you fear?

Metella. I know not what I fear.

It grows so dark! so dark! so bitter cold!

It seems as if the living all were dead,

And we alone remained alive on earth!

And we are damned: the rest are safe in Heaven!

Iridion. The hour of which I told you comes, and is
Too hard for your soft heart.

Metella. It is not so.

Have I not longed to bear the martyr's palm,

And shall I tremble when my Lord prevails? . . .

Something so black, vast, wild, and terrible

Is tearing up my soul, breaking my heart,

Whirling my brain! What is it, Hieronymus?

Iridion. A woman needs no deeds. In tranquil prayers

She may find her redemption. If she feel

Not strong enough to follow on my path,

Let her forsake me! Here part our ways,—farewell!

Young virgin of the Lord, you may be blest

As ere we met! We may meet once again,

Though never more, Metella, upon earth!

Metella. So were it best, my brother; I will go!

Feet rise, and bear my soul far . . . far from here!

(She struggles to rise, Iridion gives his hand to aid her.)

You plunge me back anew,—I cannot move . . .

Ah, me!

Iridion. Unhappy girl! Fly while you can from me!

Metella. Something Immortal seizes upon me!

All-powerful arms embrace me—hold me here!

Iridion. For the last time I speak,—Metella, fly!

Metella. I will not leave you, brother, to the Fiend!

Until your soul is dead in mortal sin,

You are my brother, signed with the same cross

Before the face of our great God in Heaven!

Iridion. Bones of the dead, and thou, my mother earth,

Bear witness, I would brave a thousand deaths

To save this innocent victim! Her alone!

(He paces up and down in agitation.)

Thus did my father once destroy the soul

Of the young dedicated priestess!

* * * * *

O powerful Fate, thou triumphest o'er all!

(*He approaches Metella.*) There's no escape! Metella!
O Metella!

Metella. I pray for you. Kneel here. Give up revenge!

Say, I forgive them for Metella's sake;

Kneel and repeat the prayer after me!

Iridion. It cannot be! To-morrow must begin
My prayer of blood, not muttered in a vault,
But loudly breathed through the wide air to heaven,
Amid the sobs, wails, shrieks of dying foes!

(*A cry is heard approaching.*) To arms! To arms!

Iridion. I come!

Metella. 'Tis Simeon!

Iridion. Yes,—thousands more like him await me
now,

And chide me with delay! I may not stay!

(*He draws off her veil.*) Away! thou hid'st from me
my angel's soul!

(*He folds her to his heart and kisses her forehead.*)

Lips, press the promise on this brow of snow

Of happier destiny! Awake to life!

Metella. Alas! I'm damned with thee to all eternity!
(*She faints.*)

Voices. Haste! Haste!

(*Iridion places Metella, still unconscious, upon the sarcophagus. He takes up his helmet, places it upon his head, and buckles on his armor. He approaches Metella, and bends over her prostrate form.*)

Iridion. No, no! Thou art not dead! Metella, wake!

(*He lifts her in his arms.*) Awake on this mailed
breast! . . . And thou,

Old man, be damned to everlasting woe,

Unless thou payest me for all this blight

With victory, and Rome's entire ruin!

Metella (recovering). Who calls? I thought I heard an
angel speak!

Iridion. He calls of whom 'tis said: "He comes to
abase

The proud!"

Metella. At last I see Thee! Take Thy bride!
Oh, I have waited for Thee long, my Lord!

Iridion. Lift up your head! Pierce with your gaze
these walls;
Behold the Elect! They chant the triumph hymn:
Rise, dead! The Resurrection is at hand!

Metella. The conqueror's glory beams from Thy high
Face,
And glittering swords are flashing round Thy Brow!
Where are Thy wounds, my Lord, that I may bathe
Them with my tears?

Iridion (*lifting her from the ground*). To-morrow,
woman, will
The promise of the kingdom of the Cross
Be all fulfilled!

Metella. I fear to lose Thee, Lord,
In this great darkness! Let me be with Thee!
Thou hast promised Thou wouldst surely come for me,
And now Thou takest me not,—forgettest Thy handmaid!

Iridion. Unfortunate, weep not! Do not despair!

Metella. Let me die in the light of Thy great glory!
I am already dead in Thee, my Lord!

Iridion (*lifting her up*). Woman, wait but a day,—I
will return.
To all the brethren loudly cry: To arms!

(*Exit Iridion.*)

Metella. My Lord is here! . . . He comes again to
earth,
The sword of victory flashes in His hands,
His last words were, To arms! To arms! Ye priests,
Bones of the dead, and living warriors,
And all ye people of the Lord, cry out:
To arms! To arms! Men, follow me! To arms!

(*She hurries forward.*)

SCENE II. *Another part of the catacombs.* SIMEON of
Corinth. A roll of parchment, a crucifix, and a death's-
head stand on a tablet near him.

Simeon. With one day's bound to rule o'er all the
world!

Not that material earth glittering with gold,
 Groaning in chains; but that realm infinite
 Of souls;—to reign there in Thy name, O Lord!
 Like a vast sea of light, this thought unrolls
 Before me. I ever float toward this great sea,
 Struggling through torrents of oppression, pain,
 Cleaving the gloomy waves with greater force;
 Each hour the tide bears me more swiftly on!
 All that is matter, Christ, I would subject to Thee!
 There are the deserts, mountains, cities, streams,
 'The cries of merchants, clamors of the kings:
 My soul, made in Thy image, then would float
 Above them, ruling and embracing all,
 Ordain them prayer or silence, thought or sleep,
 Joy, fear, repentance,—I would *reign* with Christ! . . .
Iridion (*enters*). I greet you, son of Hellas! Doubly
 brother!

Simeon. You come at last!

Iridion. I am in time to act.

Simeon. Have you seen Victor? Will he move with us?

Iridion. The superannuated child who rules us?
 His gentleness is weakness; weakness, obstinacy!

Simeon. His flock will not move on in unknown fields
 Without the shepherd. Greek, he must be won!

Iridion. We will delay our onset till the last,
 Then with despairing prayers surround him suddenly;
 All unprepared his fears may force him on,
 Or God's own Spirit shine into his heart.

Simeon. I'll go and throw myself before his feet;
 Perhaps the hot sparks breathing from my heart
 Will kindle his cold brain.

Iridion. His eyes are dim,
 His soul asleep; we must go on without him,
 Surmount all obstacles; thus only can
 We hope to win deliverance from shame!

Simeon. All will be as you've prophesied! Hark!
 Hear

You not the sound of many mingling voices?
 As I ordained, they meet upon the space
 Which separates the holy Christian graves
 From the wide cemeteries of the pagans.

Iridion. Simeon, take up this mystic crucifix,
And bear their God, *still unavenged*, before them!

Simeon (seizing the crucifix). Alas! how blind and
groveling I have been!

I thought that man must bear wrong patiently;
That to win Heaven, he must bear shame and pain!

(*He takes up the death's-head.*) Look on these fleshless
temples; into these

Dim caverns from which shone a lustrous eye,
The joy and light of my once happy life!

The Bishop had consented to unite us

In holy bonds; we were so young and happy;

Another day had made her mine forever!

But at the dead of night a centurion came,

And dragged the helpless innocent away

To fight with wild beasts in the Flavian circus:—

This skull alone was left me from the tiger's jaws!

* * * * *

I struggled with resistance, rage, despair,

As if with Lucifer, wild as a fiend!

At last I bowed before the Holy Lamb,

And gave to Jesus all my fiery soul.

(*He places the skull upon the tablet.*)

Rest, hapless maiden, rest! The dawn is near,

The Resurrection trump about to sound,

And soon thou wilt arise in loveliness

From thy red bed of death!

Iridion.

Revenge! Revenge!

Where swarm the bees, let vengeance fall the first!

(*Exeunt Simeon and Iridion.*)

SCENE III. *Spacious vaults in the catacombs. The walls are filled with pagan cenotaphs and inscriptions, the ground is almost covered with grave-mounds, tombstones, and monumental pillars. It has been the receptacle of the pagan dead, and no Christian inscriptions are within it. The Christians enter, bearing torches.*

CHORUS OF YOUNG DISCIPLES.

Wretched is he who is of woman born:

His days are few, and ever full of woe!

Even on the cross He cannot turn for thorns,
 Nor tear away His hands for cruel nails!
 His sister darkness is: His grave is with the worm!

CHORUS OF OLD DISCIPLES.

Holy! Holy! Holy! Just are all Thy judgments!
 From martyr-sires, Thou bring'st new generations
 Of Christian sons! Thou coverest the mounds
 Of our dead bones with the fresh green of spring,
 The flowers of young life! And Thou wilt found,
 From the dying life-flood of our willing veins,
 Thy holy kingdom, justice, for our children!

CHORUS OF YOUNG DISCIPLES.

Send us a Comforter, and let Him stand
 On the high places of the earth, and plant
 His feet upon the neck of our proud foes!

(*Enter SIMEON and IRIDION.*)

Simeon. In the name of the Father, Son, and Holy
 Ghost,
 Peace be upon you all!

CHORUS OF OLD DISCIPLES.

O Simeon!

Why is he who is with thee, lately clad
 In the catechumen's peaceful robes, now girt
 With armor, glittering with steel?
 Teach him repentance is the truest shield,
 And prayer the only armor for a Christian.

Simeon (to Iridion). Step on this mound, and answer
 for yourself!

I will meanwhile invoke the Holy Spirit.

Iridion. Let him who doubts trust not to his now
 wisdom,

But look upon the signs, remembering
 The *Promised Days*, which were to precede the last
 Of woes on earth! This hour Time ends his silence;
 The tortures of the Just are over now;
 Graves will no longer for our martyrs ope;
 Our virgins no more fill the tiger's maw;

The dead bones quicken, mount to Heaven's blue !
 Arise, ye Christians, cowering in the dust !
 Tremble, ye rulers, who increase our pangs !
 For all "the valleys shall exalted be,
 And the high places of the earth laid low !"

Young Disciples. O son of promise, may the Lord be
 with thee !

Iridion. The lightnings of Jehovah are with us :
 From our humiliation springs our inspiration !
 Our trust is in the mercy of the Son,
 The glorious power of the triune God !
 If ye will aid me with your wills and prayers,
 Our strength will be increased a thousand-fold.
 Strike as one man for vengeance ! Even to-night
 Division seals the doom of the cursed city !
 The son of madness totters on his throne,
 The prætorians turn away from him their hearts,
 The storm-tost people know not by what wind
 To steer their course ; like waves before the tumult,
 They rise and fall ; but soon the heavy wings
 Of the black tempest will swoop down on them,
 Awaking all the lightnings of their passions !
 Look how the clouds are piling above Rome
 Which murders prophets, crucifies the saints !
 The legions throughout Asia revolt ;
 The Alemanni on the Rhine rebel ;
 Cæsar and Alexander stand prepared
 For their last struggle. The one cries "Jupiter !"
 The other summons Mithras to his aid !
 What matters it to us which of them conquers,
 Since both will equally blaspheme our Lord ?
 Such are the signs long since predicted you ;
 Look up, and see them glittering in the sky !
 Will firmly, you are free ; and Christ shall rule !

CHORUS OF OLD DISCIPLES.

Who gave thee the commission to conduct us ?
 Who stamped thy brow with the seal of the Holy Word ?
 Where is the anointed shepherd of our flock ?
 Will he point to thee, saying clearly to us :
 Behold the Leader whom the Lord hath armed ?

*Simeon (standing upon a tomb). I bear him witness !
(He holds aloft the crucifix.)*

Flow on, ye tears of Christ !
Open afresh, ye gaping, bleeding wounds !
Behold the Lord, regarding not the proud,
Whom you would fetter at the thrones of men !
But God is conqueror of the gates of death !
Men without hearts, sleep on, if sleep you can ;
Cumber like stocks and stones His living way,
To you I speak not ! You who do not burn
To see the new Jerusalem descend
Upon the waves of time,—to you I speak not !
I call on those for whom He suffered shame
And anguish, till woe grew to such a height
The sun in horror veiled his radiant face !
Ah ! since that night of terror, who defends
The Son of man ? . . . who strikes for Jesus Christ ?
He hungered—there were none to give Him food !
Thirsted—but there were none to give Him drink !
Naked—none came to clothe or comfort Him !
But every day and every passing hour
The nations of the earth conspire against Him,
Scorn His disciples, crucify anew !

CHORUS OF THE YOUNG.

Curses upon the worshipers of Moloch !

Iridion. Let not the appointed hour escape us,
brothers !

Gaze not upon it as the gleam of wings
Whirring above our heads, fading in distance ;
Nor as the lightning flash, scathing the sky,
To vanish 'midst the clouds ! O brothers, seize,
And clasp these moments to your heart of hearts !
Press from them that which never will return !
Strike from them *now* the glittering spark of life,
For they contain the germs of our whole future ;
Long centuries are wrapped within their shroud ;
They hold the hope of all humanity,—
These centuries are yours,—if you know how to grasp
them !

CHORUS OF OLD DISCIPLES.

The flame of prayer is dying in our souls ;
 A mystic veil darkens the sky above us ;
 Save us, O Lord, from all the Devil's wiles !

Iridion. This is mere weakness ! Summon all your
 strength !

I call on you by chains your fathers wore ;
 By Nero's butcheries ; the arena's bloody sands ;
 The victims of the amphitheatre ;
 Your daughters' shame,—shake off these craven fears !
 Be men ! And Rome is yours !

CHORUS OF YOUNG DISCIPLES.

Thy voice, like trumpet-thunders, stirs our souls,
 Driving us up to the surface of the earth ;
 But our hearts throb, and our hair stands on end !
 Simeon of Corinth, speak ! what seest thou ?

Simeon. I gaze with the eyes of John, to whom ap-
 peared

The new Jerusalem of the Elect. He sleeps
 In his lone grave, and angels bend above him.
 To-day or else to-morrow, he will rise,
 And then I will retire that he may lead you.
 But now 'tis I who call you, prophesy.

CHORUS.

Simeon, strange clouds are sweeping o'er thy brow,
 The black cross quivers in thy trembling hands
 Like swaying branch upborne by stormy winds !

Simeon. The spirit lifts me up—and bears me on !
 My feet are on the ruins of a city,
 Idols are overturned like new-mown grass ;
 On piles of broken arms, eagles of gold
 Lie shattered without beaks or wings ; I see
 Imperial purple strewn about in rags,
 Covered with cobwebs, like flax on the grass.
 The fire is out within the vestal's lamp ;
 Unbraided hang the tresses of her hair ;
 The long robes of the consuls float no more ;
 The Cæsars' jeweled crown is soaked in gore ;

Flames run along the heaps of festering corpses,
And flying chariots vanish in the distance !

(He falls upon his knees.)

O God, who sufferedst on the cross, inspire
Their souls as thou hast mine ! kindle their hearts
With the consuming fire of battle !

(Rising from his knees.)

High Heaven is overflowing with your prayers,—
The foaming waves repulse the infidels.
The souls of martyrs, of the massacred,
Are placed before the altar which forever burns
Around the Great White Throne : I see Him shine
Who sits upon that Throne ; He counts them all ;
He finds their number all completed now ;
The crimson Book of Martyrdom is closed,
Death banished, and a loud voice cries : “ Henceforth
You witness unto Christ through life and victory !”

CHORUS *(kneeling)*.

Christ ! Christ ! our hearts throb wild within our breasts !
Forsake us not in this our hour of doubt,
Reveal to us what Thou would'st have us do !

Iridion. O ye of little faith, can ye still doubt ?

(He points to the crucifix.)

Lift up your eyes ! gaze on your dying Lord !
His lips are open still ; do you not hear
The last cry breaking from his anguished soul ?
“ My Father, why hast Thou forsaken me !”
Brothers, will you again abandon Him to-day ?

CHORUS OF THE YOUNG.

No ! No !

Iridion (starts and utters a sharp cry). Ha ! what
stands there ?

Simeon. Thou growest pale !

Iridion. Look, 'neath the vaults, where light and dark-
ness meet !

One of the Chorus. Some one approaches us with light,
quick tread.

(*Metella glides rapidly forward. Her veil is displaced, and
her long hair floats on the wind.*)

Simeon. We greet thee, virgin! Bride of the eternal
love!

CHORUS.

Whence comest thou so late, and all alone,
With wild disheveled hair?

(*Metella stops near the tomb where Iridion stands.*)

Simeon. Greek, finish quickly what thou hast begun!

Iridion (to Metella). Dost recognize me? Rememberest thou my words?

(*She sees him and shrieks.*)

A Man. Heard you that piercing shriek?

Other Voices. It fills our hearts with awe!

Iridion. Silence! she speaks!

Metella. Thou didst reveal Thyself!

Thy wings were swords on which the angels rode!

Thy mighty words came crashing through my ears;

Since then I run forever to and fro

And cry as angels bid (*turning to the people*): To arms!
to arms!

Iridion (aside). Through thee I conquer, Masinissa!

(*Addressing the people.*) Hear!

A woman's spirit has divined, before you

The mysteries of Heaven! wash off the shame

In the hot blood of the idolaters!

(*He places his hand on the head of Metella.*)

Become the living voice of promised glory!

Before our people lift the veil of time!

Metella. I saw him armed with dazzling lightning . . .

He went forth conquering, and to conquer all . . .

I looked into his face, and grew immortal . . .

CHORUS OF THE OLD.

Is it a vision? Hast thou a spirit seen?

Has it yet vanished, or is it present still?

Metella. I saw him armed with lightning . . . he
marched and fought,
And triumphed everywhere . . . naught could resist
him . . .

The arrows from his bow compassed the earth . . .
Terror surrounds him as a cloak a king . . .
And when he moves, pale Death accompanies him !

(She hurries onward.)

A Voice. Her long hair floats and flutters like a mist
Amid this surging sea of heads and torches !

Iridion. Where wilt thou go? Metella, answer me !

Metella. Where the light cannot pierce, my voice
shall reach :

To arms ! to arms !

Simeon.

To arms !

All.

To arms ! To arms !

Metella. O Darkness, rend your walls before my cry !
Dead rocks remove,—bear witness to the Lord !

Simeon. Urged by the spirit on, she disappears.

Many Voices. And we will follow her to victory !

Iridion. You know the Palace of Amphiloehus ;
Whoe'er shall there present himself and say :

“Sigurd, the son of Crimhild,” shall receive
Immediately a javelin, sword, and helmet.

Remember: “Sigurd, son of Crimhild.”

First Barbarian. Was Crimhild, Odin's priestess,
child of Sigurd,

Once famous in the distant Chersonesus ?

Second Barbarian. Our sires invoked that name with
love and awe.

Third Barbarian. Our kinsmen from the cold sea of
the North

Chanted to us in the dense Saxon woods

Her funeral hymn. She was from Silver-Land.

Iridion. She was my mother ! Ye are all my brothers !

*(He comes down from the tomb, and moves among the Bar-
barians.)*

Give me your hands ! We have abandoned all
Our ancient errors ; let the errors still,
Once common to our fathers, weave new ties

Between their sons !
In the name of Christ, be faithful to me, Brothers !

CHORUS OF BARBARIANS.

Oh, son of Crimhild ! Son of Silver-Land !
From freemen come free pledges never broken !
The blue-eyed, fair-haired, sturdy sons of the North
Will not betray thee ! To thee they give their bodies,
As they have given their souls to their new God !

Iridion. The son of Sigurd thanks his faithful brethren !

CHORUS OF BARBARIANS.

'Tis centuries since Herminius began
The combat against Rome,—the southern elephant !
His bones rest in the woods of Irminsul.
On ! on ! Before a wandering spirit drove us forth
From our dark pines, we had already heard
Our Bards announce the ruin of proud Rome.
Iridion our Herminius shall be !
Lead us to battle ! Lead us to destroy
The palaces of treacherous Italy !

(Subterranean noises are heard. A wild storm rages, accompanied by an earthquake.)

Simeon. Why ragest thou, O Earth ? thou mother of
Dead bodies, not of living souls ?

Iridion. Earth's voice
Announces judgment on the idolaters !

CHORUS OF THE OLD.

O Simeon ! hear'st thou not the voice of God
In anger, in these dreadful thunderings ?

Simeon. The wrath of God is here announced,—I
bless it !

The Almighty rises—the Abyss cries mercy !

(Subterranean noises increase, with consequent alarm and confusion.)

The very rocks are shuddering in affright,
And the winds hiss like serpents ! The Furies send
Tempests before them, as they haste to claim

Their ancient worshipers ! Their dead lie here !
 Their graves are yawning wide and bottomless !
 Hosanna ! See, the Day of Judgment dawns !

CHORUS OF THE YOUNG.

Now keep thy promise, Hieronymus !
 The will of Christ reveals itself through thee !

Iridion. Mithras and Jove go thundering down together,
 As we, the faithful Christians, march to plant
 The Holy Cross upon the Capitol !
 My treasures all are yours ! My blood to its last drop !
 Swear then to follow me !

CHORUS OF THE OLD.

Swear not ! Woe ! woe !

CHORUS OF THE YOUNG.

We swear ! We swear it in the name of Christ !

Iridion. You'll know no rest, no prayers, nor feed upon
 The Body of the Lord, until you plant
 His sacred Cross upon the Capitol !

CHORUS OF THE YOUNG.

We swear !

BARBARIANS.

We swear !

CHORUS OF THE OLD.

Earth yawns to swallow sacrilege !

(*The tumult continues to increase. Crashing and subterranean noises ; torches flicker and go out ; mounds, stones, and pillars totter ; the old graves of the pagans yawn ; groups of Christians are swallowed up ; fires break from the earth and panic prevails.*)

Iridion. Thus will Rome fall in ashes 'neath our
 swords !

Voices. The torches flicker! Beware! they will go out!

Men running back. Fire! Fire! Earth opens, sends forth flame and smoke!

CHORUS OF BARBARIANS.

Room! Let us make a way across this crowd!
Up! up! where javelins glance and keen blades shine
In the light of day! Why should the sons of ice
Stay here to perish in this realm of fire?

Simeon. Friends, follow me! He whom I bear before
you
Once stilled the storm-waves of a raging sea.

Voices. Back! back! Before us flames rise from the earth!

Iridion. Here! here! This Christian tomb is safe enough.

The Furies play with earthquakes in these graves!
Wild terror blinds you! Cease not to be men!

Simeon. This stone is tottering—throws me at your feet!

Iridion. Come, lean on me! (*Pointing to his breast.*)
This rock has never trembled!

Simeon. Where are the men who followed after me?

Iridion. All vanished! . . . I never saw so wild a night.

How few remain of all our thousand torches!

Simeon. And they, like dying stars, are going out;
First one, and then another. We will be left
In utter darkness in these awful vaults!

Many Voices. It is the hour of death! Forgive our sins!

Simeon (to Iridion). Hold your torch high above this sea of darkness!

Iridion. I hold it firmly, but it throws no light.

Simeon (seizing Iridion). Hear you that frightful crash?
The tumult drowns

The voices of the dying! all is lost!

(*Earth opens, and a group of men is swallowed.*)

Iridion. I hear the voices of the living there below !
To me ! to me ! ye who still breathe and move !

Simeon. Oh ! where are they who but a moment since
Stood at our side, and called on God for aid ?

Iridion. God has already judged them. (*Addressing
the voices.*) This way ! To me !

CHORUS OF BARBARIANS.

Through fire and darkness we still wander on,
Pursued by earthquakes, thunder, lightning, flame,
But our strong hearts beat calm as on our sea
Of ice, sleet, hail, whirlwinds, and mist and snow.

Iridion. Look to your steps ! Your torches here ! I
know
The way, can lead you safely to the light.

Voices in the distance. Burn Earth, until the Day of
the Last Judgment !

Simeon. I hear the tramp of feet ; the sound of voices ;
Our brethren on their way to Eloim ;
They're safe ! Let us rejoin them !

Iridion. Heard you that cry ?

CHORUS.

On ! On !

Iridion. Fly ! Fly !

A Voice (approaching ever nearer). To arms ! To
arms ! To arms !

(*Iridion flies forward.*)

CHORUS OF THE OLD.

Stop ! stop ! It is the Father of all lies,
Who calls you to destruction !

Iridion. Metella's voice !

Simeon (retaining Iridion). I will not let you go, Hier-
onymus !

Iridion. If I remain, who is to guide them out ? (*He
moves on, repulsing Simeon.*)

I call upon you, O Amphiloclus,
Humble these flames of Erebus before me !

Voice of Metella. Near thee, my crown shall be of stars
immortal!

Iridion. O Christ, in whom she trusts, save the un-
fortunate!

*(It grows lighter. Flames break from the earth, Metella
appears in their midst, Iridion rushes forward to save
her.)*

CHORUS OF BARBARIANS.

The helmet of our hero flashes lightning!
It disappears in darkness.

Simeon.

Hieronimus!

Barbarian. Sigurd! our Sigurd, come!

Voice of Iridion.

I hasten to you!

(He returns bearing Metella in his arms.)

Lower the torches! this way! follow me!

*(Barbarians, Simeon, Christians, etc., follow Iridion, who,
winding through graves and mounds, bears off Metella
in his arms. The flames fall before him, and the scene
is left in darkness.)*

CHORUS OF RETREATING BARBARIANS.

Save us, O Son of man, and Rome shall be
Thrice ruined, burned! First that she is the foe
Of the gay children of the sunny South,
Of the strong freemen of the frozen North,
And of the human race in every clime!

A Voice in the darkness. Storms, go to rest in these
old pagan graves!

You ashes of the ancients, sleep once more!

*(New flames rise from the earth and stand like pillars of
fire. Masinissa appears in their midst.)*

CHORUS OF INFERNALS.

Look! At thy voice how peaceful we become,
Burning like lamps before a sanctuary!
We, damned, who are to burn eternally,
Immortal victims of immortal woes!

Masinissa. The hour will come when earth shall be
 your prey!
 Await it! . . . Your work to-day must finish here!
 You must no farther go.

CHORUS OF INFERNALS.

O victory!

We will not live forever in despair,
 In night eternal! We will wreak revenge!
 The spirits of the Light will one day ask:
 Where is the Earth, our sister? Blotted out!
 And He who saved her, cry: Where is my Bride?
 For answer we will fling her ashes back,
 And they will fly beyond the farthest star!

Masinissa. Peace, O my sons! The moment of revenge
 Still sleeps in the depths of your eternity!
 Thousands of human generations stand
 Between you and that happy, longed-for hour.
 Your power must increase with myriads won;
 Men must have worn out much of present force;
 All creeds must first be deeply dyed in blood,
 Then given up as false; every negation
 Be covered o'er with slime, then deified!
 Men first must drive their God from his own throne,
 Then strive to fill it with their dying forms!
 Wait till their pride and nothingness are full,
 Till their maturity is only folly,
 Till power with them means naught but cruelty!

Infernals. And they shall perish!

Masinissa. We must possess their soaring intellect,
 Seize on the godlike thought which rests in them,
 Make them create worlds farther from the truth,
 Extinguish in their souls that spark divine
 Which they have ravished from celestial spheres;
 Must crown their brows with the meteor gleam of science;
 Must put ephemeral sceptres in their hands;
 And make of them the autocrats of earth.

Infernals. And they shall perish!

Masinissa (*going up and down among the flames*).
 Faith, Hope, and Love, eternal Trinity!
 I've broken Thee asunder in the hearts

Of thy most faithful children, even the sons
 Of Benediction,—wring Thy blessing from them !
 Thou fillest not with them the vacant thrones
 Once filled by us in splendor, light, and bliss !
 Thou'lt never find such glorious sons again,
 Great Enemy, who hast Thyself put out
 The blazing stars which were Thy proper glory !

Infernals. Our brilliant Thrones shall ever empty stand !
 Our hymns of glory no more fill the sky !
 His Psalm-singers shall perish at His feet !

Masinissa. This very night begins your ruin, men !
 You, puny souls, shall never fill our thrones !
 You will abandon God, as we have Him abandoned !

Infernals. And they will come at last to eat our bread,
 To dwell in our dark homes, and drink our cups of fire !

Masinissa. How canst Thou love them, deadly Enemy ?
 They've gone astray from the first spring of earth !
 No day has ever passed since they were made
 In which, disputing of Thy Nature, Substance,
 They have not dimmed Thy Name with sterile questions !
 In Thy Great Name they torture, murder, burn !
 In Thy Great Name they go forth to oppress !
 Through all their knowledge, all their ignorance,
 Their reason or their folly, anguish, bliss,
 Humility, or pride, their crimes, or virtues,
 Their lowly prayers, or blasphemies of pride,—
 Thou'rt ever pierced and crucified anew !
 Great Foe ! on Heaven's heights Thou yet shalt drain
 The cup of gall they held to Thy wrung lips
 In Thy last sigh of love for them on earth,
 Until, in Thy turn, Thou shalt also curse them,
 Until in the midst of all Thy power, glory,
 The pangs of baffled love and useless mercy
 Shall teach *Thee grief !*

Then Thou shalt know what our Hell truly is !

Infernals. Glory to Him who glitters in the fires
 Of reprobation, bright as He once shone
 When girded by Heaven's rainbows, fed on Light !
 Glory to Him ! and glory unto us !

Masinissa. With His own hand He covereth His
 brow,

Furrowed with Heaven's lightning! In the depths
 Of the abyss He nourisheth a Thought
 For the war of the last days when ends this world!
 Glory to Him!
 Our light transmutes to heat, and darkness comes
 To overshadow me.

Depart in silence, Brothers!

ACT IV.

SCENE I. *A scene in the camp of Alexander, without the walls of the city. ARISTOMACHUS and LUCIUS TUBERO are in the foreground, while in the background ALEXANDER SEVERUS and DOMITIAN are seen reclining upon couches, and conversing in a low tone with each other. IRIDION enters.*

Iridion. Romans, I seek you in your master's name!
 Make your complaints, and I will listen; answer
 To each according to the will of Cæsar.

Aristomachus. If you desire to know what we complain of,
 You should have come at least a year ago,
 We would have told you then; 'tis now too late;
 For men who take up arms *complain* no more;
 They *threaten*, not obey; command what they require.
 You've seen our soldiers armed, prepared to march:—
 You have my answer, Greek.

Iridion. Is this the answer too of Lucius Tubero?

Tubero. Although my associate is excitable,
 More skillful with his sword than with his words,
 Yet I can add but little to his speech.
 From me *alone* then tell the Emperor:
 He made my father open his own veins,
 And bleed to death in the bath! My sister's child
 He forced to swallow burning coals! Remind him, Greek,
 How many senators he has deprived
 Of life and honor in the last three years!

Tell him that I, surrounded once by friends,
 By prosperous relations, am now alone :
 The few he left me, die to-day of famine !
 'Tis true we have for them, Eutyechian,
 Freedmen and concubines wearing the purple !
 And, Greek, do not forget to add that he
 Has basely shamed a noble Grecian maiden.

(Iridion draws forth his tablets, and writes upon them with his stylus. 1)

What write you there, son of Amphilochochus ?

Iridion. What you have said,—your name,—your
 hour of death !

Proceed, I pray.

Tubero. Danaus, thanks ! Tell him

If he will nail Eutyechian to a cross,
 Pay from his treasures the sums justly due,
 Resign his powers as high-priest, consul, Cæsar,—
 We may grant him his miserable life,
 Let him retain his mistress if *she* choose,
 And send him to that country whence he came
 To curse and ruin Rome !

Aristomachus. But bid him haste !

To-morrow's dawn we force the city gates,
 One hour later in his palace stand.

Iridion. Is there no more ?

Aristomachus (drawing his sword). Naught but the
 flash of steel !

Tubero (also drawing his sword). Only the sword
 can, in a single day,

Wash out in blood the infamy of years !

Aristomachus. With steel we'll hew both crown and
 head from Cæsar,

And scare the laugh of scorn from the proud lips
 Of his confederate !

Iridion. Indeed ? . . . You have

At *last* divined the scorn which fills my soul

To hear a Roman prate indignantly

Of yokes and chains, symbols of his own shame !

(He laughs.) Tiberius drove your sires, like beasts, to
 pens ;

And Nero, scorned himself, trod them to scorn!
 How can you dare complain of any shame?
 You, sons of men who labored to disgrace
 And outrage the whole earth! how dare you speak
 Of honor? Mistake not what you really are!
 Your race is the most cruel, basest on earth!
 Were this not true, would Asia, godlike Greece,
 The Hyrcanian Syrtis, the Jazigean wastes,*
 And every country which you have subdued,
 Lie withered 'neath your desolating breath,
 Crumbling in ashes, blighted and destroyed?
 You have divined aright, I laugh *in scorn!*—
 As yet you know not *what* smiles foretell!

(*He stands directly in front of them, and addresses them
 in a tone of command.*)

Unless you instantly lay down your arms,
 Without delay fall at your Emperor's feet,
 Give every tenth man up to meet his vengeance;
 Shame, torture, death await you.
 Romans, my mission now with you is over!

Aristomachus. Away to Cæsar! Tell him to anoint
 His hair for festival! To-morrow eve
 He sleeps with Pluto o'er the gloomy Styx!

Iridion (*approaching Alexander*). My embassy is now
 with Alexander.

Domitian (*to Alexander*). Strike the intruder dumb
 with scorn!

Alexander. I cannot!

Iridion. Thy brother greets thee! He demands to
 know

Why at the dead of night thou fled'st his palace?
 He orders thy return without delay,
 And will commute thy doom of death to banishment!

Alexander (*rising suddenly*). No! no! a thousand
 times! (*To Domitian.*)

There's more in this

* Hyrcania was situated on the coast of the Caspian Sea; the Deserts of the Jaziges between the Don and Dnieper.

Than meets the ear! I will hold converse with
Iridion *alone*. Leave us, my friends!

(*Exeunt all save Alexander and Iridion.*)

The gods of vengeance weave their treacherous mists
Between our souls, son of Amphiloclus.
I can no longer read your heart, designs;
And you no longer seem to know Severus.
Did you not vow a hecatomb to Fortune
That day when justice should have rule in Rome?

Iridion. I vow it still! Oh, if she would but grant
A single day's, nay, but an hour's, justice,
I might bring Rome itself and immolate
As burning hecatomb upon the shrine
Of this same goddess, Fortune!

Alexander. You wrong me, Greek,
With your ambiguous words. Do you not owe
Me thanks, that I believe not my own eyes,
However clearly they report your perfidy?
I scarcely know myself why I so long
To love and trust you; to be loved and trusted!

Iridion. Thanks from my soul, Severus! Ah! if Fate
Had made me as a man to live with men,
And granted me to soothe my heart with friendship,
I would have chosen you, as honored friend,
From all the world, true Alexander!
It cannot be! Look! both our breasts are clad
In iron, and can but approach in mortal combat!

Alexander. It is not yet too late! Forsake the tyrant,
Look *through* the mists gathering between our hearts!
Call me once friend,—and I will never doubt you.
Iridion, where is your *Elsinoë*?

Iridion. Where *Nemesis* and all the *Furies* chain her!

Alexander. She still is pure as purest vestal virgin;
Pure as my thoughts of her! Listen to me . . .
Iridion, stop! . . . Oh, I conjure you, stay! . . .
Yes, I have read unutterable pain
In her heroic eyes! I know she hates him! . . .
And can her brother fight for one she scorns,
Retain her in a bondage worse than death?

Iridion. Why are your days to be so short and sad,
Young Eagle of the cliff? What will remain

Of all your noble love, your thirst for virtue?
 You perish like harmonious sounds, unheard
 By men,—known only to the gods!

Alexander. Why gaze upon me with a look so sad?
 Yes, I have heard it said your mother bore
 A demigod in her prophetic breast!

Iridion. A god of vengeance to the Furies vowed! . . .
 Alas! The good inherit oft the punishment
 Due only to the guilty! . . .

Son of Mammaea, know your hour draws near!

Alexander. Would you affright me, Greek?

Iridion. No. I announce
 The simple truth. If you should lose, you die
 By the hand of the conqueror; if you should gain,
 You perish by the swords of those who used
 Your name as standard to advance themselves!

Alexander. Shame upon him who fears that he must die
 Before death is upon him! Shame on him
 Who fears to die when the gods call him home!
 If danger threatens, stay and share it with me!
 From the tiger's jaws I'll tear the sunny-haired,
 Restore to Rome the glories of her spring.
 Why do you shudder, brother, wring your hands?
 Would Elsinoë's honor, bliss, Rome's fame,
 Be bitter to your soul? Iridion, speak!

Iridion. I recollect that I was sent by Cæsar,
 To report your answer!

Alexander. Remind me not of him!
 And if the gods have given you a heart,
 Let the proud memories of Amphiloachus,
 The agonies of Elsinoë's shame,
 Be brands of fire to chase him from his prey!
 Sing as your tuneful ancestors once sang:
 "Yes, vengeance is the rapture of the gods."

Iridion. Oh, innocence! (*He presses his hand.*) For
 the last time on earth

I press your hand! for the *last time*, Severus!

We both stand on the border of the grave.

Before the rosy dawn shall three times tint

The sky, or you or I, it may be both,

Will cross the Styx to Erebus!

(*Exit Iridion.*)

SCENE II. *A hall in the palace of the Cæsars adorned with pillars, statues, costly vases, and tripods; an altar dedicated to Mithras and dazzling with gold stands in the centre; in the background, a heavy curtain of purple hangs to the floor between two pillars of gold, its clasps are of precious stones. Before it is seated ELSINOË, clad in purple and glittering in jewels. IRIDION enters armed and helmeted.*

Iridion (looking around). Where is the Accursed?

Elsinoë (pointing to the curtain). There! There!

His body rests

On violets; his soul in the Furies' lap!

I choked within the curtain, and came forth

To breathe a moment's liberty.

Iridion. Spake he of me before he went to sleep?

Hast thou prepared him, as I counseled thee?

Elsinoë. He has accepted all, but wept, and beat His head against the wall. He called Eutylian, Threw himself on his breast and pressed his hands, Not daring yet to tell him he had given Command of the prætorians to thee.

He told him that he hoped by gentle means

And promises thou would'st win back the rebels.

He begged me pray for him to my fierce gods;

Then weeping sprang upon his perfumed couch,

And tossed and twisted like a wounded serpent!

Iridion. We must awake him!

Elsinoë. Brother, come with me!

(*Elsinoë unclasps the curtain, behind which Heliogabalus is seen asleep upon a couch of roses and violets. Iridion and Elsinoë stand for a moment gazing upon him.*)

Iridion. Hush! those half-open lips are trembling into speech.

Elsinoë. Curses upon them, whether they sleep or wake!

Heliogabalus (in his sleep). Iri . . . my Iri . . . why dost thou forsake me?

Elsinoë. He dreams of thee!

Heliogabalus. Elsi . . . my Elsi . . . why dost thou forsake me?

Elsinoë. The child of Crimhild never has been thine!

Iridion (*placing his hand upon the Emperor*).

Wake, Emperor, wake!

Heliogabalus (*rising*). Who calls? Where am I?

Speak!

Is it thou, my Elsi? Thou, Iridion?

Here are my roses! My blue violets!

Here my dear smoking tripods! Elsinoë!

(*He takes the hands of Elsinoë and Iridion, and comes forward.*)

I agonized—thy voice called back to life!

Iridion. What didst thou dream to affright thy spirit thus?

Heliogabalus. Oh 'twas a fearful dream, Iridion!

When first I went to sleep, I thought I saw

All nations, peoples, shrink into a dwarf,

Who, powerless and in chains, lay on the ground;

My white and dazzling foot upon his head

Shone like a shell in its transparency!

My throne blazed with the splendor of Olympus,

And Rome was burning, as thou saidst it should;

From east to west the bright flames swept the sky!

There were no men to kill us anywhere,

For with my foot I kneaded the whole race

Into the Dwarf, who mangled lay before me.

Iridion. The gods themselves have given the wished-for sign.

Heliogabalus. Alas! Not so! Then great confusion came;

The dead seemed rising from the catacombs,

The circus, mausoleums, unknown graves;

Victor, and the Apulians, Tubero,

Lucius, and the dead men who set my gems,

And crowds and crowds of ghastly, wormy forms,

Rode on the air, and scowled, and breathed on me!

Then suddenly, on the horizon's verge,

I saw appear my father, Caracalla;

His head was crowned with coiled and hissing vipers,

And in each hand he held a human skull;

His purple robes were dabbled o'er with gore;

He tottered in the midst of burning cinders,

And as he fell, he cried : " My son ! My son !"
Then the dead marched and marched, and rushed upon
me,

The Dwarf began to laugh, and toss my foot
From off his head, and grew to myriad men !
They marched and marched, their togas wrapped around
Their left arms, while drawn swords were in their right !
Thou wert beside me, and *she* too was there ! . . .

Then thou, Iridion, betrayedst me,
Crying : " Behold ! Strike Cæsar ! He is there !"

My Elsinoë, thou betrayedst me,
Crying : " Behold your murderer ! Cæsar ! Kill !"

The lightning of a hundred naked swords
Flashed out my eyes ;—I could not see ye more !
Hundreds of blades crashed through my shattered heart !

(He buries his face in his hands, then rushes madly forward, and, pointing to a large tripod, cries :)

'Tis he ! Dost thou not see my father there !

(He shudders, and falls back in the arms of Iridion.)

Iridion. Why, this is but a dream ! Drive from thy
brain

The treacherous poppy-seed, which Morpheus threw
Around thee in thy sleep. Summon thy courage ;
Thou wilt need it all ! The prætors break
Forever from thee, and Alexander swears
To take no rest until he wears thy crown.

Heliogabalus. Ah, wretched me ! But did you tell
them all ?

Assure them of forgiveness, gold, reward ?

Iridion. It is not *gold* they ask ;—they want *your blood* !

(Heliogabalus throws himself upon the altar of Mithras and embraces it with open arms.)

Heliogabalus. O Trinity of rapture ! God of light !

Elsinoë. As long as thou liest whimpering like a boy,
Crying to Mithras, danger and death surround thee !

Odin invoke, and he will send his Ravens

To tear and rend the Eagles of proud Rome !

Heliogabalus. Thy voice, my Elsinoë ! Thy loved
voice !

Oh! let me hear it in my dying hour!
 Twine thy white arms around my shattered breast;
 Let them be my death-girdle! Oh, how I love thee,
 Through all thy bitter scorn and hate of me!

Elsinoë. Die not before the hour appointed thee!
 Arise, and call thy guards, Eutyechian;
 Then place all power in my brother's hands,
 And he will save thee.

Heliogabalus (attempting to rise). Elsi, if that could be!

Iridion. Play never with the dice of life and death
 On Fortune's Altar! This night Rome rocks in fire!
 Fear not! The jests will die on the fierce lips
 Of Aristomachus in the unwonted glare!
 Where are thy treasures?

Heliogabalus. Part have been dispatched
 To Syria; Eutyechian holds the rest.

Iridion. Divide them with the guard still faithful to
 thy cause!

Eutyechian (rushing in). Godlike! Divine! they
 threaten holy Cæsar!

The people rise and drive the soldiers from
 The senate gates; the senators rush in;
 They seat themselves in solemn conclave there;
 Loved Anubis, on what do they debate?
 Upon the death of the godlike Emperor!

Iridion. Haste, Cæsar! haste!

Heliogabalus (to Eutyechian). Give me your arm, old
 friend!

(*He leans upon his shoulder.*) As oft in happier days, I
 lean on you,

And love you well as in our sunnier hours.
 The censer oft we have together swung
 In Mithras' brilliant courts; together drunk
 The ripe juice of the grape; together poured
 Libations to the god of bliss! Ah! happy hours!
 The parrots' livers and the maidens' lips
 Are less delicious than they used to be!
 The sky of Rome is harsh, old friend, and we
 Must brave the storms of Fate ever *together!*
 Oh, stay with me! . . . and give the Greek your sword!
 Let him be Prefect of the Prætorians!

Eutychian. They want my head—and this Greek
wants my power :

But what becomes of me without a head or sword ?

Silvius' last cup I have prepared for thee,

Godlike, and . . .

Heliogabalus. Be silent ! give !

Eutychian (*handing the sword to Iridion*). Greek,
spare my child !

Safe in its copper cradle it has hung

Forever round my loins.

Messenger (*entering hastily*). Great Cæsar ! I

This moment in disguise escaped the senate,

And as I left, heard Canulejus cry

That thou shouldst die the death of Nero, and

Thy brother should be chosen Emperor !

Heliogabalus. They too conspire against me, seek my
life !

Iridion. Fear nothing ! (*To the messenger.*) Soldier,
run through the lower halls

Of the court ; collect the prætorians ; bid them wait

For me within Domitian's atrium ;

Then seek my palace, where in the command

Of Scipio you'll find my gladiators

Armed and ready for the fight. Bid them

Without delay march to the temple where

The senate sit in counsel ; as they pass

The palace bid them shout : Iridion !

Haste and be prudent ;—great will be your gain !

(*Exit messenger.*)

Hark, son of Sœmias ! I will drive away

These babblers, to arrive at whom I'll fling

Aside the people, as a sturdy swimmer

Breaks through the waves thronging to overwhelm him.

To conquer Alexander—I need more !

Heliogabalus. What need you more ?

Iridion. It is too late to name

Me in the presence of the troops and people

As representative of all thy powers :—

Lend me the ring of Empire, that all Rome

May know in me thy chosen delegate

And join our force if faithful still to thee !

Heliogabalus. I dare not, Greek! Dost thou not surely know
The Genius of the Roman Empire lives
Within this ring? The Emperor who would
Intrust it into foreign hands would be
Guilty of treason, doomed to instant death!

Eutyichian. Give! Give it to Iridion, I pray.
Stay thou to comfort me,—let him be Cæsar!

Heliogabalus. Slave! jest not at thy Lord!

(*He shows him a poniard.*)

Look at this joke
With double edge, dipped in Getulian poison;—
I'm half inclined to plant it in thy heart!

Eutyichian (kneeling). A blade of gold!—Thy servant
ne'er feared gold!

(*As Heliogabalus advances upon him.*) Thou knowest
that in the temple of Osiris,
The Syrian Seer was wont to prophesy
That thou would'st live but three days after me!

Heliogabalus (embracing Eutyichian). What say'st thou,
friend? Support my weary head
Upon thine arm! Thou knowest that I love thee!

Eutyichian. Yes, as the drunken Macedonian loved
Old Clitus!

Iridion. I tell you I *must* have the ring!

Heliogabalus. Never! I will not give the god buried
in diamonds,

With the two golden serpents interlaced to guard it!
Take all my treasures, goblets, vases, gems,—
Enough! Enough! I will not give the ring!

(*Noise and tumult are heard without.*)

Iridion. Hear'st thou that chant of triumph for
Severus?

Elsinoë. Obey the son of Odin's priestess, Crimhild!

Heliogabalus (wringing his hands). Ah! Elsinoë!

(*The noise increases.*)

Iridion. Dost hear? Give me the ring!

(*Attempts to seize his hand.*)

Heliogabalus. I will not give my hand! I will myself

From the finger of Heliogabalus take it off!
 Wait, Greek! Perhaps I'll fight myself,
 As I once fought with the legions of Macrinus.
 The day was hot and bright; my silver car
 Rolled over corpses; with my own hand I threw
 My golden javelins, flashing like rays of Mithras.
 Give me my arms! I'll fight again to-day . . .

(A sudden change comes over him; he starts back in affright.)

Gods! gods! . . . Look there! Behind the tripod . . .
 look! . . .

'Tis gone . . . I breathe! . . . No! there he comes
 again!

He stands before this pillar! See, he moves!
 He leans upon my couch! . . . He beckons me!
 He wears the purple dyed in his own blood!
 Father! I come!

(He falls fainting in the arms of Eutychian.)

My friends, all's ill with me!

My breast, like a deserted temple, crashes in.

(Iridion seizes his hand.) Wrench not my hand so vio-
 lently, Greek!

It is high treason against majesty!

Iridion. Where power is, must be its forceful symbol!

(He tears off the ring.) Now go to sleep, and when the
 flames blaze high,

I will awake you.

Heliogabalus. Alas! He now is Cæsar! . . .

Lead me, Eutychian! Come, and sit by me

Upon my violets. Thou shalt hold before me

My newest shield, that I may see myself

In its bright steel once more by the blazing flames

The Greek has promised should consume the city.

Oh! Heliogabalus grows so cold! so cold!

All grows so black before his aching eyes!

He cannot see . . . Come, Elsinoë . . . Come!

Elsinoë. Spare me one moment with Iridion!

Eutychian. Son of Amphiloehus, thou shalt eat dust,
 And drink thine own hot blood! then know 'twas cooked
 By Eutychian, whom thou wilt recollect

Was cook to the Syrian!

(*Elsinoë leads Heliogabalus, accompanied by Eutygian, to his couch. She unclasps the curtain which falls over the recess, and joins Iridion on the front of the stage.*)

Elsinoë. Poor wretch! He stands upon the brink of
Erebus

Shivering with fear! As his companion, I
Have given him madness! . . .

Have I yet more to do?

To-morrow, nay, to-night, the prætors may rush in,
Or Rome will be in flames—or my heart break,—
My bosom, tired of suffering, refuse to breathe
Longer the scathing air of this dread world!

Iridion. Sister, watch over him till my return;
Then thou must leave these walls accursed forever!

Elsinoë. What will become of him?

Iridion. It matters not!

I care not for his life—nor for his death!

That which he *was*, now glitters on my hand;

(*Shows the ring.*)

That which he *is*, is scarcely worth a thought.

Elsinoë. If that be so—come near,—ay, nearer still:
Iridion, dost thou hear my failing voice?

Iridion (holding her in his arms). What is it, sister?
What can I do for thee?

Thy small hand throbs in mine with veins of fire,
And the quick bounds of thy wrung heart beat wild
Against my breastplate! *Elsinoë*, speak!

Elsinoë. The eyes whose fires withered my virgin
soul . . .

Must die out in their sockets! . . .

And the two arms which once embraced my neck . . .

Must fall like mangled vipers! . . .

The lips which once have dared to rest on mine . . .

Must crumble in the flames! . . .

Iridion. Yes. He and Alexander both shall burn
Upon one funeral pyre!

Elsinoë. Unsay! Unsay!

Hear my last wish! I have a right to speak!

Have I not given all,—far more than life?

Because I know the power of thy hand,

I bare to thee the last, the only wish
 Which pulses in my heart, Iridion!
 Spare Alexander on the battle-field!
 Let no stroke fall on his broad Grecian brow!
 For he alone divines . . .

Why dost thou turn
 Thy face away from me, Iridion?
Iridion. Think not of him! 'Tis he alone keeps
 Rome

From falling in the clutches of my hate,
 And the Gods grudge him to humanity.
 His doom is sealed,—the deadliest foe of Greece!

Elsinoë. Then press thy sister once more to thy breast.
 Son of Amphiloclus, we meet no more!
 Dost feel how wildly throbs my wretched heart?
 Ere thy return, I know that it will break!
 Remember Elsinoë asks no blood from thee:
 Let them *all live!* The Syrian, the Accursed,
He too must live! Spare Alexander, brother!

* * * * *

The close of this weird sacrifice is near;
 The virgin victim must not leave a stain
 Of blood on her pure hands, her robes of snow!
 Ah! long upon the altar she has stood;
 The fires consumed her slowly; night and day
 Flamed high her maiden dreams, her spring, her love,
 Upon the shrine! The victim's heart is dead!
 Her life is flickering fast; the fire dies out;
 A fitful smoke will soon remain alone! . . .
 The sacrifice is o'er; the hour draws nigh
 When from the body the soul is Sundered,
 Like a cothurnus' easily-loosened band!
 Of Elsinoë, nothing will remain

Save bitter memories, and her vexed soul,
 Which will become an immortal, wandering Shade!

Voices without the Palace. Iridion, the Greek! Iridion!

Iridion. Away! thy sorrow is insensate, when
 Nemesis in both hands holds crowns of vengeance!
 The victory is mine! . . . That noise, those cries,
 Embody the sole thought of my whole life!
 I am reborn; and thou canst wish for death!

Be proud and happy, sister, that the day
 For which thy father lived, thy country prayed,
 Comes in the lightning's flash, the thunder's roar!

(Loud crashing heard without.)

Hear'st thou that crash? it is the doom of Rome!
 And thou wouldst perish now with vengeance won!

Voices. Iridion! Iridion!

Iridion. Farewell!

Elsinoë. Go, brother, go! Be famous, happy, great!
 And if thou ever floatest o'er the waves
 Of our blue sea, and drawest near the coast,
 Then throw a handful of my ashes on
 Chiara's shore! Farewell, Iridion!

(She presses him to her heart, and retires within the curtain as he disappears.)

SCENE III. *The highest terrace of Iridion's palace, surrounded by balustrades and statues of the Grecian gods. MASINISSA is seated upon a stool of ivory; behind him stand the slaves, barbarians, and soldiers of Iridion.*

Masinissa. Slave, look again!

Pilades. Strange things are going on
 Around the temple; what they are, the Sphinx
 Alone can tell! The arch of Septimius
 Looks like a child, playing upon the sand;
 The Capitol alone looms out in all its grandeur.

Barbarian. At full two hundred paces I can strike
 A nut-branch and transfix it with my arrow;
 But that cursed Forum is so far, I can
 Discover nothing.

Masinissa. Age weighs upon my eyelids;
 The burning suns of years weaken my pupils;
 I still see farther than the youngest here!
 I see the vulture on Iridion's helmet;
 It floats above the crowd; I see the gleam
 Of Scipio's sword before him; behind him are
 The dark heads of your brethren.

Second Barbarian. I thought 'twas they!

Pilades. Is it a dream, or do I really hear
 The distant death-cry of a thousand voices!

A Young Barbarian. List to that shout !

Masinissa. I see him ! he is safe !

He pushes through the throng,—enters the peristyle,—
The gladiators sit upon the senate-steps,—
The people surge against the palace base
Like an o'erwearied sea sinking to calm.
Ho ! Verres !

Verres. Here.

Masinissa. How many men have you ?

Verres. I have with me the slaves from Sicyon ;
The Germans too from the Cisalpine legions,
Who joined us yesterday.

Masinissa. When Hesperus appears,
March with them quickly to the Samnite gate ;
Wait there the signal ! When you see a flame
Rise from this terrace, throw your firebrands ;
Begin at the villa of Rupilius,
And kindle flames until you reach the Forum !

Verres. Rely on me as on a Catiline !

Masinissa. I trust you, as old patrician,
To leave no drop undrained in the cup of vengeance !

Verres. And fill it up again to the very brim.

Masinissa. Alboin !

Alboin. Son of the Desert, give command !

Masinissa. Say rather, *Father!* Where are the He-
ruli ?

Alboin. They've just returned, having cut one aque-
duct,
Stopped Galba's fountain, Manlius' springs.

Masinissa. At twilight take your post at Nero's pond ;
Be faithful to your task !

Alboin. I need no spur.

Caracalla burned upon the Rhine
The homes and villages of all my tribe,
Made me his slave : this day shall pay my service !
I'll drive away all who approach the pond,
From the blind, tottering gray head with his buckets,
To the child who stretches out his little hand
For a drop of water !

Masinissa. Ay, Alboin, that is right.
The blessing of an old man cannot hurt you !

Verres (to Masinissa). Pray, look again! My heart
burns with anxiety!

Masinissa. Hold! . . . I see Scipio flying on his
horse!

All. From whence comes he?

Masinissa. From the Hostilian court.

There! there! . . . He disappears behind the palace.

Pilades. I think we ought to go to aid our Lord!

Masinissa. Do you hear nothing?

Alboin. I hear a distant sound.

Masinissa. It is the trampling of a horse!

Verres. I hear it!

Pilades. Look! Look! 'tis he! He dashes swiftly
on!

Verres. The portico, the obelisk now hide him.

Alboin. See, like a dart he passes to the temple!

Masinissa (calling). Scipio!

The voice of Scipio. Victory!

All. All hail to Africanus!

Scipio. No time is to be lost!—The sun sets in
A sea of blood beyond the Tiber. Haste!

Bring cypress branches, dry wood from the vaults!

Prepare a high pyre here upon the terrace;

It must be ready ere the stars are out!

(He enters.) My friends, the Roman Senate is no more!

Pilades. Iridion? . . . Where have you left my Lord?

Scipio. He hurried to the palace of the Cæsars
To gain the guard;—he will be here anon.

*(To the slaves who enter bearing cypress branches, logs of
wood, and vessels of various forms.)*

Here! Here! just in the centre, pile the wood,

Between the Athenian Minerva and

Diana of Ephesus! Sprinkle each row

With aloes, then pour copious streams of naphtha!

Masinissa. Your voice is pleasant to my ears, O
Scipio!

How did you the patricians drive away,—

Your ancient brethren,—from their curule chairs?

Scipio. We entered with Iridion at our head.

We found the conscript Fathers seated calm,

As in the better days of the Republic.

The statue of the Emperor was o'erthrown,
 The head lay at the feet, the arms were off;
 Volero, with his foot upon the breast,
 Was playing Cato for the senators!

Verres. A tradesman's son!

Scipio. But when they saw the Greek,
 They all grew silent, for his brow was dark
 With all the gloom of the past centuries.
 Then Uxor rose, and asked him: "By what right
 Do you dare desecrate the majesty
 Of the Roman Senate?" . . . The son of Amphilochous,
 Leaning against a pillar, crossed his hands
 On the Medusa chiseled on his armor,
 And said: "Depart! I banish you from Rome!"
 Then noise and fury overpowered his words;
 The priest of Jupiter, Ventidius,
 Called for the lictors; some seized the curule chairs;
 Some drew their swords; Iridion said, unmoved,—
 An icy smile upon his haughty lips:—
 "Here was it that your fathers once condemned
 Unhappy Greece: and in the very spot
 I here degrade you! If you do not fly,
 You all shall perish!" Volero sprang upon him;
 His sword glanced off the armor of the Greek,
 And with the shock, he fell against the base
 Of the statue of Caligula; his head,
 Striking on a sharp angle of the marble,
 Was gashed; he fainted as the blood gushed forth.
 The Greek deigned not even to draw his sword;
 Majestic as a god he turned, and said:
 "Scipio, I give the Senate up to you!"
 He clapped his hands in signal; then our men
 Tore down the brazen doors and rushed within the hall!
 The lictors soon repulsed, the conscript fathers fled,
 Scared by the flashing of our naked blades!
 He who resisted, lay by Volero;
 The flying called on Jove, while we cried Victory!
 (To *Verres.*) And I invoked the memory of Zama.*

* A town in Numidia, celebrated for the victory which Scipio obtained there over Hannibal, B. C. 202.

Verres. Alas! I was not there!

Scipio. Console yourself;
To-night I bid you to a fuller banquet!

CHORUS.

Here comes our Lord! We know his ringing voice!

(*Enter Gladiators; after them, IRIDION.*)

Pilades (throwing himself at the feet of Iridion).
Son of Amphilochus, I bless the gods
That you return unhurt!

Iridion. Rise! Rise! old friend!
I thank you from my heart, my Pilades!
I see the pyre is ready,—that is well!
Nothing is wanting but the asbestos shroud,
To save the ashes of the corpse of Rome.
Old man, have my commands been all obeyed?

Masinissa. All has been done as you desired, my son.

Iridion (seating himself by Masinissa).
A moment's rest! Take off my helmet, Pilades!
Lucius!

Scipio. I listen, Greek!

Iridion. Mark well my words,
Engraving each upon your memory
As part of your own vengeance! I have just left
The gardens of the Palace: the prætorians were
In wild confusion, drunk, some without arms,
Some terrified. I let them spend their rage,
And when the noise was stilled, I raised my hand,
When at the sight of the imperial ring,
They knew their danger! The tribunes thronged around
me;

I made a short address. The eunuchs brought
Great vessels of the Syrian's silver out,
And dreadful oaths came from the prætorians' lips:
"While a drop of blood remained, they would be true,
Ay, long as life should last!" With other vows
Which may stand for to-night,—to-morrow blots them
out!

Go, then, and watch them closely! Take with you
The gladiators, and Eutyichian's sword

As token that you come from me as Leader !
 Hold the guard in suspense and expectation ;
 Tell them Severus' bands have crossed the walls ;
 If they should hear the wailings in the streets,
 Tell them Severus' bands are raging there !²
 When they shall see the light of the burning city,
 Tell them again Severus and his bands !
 They will not wish to fight their furious brothers !
 Should Alexander's heralds come, toward morn,
 Find pretexts for delay ; reject ; accept ;
 Break and renew your terms, as long as lasts
 His patience ; spinning webs of guile around him !
 When that is over, rush with fury on him ;
 Fight, while a drop of blood is in your veins !
 Let Caracalla, Heliogabalus, be
 Your treacherous war-cry through the lingering night !
 Fight till you see the Forum burst in flames,
 A burning crown wreathing the Capitol,
 Rome rocking in the throbbing heart of fire,—
 Then know, the son of Amphilochus is nigh !

Scipio. What if the Syrian should wish to leave
 The palace, interfere with our success ?

Iridion. My sister will take charge of the Emperor ;
 But guard his life and person till the end !
 The prætorians but obey us while he lives.

Scipio. Where will your post of danger be, brave
 Greek ?

Iridion. I hope to be with you ere night be past !
 But hasten, for the twilight's crimson streaks
 Are fading from the sky.

(*Exit Scipio.*)

Verres, 'tis time

You also should depart !

Verres (to his soldiers). Men, follow me !

(*Exit Verres and his soldiers.*)

Iridion. Go with them, Alboin ; halt at Nero's pond !

Alboin. Sigurd, farewell, until we meet again !

(*Exit Alboin with his men.*)

Iridion (to the slaves). My faithful slaves, you must
 prepare to leave me !

Before you go, join in the parting feast

I have prepared you in the peristyle.
 For the last time you eat and drink together
 Within the palace of Iridion!
 To-morrow eve, his home will be in ashes;
 To-morrow's dawn will find you rich and free!

CHORUS OF SLAVES.

Father and mother thou hast been to us,
 Through exile, woe! Thou'st given us food and wine,
 And made us happy in thy palace, while
 Our brothers starved, whitening the deserts with
 Their famished bones, dying unpitied in
 Their agony upon the Arena's sands,
 All crimsoned with their blood!
 Should some among us ne'er return to thee,
 Ask not where are thy faithful slaves! They will
 Have gladly perished for thy future glory,
 Blessing thy name, son of Amphilochns!

(They throw themselves at his feet.)

Iridion. Friends, when this pyre of cypress blazes high,
 Answer the signal from your once loved home
 With countless fires! Burn temples, baths, halls, palaces!
 Farewell!

(Exit slaves. Iridion rises and leans against the pyre.)

The nearer comes the longed-for hour
 The fiercer burns my blood! Am I deceived?
 Is it a *real* darkness glooms the city?
 Amphilochns, is the time surely here?
 Are these stars *actual* that shine before me,
 Or are they only kindled by my thirst
 Of vengeance? . . . No! No! . . . the blood boils in
 my veins!

I feel it must be the last night of Rome!
 Look, Masinissa, how my men glide on
 Like shadowy spectres through the growing darkness!
 See how the torches creep in silence on!
 The neigh of horses,—are they those of Verres?
 As the light fades, flames flicker through the mounds!
 At last, ye gods, vengeance shall fall on Rome!
 But softly, softly, soldiers! Make less noise!

Masinissa. A desert grows around us! Voices die
That once were wont to echo through this palace!
Hark! they propose a health!

(*Cheering heard from the slaves feasting below.*)

Slaves. Iridion!

Iridion. Ah! how they ring my name with stalwart
cry!

Masinissa. The last glad cheer these walls will e'er
re-echo!

They leave the hall, they part, crouch to the ground,—
Their torches vanish in the thickening gloom.

Iridion. They've kept their faith; each has been true
to me;

All gone to do my will, to ruin Rome!

All gone, old man, and we remain alone

In this doomed Palace of Amphilochus.

'Tis strange the Nazarenes are not yet here,—

What can detain them? . . . Simeon swore to me

He would be here with them within three hours!

Masinissa. They must be here ere long, for Hes-
perus

Mounts o'er the Capitol; Berenice's

Bright hair now lights the distant Sabine hills.³

Iridion. Night, grudge me not this once thy winds
and clouds!

But once,—and then for centuries shine down,

Girdled with starry crowns, calm, peaceable,

Upon the blackened walls, ashes of Rome!

I scarce can breathe until the hour is here;

I long for it so madly!

Masinissa. Ay, so do I;

And not on thee alone does time weigh heavily!

Oh, I have waited longer far in vain

The ruin of my Enemy in silence!

Iridion. Your voice recalled my father's well-loved
accents.

Might not the statue of Amphilochus

Spring back to life, in this our hour supreme,

And feel a heart beat in his breast of marble?

But as you sit upon his ivory stool,

Shadows around, you bring him to my soul!

Exactly thus his toga fell about him
 The hour I swore . . . his hour of death! Give me
 Thy hands, and breathe the blessing on my head
 Which he was wont to do, before the battle!

Masinissa. May my seal rest upon thy forehead till
 The end of time! With this sign on thy brow,
 Thou'lt see a day these stars shall never know!

Iridion. I feel thy strengthening breath! I see Rome
 blaze!

The dome of her proud Capitol is crowned
 With leaping flames! Ye gods! her eagles fall!
 The clouds swoop down, glowing with crimson light!
 Domes, temples glitter, . . . crash in ruins down!
 The stars die out! The sky's on fire! Fire! Fire!

* * * * *

Nay, I but dream! Fires blaze but in my brain!
 But where are they? . . . The Christians? . . . All is calm!
 Darker, more silent still it grows on earth;—
 Winds sweep the sky! . . . Where are the Nazarenes?

Pilades (entering). Did you call me, my Lord?

Iridion. No. No. Not you.

Yet stay! Have you heard nothing in the vaults
 Beneath the palace, heard no steps approaching
 From the deep entrance to the catacombs?

Pilades. I have heard none, my Lord.

Iridion. Bring me a torch! (*Exit Pilades.*)

It cannot be! they will not fail to come!
 Have they not sworn it to me on the Cross?

Masinissa. And if they fail?

Iridion. The doubt is malediction!

Then all is lost! My hopes are placed in them!
 With them I meant to overrun the city,
 Startled and breaking everywhere in flames,
 Recalling Brennus,⁴ shouting "væ victis!"
 Without them, all my gladiators, soldiers,
 Are insufficient to repel the troops.

If they betray me . . . I will die, old man!

Masinissa. Be patient, son! Perchance they'll come;
 but first

Must they not finish all their long-drawn hymns?
 (*Pilades returns with a torch.*)

Iridion. Place it upon the pyre. I die in chains,
As did Prometheus.—A single moment lies
Between me and the banquets of the gods! . . .
Why are you silent? . . . Masinissa, speak!
Cry, Long live Hellas! Live Amphiloehus!

Masinissa. I'm silent,—for I *know* the promised hour
Of their arrival is already past!
Each feather in its wings, as it flits by,
Rustles with long-drawn sneers! . . .
Now it has passed forever! I can hear
The bitter laugh no more! 'Tis o'er, Iridion!

Iridion. In spite of men and fate, my father's will
Be thus accomplished! (*He seizes the torch.*) Glory to
Greece! Glory!
Thrice-powerful Hecate, come!⁵ Receive this sacrifice!
(*He prepares to fire and spring upon the pyre, when a mes-
senger enters.*)

Whence comest thou, black phantom? Answer me!
If thou'rt my Evil Genius, thou'rt too late:
Thou canst not hold me now upon the earth!

Messenger. Peace in the holy name of Jesus Christ!

Iridion. Where are the Brethren? Where is Simeon?

Messenger. In his despair he calls on you for rescue!
All the armed Christians are by force detained
By Victor at the gate of Eloim,
Most anxious as they are to join you, Greek.

Iridion. Thanks, servant of the saints. See, I am calm;
I do not kill you! Thou alone shalt die!

(*He tramples the torch out with his feet.*)

(*To Masinissa.*) Should any of my men come back, bid
them

Await me here. I will return, old man.

Masinissa. There may be time; it still is far from
dawn.

Pilades (*handing the helmet to Iridion*). You have
forgot your helmet, my good Lord.

Iridion. My sword's enough to win the victory;
To die requires no helmet! (*To the messenger.*) All
hangs on haste!

(*Exeunt Iridion and messenger.*)

Masinissa (rising and stretching out his hands toward Rome).
 Be blest forever, O my cherished city!
 Sleep sweetly in the shadow of these arms!
 Thy baseness, cruelty, have saved thee, Rome!
 Live and oppress! Live on to torture man!
 Let all flesh be corrupted in thy torments;
 All souls, until they doubt that God exists!
 (*He disappears behind the pyre.*)

SCENE IV. *The sanctuary of Eloim in the catacombs. A chalice and a cross wreathed with flowers stand upon the altar; tapers are lighted round the cross, and burning censers emit clouds of perfumed smoke. SIMEON, armed, stands on one side of the altar, METELLA on the other, and armed Christians are seen kneeling in the background. VICTOR stands in the centre, on the highest step of the altar, with many priests surrounding him.*

Victor. Lost in the air like clouds of smoke, so will
 All traces of you melt from earth and heaven!
 Ah! would, like stones, you might sleep on forever!
 But you must wake to conscious agony,
 Forever live in the dark home of death,
 Wherever falls the thunder of God's vengeance!
 (*To Simeon.*) Fly from Jehovah's face, like the first
 murderer!

Simeon. But hear me, Victor!

Victor. I will not listen more!

Look on this maid, whom I reproach not now,
 Because the Hand of God is on her brow.
 Who killed that soul? left life within that frame,
 Only to grow a scorn 'mong living men?
 Dost thou not hear the voice of one possessed
 By Satan, quivering through those wretched lips?

Metella. Thou persecutest me, Priest of my People!

Victor. Silence, rebellious child! Thou wert an angel,
 But, wanting perseverance, thou hast fallen,
 And now art damned!

Metella. Alas! thou knowest him not!
 He spake so gently, called me "unfortunate,"
 Because he knew that I would suffer shame

On his account. Fear not to trust him, Simeon ;
 He'll surely come ! Brothers, forget him not ;
 I know he will be here ! Do not forsake him !
 He tore me from the fire when raging flames
 Were blazing round my body. He will save
 Me yet from all my foes. He comes ! He comes !

Simeon. Victor, for the last time, I pray you hear
 me !

Have I not always been obedient to you ?
 What Christian dares to testify against me ?
 Have I not twice striven for the martyr's crown ?
 Once in the Antioch dungeons ; afterwards
 At Tarsus in the ring ? Have I not done
 Stern penance in the desert for long years ?
 Have I e'er broken the law, or given offense
 To any of the Christian brethren ? Speak !

Victor. You now offend, thus boasting of yourself.
 Like the proud Pharisee the Lord condemned,
 You throw a stumbling-block before the humble.

Simeon. I do not boast ; I speak the simple truth.
 Who has more deeply meditated on
 The death of Christ ? Who of you all has felt
 A deeper love spring from the agonies
 Of Golgotha ? a gratitude more fervent ?
 To save the world our God took human flesh ;
 Must we to serve the world not take a body ?
 Our Lord took flesh : we live but in the spirit !
 Where are our temples, churches, kingdom, power ?
 Can *unseen* men control the *visible* world ?

Victor. Corinthian sophist, whom would you deceive ?
 " My kingdom is not of this world," said Christ.

Simeon. Ah ! wherefore did I leave my burning sands ?
There the Creator I adored ; and *here*
 I hate the creature !

Victor. Son !

Simeon. A voice I hear

Often at night urges me ever on !
 Can such things be but lying prophecies ?

Victor. A short time since, and you were of the elect,
 One of the chosen children of the church :—
 And will you crucify your Lord anew ?

Metella. Bow low your heads! I hear his footsteps
ring
As they descend the golden stairs from Heaven!

(*Enter IRIDION.*)

Immortal youth is on his glorious brow!

(*She throws herself at his feet.*)

I told them, Lord, that thou wouldst surely come!

CHORUS OF PRIESTS (*to Iridion*).

Go! Heretic!

Victor. The brimming cup of mercy
Once by thy angel held, is now exhausted.

Iridion. I'll fill it up anew with Roman blood!
Who swore to come, and broke his plighted oath?
Simeon of Corinth,—perjured before God!
Who let their arms fall from their sinewy hands,
Licking the dust, feeding on broken vows?
You, Brothers! . . . Yet at this hour proud Cæsar falls,
And all the gods of the idolaters

Wait but the resurrection of the saints

To vanish from the face of earth forever!

Ha! Are ye men? Then leave the old, the dead,
To sit among their tombs till time is o'er;—

Men, follow me, and you shall surely conquer!

Strike boldly, and proclaim the triune God!

Come! You shall see the star seen by the kings

When Christ was born,—it leads to victory!

Christ will be born anew in thousand souls

Which else would never know Him! You shall hear
Again the archangel's song, ringing through Heaven!

Simeon. I stretch my arms to thee, Hieronymus!

CHORUS.

Beg Victor!

Iridion. Father!

Victor. Nay, this day you have lost
Your Heavenly Father!

Iridion. Old man!

Victor. You'll never live
To reach my age!

Metella (to Iridion). Forgive the old man, Lord!
He knows not what he says! To arms! To arms!

Iridion. Thou only hast remained still faithful to me;
But fate this hour forsakes thee too, Metella!

Victor. My sons! A sign from Heaven will be given,
That you may turn from sin and be forgiven,
Saved by the intercession of your Shepherd.

(To Metella.) Thou who wert ever wont to be the first
At the Lord's table, though to-day the last,
Approach, that I may place my hands upon thy brow!

Metella. Metellus' daughter once was dear to thee;
Father, she comes,—what wouldst thou with her now?

Victor (elevating the chalice). Metella, kneel before
the Blood of the Lord!

Metella (turning round and kneeling before Iridion).
Father, I kneel before the Lord Himself!

(A priest hands holy water to Victor.)

Victor. Spirit! proceeding from the Father, Son!
Deign to renew thy dwelling in this soul
Wandering from Thee! . . . As in the hour of baptism,

(He makes the sign of the Cross upon Metella's brow.)

Again I bless thee, consecrate thy brow!

CHORUS.

Sleep overcomes the virgin! Her head sinks,
And the long lashes droop so wearily!

Victor (to the priests). Surround! support her in your
arms! She faints!

Metella. To arms! To arms!

Victor. Be silent, evil spirit
Who speakest through her voice, and drivest her mad!
I bind thee by the mighty sign of the Cross,
And with the strong word, Jesus, I command
Thee, Liar, Fiend, whatever be thy name
Or power,—release her soul, and quit her body!

Metella. A hundred sighs are wailing through my
breast!

A hundred curses,—none of them my own!

Victor. Yield, Demon! Go!

Metella. Save me! oh, save!

Iridion.

Here! Here!

Within my arms!

Metella.

Earth, open 'neath my feet!

Hide me forever from his fatal gaze!

Iridion.

Metella, thou art mine! Mine! only mine!

Metella.

Where is Metella? . . . Do not call her thus! . . .

She loved and trusted thee . . . is lost forever! . . .

I hear wild laughter! . . . laughter which tears the earth! . . .

Black phantoms hover,—circle round my head!

Back! Back!

Iridion (making his way through the priests). Out of my way! Give her to me!

Brothers, we'll tear the maid from the hands of her murderers!

Metella.

Whose voice is that? . . . Ah! I have heard it oft! . . .

Yes, she was mild and so sincere! She loved

Thee once so well! Thou wert so beautiful!

Calledst her "unfortunate"! . . . Thy voice was sweet . . .

Thou saidst to her, "My glory shall be thine!"

Victor. Apage Satanas!*Metella (to Iridion).*

Approach me not!

Fly from me! Fly! Thousands of dusky wings

Float over thee! . . .

Where is the Lord, my God?

Victor (holding the crucifix before her). Here, daughter! Here!*Metella.* Press it upon my lips! (*She kisses the crucifix.*) Forgive! Forgive!*Victor.* Dost thou renounce the evil spirit? . . . Speak!*Metella.* Yes, I renounce him! (*She falls.*) He has deceived me, Brothers!

He has deceived you all!

CHORUS.

Thou grow'st so pale!

White Rose, thou sink'st to earth, to rise no more!

Metella. The Judgment of the Lord is now upon
me! . . .

I die . . . but hark! I die . . . die in the Lord!

(She drags herself on to the feet of Victor.)

Bless me, my Father! Press me to thy heart!

Father, defend thy agonizing child!

It grows so cold! so wild! so terrible!

So dark! Father, I cannot see thee more!

Victor. Daughter, depart in peace! Thy penitence
Hath saved thee!

Iridion. Oh! tear thyself away, my love,
From that cold breast in which there throbs no heart!
Metella, come to me!

Metella (turning her face to Iridion). Ah! I forgive
thee all!

Adore Christ only, Hieronymus!

Victor (leaning over her). Dost thou still hear me,
daughter? Answer me!

Metella. I breathe the breath of roses,—violets . . .
(She dies.)

CHORUS OF CHRISTIANS.

Father, pray for us to the Invisible!

Whate'er thou loosest on earth, is loosed in Heaven!

He who deceived us totters and turns pale!

Iridion. Shame! Were a woman's words your only
trust?

Did you take up the sword at her command?

Because these miserable dotards here

Have killed her, will you then forsake our cause,

Desert me, and your God? What, silent all?

Shame lays a weight as heavy on your lips

As stones upon the dead! Follow me, men!

Simeon. I tear my clothing, pierce my heart to find
The truth! Let my life perish with my dream!

Iridion. Slave of these dotards, dar'st thou speak to
me?

Accursed! 'twas thou betrayedest her to these priests!

Victor. I excommunicate thee from the church!

Whoe'er shall touch thy hand will be unclean!

And he who listens to thy dangerous words

Shall have no place at the table of the Lord!
Go! Go! Thy name *was* Hieronymus!

(*Enter a messenger.*)

CHORUS OF PRIESTS (*to messenger*).

The Lord be with thee!

A Priest. Julian, thou bringest news?

Messenger (kneeling before Victor). Mammae begs your
prayers! Her son has pressed
Into the city; fights upon the Forum.

Iridion. Time has outstripped me—men betrayed—
and gods deceived!

(*He tears a Cross from under his armor.*)

Take back your symbol of eternal life!
Who that has lived on earth would live again?

(*He dashes the Cross on the steps of the altar.*)

Look! how it shatters on the altar's steps!
Cowards, live on!

(*He goes.*)

Barbarians. Stop! stop! we will be true!
We'll march with you,—Jesus may judge us after!

Iridion. Then cry aloud: "Odin and Crimhild!"
Come!

(*Exeunt Iridion and Barbarians.*)

Victor. Christians, put up your prayers for Alexander!
He will be Cæsar.

SCENE V. *The street of tombs along the walls of Rome.*
Enter soldiers of Iridion, bearing in VERRES, wounded.
Scattered groups of men are seen from time to time flying
across the background.

Verres. Your torch seems tripled by my swimming
eyes:

Greek, read the inscription on this monument!

Soldier (reads). Diis manibus Attilii Verres bis con-
sulis . . .

Verres. Enough; lay me beside my ancestor!

Bid me good-night, for though the dawn is near,
Verres will never see the sun again !

(IRIDION *appears on the opposite side, ascending from the catacombs. He is first seen amid the ruins of a large monument, accompanied by the Barbarians.*)

Iridion. The hues of morning mock me, painting flame
And fire upon the sky,—Rome yet unscathed !

(*To the Barbarians.*) Unbrace the axes from your gir-
dles, friends !

(*He moves forward.*) Speak ! who art thou supported by
this tomb ?

Verres. Is it a dying dream, or do I hear
Iridion's voice. Say, is it dream or truth ?

Iridion. Truth. I am here. I hope you are not
hurt !

Verres. Approach ! You know a sign was promised
me ;

I waited for it like a famished wolf ;

It never came,—and I began without it.

Behind yon pyramid, 'midst smoke and embers,

I met Rupilius, throttled him in the ashes.

The people fell upon us shouting "Severus !"

And I received the wound from which I die.

Atropos' shears cut rapidly my life-thread !

The dawn grows brighter—but my life goes out—

I am the last of the Verres—Rome still stands—

(*He dies.*)

Iridion. All efforts to restore him are in vain ;

His debt to Fate is paid ! The last of the Verres !

Revenge him, Brothers ! Join with the troops I bring !

(*A slave rushes by.*)

Halt ! tell us whence you fly so rapidly ?

Slave. Last from the Forum. Do not stop me,
pray !

Iridion. In other days I gave you to my sister ;

You sang blind Homer to me when a boy.

But yesterday you clasped my chlamys for me

In Cæsar's Hall—and yet you do not know me !

Slave. My noble Lord ! (*He kneels.*)

Iridion. I left you with my sister,

Whom you swore to defend with your own life.
Spare me no anguish ! tell me quickly all !

Slave. Scarce had the stars shone down through half
the night,
When suddenly the legions of Severus,
Shouting, plunged down upon the Palatine.
The livelong night with fury Scipio fought ;
I heard him raging like an angry wolf,
His men defending, driving back the foe.
You know you stationed me in Cæsar's room.
Eutylian, pale with fear, ran to and fro
Without cessation. Thy sister came but once :
" Euphorion ? " she said. I answered her :
" Command ! I will obey ! O Elsinoë ! "
She made me no reply, gliding away
Divinely calm and beautiful as ever !
A melancholy splendor lit her brow,
Unearthly light, like midnight strewn with stars,
As if already floating o'er the waves of Styx !
Without, the cries grew ever more tumultuous.
Eutylian could bear his fright no longer ;
Shivering, he rushed into the Hall of Porphyry,
And, leaning o'er the balustrade, he cried :
" The Greek betrays us ! Ay ! He *has* betrayed us !
His sister is a traitor ! She betrays us ! "
Maddened with terror then I heard him cry :
" The Emperor and Greek will burn the city !
Pardon me, Romans ! I am not in fault ! "
Aristomachus thundered from afar
Of Alexander's magnanimity,
Of recompense, forgiveness, and rewards ;
But when he ceased to speak, wild groans arose
Under the flashing of his keen-edged sword !
When his blade rested, he again deceived
Our people with his treacherous promises !
The prætorians then revolted, would obey
Neither centurions nor tribunes more :—
The threats of Scipio were hurled in vain ;
The fight ceased in the gardens, and they rushed
Precipitately in, storming the palace !
Then I ran to thy sister ; I had sworn

To defend her with my life, to die for her!
 Cæsar, with haggard looks, leaned on his couch;
 He had attached his pendants as High-Priest
 To his imperial diadem: he held
 In the one hand the knife of sacrifice,
 A jeweled cup of poison in the other.
 But without courage to destroy himself,
 He heaved long sighs, lamented, sobbed and wept;
 Sometimes was silent; suddenly would break
 Into voluptuous songs, as rocked in rapturous dreams.
 Upon a throne of gold thy sister sat,
 Glittering with gems and robed in royal purple,
 In utter silence, and divinely calm.
 The first—the second door are rudely shattered—
 The third door crashes in—voices and tumult—
 The tramp of men—the clash of ringing steel—
 I cover Elsinoë with my body—

Iridion. Your hand!

Euphorion. Hundreds of lances tear away
 The separating curtains,—troops rush in,
 Led by Aristomachus, crying loudly:
 “Murder and rob! Vengeance for all our wrongs!”
 The Emperor springs upon them like a tiger,—
 Soon running o’er with blood, retreats—back—back—
 And falls at last among his cherished roses!
 A living wall of swords obstructs my sight—
 I cannot see him through the glittering veil—
 I hear the blades break through his shattered breast!
 When the wall falls—I see his jeweled hands—
 Severed—there lies his diadem-crowned head!

Iridion. But Elsinoë? Elsinoë? friend!

Euphorion. Alas! my master, must I tell thee all?
 That instant comes Severus, crying loudly:
 “Who Elsinoë harms, ne’er sees the sun again!”
 She gazes on him calmly as a goddess,
 Throws back the purple mantle from her shoulders,
 Seizes and drives a dagger to her heart!
 I see the flash of steel,—the gush of blood!
 Some muttered words . . .

Iridion. Go on! Go on! the gods
 Have given Iridion a heart of stone!

Euphorion. Broken the voice,—I catch the dying sounds:—

“Brother! I will not live to love thy foe! . . .
My task is done! . . . Mother! receive my soul!” . . .
She falls into the arms of Alexander!
Whirlpools of motion surge me as they will,
I stumble, fall upon Eutyçhian’s corpse,
Fly for my life, then meet with Scipio,
Who still is leading the Cheruskian cohorts,
The sole men left who yield not to Severus!
Ha! here he comes!

Iridion. Sun! rising bright and clear,
Glaring so ghastly on my ruined hopes,
Where is my sister, my poor Elsinoë?

(*He moves a few steps forward, and leans against a tomb.*)

Far in the west on the volcano’s brow,
The last cloud of this fatal night still lingers!
My mother often told me that the shades
Of mortals loved to rock themselves in clouds,
Float with the flying mists,—O Elsinoë! . . .
My sunny-haired, dost leave me thus forever?

(*SCIPIO enters with the cohorts, and stops by the corpse of Verres.*)

Scipio. Dead! Thou hast gone to sleep before me,
brother!

Yet let me once more press thy icy hand!
Sit tibi terra levis!

Euphorion (to Scipio). Look, where he leans for support
on a grave

And struggles with despair!

Scipio.

Who? Who?

Euphorion.

The Greek;

Son of Amphilochus.

Scipio.

Iridion!

I waited vainly for the promised flames!

Iridion. In vain!

Scipio. Fortune betrays us everywhere!

Iridion. I know!

Scipio. Domitian, Tubero, are here,

Close at our heels; what are we next to do?

Iridion (starting from his stupor). Why, go to meet them! . . . O Scipio, Roman blood!

Scipio. No weakness ever! Despair but gives thee keener arms!

Our glorious chief! Such were the Patrician Romans!
Better to die with thee, than live to fall
By tigers' claws upon the bloody sands!
On! on! and Tubero will soon be ours!

Iridion (drawing his sword and throwing away its scabbard).

Go, where my hopes are gone! Thou, handle, grow
Into my hand, never to be unclasped!
Blood! Roman blood! and death to Alexander!
On! soldiers, on!

(*Exeunt all.*)

ACT V.

SCENE I. *Palace of the Emperors.* ALEXANDER, MAM-
MEA, DOMITIAN, *Courtiers.*

Domitian. Why do you parley longer with a madman?
What can you hope from the perfidious Greek?
First he deceived us with his assumed sadness,
And then implacably resisted us.
Does he address to you a single prayer,
Acknowledge you as Emperor of Rome?
Without the slightest shadow of success,
Did he not furiously fight all yesterday?
Did he not burn last night our Roman temples?
Does he not combat for a ruined cause,
More like an incarnate Hate than mortal man?
For, thank the gods! men commit evil rather
To attain an end, than through a love for it.
He stands beyond the pale of all humanity.
Have no more mercy! You have gone far enough
In sending him in state his sister's corpse.

Alexander. When *Elsinoë* lay pierced to the heart,
Stifling her moans, and dying in my arms,

Her life-blood weltering o'er her breast of snow,—
 I swore to pardon, to forgive her brother!
 Upon this sacred vow her spirit fled:—
 It floats before me now, and claims the promise.

Domitian. Let others prate of Cæsar's magnanimity;
 I call it weakness! Junius was named the Just
 Because he would not pardon his own sons.
 He who forgives the guilty, some day must
 Punish the innocent!

Mammea (to Alexander). Swerve not from your
 intent!

Mercy is royal purple for a king.

Domitian. And oft transforms the royal hue to blood!

Alexander. I cannot turn from my decision, Consul.
 Go to Iridion; propose my terms;
 Should you return from him with longed-for peace,
 Happier than Titus, I can say, my friends,
 I have not lost my day!

Domitian. Should I return,
 And bring you back refusal, withering scorn?

Alexander. I will have done what my heart bids me do;
 Have kept my promise to the sunny-haired;
 And you may then begin to judge and doom!

SCENE II. *The Hall of Amphilochus as in Act I., Scene I. The corpse of Elsinöë, robed in white and strewed with cypress branches, lies upon an elevated bier. A Grecian vase of lustral water stands on a tripod beside it. An Altar to Justice is erected in the midst of the Hall. A chorus of weeping maidens circle the corpse, scattering white roses and lilies around it. PILADES sits moaning beside it. Enter IRIDIION, followed by gladiators, retainers, soldiers, and slaves.*

Iridion (to Pilades). Hast thou seen Masinissa, Pi-
 lades?

Pilades. No one has seen him since you parted with
 him.

Iridion. Masinissa!

CHORUS OF GLADIATORS.

Masinissa! Hear!

Iridion. Twice have these vaults alone replied for him!
(*He seats himself at the base of the statue of his father.*)

Pilades. The old man is a traitor to my Lord.

Iridion (*covering his face with his hands*).

Oh! say not so! . . . He was the friend of Sigurd,
Lifelong companion of Amphilochous.

Before his words the graves gave up their dead,
The buried walked in forms of life again.

He will return. He never will forsake me!

(*He comes forward and addresses soldiers, gladiators and slaves.*)

I've called you all together at this hour,
When rest the Roman cohorts from the fight,
To pay the last sad honors to my sister's corpse.
The first pure victim of our holy vengeance,
She perished in her virgin innocence.

Let him who honors me, reverence her memory!

Let him who curses Rome, remember her

With deathless gratitude! Let him who swears

To die with me, now bless her solemn shade!

(*Iridion advances to the bier, takes a branch of cypress, dips it in the vase of lustral water, and sprinkles the drops round the corpse. The gladiators, barbarians, etc., do likewise, while the chorus of virgins chants the "Salve Eternum."*)

CHORUS OF VIRGINS.

Not yet the fearful steersman, Son of Night

And Erebus, unfurling his black sails,

Has taken thee with him, O Elsinoë!

This side of gloomy Styx, thou wanderest still!

We lay a piece of gold in thy pale mouth

To pay thy silent Boatman, sunny-haired!

The poppy and the honey now we place

In thy snow hands—that move on earth no more—

To lull old surly Cerberus to sleep!

We weep around thy bier! . . .

(*They pause and weep.*)

(*Again resume.*)

But a few moments more, and thou wilt go

Where swarms of Dead like shadowy vapors flit;

Whirling like autumn leaves they drift and toss :—
 A moment after—and thou must appear
 Before the Judgment Seat of Rhadamanthus,
 The strict and terrible, where there are sighs,
 Wailings and doom, and groans of vain remorse !
 Salve Eternum, Elsinœ pale !

Thy rapid feet scarce touch the living flames ;
 Light as white wings they bear thee swiftly on !
 Thou leavest the brazen gates of Erebus,
 Thou crossest o'er the blazing Phlegethon,
 Which, like a snake of fire, winds seven times
 Round gloomy Tartarus.

Ha, virgin ! Now thou seest a soft, sad light,
 And groves of tender green, where reigns a still
 And melancholy peace. There wait for thee
 Full cups from Lethe's spring, and the calm shades
 Of virgins like thyself, who perished young—
 The perfumed leaves of spring flowers early mown !
 Salve Eternum ! Elsinœ, go !

The piece of gold lies on thy pallid lips
 To pay the Pilot with the gloomy sails !
 Poppy and honey in thy hands of snow,
 To soothe the triple-headed Cerberus !
 Go, drink the cups from Lethe's calming spring !
 Salve Eternum ! Elsinœ, go !

(*After the chant has ceased, EUPHORION enters and addresses Iridion, who is still standing by the bier.*)

Euphorion. Son of Amphiloclus !

Iridion. What is it, friend ?

Euphorion. Domitian, Cæsar's Consul, asks admission.

Iridion. Admit, Euphorion ! I will see him here.

(*Enter DOMITIAN, preceded by the imperial eagles.*)

Domitian. As foe and envoy you once came to us :
 I come to you to-day, as foe and envoy.

Iridion. As you then answered me, I answer you to-
 day :

“ Our arms are in our hands. It is too late ! ”

Domitian. Like words result not in like consequence ;
 Ours brought us victory !

Iridion. Did you say *victory* ?

Rolls the imperial chariot yet along
 The Via Sacra? I dream *my* troops are there!
 Holds Fortune yet the wreath of triumph round
 The brow of Alexander, Conqueror?
 Holds Alboin not the Viminalis still?
 Is Scipio driven from the Aventine?
 Who burned last night the temple of Faustinus,
 The great Emilian Basilica?
 Roman, it is defeat, not victory!

Domitian. I saw the sentenced on their way to death
 This very morn; they moaned and wrung their hands
 In agony,—such fate must be your own.
 But Alexander, sporting with success,
 Would gladly save you from such suffering,
 And offers peace, and pardon for your crimes.

Iridion. Perchance high treason against majesty?

Domitian. And have you not been guilty of it, Greek?

Iridion. Your majesty began but yesterday,
 And my crime is as old as the hearts of freemen!
 Is there still more to hear? I am in haste.

Domitian. The Emperor exacts that you shall leave
 The capital forever; to Chiara go;
 Over the smoking entrails, swear to observe
All the conditions, faithfulness to him;
 Give up your accomplices to the last man.
 And he who justly might immure for life
 Or nail you to a cross, will take your hand,
 Forgive, forget, and say farewell to you.

Iridion. Speak louder, Consul! My people, have you
 heard?

Cæsar renews to me his terms of favor,
 If I will chain you up like beasts, and give
 You to his lictors' axe! Shall I accept his grace?
 Would it be sweet to be allowed to kneel,
 And strike our brows against the heels of Cæsar?
 Immortal gods! who in your scorn of men
 So calmly sleep on your Olympian heights,
 Waken and scoff to hear Mammea's son
Dishonor send as his most precious gift
 By Ulpian, to the son of Amphiloclus!

(*He rises, and comes close to Domitian.*)

Sooner will scorpions perch upon the hand
 Of Cæsar, innocent as butterflies ;
 Or Zeus' dread lightnings kneel to him, and say :
 " We pray thee suffer us to rend the clouds,"
 Than will the son of the Greek, Amphilochns,
 Lay down his arms, betray to death his brothers !

Domitian. I urge it not. I simply execute
 A mission given by the Emperor.
 Rather continue blind unto the end ;
 Rage on with your few robbers, murderers ;
 Fight for the Ruler you have chosen on earth ;
 And when you fall—leading barbarians, slaves,
 Assassins, gladiators, recreant Greeks,—
 Into the Dark of Erebus; still shout,
 Crossing the Styx: " Long live the Syrian !"
 While Cerberus, with his three barking heads,
 Makes chorus to your cry !

Iridion. Is this your legal skill in sifting motives,
 In reading the complexities that weave
 Their subtle mysteries through the human heart ?
 Great jurist, analyst, you know me not !
 The worm which writhes under my feet in mire,
 The very dust I shake from my cothurnus,
 Have deeper place in my remembrance than
 The Syrian. Domitian, ask my people,—
 If any of them will respond to you,—
 If there is one among them who has known,
 Or can remember him you call *my master* !

Many Voices. We serve Iridion only.

Other Voices. Only Sigurd.

Barbarians. Only the son of Crimhild, Odin's priestess.

Domitian. And she who lies so still upon this bier ?

Iridion. I dedicated her to sacrifice !

She yielded not to threats of sovereign power,
 Nor gave herself to spouses of dishonor.
 Oh, injure not the dead ! Breathe not one word
 To taint her sanctity,—who wakes no more !
 Under the Syrian despot's poisoned breath,—
 Whom Romans chose to be their Emperor,—
 She lived more chaste than purest of your mothers,
 Your daughters, or your unsunned vestal virgins !

Domitian. For whom then dost thou fight? and against whom?

Iridion. Old man, the tale were long; time fails to tell it!

Domitian. Yet Alexander loves you, mystic Greek.

Iridion. No portion of my hate has fallen on him.

Domitian. Then, Greek, who is your *real* enemy?

Iridion (*turning' to his soldiers*). Answer the deaf and blind, and tell him, Brothers,

What foe has driven you from the pleasant paths
Allotted to humanity, and forced
You into regions of perpetual gloom;
Who from your cradles branded on your brows
The seal of hunger, thirst, and misery;
Who has forbidden you to love a wife,
To offer her a quiet home of peace,
Or sit with children round a happy hearth.

CHORUS OF SOLDIERS.

Rome! Rome!

Iridion. Mortal itself, who founds its dearest hopes
Upon the agonies of mortals, nations?
Who taught the son of Mithridates to
Imbrue his hands in the blood of his own father?
Who invites the traitors of the north,
The betrayers of the south, to its high festivals,
Making of treason the sure path to fame?
Who forces the unfortunate to drain
The cup of wretchedness?

CHORUS OF VOICES.

Rome! ever Rome!

Iridion. And who is it, that, like the infernal gods,
Banquets on tears, and bathes in baths of blood,
As if Pain were the nectar of the gods?

CHORUS OF VOICES.

Rome! Rome!

Iridion. Have you heard, Consul? Do you know
At last, who, what I am?

Domitian. A very madman!

Rome is, has been, the darling of the gods !
 The second Fate, destined to rule the world !
 Before her fall the weak, with faces in the dust ;
 The haughty vanish when she frowns on them !
 The wheel of Fortune cannot turn without her ;
She walks a slave, chained to Rome's car of triumph !
 Yet you, a *boy*, without provisions, troops,
 You will destroy a Power whose thunders crash
 From the urn of Hannibal to farthest Cimbrian mounds !
 Look from this place, and see the spot on which
 Your head shall fall before the lictor's axe !

Iridion. It may be, Roman ! but before that hour
 The Cimbrian javelin may have pierced your heart,
 The axe of the Cherusci found its way
 Through Aristomachus' breastplate ; and I will
 Have kept a solemn vow, once pledged to Tubero !

CHORUS.

Before that hour the wronged must drain a cup
 Full to the brim of blood, for every pang
 They have endured ! After us, come our heirs,
 Whom we, from our abyss, will lead to vengeance !

Domitian. You'll have no heirs ! Your races die in
 you !

Your madness and its punishment will be
 A corner-stone in the enduring base
 Of the city founded on the seven hills !

Iridion. On that stone shall be graven : **HERE LIES
 ROME !**

Domitian. Weak mortal ! Do you really hope to
 change

The will of Fate, forever wise and good ?
 Were it within your power, to whom would you depute
 The right to rule, if not to mighty Rome,
 The home of energy, decisive action ?
 Should venal Afric hold the sceptre of the world ?
 Debauched Seleucia ? singing, dancing Hellas ?
 No. Force is born where never sounds the lyre ;
 Where steel and iron gird the stalwart brow,
 Not myrtle-wreaths and crowns of fading roses !
 There where the souls of men are filled with vigor,

Where the strong will is master, acts and dares,
 Not in the world of Rhythm, Music, Song!
 Wills deep as the abyss, and grave as thought,
 Invincible as reason, must bear rule!
 Power dwells where intellect has built her throne;
 Where understanding, not the muses, sway.

Iridion. The martyrs of all nations know too well
 The meaning of the Roman *intellect*:
 'Tis cunning subtlety, self-interest, guile!
 With *Roman wisdom* graven on his brow,
 The Roman Genius came to take his seat
 Within the home of Attalus! He stooped,
 Caressed and flattered, furred his raven wings,
 Until he wrenched from tottering, dying hands
 The title-deeds to Pergamus!¹
 Then he arose, and crawled to take a part
 In the Isthmian games, praising the sons of Hellas.²
 He spake of WISDOM, for with this magic word
 He still deceives the weak, and kills the human soul.
 The *intellect* in Greece is godlike power
 To create the Beautiful; to bless the soul;
 Such intellect is genius from the gods:
 It means not subtlety, successful fraud.
 If an unfortunate victim, weak enough
 To trust Rome's Genius, falls into his snare,
 Renounces country, home, all fame in life,
 All glory after death, the Genius laughs
 And says: "You yield to Roman intellect;"
 Then twists a halter round the wretch's throat,
 Drags him forthwith to the Tarpeian Rock,
 And pitiless hurls him into the abyss!
 My Hellas never was degraded by
 The debasement of such groveling "intellect"!
 The life of Greece is not a dull account-book;
 Her hopes were never based on treachery,
 Nor is her nectar bitter sobs and tears.
 Latona's son in her shades loved to dwell,
 To twine round her his glorious aureole;
 She rests upon the breast of Zeus; her brow,
 Shadowed by the immortal shield of Pallas,
 Engenders *thought sublime*. Apollo loves her;

The Laurel on his head, the Golden Lyre
 In his skilled hands, he sports on her blue seas;—
 Placing his shining feet upon her sunny shores,
 Inspires her sons,—the Genius true of Greece!
 Vengeance, Apollo! vengeance for thy Hellas!

Domitian. Rave not, but gaze upon Rome's might
 and strength!

The names of Sparta, Corinth, Athens, die
 'Neath the pervading thunders of our arms
 Like hum of distant bees at sunset's hour.
 Farther and farther will our sway extend,
 And from the rising to the setting sun,
 The world will know no peace, until its name is ROME!

Iridion. And can you dream to cover this abyss
 With a fresh growth of ivy, vines, and laurel?
 Deem you the bones of your dead offerings,
 The plundered shrines, polluted sanctuaries,
 Swords torn from bleeding hands that trusted you,
 The murdered women, children's rotting flesh,
 The myriad broken hearts strewn o'er your path,
 Will be no longer seen 'neath that lush growth
 Which loves to shelter ruin, hide decay?
 Death lurks in every pitfall of such path!
 And in a generation without souls,
 How can you light anew the extinct fires
 Of honor, peace, security, and art,—
 Cull palms and roses, where you have sown Hate?
 Send for your wreaths of laurel, you and Cæsar;
 Indulge your pleasant dreams, like frail old men
 Who hope the return of youth, when Death knocks at
 their door!

Domitian. Chief of incendiaries, bands of robbers,
 Your breath is poison for a man of virtue!
 Branded upon your brow, abandoned by the gods,
 All crimes are burning with infernal glare:
 My old frame shudders as I look upon you!

Iridion (turning towards the statue of Amphiloehus).
 Father! the Roman for the first time hears
 A freeman speak, and falls into a rage!
 Consul, a few words more! What have you made
 Of all this world which the Infernal gods

Have given to you? Have you made *any* happy?
 I've seen triumphal arches spring upon it,
 The ivory chairs of the Ediles rise thereon;
 You have made roads o'er which to send your troops,
 Raised marbles upon which you've graven your name
 With the sweat and blood of dying, wretched men,
 Yourselves thus dedicating to the vengeful Furies!
 And when the tottering earth fell in your arms,
 Like a deluded woman led astray,
 The godlike dreams of Plato floated o'er it,
 While even from Gades to the Ultima Thule,
 Glittered the snowy sails of prosperous Carthage!
 What have you made this world? Answer me, Consul!
 Speak! What remains of all the happy past?
 Do you not hear the sighs and sobs break forth
 From the fainting hearts of the wretched Nazarenes
 Whom you detain for torture in the catacombs?
 Look at the wandering shadows of the Stoics,³
 Who try to console themselves for the loss of all
 Making life precious, by the cold abstractions
 Writ by Aurelius! Can you call this, life?
 Where has the Olive Branch, since Greece was ruined,
 Flourished upon the earth you've made so wretched?
 Show me the people whom your ancestors
 Have soothed for the loss of liberty with hymns
 Of hope and love, lessons of godlike wisdom?
 Oh yes! . . . I know! . . . Augustus closed the gates
 Of Janus in the evening of his life,
 And venal lutes sang flatteries before him!
 Consider, he but gave the *name of peace*
 To silent deserts of the ruined, dead!—
 Only on wasted cities ground to dust,
 On graves of bloody generations slaughtered,
 You gave the words: PEACE TO THE SONS OF MEN!
Domitian. E'en as a father rules his family,
 Patricians rule plebeians; masters, slaves,
 So have we Quirites held provinces,
 Inherited, subjected, or our own;
 So do we rule the world. By the same law,
 We govern earth we've conquered by the sword,
 And o'er its head we hang the *law of the sword!*

Iridion. If you had ne'er made use of perfidy,
 Deceived the credulous by lying words,
 What would have been your fate, O subtle Roman?
 Look on the legions of your proud Republic
 Flying before the elephants of Pyrrhus,
 Quailing beneath the pronged blades of the Samnites,
 Falling like grass before the reaper's scythe
 On Thrasimene's Lake, shrieking aloud
 For mercy to the Spaniards, when inclosed
 In narrow defile where no water flowed.
 In the dense forests of Hercynia,
 Paling before the prowess of the Germans,
 They knelt like helpless victims to be slaughtered!
 Not with the thunders of bold Alexander,⁴
 Not with the valor of your naked blades,
 But through your cups of poison, perjuries,
 Conspiracies, fomented treasons, guiles,
 Your treacherous friendships, dark diplomacies,
 You've crawled and writhed into the power you hold!
 No. Not among the mountains grew your eagles,
 But in the fetid air of treacherous swamps!

Domitian. Vainly you rage! The granite rock on
 which
 You gnash your teeth but tears them from their sockets!
 Thus you reject the mercy of your master?

Iridion. *Who is my master?* . . . I've known *none* on
 earth!
 Behind yon pyre, like monstrous birds of prey,
 The Genii of Death are gathering fast!
 In that still kingdom I am soon to enter,
 They'll tell me, of *what Cæsar* I am subject!
 Here I've known only foes; and a few slaves
 Who love and serve me faithfully, my brothers.
 I never have known peace, nor bliss, nor rest,
 Only one godlike hour, dear to my soul,
 Short, brilliant as the flash of clashing swords
 That shatter suddenly in sparkling atoms,—
 But sacred to my heart for evermore!
 None of you, Brothers, shared that hour with me;
It was myself,—and I was *It* entire;
 There was no separate identity!

The torch of vengeance blazed in my hot hands ;
 'The accursed city lay beneath my feet,
 More and more closely veiled in night's dim shroud ;
 The winds arose : . . . Fire ! Fire ! . . .

*(He turns pale and leans for support on the statue of Amphilo-
 chus.)*

Ah ! Nemesis !

Domitian. What is the matter, Greek ? How pale you
 grow !

Iridion (recovering himself). More Roman blood is
 wanting to my cheeks !

Domitian. The gods have warned you by some inward
 sign !

For the last time, in the name of him who sent me,
 I warn you, sentence will be passed against you.

For the last time, I offer Cæsar's grace.

Pardon still lies within your grasp, for Rome

Is ever ready to forgive the humble !

Iridion. Is *such* the conclusion you draw from my
 words ?

Is this the Jurist's lore ? . . . Wait, Consul, wait !

Euphorion, hand the consecrated cup !

(Euphorion hands a bowl of wine.)

I pour the Lesbian foam upon thy feet,

(Empties the wine at the feet of the statue.)

Amphilo- chus ! Receive my bloom of life

In sacrifice ! Father, I come to thee ! . . .

Euphorion, fill again ! . . . Drink, Brothers, drink !

Drink, as the faithful men of Leonidas

Pledged one another ere their twilight fell !

*(The cup is filled and refilled as it passes round from man
 to man.)*

Drink, and be free from sad or evil thoughts !

*(After the cup has circled round the men, it is again filled ;
 Iridion holds it in his hand as he approaches the altar
 which stands between the statue of Amphilo- chus and the
 body of Elsinoë, upon which altar fire blazes. He draws
 from his finger the ring of Empire.)*

The Guardian Genius of the cruel Empire ;
 The god who guides its future Destiny,
 Blessed by the augurs, famed and hymned by prophets,
 Revered by vestals in their sacred chants,

(He holds the ring above the flames.)

Given by the Senate but to Cæsar's hand,
 The Fate of Rome,—I dedicate to thee
 In sacrifice, O Father ! Mother, thee !
 And thee, beloved Hellas !

Domitian. Stop ! Stop the impious sacrilege ! Arrest
 The desecration of the holy symbol !
 Is there a Roman here who hears my voice ?
 Life, honor, gold, are his who saves the ring !
 I vow by Stator, by Quirinus, swear !
 Hold, infamous boaster ! The mystic name of Rome,
 Her Fate, her Honor, live within the seal !

Iridion. Life ! Honor ! Gold ! My Brothers, have
 you heard ?

The Name and Fate of Rome live in this ring !

*(He throws the ring into the flames. Domitian covers his
 head with his toga.)*

CHORUS.

The Roman throws the toga o'er his head ;
 Sorrow and anger swell his troubled breast ;
 He dares not lift his head to meet our eyes !
 Euge ! Euge !

Iridion. Before my lips are closed in death forever,
 I utter my last will. *(To his soldiers.)* Hearken to me,
 And with me join to curse the accursed city !

CHORUS.

Look ! is it the reflection from the blaze,
 Or does Apollo crown him with his light,
 That thus his face illumines with sudden glory ?

Iridion. Woe to the victors ! Woe ! As they would
 have

Degraded us, so may they be abased !
 All who are born in Rome, all dead in Rome,
 Women and children, men,—may all be slaves !

CHORUS OF MEN.

Women and children, men,—may all be slaves!

Iridion. Eternal “*Fatum!*” Rise from thy high throne,

Where thou art seated o’er all other gods;
Descend to earth, rest on these seven hills,
Become the Fury of their agonies!
May Rome, which ruins all, die at Thy Feet,
O All-Creator, God of all their gods!

CHORUS OF MEN.

Destroy their race! Their language die with them!

Iridion. Their infamy shall live till Time shall be no more!

Let the tradition of their tyranny
Be their eternal epitaph! May all
Who read it in the future curse them,—curse them
From age to age, while lasts the universe!

CHORUS OF MEN.

Curse them from age to age, while lasts the universe!

Iridion. The hour of prayer and sacrifice is past;
The flame is dying out upon the altar;
The god of Rome is dead! Consul, look up!

Domitian. You break all codes, outrage the holiest symbols!

According to the customs of our Fathers,
I shut you from the protection of all law;
I interdict the use of fire and water!
The slave who brings your head shall have his freedom;
The freeman, have his statue near the rostrum,
A seat next to the Consul at the games!
Villain, I go to await you at the gate
Of the Mamertine prison! Madman, death-doomed,
I’ll see you plunge from the Tarpeian rock!

Iridion. None here will raise a hand against me! Go!
Rage is unseemly with a head of snow.

(*Exit Domitian.*)

Thy funeral pyre is ready, sunny-haired!
 Take up the bier and bear it gently, slaves!
 Salve Eternum, Elsinoë pure!

(*They carry the bier slowly out, Iridion walking beside it, followed by Pilades. Exeunt soldiers, attendants, etc.*)

SCENE III. *Moonlight. A street in Rome. On one side stands the temple of Venus, opposite to it is the Flavian amphitheatre. LUCIUS TUBERO and the prætorians are seen upon the steps of the temple.*

Tubero. Aristomachus should be here ere this.
 Night had scarce fallen when we parted; now
 The moon stands high above the amphitheatre.
 The giant shadows, silence of these arches,
 Weigh upon me! I know not why it is,
 But the fresh breath of night, instead of calming,
 Burns on my cheek. How anxious is this waiting!
 Yet I have looked on far more desperate things
 Without a shudder. Soul, thou slave of Lucius,
 Why dost thou now revolt against thy master?
 'Tis said that when the end of life draws near,
 The spirit grows afraid and warns the body.
 Brutus had signs before the last lost fight,
 And Otho too at Bedriacum . . . Diespiter!
 This is no time for Tubero to die!
 Young Cæsar counts on my experience,
 And with Domitian I can hold the reins.
 Should the great jurist fall beneath the sword
 Of the mad Greek or axes of the Germans,—
 Then . . . then . . . Who answers me? Marspiter!
 speak! . . .
 'Tis nobody! Only a lion roused from sleep
 And roaring in the vaults below the circus.
 No,—there *are other sounds!* Voices and tumult!
 Marspiter! who comes here?

(*Armed men rush in in disorder, followed by ARISTOMACHUS.*)

Aristomachus.
Tubero.

Help! help!
 Shame! shame!

Cæsar upon the Forum waits for you
To bring the Greek in chains; you fly before him!

Aristomachus. Were he the Father of both gods and
men,

He lies who says I fear! I have just driven
This javelin through the breasts of two centurions
Because they wavered, turned their faces from
The flaming eyes of this same fiery Greek.

Tubero. Whence gets he this new power? Does he
sow dragons' teeth

Which grow to men as soon as they are planted?

Aristomachus. He must be near the end, but he still
fights

With supernatural force and bravery.
As we marched o'er the slope of the Viminalis,
He rushed upon us like a lava torrent,
Throwing his flaming torches, fiery arrows,
And burning naphtha. Face to face we met;
Three times a desperate encounter followed;
As if from Vulcan's anvil flew the sparks
Between his shield and my tried sword: in vain,
For each time were we driven by the crowd apart.

Tubero. I swear to hang within thy Temple, Mars,
His armor, when I've torn it from the Greek!

Aristomachus. Take off your breastplate, Tubero!
Two scales

Ruptured above the heart just as you spoke!

Tubero. The gods avert the omen!

(*Exeunt Tubero and Aristomachus.*)

Masinissa (*appearing upon the steps of the temple of Venus*).

Ye birds of night, fed on the arena's blood,
Spread your black wings, and circle round my head!
Moon, ghastly ruin of a dead volcano,
Where Vulcan raged, whom men in idle dreams
Have changed to star of purity and peace,
Send me thy pale, thy faded rays!
Earth, give me that which still belongs to me!
Air, pay me what is due! I fain would feed
To-day on poison, misery, and blood,
As I once fed upon eternal light!

Another day, another night, and I,
With my brave son, depart to other scenes !

A CHORUS OF FEMALE SPIRITS FROM THE DEPTHS OF THE
TEMPLE.

The Beautiful, Voluptuous, salute their Lord !
Floating above the helmets of the warriors,
Our cheeks we freshen in hot human blood :
The blood shed by thy son is now our favorite mirror !

The Beautiful, Voluptuous, warn their Lord,
That at the rising of Orion's stars,
The mystic spirit came, rolling in streams
Through the blue depths of ether's haunted realm !
All melancholy clouds, all silent charms
It weaves, re-weaves around Iridion's soul !

Masinissa. Does my son heed the whispers of the
spirit ?

CHORUS OF FEMALE SPIRITS.

Whene'er this mystic thought, which has no voice,
Touches his heart, he chill and pallid grows.
His sword still seeks the weak points in the armor,
But cannot break into the House of Life.
Like a fallen angel he still strives and fights
'Midst heaps of ruins. Hasten to him, Lord !

Masinissa. Feeble and misty soul of a chaste virgin,
Pure sighs breathed from the other side of graves,
You shall not tear Iridion from my grasp !
I have not trained his hands to strike your golden harps,
Nor tuned his vengeful lips to chant your hymns of praise !
(*He disappears.*)

SCENE IV. *The Forum lighted by torches.* ALEXANDER
*is seated in a curule chair ; behind him stand the guard
with golden eagles. DOMITIAN is at his side. ARISTO-
MACHUS enters, followed by soldiers bearing in SCIPIO,
dangerously wounded.*

Aristomachus. O godlike Emperor ! Brave Tubero
Ere this has made a captive of the Greek !

I was with him when he began the fight
With the Cherusci, who, led by this man,

(He points to Scipio.)

Stood on the farther slope of the Viminal.
I pressed him so severely that they cried :
“ Long live Severus, Cæsar ! ” They swore to me
By all the gods of the north, that they had lost
Their senses after Heliogabalus perished.
This man closed up the mouths of two or three
With vigorous thrusts ;—the rest massed on our side.

Alexander. Aristomachus, our best thanks are due !

Aristomachus. I must return to Tubero.

(Exit Aristomachus.)

Domitian (to Scipio). Your name ?

Scipio. A dying man !

Domitian. Reveal the hidden truth,
And reconcile yourself ere your last sigh
With the just gods.

Scipio. Just gods ! Where may I find them ?

Domitian. Answer before your Emperor ! Since
when

Have you conspired ?

Scipio. I cannot count.—

Since the beginning of eternity !

Domitian. Nay, jest not, slave ! Have you accom-
plices

In other portions of this mighty realm ?

Scipio. Ay ! everywhere !

Domitian. Who are the chief among them ?

Scipio. Cæsar and you ! While you exist, they live !

(He dies.)

Alexander (descending from the throne).

Nor threat nor pardon conquers such firm souls !

Domitian. No, fire and steel alone ! . . . Learn how
to walk

On the brink of the precipice without a fall !

Heed not the voice of women ! Never trust

The generosity of other men !

Rome has in thee, herself incorporated ;

Then be as she is, strong and pitiless !

SCENE V. *An open space by the fountain of Neptune.
Clashing of swords and alarums heard in the distance.
Enter IRIDION pursuing TUBERO.*

Tubero. Through the whole night your eyes, like
brands of fire

Kindling from Erebus, have followed me!

Which of your gods tempered and forged your armor?

Marspiter! Greek, my courage fails me not

Under your strokes,—but my strength totters . . . reels . . .

Iridion. For the last time you've parried my sharp
strokes;

I keep the *promise pledged you*, Tubero!

Tubero. O Father Neptune, help! (*He falls.*) My
hour has come!

Iridion. Go, tell my sister I am coming soon!

(*Kills him.*)

Vengeance! Thou givest me but single drops,

When I have prayed thee for a sea of blood!

I burn in the full force of vigorous life!

The souls of murdered, dying brothers live

And fight within my breast. I know no fear!

I grow into a Titan . . . Must I die? . . .

I will not die! . . .

(*He stoops and picks up the sword of Tubero, then staggers
and turns pale.*)

Invisible spirit, why thus follow me?

Christ? Christ? . . . What is that mystic name to me?

Away! Away! Torture me not, Metella!

Float with the silver clouds around the moon!

Fly! darkness soon will shroud the crimsoned earth!

(*Enter ALBOIN.*)

Is't friend or foe of Iridion, the Greek!

Alboin. Once an associate.

Iridion. Say, is it fear,

Or the reflection of the moon's white rays,

Which blanches thus your cheek?

Alboin. The ghastly corpse

Of Scipio is thrown down the Gemoniæ.*

* "Gemoniæ Scalæ," steps in Rome, down which the bodies of criminals were thrown.

Iridion. His fathers on the Capitolium sleep.

Alboin. And the Cherusci yield their arms to Cæsar.

Iridion. Then our last moments will be very short !
We'll seek the palace of Amphiloachus,
There let the Romans enter in the court,
Where blazes still the pyre of Elsinoë ;
With her we both will pass away in flame ;
My foes, my men, the palace of my father,
All, all shall perish ! Alboin, follow me !

Alboin. While any hope remained I served you truly,
For I hate Rome as you. However . . . now . . .

Iridion. Slave of the Golden Eagle, you betray me !

Alboin. Not I, but Fortune has deserted you !
Why, I *must* live ; life's only on that side !
Hear you the tribunes shout ? Cæsar has set
A price upon your head ! *(He draws his sword.)*

Iridion (felling him to the earth). Go down to Hell !
On that route, soon or late, you will meet Cæsar !
(Exit.)

SCENE VI. *The court of Iridion's palace. The still smoking pyre of Elsinoë stands in the court. Gladiators, slaves, soldiers enter, bearing torches. PILADES is seen hurrying across the stage.*

Several Voices. Where are you going, Pilades, so fast ?

Pilades. To bring fresh pine and cypress from the cave.

Many Men. Tear the torch from his hand ! He shall not go !

Pilades. No nearer come ! Do you not know me, Brothers ?

I *must* do as my Lord directed me.

Many Men. Throw down your torch at once ! Stand still, or die !

Several Voices. Aristomachus' eagles must be near !

Other Voices. And Tubero must be almost upon us !

Iridion (entering). Brothers, you are deceived. No day will ever dawn

For Tubero ! *(He mounts the base of an obelisk.)*

Why, what means this ? Axes,
Shields, arms, thrown down, and my men in disorder ?

For the *last time* I call you to the fight :—
Then, Brothers, rest and silence evermore !

(*A pause. The men stand motionless and make no reply.*)

Why do you gaze so furtively at me?
Why let the arms drop from your sturdy hands?
The very flames grow pale before your pallor !
To arms !

First Soldier. My chief ! I fought from break of day
Until the moon went down. I scarce can stand.

Another Soldier. What has become of our associates?
Some fainting, exhausted, nearly dead ;
Some die in torture ; others kill themselves ;
Many have gone to yield themselves to Cæsar !

Other Soldiers (showing their wounds).
Look at our wounds ! We cannot stand upright !

A Soldier. Aristomachus broke his heavy lance
Off in my breast. Iridion, water ! water !

Iridion. Ah ! I can only give you fire ! fire !

All. O impious ! The gods themselves desert you !

Iridion. Diomedes, were you not born in Corinth?
Will you humiliate yourself before
The tyrants of your country ? You, Glaucus, *you* ?
Eutelles, beautiful as Greek god ?
How can you, Greeks, shame Greece before her foe ?

CHORUS OF GREEKS.

Woe ! Woe ! Our agonies are useless
To our *dead* Fatherland !

Iridion. Die for her glory !

CHORUS OF MEN.

Life ! Life ! Not fame ! Food, rest !—not useless glory !

Iridion. Poor wretches, I have heard your many
oaths,
Have seen your swords oft deeply dyed in blood,
And know how bravely you have borne the brunt !
But now you stand on the very brink of the grave,
When one short hour would bring you lasting fame ;
And will you die as men are wont to die,
Not in despair, blindness, fury of combat,
But shame, submission, treachery, cowardice ?

CHORUS.

Cæsar still loves you! For yourself, for us,
Obtain his pardon! It is not yet too late!

Iridion. If Rome should *now* forgive you, can you
think

You would be suffered long to live? Not so!
Grief, shame, I know, would not cut short your days,
But *they* would send you into desert sands,
Where water flows not, where the blazing sun
Would scorch your feet, would crisp your hair and burn
Your brains, destroying you as Greeks!
Invited to their banquets, they would pledge
You deep in poisoned cups, accuse of crimes!
Know, men, that all who'd enter Cæsar's service
Would find their blood sold cheaply to his foes
Because he still would number you among them.
You will be forced to fight with tigers, lions,
For the amusement of the Roman people,
Procuring them another holiday!
You cannot save your lives! Die then as men,
With arms in your brave hands! Die not as slaves!

A Soldier. You now *abuse* us! You, who have *be-
trayed* us!

Another Soldier. You promised victory! (*He seizes
Pilades.*) Hold, Pilades!

Iridion. Stab him who holds you, Pilades, and go!

A Soldier. Your head is doomed!

Another Soldier. We'll carry it to Cæsar!

Iridion. Strike, wretch! See, I have thrown away my
shield!

But your hands tremble so you cannot strike me!

(*Pilades is stabbed by a soldier with whom he is struggling.*)

Ah! my poor Pilades! My faithful friend!

Pilades. Son of Amphilochous, Iridion!

Thy fate is far more bitter to me than *my own!*

(*He falls and dies.*)

CHORUS.

Seest thou the golden eagles? Cæsar's purple?
Hearest thou the trumpets of his legions swell?

Iridion (springing down from the base of the obelisk on which he stood).

Each of these swords is at a traitor's throat !
 Wretch, see thyself in Sigurd's glittering blade !
 Miscreant, the sword of Tubero is keen !
 Traitors, no nearer come ! Out of my way !
 Grow not so pale ! I have no wish to kill you !
 Go ! press your trembling knees into the dust !
 Go, beg for pity ! fold your hands in prayer !
 Adore the Romans ! I will not die a slave !
 (*He passes between his men with a naked sword in either hand, and mounts upon the pyre of Elsinoë.*)

CHORUS.

Son of misfortune ! May the floods of blood
 Which thou hast shed, soon bear thee into Erebus !
 The curses of the living follow thee !
 May they still thunder on thine ears, until
 Thou shiverest upon the gloomy shores of Styx !

Iridion. Father ! I die, weary of my few days,
 Sate with poison, bitterness of life !
 Father, forgive not cowards ! Cruel victors !
 (*MASINISSA appears by Iridion upon the pyre of Elsinoë.*)

Ah ! thou appearest at last when all is o'er !
 Go ! go, old man ! thine hour is not yet come !
 Go ! join the traitors ! Cæsar may forgive thee !

Masinissa. Son, follow me !

Iridion. No longer do I know thee !

Masinissa. I saved in battle ; but thou saw'st me not ;
 Aided in thy despair ; thou knewest me not :
 And I am here only to save thee now !

Iridion. To save me ? No ! Die with me if a man !

Masinissa. What if I cannot die ?

(*He takes Iridion in his arms.*)

Iridion. Why, what art thou ?

Masinissa. A god !

(*He disappears with Iridion.*)

(*Enter ALEXANDER, DOMITIAN, ARISTOMACHUS, Roman cohorts, etc.*)

Alexander. Rebels ! Where is the son of Amphiloachus ?

CHORUS.

We saw him mount upon his sister's pyre ;
 We heard him speak but once ; then all was still ;
 He disappeared, we cannot answer where.

See ! We lay down our arms, and pray for pardon !

Soldiers. We would have given him up to thee, O
 Cæsar !

Alexander. My mercy is worn out !

CHORUS.

Be pitiful !

Iridion alone was guilty ! He
 Deceived us all ! He led us to destruction !

Domitian. Woe to the conquered ! Call the lictors
 here !

The top of a mountain. On the one side Rome is seen as if through a fog ; on the other side, the sea. IRIDION is supported on the arm of MASINISSA.

Iridion. Oh, thou that for thy sufferings I loved,
 Hellas ! my Hellas ! wert thou but a shadow ?
 Art thou forever crushed, my cherished country,
 While thy invincible foe still stands erect,
 Glaring his marbles in the face of the sun,
 Like the white teeth of a fierce tiger ? . . .
 Why am I here ? Fire rages in my brain !
 Thoughts gnaw my soul, as worms destroy a corpse !

(*He throws himself upon the earth.*)

Masinissa. Refresh thy forces in this morning mist ;
 Drink this cool air, bathe in this strengthening light !

Iridion. Grasping my hand in thine, like iron links,
 Thou'st dragged me here ! . . . I am confused ! . . .
 know not . . .

Man lives but once . . . this once is past for me . . .
 For I died yesterday . . . Is all but dream ?

Masinissa. Thy course is not yet ended, O my son !

Iridion. Nay, torture me no more ! My father died

Held in your arms ; my sister, sent by you,
Perished by her own hand in Cæsar's palace ;
And at your feet I lie in agony !
Is this not yet enough, stern Masinissa ?

(*He raises his head from the ground.*)

The innocent girl I sacrificed to you
Melted away in piteous sighs and wails.
I hear her voice still quivering in my ears ;
I see her cross upon the Blue of Heaven !
Oh, if her God were greater than all gods !
What if *He* were the *sole Truth* of the world !

Masinissa. And were it so, what wouldst thou do,
my son ?

Iridion. Dying, this broken sword still in my hand,
I would acknowledge Him, invoke, adore Him !

Masinissa (with irony). Thou'dst kneel, and say :
Father who art in Heaven,
Give life to Rome ! Save those who have betrayed me !
Deliver those who've never ceased to oppress
My Fatherland !

Iridion. No. I would kneel and pray :
Father who art in Heaven ! deign to love
My Hellas well, as I myself have loved her —
Speak, Masinissa, in this solemn hour !
You who have still deceived me, promised much,
And nothing done, making me ever wretched ;
You on whose breast my young head used to slumber ;
You who *even now* stand o'er me like a god,
As if you had the rule of the whole universe ;—
Answer ! for my brain reels and my thoughts whirl,—
Answer me quickly, truly, I conjure you !
Is Jesus Christ the Lord of Heaven and earth ?

Masinissa. Thou hast said it !

Iridion. You also bear Him witness !

Masinissa. As an immortal foe, to his immortal foe !
He rules to-day the old Empyrean
And the decrepit earth ! . . . But there exist
Immensities where His name is effaced,
As my name is effaced within His Heaven !
Worlds of immortal youth there are which roll
On in confusion, full of embryos,

Working and bringing forth in agony!
 There, there are suns still without brilliancy;
 Strong future gods in chains; vast oceans, which
 As yet receive no name, whose swollen waves
 Forever seek, and tend toward shores of pleasure!
 But He . . . He chained Himself . . . mounted a throne,
 And said I AM! . . . And bowed His Head! . . .
 No. I deny Him not! I see Him now!
 But I turn toward the abyss of glooms,—my hopes—
 Eyes wounded by His light! . . . But from these glooms
 Shall spring the victory! Iridion, choose!

Iridion. Upon your brow is iron constancy,
 The shadow of eternal suffering;
 But 'midst its many wrinkles, there is not
 One thought of hope! No! No! From the abyss
 Of gloomy centuries you'll rise no more!
 You have deceived, betrayed, and ruined me!

Masinissa. Forsake me not, as cowards have forsaken
 thee!

(*He lifts up Iridion.*)

Float over this abyss, and look into
 'The city of thy hate! Ha! knowest thou
 Who is to tear it from thy brothers' hands,
 When they, as Crimhild prophesied, shall come
 To ravage Italy, to sow its soil
 With salt, and plough its furrows red with blood?
 The Nazarene!
 And when the Purple from the Cæsars falls,
 Dost thou know who will seize it, wear their crown?
 The Nazarene!
 In Him will be the perfidy of the Senate;
 In Him will be the cruelty of the people,
 As an eternal heritage.
 His hair is white; His heart as merciless
 As that of the first Cato; His words are sweet;
 His voice effeminate; He fasts and prays.
 The warriors of the North will come and sit
 Like little innocent children at His feet;
 And for the second time He will raise Rome
 To be the god and ruler of the world!

Iridion. Alas! how boundless my desires have been;

How I have labored only to destroy ;
 Have sacrificed all I held dear on earth
 To satiate a sacred vengeance !
 As others strain to bless the souls they love,
 I've strained to ruin those most dear to me !
 I die,—and you come to announce to me—
 To me, the dying!—the *eternal life* of Rome !

Masinissa. Despair not ! for a day will surely come
 When the shadow of the Cross will seem to scathe
 The nations of the earth like burning heat ;
 When they will seek a god 'neath newer suns.
 Then He will stretch out wide His arms in vain
 To press unto His heart those who abandon Him !
 One after one, they will arise and say :

“ *We will no longer serve you !* ”

There will be heard at all the city gates
 Complaints, confusion, threats, and mutterings !
 The Genius then of Rome will veil his face,
 His tears, sobs, sorrows, will be infinite !
 For on the *Forum* will be only dust ;
 And ruins on the amphitheatre ;
 And of the Capitol, but infamy !
 And I will walk upon these desolate plains,
 Inhabited by wild beasts and a few
 Pale shepherds, the last denizens of Rome !
 Then my long strife on earth draws near its end !

Iridion. My heart begins to beat ! This longed-for
 day,

Is it far distant ? Tell me, *Masinissa* !

Masinissa. So far, I scarcely can myself divine it !

Iridion. Amphiloehus, then was thy son a dream,
 A shade astray, cast from a *distant* Future,
 A toy too early born, the sport of Fate !

(*To Masinissa.*) Go, *Masinissa*, go ! Neither to thee,
 Nor any other god, will I give up my soul !
 Upon this rock, with my eyes fixed on Rome,
 I'll die as I have lived,—in solitude of spirit !

Masinissa. Hear me, my son ! The pallor of thy
 cheeks

I will give back to death, and kindle life anew ;
 I will restore the strength within thy fiery heart ;

I will obliterate all memory of the Past,
And I will give thee ignorance of the Future !

Iridion. Away !

Masinissa. I will awake a thousand keen desires,
And give a thousand powers to gratify them.
I will revive the beauties of the Past ;
All of them, ere they vanish, shall devote
Their charms to thee ; shall burn, consume, and melt
In rapture in thine arms ! Helen of Troy,
The radiant daughter of dark Ptolemy,
Venus of Ida ; all that fancy asks ! . . .
And from translucent waves and rays of flame,
Nay, even from the crawling slime of earth,
Voluptuous raptures still for thee shall glow !

Iridion. Tempt me no more !

Masinissa. In a far-distant land
I'll give thee generations of a race
Supple, obedient 'neath the palace-roof,
But terrible upon the battle-field.
Intoxicated by their adulation,
Thou'lt love thyself, as once thou hast loved Hellas.
I'll steep thee in the power desired by kings,
Teach thee their loves, and fill thee with their honors :—
Until I come to set my seal upon thee,
Saying, " The hour of eternal combat sounds ! "

Iridion. Tempt me no more, or crush these walls in
ruins ;

Destroy the accursed race that blighted Hellas !
You claim great power : renew with me the combat ;
The son of Amphilochous would conquer Rome !

Masinissa. Vainly on me thou urg'st thy prayer *to-day* !

Iridion. Then not *to-day* I yield myself to you !

Masinissa. Hear me ! Yet hear !

Iridion. O Genius without power !

In all your boasted treasures there is naught
To tempt Iridion's soul ! He scorns them all !
He scorns you with them, for such offerings !

Masinissa. What if I could destroy the ages for thee ?

Iridion. I comprehend you not.

Masinissa. If I should tear

Thee from the hurrying waves of Time ; should lay
Thee safely on the banks of this still shore ;
Rock thee to sleep upon oblivion's heart,
Until these towers shall tumble into dust,—
And then awake thee, such as now thou art ?

Iridion. In Rome? when centuries have rolled away?

Masinissa. Yes. So thou shalt fulfill thy sole desire !
Thou'lt crush beneath thy feet the smouldering ashes
Of ruined Rome, thy mortal enemy !

Iridion. Not when the red flames wrap the accursed
city !

Not when the brethren of my mother blow
Their vengeful horns upon the seven hills !

Masinissa. Son of Amphiloclus, *when* shall it be ?

Iridion. When of the Forum there is naught but dust,
The amphitheatre lies low in ruins,
The Capitol abased in infamy !

Masinissa. And then, my son ?

Iridion. I will be yours ! Swear ! Swear !

Masinissa. I swear to thee to keep thy body safe !
I swear to put thy soul asleep ; awake it !
I swear it to thee by what He calls Evil ;
My only Good ! Iridion, give thy hand !

Iridion. Take the unhappy thing that fought in vain !

Masinissa. The Powers of Darkness gather round thy
head,

And the abyss, my father, hears thy oath !
Wilt thou renounce my Enemy forever ?

Iridion. I will renounce . . .

What a despairing cry wails o'er my head !

Masinissa. Regard it not !

Iridion. The air is full of sighs !

That rock ! . . . Look ! Look ! . . . It breaks into a
cross ! . . .

Black drops are falling from the sky above us ! . . .

Look ! . . . they are drops of blood ! . . .

Masinissa. 'Tis nothing, son !

Iridion. A wild storm gathers out upon yon sea !
Who calls me there ? . . . up there ! . . . farther . . .
and ever farther !

Do you not hear that voice ? Alas ! alas !

Masinissa. And now?

Iridion. Silence!

Masinissa. Together through eternity!
Together without end, repose, hope, love,
Until the Everlasting Vengeance be fulfilled!

Iridion. I swear! Together for eternity
When Rome is ruined, earthly vengeance full!

Masinissa. Now all is finished! Follow me, my son.

Iridion. Whither?

Masinissa. To a cool cave upon the shore,
Covered with clustering vines and wreaths of ivy.
No crimson morning ever breaks its gloom,
No moon, no stars, no echo from the living;
No pleasure, pain, nor dreams shall haunt thee there!
Thou shalt sleep on through coming centuries,
Unconscious till I come to waken thee,
The hour my kingdom's gates open for thee!

Iridion. I follow. Rome to me! To you, my soul!

EPILOGUE.

SON of my Thought, long centuries have rolled over thee! Thou slumberedst through the days of Alaric, the days of Attila; and neither the clangor of the imperial crown on the rugged brow of Charlemagne, nor the tumult of Rienzi, the Tribune of the people, availed to waken thee! And the Holy Masters of the Vatican glided by thee, one after another, as shadows past a shade!

But to-day thou wilt awaken, Son of my Thought!

In the Roman Campagna the sun only shines upon wastes of desolation, and is now sinking sadly over the deserted plains. The long shadows of evening are creeping over the burnt wormwood of the sands and the swaying reeds of the swamps. And over the lonely pines of the hills, the cypress-trees of the valleys, the star of the

evening—a goddess for the men of the past—rises mournfully, and tears of dew fall here and there beneath her. The foaming waves still play upon the sea, illumined by the sunset's bloody shimmer.

The silence of a stifling heat weighs on the air; not a cloud, not the lightest movement in the ether; and yet the depths of the sea are strangely stirred; the waves, with full and purple breasts, utter wild plaints to Heaven.

For he who dwells in the Abyss; he who once made the solemn promise, rises from the boiling bosom of the waters, and moves with feet far blacker than the night over the surging bodies of his myriad slaves.

A sombre light streams from his form, as if a darker crimson sun went down behind him; shadowy clouds rise from his arms, and roll over the distant waves.

He is alone, as centuries ago; still bearing on his brow his immortality of age.

When he attains the shore, the unburdened sea respire!

The tired waves fall into sleep in the fast deepening twilight!

He leaves no traces of his path as he moves by the Samnite hills and seeks the hidden grotto.

There, by the power of his spells, the sleeping life begins to wake in thee, O Son of Vengeance!

The serpent sleeping at thy feet begins to move and shiver. He seems already to divine the approach of his master. The livid scales grow brighter, rise and fall; as he untwines his coils, sparks flash and glitter from them o'er thy bed of marble. Uncoiled, he rises, stands erect; and like a blazing torch, he waits! By his strange light are seen the black stones of thy couch, the cliff behind thee, thy darkened features, my Hero!

The first faint dawn of life quivers across thy brow, like ignes-fatui over graves; but from the threshold of the cavern, and calling on thee by thy name, a solemn voice intones the chant of resurrection. At every triplet of the mystic song, renewed force of life returns to thee. A

consciousness of all the ages passed since thy long sleep began is given thee, as thou hadst lived them all, and, like the history of a single day, thou seest unroll before thine eyes the cruel torments Rome has suffered, and all the triumphs of the Cross.

The whole Past lives before thee, as if in hues of flame. The neighing of horses, and the noise of arms; the clash of swords; rattling of armor; the chimes of bells and chanting of calm hymns float on around thee, splendid and vivid, as they, in their reality, had formerly swept by above thee, during thy centuries of slumber. Dead Bishops pass in long procession on before thee. And preceding each of them is a monarch, bearing upon his shoulders the open Book of the Holy Word. They cross and recross the Seven Hills, up and down, and down and up, moving in ceaseless course. Over some float groups of angels in the air, throwing down crowns of palms; while some move on in silence and alone, bearing in the right hand the holy symbol of redemption, and in the left the insignia of war.

And as the hour of thy awakening draws near and nearer still, their train grows less and less; their bands fall off; duller sound the footfalls; whiter and whiter grow the heads of the Lords of Rome, and more tremulous their hands.

Then above all the varied chanting^{*} peals a voice of wondrous power; a voice of fierce command which does not reach the skies, but which the earth re-echoes from her inmost depths; and this voice cries: "My son!"

Then on the surface of the lake, over its mossy banks, under thy cavern's vault, a flash of lightning gleams, and the thunder of renewed life reverberates through thy dormant breast. And young and beautiful, such as thou wert in centuries long past, thou risest from thy couch of marble. Thy flashing eyes first meet pale Dian's face above the Latine Hills; thou sayest: "Lo! I am!"

He beckons with his hand and leads thee on . . . but the footsteps wake no echo, and the two forms glide over dark ravines like two black clouds.

Thou standest in the Campagna of Rome, and nothing veils its shame from thy keen eyes. Like myriad golden memories twinkle the stars, as myriad mocking smiles. The black and stagnant aqueduct, once bearing its clear water to the city, is broken, choked ; great blocks of stone fallen from its walls lie round like rags of vestment, or form in heaps like gravestones, funeral piles, o'ergrown with trailing vines ; winds thick with dust blow over them ; and birds of prey and night flit round with melancholy cry !

The son of centuries gazes around him, and rejoices in the justice of his vengeance. Each ruin seems to him a recompense. He ponders o'er the widowed amphitheatre, the orphaned temples. He shakes the dust from his feet where once stood the circus of Caracalla, and o'er the mausoleum of Cecilia, the wife of Crassus. His dreadful leader guides him ever on ; up through the street of ancient tombs to the gates of Rome. They open, but they grate not on their hinges ; no rattling of bolts and bars is heard ; they enter, but the sentinels seem all asleep, supported on their arms. Like shadows they pass by the sleeping shadows !

Through long and lonely temples, halls, they wind their narrow way. "Night of my love ! My only night ! My last ! Thou shinest for me with all the brilliancy of day ! Above each wreck thou tearest the veil of shadow, and thou deliverest ruins, trembling and naked, to the gaze of their worst foe ! Thou, moon, pierce with thy rays these mouldering buildings ! With thy white rays of scorn, show me the wretched remnants of Rome's few inhabitants !"

Under the portico of the Basilica stand two old men, invested with a purple mantle ; some monks salute them by the name of Princes of the Church and Holy Fathers, and on their faces may be read poverty of spirit. They enter a chariot drawn by a pair of black and meagre horses ; behind them is a servant with a lantern, such as is held by a poor widow o'er a child dying with hunger. And on the panels of this carriage still remain the marks of former gilding.

Slowly vanish the creaking wheels; slowly disappear the bent and hoary heads.

The fearful leader says: "They are the successors of the haughty Cæsars! That is the chariot of the Fortune of the Capitoline!" The son of Greece looks on and claps his hands in triumph!

And now they climb a slope, mount a broad stairway over mutilated steps and prostrate pillars, and enter a desert court. And in its midst is seen the equestrian statue of Marcus Aurelius, still stretching out his hand in empty space. Cæsar without a subject! A conqueror without triumphal pæans! and behind him appear in the shadow the black walls of the Capitol.

Not far from the statue is the Tarpeian rock. With the shattered stump of his sword the young man strikes fiercely upon the brow of the best of the Cæsars. Under the blow of the Greek blade, the Roman bronze wails like the toll of a death-knell. To this melancholy clang only answer the piteous cries of the owl, watching from the pinnacles of the castle, and the howlings of the dogs prowling through the ruins of some desert street.

Down steps covered with mud and crumbling sand, they descend toward the Forum: it is the "*Via Sacra*," the route of the Conquerors!

The arch of Septimius Severus is buried breast-high in earth; the columns of the Temple, sunk to their throats in mouldy rottenness, lift their sad capitals above the soil, like heads of the damned! Other wrecks remain standing, high and solitary, on mounds, glaring nakedly out in the ghastly symmetry of skeletons. Their capitals, their flowers, their acanthus-leaves, which in their snowy whiteness used to glitter so pitilessly upon thee in the centuries past, appear to thee now, O my hero, begrimed and bristling like the unkempt locks on the brow of a convict. The marble cracks, and breaks from their sides; it disappears in dust and ashes,—and thou canst recognize nothing, and name nothing, in the hour of thy triumph!

Under the remains of this portico, two wretched beggars are asleep, wrapped in the rags of the same cloak. In the pale light of the moon their faces gleam like monumental marbles; a lizard glides over their entwining arms; it flies before thee like a leaf in the wind of autumn. In them thou greetest the last of the Roman People on the ruins of the Forum! Thou strikest them with thy foot,—but they awake not!

Thy leader guides thee through a way bordered with dying trees: there sleep the shadows of the Palatine: there lie the battered breasts and broken limbs of heroes; there headless gods and demigods of jasper and of porphyry strew the ground, rolling together in the dust! Thou passest through the broken arch of Titus, gaping like a great wound into the empty, desolate space beyond. Here it seems to thee, just risen from the sleep of centuries, that the Coliseum still stands entire:—but the terrible one takes thy hand—and laughs convulsively!

And 'midst the deadly silence of the arena, on its silver sands, under its long arcades with broken arches, like formless rocks with ivy growing on their tops and gashes through their hearts,—thou thankest *Fatum* for the complete abasement of the seven-hilled city!

And here must end thy pilgrimage!

From the arena's sands thou art to go where millions upon millions have before thee gone!

All that thou hadst once seen, all in which thou hadst thyself borne a part, returns to thy remembrance. There stood the throne of Cæsar; there suffered Elsinœ; there writhed Heliogabalus; there conquered Alexander. Contests, struggles, blood, curses, mingling with trumpets, flutes, roll on before thee. But there is no sunshine now, and no velarium,* whose purple folds floated about the circus, now shades the hill of Livius. The moon alone

*During the games in the amphitheatre, an awning called the *Velarium* was thrown across its whole length and breadth, to shelter the spectator from the rays of the sun.

shines coldly down upon the throng of the moving, acting, vanishing phantoms which glide before thee.

Of all these varying sounds the accents of a hymn alone swell on thy ear; thou didst hear it formerly; this formerly was yesterday; yesterday died the Nazarenes within this amphitheatre, their faces calm as an eve in summer. And where they fell stands now a cross:—a black and silent cross in the midst of the arena. Thy leader turns away his dark and stormful face from its peaceful shadow.

A wondrous feeling now awakes in thee. Not pity for lost Rome; her desolation equals not her crimes. Nor is it dread of the destiny which thou hast chosen; for thou hast suffered far too deeply to know fear. Nor is it a regret to leave thy mother Earth; in thy long sleep of centuries, thou hast forgotten all the love of life. But a virgin's tender face, full of melancholy sadness, floats o'er the cross,—that cross once scorned by thee, because thou couldst not sharpen it to steel, and make of it an arm of vengeance.

And now thou hast no wish to fight against it. It seems to thee, that like thyself, it, too, is weary. Its fate appears to thee as sad as that of thy loved Hellas.

And under the rays of the moon, thou hast felt that it is Holy for evermore!

However, thou hast no desire to escape from thy sworn faith. Thou risest and walkest to the old man of the Desert. He shudders, for he reads the secrets of thy soul. He throws his long arms round thee, and clasps thee in their gloomy circle; he tears thee step by step away from the sign of man's redemption; and thou followest him slowly on, as once thy father followed him.

But thou, my hero! strong and beautiful, with thy dark tunic wrapped around thee, and thy Greek *cothurni* on thy feet,—thou stoppest;—thine arms stretched towards the sky, thy being vibrates with a sudden aspiration, like rapid, powerful music, harmonizing in its own unity a thousand wandering tones:—an aspiration in itself uniting the thou-

sand voices of thy soul! . . . And all the ruins of the Corinthian capitals, the acanthus-leaves, seem to sigh with thee, Iridion!

“My son, the time is here. Thou hast drained to the dregs the drink the centuries prepared for thee and poured into thy life-cup. The time has come! The crimson dawn is nigh, our way is long, and we must enter on a darker path!”

Moans are heard issuing from the earth; it seems as if the bones of those who have sealed their faith in blood awake from sleep. Sighs fill the air; the souls faithful to Christ appear to float on through space. Then, o’er the summits of the amphitheatre, above all the plaintive voices, resounds a chant full of glory!

And in the air a form reveals itself of dazzling whiteness and transparent splendor; and round this form floats the charity of the celestials; sometimes the rays like fluttering pennons twine and intertwine, then sunder to expand in the white moonlight into two still, outstretched angel-wings.

Thou raisest thine eyes to gaze upon that calm face; thou recognizest features once known to thee, but freshened by celestial dew, and luminous with the breath of Heaven. Thou gazest into it, and, in bidding it adieu, it seems to thee that thou art bidding farewell forever to all beauty.

A Voice calls the old man of the Desert back before the cross, to await a judgment not yet decided. Humbled by that voice, he covers his withered brows with his hands as the angels chant their hymn of love, and turns his dark face toward the gates of the arena. He seizes thy hand, gnashes his teeth and mutters: “Damned! Damned! Who can tear him from me?”

And now at the foot of the symbol of redemption, as the first crimson of dawn flushes the sky, and the moon sinks behind the amphitheatre, while the whole arena

glitters with the brilliancy of the wings of the angel, begins the music of an invisible choir, and commences the last, the supreme combat which is to decide thy eternal destiny!

Above thy Tempter, and below thy Angel, thou standest upon the steps of the cross. No fear is on thy brow; no prayer breathes through thy lips:—thou art as thou hast ever been:—alone in the universe!

He plants his swarthy feet deep in the sand, supporting his bowed head upon his scathed breast, and asserts his claims: “Immortal Enemy! He is surely mine! He lived for vengeance, and he *hated* Rome!”

But the Angel unfurling the rainbow of her wings and shaking her curls of gold: “Lord! He is mine! for he *loved* Hellas!”

The air grows sad and dark with this majestic struggle. New agony awakes within thee. Thy life entire becomes an expectation, a harrowing laceration. Infernal fires burn at thy feet; splendors of heavenly glory dazzle thine eyes; dark bands of spirits drag thee toward the abyss; hosts of angels draw thee to the sky; sometimes a hope divine illumines thy soul; it vanishes! it flickers like a dying spark! it dies! Then like a meteor it again awakes, expires, and all grows dark, silent, and desolate as in blank nothingness; bitter and woeful, unendurable as black despair; weak, doubting, wretched, as in groveling shame!

Dark hour of terror, destined for all who live,—begone! Avert thy face from the Son of my Thought!

Father in Heaven! If once Thou didst forsake Thine own Son, it was that Thou mightst never more forsake a single one of Thy poor finite children!

No, no. None of Thy works shall disappear forever!

Rise, son of Greece! Look up! Thine enemy buries his face deep in his withered hands, and this old edifice of men trembles with his vain struggles!

And in the gathering mists of morn, his form, ever more dark, more dim, fades slowly away! His head supported on the gates of the old amphitheatre, he writhes in agony; while his voice dies away like ever-lessening sounds of distant waters!

Metella testifies for thee! Metella prays for thee!
And thou art saved, because thou lovedst Hellas!

Arise! Dost thou not hear the Voice which breaks the hush, the reverential silence of the spirits? Like lightning-flashes, it breaks through the shimmer of the dawn; and all the perfumes of the valley-flowers awake to greet it!

“Go toward the North; go in the name of Christ! Go! and halt not until thou standest in the land of graves and crosses:—thou wilt know it by the silence of the warriors, and by the sadness of the little children! Thou wilt know it by the burned and smoking cottage of the poor, the ruined palace of the exile!

“Thou wilt know it by the moans of my pitying angels, who pass over it by night!

“Go! dwell with the new brethren I now give to thee! In that sad land shall be thy second trial! There, for the second time, thou’lt see the object of thy love transpierced and ruined; thou canst do nothing to avert the wrong, nor canst thou die! . . .

“The agonies of myriad souls shall incarnate themselves in thee!

“Go! and have faith in my name! . . .

“Think not of thine own glory! Only seek the good of those I have intrusted to thee! Be calm before the pride, oppression, and contempt of the unjust!

“They all shall pass away; but thou and my Word, ye shall endure forever and forever!

“After a long, long martyrdom, then I will light My golden Dawn above thee! I will give thee that which I have given to my angels through the centuries: Happi-

ness!—That which I promised men from Golgotha:
Liberty!

“Go and act! Act, though thy heart be withering in
thy breast!

“Act, even when thou doubtest the Brothers I have
given thee!

“Act; shouldst thou doubt thyself, despair of aid from
Me!

“Act without ceasing and without repose! Thou shalt
outlive the vain, the fortunate, the haughty, the illustri-
ous!

“And thou shalt rise again, not from the sterile *sleep*,
but from the *work* of centuries!

“Thou shalt become one of the free sons in My
Heavenly kingdom!”

The sun rises upon the ruins of Rome!

And no one can say where are the traces of my
Thought!

But I know that it exists! I know it lives!

NOTES TO IRIDION.

NOTES TO THE PROLOGUE.

¹ The scene of Iridion is laid in the third century after Christ. The Roman Empire was then in a state of disorganization, dissolution, and approaching death. All that had once been its force and life was losing form and lapsing into nothingness. Three widely-differing religious systems stood face to face in the Eternal City: Classic Paganism, Barbarism, and Christianity. Classic Paganism was, indeed, already lifeless, pushed aside and trampled upon by the creeds of the East, yet like a richly-adorned but still unburied corpse, though stiff and motionless, it was still visible, and still held its place on earth. Christianity, as yet without form or body, was persecuted and oppressed, but was notwithstanding constantly increasing in numbers, combating all the symbolic creeds of past ages, now pronouncing utter condemnation upon them, and now reconciling, through the solvent power of its own higher truths, all that was valuable in them with the eternal Reason.

Barbarism, shifting and restless as a stormy sea, brought with it its own wild, rude, and melancholy myths, yet frequently forgot them in the lap of Rome. Sometimes it was found fighting in the Roman legions; sometimes, as in the northern provinces, it raged against Rome; it thronged from all sides into Italy, either to supply her with mercenaries, or to conquer her, never attaining self-consciousness or knowledge, always blind and reckless, but vivid and formidable as the powers of nature herself. This Barbarism offered a glowing material to be cast into the mould; to form the Body of that Spirit already existing in the catacombs,—Christianity. The calm which preceded the great storm in which Rome vanished and became Christian Europe, was the last festival time of the Cæsars, while an indescribable wretchedness weighed upon the people and slaves in every part of the empire. Material superfluity, or material want, always causes mental silence, the utter suppression of the intellect, whether with individuals or nations; for on the highest step of sensuous well-being, or the lowest grade of want, moral life is quiescent, and human existence approaches that of the brute; the moral and mental essence seems to sleep that it may awake refreshed, and make itself more fully heard. As the old world was rather a world of forms and numbers than of free and independent movements of the soul, it was forced in its convulsive death-throes to writhe and twist in the rigid moulds of its own materialism: our world, on the contrary, is oppressed by mental superfluity.

² The *Fatum* of the Romans, the *ἀνάγκη* of the Greeks, was, according to Hesiod, the son of Night and Chaos, and was that *Necessity, Fatality,*

higher than all the Gods and Spirits of Heaven and Hell. It was represented as an old man holding an urn in his hands, in which slumbered the destiny of all mortals. This figure was symbolic, and principally conceived of in an ideal sense; it signified the Divine Unity, the logical sequence and final aim, the eternal reason and order, the Mathematics of the Universe, which neither gods nor men were able to resist.

3 Under the rule of the Cæsars, arose gradually a general equality of all subjects in regard to their sovereigns; the rights of citizenship, so scantily distributed by the patricians, were at length granted to all the provinces of the empire. Many of the emperors were from the provinces. Trajan was a Spaniard, Heliogabalus a Syrian, Maximinus a Goth, etc. Rome, full of the idea of conquering the world, and standing, as the Almighty after creation, sole Lord of all, was forced by the press of circumstances to open her gates to the people both of the north and of the south. Even her haughty egotism did not suffice to keep her in her isolated position, although she always struggled to retain her individuality, even while the conquered nations were gradually mingling with her, each imparting its peculiar share, and taking in return its peculiar portion. Grecian art and philosophy pressed first into the city; the Greeks taught the Romans, thus taking possession of the spiritual culture of Rome. In this way was the fall of Rome brought about, for a coarse material egotism is only powerful as long as it remains *utterly material*. To awaken a living spirit in it, is to destroy it. For the very essence of such a spirit is to seek external development, and, sooner or later, through its strivings for wider life and power, the material mass is broken asunder, and its bonds ruptured. Oriental sagas, myths, customs, manners, and luxuries also came to take and give their part in Rome. They exercised as much influence over the people, as Greek art and philosophy over the senate and patricians. The egotistic and exclusive type of the Eternal City was destroyed in this way, and the visible consequences of these unseen moral causes came, in after-times, fully to the light. Rome became Greece, Egypt, Asia Minor; while Greece, Egypt, and Asia Minor were not Rome. Barbarians sat in the Roman senate; all creeds and laws mingled in this flux of nations; and in this disorganizing formation, this heterogeneous culture, all the old Roman enactments and ordinances fell to the ground; the aristocracy disappeared, partly through the jealousy of the Cæsars, and partly through the exhaustion of its own vital powers. The emperors confiscated the property of the patricians, seized their privileges, and constituted themselves their heirs. They held in their own hands the rights of the priests, nobles, and people; whatever they deemed advantageous to their own interest to destroy, was at once destroyed. They thus united in themselves the powers of those whom they had ruined. But one thing they could not destroy,—the People over whom they reigned. The people alone remained forever with them, and as the material power was placed in the people, the existence of the empire depended upon them, and the emperors were frequently forced to bow to them, to flatter them with gifts and costly shows, with triumphs, games, and festivals. Thus were People and Cæsar the whole of Rome!

4 Considered with regard to religion, the Germanic stem branched into two leading divisions. Germania, as spoken of by Tacitus, in which the Suevi (Hermiones) seem to have had the first rank, held the religion of nature, worshiped the elements, trees, waters, and the goddess Hertha (Earth). She was supposed to visit the earth at stated intervals, when

her coming was celebrated with great rejoicings; she was brought in a closely-covered carriage from the forests of the islands of the North Sea. Different local ceremonies were practiced among the different hordes, and their creeds were confused and uncertain. But stronger colors were impressed upon this pale, vague canvas by the tribes dwelling still farther north, unknown to the Romans. These northern people had already made some progress, believing in the virtue of heroic though savage courage; they accepted some religious revelations deemed to have been given them by their god, Odin. Odin of Iceland, where his worship afterwards attained its fullest development, ruled the souls of men even to the shores of the Rhine. The Goths, Saxons, Gepidæ, Lombards, Burgundians, were worshipers of Odin and believed in his incarnation, in the sanctity and power of certain ceremonies, in immortality, and in rewards to be conferred after death upon the brave in the Palace of Odin, Valhalla; in a holy place upon earth, Asgard, whence their fathers came, and to which, sooner or later, they were themselves to return. Their courage and warlike energies sprang from these wild myths; their whole development centred round them. It was this creed which set in motion the Germanic races then vegetating in lower Germania. They went from Scandinavia as far as the coast of the Baltic Sea, turned toward the Danube, and passed through the whole of Germany to the limits of the empire. This incursion from the north generated an utter chaos in Germania, which afterwards passed on to Italy.

5 The catacombs are spacious vaults lying under the entire city as well as under part of the Roman Campagna; it has even been asserted that they extend as far as the shore of the sea. They were used by the early Romans as places of burial; the bodies of slaves and of the poorer classes who could not be placed upon funeral pyres were deposited there. They were afterwards places of resort and refuge for the Christians during the persecutions. They are still in a state of preservation in some parts of their extent, and are in a measure accessible to visitors, though they are much obstructed with ruins. They consist of numerous and apparently almost interminable, low, narrow, dark passages, sometimes widening into round or quadrilateral apartments. The walls are covered with tombstones, and inscriptions to the memory of the martyrs, whose bones are still excavated from these mysterious vaults.

NOTES TO ACT I.

¹ The Grecian women had not then attained the freedom of their European sisters; Oriental manners still lingered among them, and they were kept secluded in apartments called Gynceum (from the word, *γυνή*, woman), which they never left before marriage.

² So was called the son of Varius Marcellus and Scœmias, from the god Halgah-Baal or Mithras, whose High-Priest he had been in Emessa, before he became Emperor of Rome. The history of Heliogabalus is the most significant exponent, and offers us the strongest proof, of the weakness and degeneracy of the world at that time. He ascended the throne at the age of fifteen, and was murdered by the prætorians when but

eighteen ; having exhausted in this short space of time all the enjoyments which luxury and power could procure.

He had no youth, and was never young. He might indeed be called the very personification of age. The influences of the past seemed to have left a void in his soul which nothing ever sufficed to fill. Sensuality and weariness were the two strongest traits of his character ; these are also the traits of old age. Weariness of life (*ennui*), is the martyrdom which springs from the feeling of eternal emptiness, and from the unceasing but fruitless efforts to escape from its torment. Voluptuous sensuality is the work of the imagination striving to find something which will have the power to awaken and rekindle the dead senses. Passion is always vigorous, it is the synthesis, the poetry of the body ; sensuality, on the contrary, is full of ingenuity and research ; it stretches forth to and embraces a thousand details, it individualizes and separates ; it is analysis, prose. Heliogabalus cannot be said to have gratified his passions, for he had none to gratify ; he had only the burning desire to have passions. He sought throughout nature, in every part of his wide realm, in his whole being, for the excitants, the sparks which might kindle a fire of whatsoever character, to inflame, to warm, to stimulate the cold void in his own soul. His whole life was spent in this restless and miserable struggle, and consequently everything he did was only a caprice. Such a character and position in a young man would be utterly inexplicable, were it not that the fatal old age of the world in which he was born had cast its burden of years upon him. Thus Heliogabalus was old through the world which surrounded him, and young through his own youth ; and from this melancholy contrast sprang the eternal contradiction in which his life was passed : eternal impotence and eternal desire !

This impotent old man, this self-warring, decaying, worn-out, and exhausted child, was born in Syria, the land of magical myths and consuming climates. His grandmother Mœsa was the sister of Julia, the wife of Septimius Severus. After the death of this emperor, his whole family, robbed of their power and influence, were banished to Syria. Mœsa had two daughters, Scœmias and Mammea ; Mammea was the mother of Alexis, afterwards famous under the name of Alexander Severus. Heliogabalus had been from the fourteenth year of his age High-Priest in the temple at Emessa, dedicated to the worship of the great god, Halgah-Baal or Mithras, who was the god of the Chaldeans, and with whom all the Oriental and Egyptian myths were closely linked. He was the symbol of the Sun, and was revered as the most famous among the gods, the Highest, the One, and, so to speak, the Abstract Essence ; for this reason no image was made of him ; a round black stone was his symbol. Other gods were worshiped in this temple ; Baal-Fegor, or the sun materialized, the Power which quickened and lived in vegetation ; Gad-Baal, or the sun incorporated, from whom came the Oracles ; Phœbe, Astarte Baalis, the great goddess, the spouse of Halgah-Baal, or the moon lighted by the sun, nature quickened by the sun ; Baalis Benoth or Venus, and Baalis Dercote or the Grecian Aphrodite, both designating nature already incarnated, woman. The death and resurrection of Adonis were celebrated in this temple ; a symbol of nature forsaken by the sun in winter and revived in the spring by his warming rays. Presents were sent to it from every part of Asia. Its solemnities were celebrated with incredible luxury, but with the most brutal licentiousness. In this vast temple of phantasms, luxuries, and crimes, the soul of Heliogabalus received its first lessons, its earliest development. His healthful energies, his free will,

were thus crushed at his very entrance into life by fantastic scenes and creeds, into which there entered neither truth nor reality; luxury enervated his mind, and voluptuousness sated his soul; the effects of both were increased by the influence of a stimulating and exciting climate. In accordance with all the accounts given of him, he was exceedingly beautiful. It was a general rumor that he was the son of Caracalla, by whom his mother had been loved, and whose memory was idolized by the soldiers of the legions. After the murder of Caracalla, Macrinus, the Prefect of the prætorians, ruled Rome and the world, but his reign was without strength. One of the legions, passing through Emessa, saw the young Heliogabalus. His exceeding beauty, associated with the memory of his father, struck the legionaries; and Mœsa, who could not forget that her sister had once been the foremost woman in Rome, struggled with all her powers to advance the interests of her grandson. She took Heliogabalus and Scœmias secretly at night from the temple, and conducted them to the camp of the legion. The son of Caracalla was there proclaimed Cæsar, and Ulpius Julius, who had been sent thither by Macrinus, was killed. Heliogabalus, for the first and last time in his life, displayed considerable courage in the struggle which then occurred. Macrinus fled on receiving the intelligence of the death of his son, and, springing from his chariot, broke his arm, when his head was stricken off and taken to Heliogabalus. Then commenced the reign of Heliogabalus, and his unceasing efforts to escape from *ennui*.

To escape from these haunting feelings of weariness, he caused Halgah-Baal to be brought to Rome, and had all the other gods transported into his sanctuary, as well as all the heroes who received worship; he had in his possession the Trojan Palladium and the shield of Vesta and Numa; he amused himself by making of these gods proconsuls, officers; and servants to Halgah-Baal; of the goddesses, he made mistresses or consorts; first he gave Baal the Athenian Pallas as wife, but afterwards took her away from him, and gave him the Carthaginian Venus, whom he suffered to remain consort.

To escape from feeling weary: he brought chariots from Sicily, flute-players from Ægium, cooks from Elis, bakers from Athens; he covered the ground with Lydian tapestries, used incense and perfumes from Syria, he sent for doves to Cyprus, for pearls to Lydia, for horses to the island of Melos, for oysters to Pylos, for fish to the Hellespont, for crabs to Minturnæ, for pears to Eubœa, for plums to Damascus, for grapes to Rhodes, for oranges to Persia, for cedars to Palmyra, for pomegranates to Antioch, for dates to Phœnicia, for almonds to Naxos, for wine to the apple-perfumed Thasos and to Cyprus.

And to escape from weariness: he drove out with camels, elephants, and lions harnessed to his chariot; he clothed himself in long, graceful garments, instead of the short tunic of the Romans; and in the interior of the palace he wore, to the great disgust of the Romans, the diadem upon his brow, although he did not venture to appear in public with it. He wore cothurni richly adorned with precious stones. He never put the same garment on twice, nor the same shoes nor rings; he bathed in immense baths of marble, with saffron and the most costly perfumes in the water which he used; he slept upon a couch of silver, covered with cushions of partridge and swan's-down; he drank from goblets of crystal, amber, onyx, and gold. After each course of food, the wreaths were changed for his brows; at the first course they were of roses, at the second of violets, at the third of myrtle, at the fourth of narcissus-flowers, at the

fifth of ivy, at the sixth of roses and papyri mingled, and at the seventh of the Alexandrian lotus.

And to escape from weariness: he had the combs torn from the heads of cocks while they were still living, and the tongues from peacocks and nightingales; he had the brains pressed out of partridges and thrushes, and the heads twisted off pheasants, canary-birds, and parrots. When he passed through the halls of the palace, or went into the garden, slaves strewed roses and silver sand before him. At one time he ordered ten thousand spiders to be brought to him; at another, ten thousand mice; then ten thousand martens; and again, ten thousand cats. At the closing of the games he would throw adders and basilisks among the assembled people. To his parasites he would send as presents costly vessels closely soldered, filled with toads and scorpions. Sometimes he would invite some among them to banquets, and the ceiling would suddenly open above them, and roses, violets, and other flowers would be thrown down upon them; at first they would stretch themselves out delightedly under the fragrant shower, but the rain did not cease, flowers upon flowers continued to fall, until the room was filled; and the next day were dragged forth the corpses of the unhappy men who had been stifled under the unceasing fall of tulips, lilies, violets, and roses. He would often have favorite lions and tigers brought into the hall, and delight himself with the fear and anguish of the senators, consuls, and courtiers, who had been invited to his banquet.

And to escape from weariness: at a time when prizes were distributed for horsemanship at the circus, he resolved to play the charioteer, and caught and seized in his own royal person the pieces of silver thrown by the spectators; then he played the part of a simple musician. As his father, Caracalla, had been a passionate admirer and imitator of Alexander the Great, he selected as his model Nero, who, stabbing himself in a grotto in the Roman Campagna, cried to his followers: "See how an artist can die!"

And to escape from weariness: he caused Pomponius Bassus to be murdered, tore the young wife from the corpse on which she lay prostrate, bathing it with bitter tears, forced the outraged widow to his own bed, and dismissed her at daybreak:—he being already hopelessly wearied!

Then he hoped to find relief in the profanation of the pure and unsoiled vestals; as no one in all antiquity had ever before thought of seizing upon one of these consecrated virgins, his idea had all the spice of novelty, having consequently the greater charm for him: he had the audacity to tear away Aquilia Severa herself from the sacred fire of Vesta, but dismissed her the following day, even more hopelessly wearied!

Then he directed nautical machines, and games at the circus upon water, and upon seas of wine and absinthe. Mammea, the sister of Scœmias, inherited a strong will, a keen intellect, and a soaring ambition from her mother. Scœmias had studied the old systems of magic, and was familiar with all the Oriental symbols of immortality, but Mammea had adopted the idealism of Neo-platonism, and the creed of Christianity. She indoctrinated her son, Alexander Severus, in these principles, and he had in his sacrarium the statues of Pythagoras, Orpheus, Abraham, Apollonius Thyaneus, and Jesus Christ. He lived upon milk, in its various preparations, and fruit, wrote verses, and read Seneca, Virgil, and Cicero unceasingly.

Mammea persuaded her sister's son, Heliogabalus, that as High-Priest of the Sun, it accorded better with his dignity to occupy himself with the

supersensual, supernatural, and magical arts alone, and to leave earthly, vain, and trifling things to Alexander. Heliogabalus at first approved of this counsel, and intrusted the charge of his mundane affairs to Alexis, naming him Alexander Severus, Cæsar, and Consul. But thereupon commenced a strife, at first secret, but afterwards public, in the imperial palace. Heliogabalus tried to mould Alexander after his own image, and because he resisted, he raged against the mother and the preceptors of Alexander. He condemned the rhetorician Silvius to death; he burned Ulpian, a celebrated jurist; he surrounded Mammea with spies, and he finally tried to murder Alexander. In this he did not succeed, for Alexander was protected by the watchful eye of his mother; whereupon he ordered the Senate to deprive him of his title of Cæsar, and the prætorians to overturn his statues. The senators, alarmed, feared to obey, and the prætorians, incited and paid by Mammea, rose in rebellion. Then, the very Heliogabalus who, but three years before, had headed the legion at Emessa, challenged the power of Macrinus, and, almost naked, without armor or helmet, with no defense save the sword in his hand, had given strong proofs of courage and prowess upon the field of battle, fled for refuge to the camp without the city, and promised to confer new honors and dignities upon Alexander.

His first thoughts after his return to the palace were occupied in devising pretexts to escape from his promises. In order to ascertain the true feelings of the prætorians, he caused a report of the death of Alexander to be spread abroad, whereupon a tumult taking place in the camp, he was forced to show his cousin living and uninjured to the soldiers in order to allay the commotion. As he stood upon his chariot, leaning upon Alexander, he addressed the legions, but hearing threatening on every side, he fell into a rage, and ordered the offenders against his sacred majesty to be immediately arrested. Then the tumult rapidly increased, Mammea on the one side encouraging the soldiers, and Sœmias on the other promising rewards to fidelity, until Heliogabalus, seized with fright and the presentiment of approaching death, fled. His party was destroyed by the prætorians,—and perhaps this was the only moment of his life in which he forgot to feel weary! Alexander was hailed Emperor.

Long before these events, the Syrian Seers had prophesied that their High-Priest would die no common death, and they had always declared to him that he would take his own life. Consequently, he had prepared various instruments for such an emergency; he had cups of poison, poisoned bowls and poisoned swords, and he had hollowed out a tomb for himself at the base of the marble tower, and inlaid it with precious stones and jewels. As he had prepared banquets, games, and amusements for himself, he would also arrange for death; but when death came, perhaps the sole reality of his phantasmagoric life, he forgot his games and his artistic preparations for his stern guest. He hid himself with his mother in one of the most distant corners of his palace,—a corner entirely unsuitable to the dignity of the Roman Cæsars, and of which even Nero, in the depths of his extremity, had never thought. But even in this obscure hiding-place he was not safe; he was discovered by the prætorians, murdered, decapitated, and his headless corpse, together with that of his unhappy mother, dragged about the streets of the city, and then thrown into the sewer; but as the opening was narrow, it was again dragged out, and was finally thrown into the Tiber. The last name of Heliogabalus was Tiberinus.

Heliogabalus may be regarded as a synthetic embodiment of the

Oriental myths. These myths, once full of deep and true thoughts, now remained only in the entire prostitution of their outward forms, so that the inner meaning was no longer suggested by, or even thought of in connection with the external manifestation: and thus these degraded and licentious symbols seem to have been gathered together and incarnated in the form of Heliogabalus, that their character and influence might be the more distinctly manifested, and that they might thus vanish from the face of the earth. Indeed, the symbolism of the East fell almost necessarily into degradation; coming under the law of nature there prevalent, the purest idea could take no pure form upon itself, for nature herself there is destructive to human energy and freedom, enticing to sensuality and luxury, lulling the conscience, and rife with the lotus-fruits of oblivion. Through her own exceeding softness, beauty, and luxuriance, she seems to choke and deaden the spiritual essence in the soul of man.

It is a common thing for historians to pass rapidly and contemptuously over the few short days of the reign of Heliogabalus. As an individual, he richly deserves their scorn, but not as an historic fact, for after his death the victory of Christianity became every day more certain. Paganism manifested itself in its very apex in him, showing clearly before the eyes of the world that it was rotten to the inmost core, that it could bear fruit no longer; indeed, its whole extent and power, its utter prostration and worthlessness to effect any good for humanity, was typified and manifested in this physically beautiful, but cruel, vicious, and unhappy young Priest of the Sun. A moral dissolution stamps every thought and deed of Heliogabalus; in his youthful desires and impotent decrepitude we see an utter want of the life of the spirit, of the soul:—he was *matter* left to its *own corruption!*

³ The Latin Diva. The emperors and their consorts were frequently promoted to the rank of gods and goddesses by a decree of the Roman Senate; statues were erected in their honor, and temples dedicated to them. Many Christians perished because they refused to burn incense upon altars consecrated to the Cæsars and adorned with their images. Antinous, the idol of Adrian, was registered (after his death) among the gods by a decree of the Roman Senate, pronounced in accordance with the desire of Adrian.

NOTES TO ACT II.

¹ Names of great emperors who were registered after death among the gods, and which became afterwards the titles of those who succeeded them, or of the princes of the Cæsarian line. Thus the emperors were called, Augustus, Cæsar. Heliogabalus had adopted the names of the best emperors as titles of honor, and was styled: Antoninus, Aurelius, etc., etc.

² The Peristyle was the saloon of the ancients, their houses usually consisting of a long row of rooms, the one following immediately upon the other, so that when one stood in the "Vestibulum" or entrance, which was commonly quite narrow, he could see through to the "Viridarium" or garden, in which it was customary for the house to terminate at the other end. Immediately back of the Vestibulum was the "Atrium," in which the slaves sat and the guests were first received. The "Vesti-

bulum," in the midst of which was the "Impluvium," a round or square tank destined to contain rain-water, was surrounded by small sleeping-apartments, the light of day entering through an opening immediately over the Impluvium. Then came the "Tablinum," a long hall adorned with all the precious or valuable things pertaining to the house. Beyond it stood the "Peristyle," a quadrilateral room, generally adorned with columns, and without a roof, intended for exercise, walking and amusement; then came the "Triclinium" or eating-room, connected with and frequently in the "Viridarium" or garden, in which were statues, vases, flowers, and shrubs. This whole row of rooms was like a long corridor, varied by the narrowing or widening of the walls, and adorned by statues and frescoes. The altars of the house-gods stood in the Vestibulum, and the other gods and heroes in the Peristyle and Viridarium. The rooms occupied by the slaves, as well as the chambers of the family, were only side cabinets attached to this main corridor, opening into it on either side. In Rome, especially in the Palace of the Cæsars, the proportions were large and noble, but at Pompeii only the main corridor, the places intended for the public eye, for the taking of meals or the reception of guests, were either spacious or beautiful, the remainder of the house consisting of low, narrow apartments.

3 Septimius Severus, whose wife, Julia, was the sister of Mœsa, the mother of Mammaea and Scœmias. Caracalla, the son of Septimius, succeeded him; Macrinus, Prefect of the prætorian guard, succeeded Caracalla, and then came Heliogabalus.

4 Tiresias, a famous seer, was a son of the nymph Chariclo; he was deprived of sight by Juno, and gifted with prophetic power by Jupiter. Heroes, when anxious to pry into the future, went to visit him in the infernal regions.

5 The inhabitants of Crotona were celebrated for their great physical strength and their skill in combat.

6 This entire speech of Iridion is based upon the foolish idolatry with which Caracalla regarded Alexander the Great. Caracalla was a man of but moderate ability, not of an iron will, but of iron caprices, vain, ostentatious, full of petty self-love, and suffering in some degree from disorder of the brain; yet he was a bold and vigorous soldier. He was a perfect hero in his own eyes, and believed that fate had created him for great purposes. The star which shone with the greatest lustre in the Greek and Roman hemisphere was the star of Alexander the Great; it kindled in him the desire to attain the same brilliancy, and it became the object of his worship. He imitated Alexander as closely as possible, and his courtiers declared to him he resembled him as one drop of water resembles another. His helmet, sword, and entire armor were like to those of Alexander, and he carried his head bent as Alexander had done, to increase the resemblance to him. Although he could not be a genius and a conqueror, yet he found resources in the mustering of legions; and since he could not take Tyre and Babylon, he marched upon Alexandria, his own city, and in one day destroyed the half of its inhabitants, flattering himself that he too could conquer and murder as the Macedonian king was wont to do. He finally deluded himself to such a degree that he actually believed, toward the end of his days, that through metempsychosis the spirit of the Macedonian had entered into his body, and that he had become actually one with the great Alexander.

NOTES TO ACT III.

¹ It would seem that near this monument, erected to the wife of the *Triumvir Crassus*, was a secret entrance into the catacombs. Near it still stands the church of *St. Sebastian*, from which the descent is now made into the crypts.

² The place in front of the *Capitol*, upon which stood the *rostra* and *curiæ*. Steps ascended from the *Forum* to the top of the *Capitoline hill*; upon the left height stood the temple of *Jupiter Feretrius* upon the *Tarpeian rock*; on the right, that of *Jupiter Capitolinus*. Opposite the *Capitol* stood the temple of *Vesta*, and the cloisters of the *vestals*; and near the foot of the *Capitolium* was the temple of *Fortune and Concordia*. On a vacant spot in the midst stood a *rostrum*. The general view must have been exceedingly beautiful. That elevation of the soul which is visible in, and is inspired by, *Gothic architecture*, is not indeed to be found in the antique or classic; in its stead rules the highest worth of the material, the highest dignity of the corporeal. The old intrepid patrician, with his *toga* thrown back, resting after the offering he has made to the gods, is the type of the ancient architecture. In its every part it is defined, limited, clear, and perfectly finished. The ideas of mass and beauty are in it united and brought into a firmly-closed and clearly-designated circle. Firmness, unity, limitation, are its distinctive marks, whereas in the *Gothic* we have variety, movement, progression, suggestions of the infinite, life. The one is a beautiful corpse; the other a growing spirit; or, classic architecture is the spirit perfectly incorporated in dimensions, in matter; and *Gothic*, matter struggling to idealize itself, to become spirit. Hence it is that so few *Gothic churches* are entirely finished, while the heathen temples were completed in every part; hence, in regard to mere art, *Pagan architecture* has surpassed the *Christian*, while in thought, spirit, and suggestiveness, the *Christian* far excels the *Pagan*.

³ The walls in the catacombs were covered with monuments, with sculpture and painting. In the early days of *Christianity*, art was essentially symbolic. Thus *Orpheus*, the first sage, poet, and founder of society and civilization among the heathens, was made to signify *Christ*, as did also the figures of *Noah*, *Isaac*, and *Joseph*. A golden candlestick with three branches represented *Christ*; so did a grape-vine. The lyre was the symbol of the *Cross*; the palm, of glory in *Heaven*; a cross set with precious stones, wound with wreaths of roses and with chains of gold extending from the two Greek letters *Alpha* and *Omega*, signified *God*, the beginning and end of all that is. The peacock symbolized the resurrection, but sometimes stood for *Satan*. The wood of the olive was the hieroglyphic of rest and eternity; the cypress and pine, of death; the anchor, of redemption; fish stood for men, in accordance with the words of the *Saviour* to the *Apostles*: "be ye fishers of men;" the dolphin represented hope and the dead who had left this world for a better. *Samson* with the gates upon his shoulders, signified *Christ*; for: "Tollit portas civitatis id est Inferni et removit mortis imperium." *Civitas* once meant the real deed of *Samson*, but also stood for the old world entire, which was truly only a collection of cities, which, strong in their walled and defended limits, oppressed men to the uttermost. This type proves that the *Christians* of the first centuries already felt their political mission.

A shepherd meant an apostle; a cock, the watchfulness of the pastor; and the cross was always made of four kinds of wood,—cypress, cedar, pine, and olive.

4 The "Pro-Christum" was a little flask, which, containing some of the blood of the martyr, was placed upon his breast in the coffin, engraved with the letters: P. Chr. (for Christ). The bodies of martyrs are recognized even at the present date by this mark, although no other inscription remains to show they died for Christ.

5 The depressing belief that the world was approaching its end, and that the day of judgment was near, was frequent among Christians from the death of Christ almost half through the Middle Ages. The entire conspiracy and appeal of Iridion in the catacombs is based upon such views of the approaching end of the world, the resurrection of the saints, and the destruction of Rome.

NOTES TO ACT IV.

1 The ancients constantly carried with them small tablets, covered with wax, upon which they wrote with a sharp instrument of metal, called stylus or style. These were worn thrust into the girdle of the tunic, and were frequently used as daggers. Many of the conspirators by whom Julius Cæsar was killed came to the senate provided with such weapons. Brutus stabbed him with the stylus.

2 The Roman legions were, upon the field of battle, drawn up in three ranks: the first rank formed the "Hastati"; the second, the "Principes"; and the third, the "Triarii." Each rank was divided into twelve bands; two bands formed a century, whose leaders were called centurions; and three companies formed a cohort. A company contained, at least, sixty; at most, one hundred and twenty men.

3 A constellation so called from the sister, and at the same time wife, of Ptolemy Evergetes, a king of Egypt. She made a vow to cut off her hair and offer it up in the temple of Mars, if her husband should return in safety from an expedition which he had undertaken in Asia. Upon his return, she kept her vow: it was hung up in the temple, but disappeared during the same night. Fearing to lose his place, the court astronomer then swore that a zephyr, commanded by Venus, had borne it to Heaven, and named the seven glittering stars near the tail of the Lion: the hair of Berenice.

4 Brennus, a leader of the Gauls, after the capture of the city of Rome and the murder of the senators, when taking the exacted ransom then being weighed before him, cast his heavy sword into the scales with the famous words: "Væ victis!" *Woe to the conquered!*

5 Thrice powerful, because she was the Moon in Heaven, Diana upon the earth, and Proserpine or Hecate in the lower world. Her usual epithet was: Dea Feralis,—the Goddess of Destruction.

NOTES TO ACT V.

¹ It is a well-known fact that when Attalus of Pergamus was dying without heirs, he was induced to leave his beautiful provinces to Rome.

² Before the Romans began to assume an intermeddling and aggressive part in the affairs of Greece, one of their ambassadors declared openly before the inhabitants of the different cities then assembled from all parts to attend the Isthmian games, that, after due consideration, the Roman Senate and People held the demands of the Macedonian king to be utterly unjust; that they deemed the maintenance of Greece in her rights would be useful and noble, and promised to aid her with all their power against the attacks of Macedonia.

³ The last expression of the Greek school of Platonism was found in Stoicism, in the dying hours of antiquity. The idealism of the ancients was realized in the Stoics, as their materialism was in the Epicureans. The virtue of the Stoics was great, but harsh and inexorable. They knew how to die, but not how to live. They held themselves aloof from other men, gazed sadly upon the dying world, but made no efforts to save it. Shut up in themselves, bowing only before the decrees of their own pride, which they, indeed, called conscience, they were *moral egotists*, filled with self-love, not even associating closely with each other; never kindled into life by the love of humanity, nor warmed by the social relations and friendships generated in society. Their thoughts and precepts circled continually round an ideal world, and were never suited for the actual; hence we have accounts of famous *deaths* among them rather than of famous *lives*. The precepts of the Emperor Marcus Aurelius breathe their highest and purest spirit. His maxims for a considerable time served in some measure to console the world, which was daily falling into the corruption of death, but they were unable to generate anything truly great or living. The system of the Stoics might well be called a "testament," in which the dying left nothing to the heirs but some melancholy remarks on life. The Stoics first brought into the world the malady known as the spleen, the last crisis of which is suicide.

⁴ Nothing could be less ideal, or more thoroughly real and practical, than the policy uniformly pursued by Rome. Its Senate shrank from no treachery to defeat an enemy, or to deceive a friend and ally. Fortitude and stern endurance in misfortune, a faith that Rome must stand because it must, with a daring shamelessness that stopped at nothing to achieve a purpose, made the greatness of the Eternal City.

THE LAST.

*Translated from the French translation of the original made by
M. Constantine Gaszynski.*

THE LAST.

From the summits of the mountains whither they had dragged their heavy crosses, they saw afar off the Promised Land. They saw the celestial splendor toward which the men of their race below were approaching; but they were not able to reach those heavenly regions. Ah! they may never sit at the banquet of life; and perhaps even the memory of their sacrifice will be forgotten!

“ANONYME.”

I.

NEARLY the whole of my sad life has passed
Under a dungeon's vault, a prison's bolts and bars,
In darkness, silence, sickness, misery.
My memory is fading day by day
Out of the hearts of my compatriots;
The love of those who loved me once, grows cold;
Perhaps even now they have forgotten me!
A child of light, buried 'neath these dark vaults,
I suffer here because I dared to sing
To my torn country, hymns of faith and love;
To plant the word within men's sinking hearts,
To bloom in inspiration like my own!

II.

I have been proud! Proud only with the haughty:—
Worst nature for *success* in this low world!

Strike those already down, thou mayst find profit :
 But if thou brav'st the arrogant oppressors,
 If with a man's free eye thou look'st upon them
 Simply as droves of brutes and not as men ;
 A dreadful vengeance from those brutes awaits thee ;
 And thou, a man, will be enchained by them !

III.

Like skiffs that skim still lakes, or eagles cleaving space,
 The first years of my life fled rapidly away.
 Unfortunate ! I did not then foresee
 Where these swift waves were bearing me ! As yet
 The sun shone brilliantly above my head ;
 Each moment of the day bloomed like a flower ;
 My fellow-beings were my Brothers, Sisters ;
 And this world, now so deaf to my complaints,
 Was my youth's Paradise !

IV.

Where is the angel who, after the pangs
 Of martyrdom have ceased, the death-hour o'er,
 Comes the third day marked for the Resurrection,
 And lifts the stone pressing the tomb ? Alas !
 He comes alone for Heavenly Powers, not men !
 Where is the second messenger from Heaven,
 Wrenching the bolts from the Mamertine doors,
 Who came at night, and bore the saints of the Lord,
 In triumph from their executioners ?
 But I am no Elect—and these are other times !
 Our Enemy has sterner arms than death ;
 He, while hot life is throbbing in thy veins,
 Will seize, will wrap and hold thee in a shroud,
 Whence thine intelligence will never rise again !

V.

For, shut within the walls of darkened cell,
 Thy spirit, wingéd guest of the infinite,
 Which used to dream of heavenly destinies,
 Will feel itself so orphaned, so alone,
 That thou wilt take a spider to thy heart,
 And supplicate thy jailer for a word

To hear again the sound of the human voice !
 And when days, months, and years on years elapse,
 And no hope ever comes to visit thee,—
 The spirit sinks in deep abyss of nothingness !

VI.

How often have I tried by force of will,
 To rouse my thoughts which fast were dying out,
 Thus to escape the threatened death of soul !
 But when despair has conquered, won its way,
 And pierced the deep recesses of the brain,
 'Tis horrible to see how fast the blood
 Will pour itself along the deadly bolt,
 How atrophy will feed upon the mind,
 And how decay will paralyze the heart,
 Which does not break, but hardens hour by hour,
 Until no longer love beats in its throb :—
 And of all bitter woes, this is the worst !

VII.

I struggled like a Titan 'gainst the void
 Of nothingness, the death of life.
 To bolts and bars I cried : “ Tell me the news,
 And what is passing where the living dwell ! ”
 I took into my livid hands my lamp,
 And one by one counted the calcined threads
 Which made its wick, to generate a thought
 To stimulate my torpid agony !
 But nothing solaced me ; nothing aroused ;
 A heavy fog drifted from day to day
 Increasing, o'er my soul, darkening my faculties
 Until the internal world *went out* within me !
 All inspiration fled ; ideas died ;
 I was alone ; alive—but in a grave ;
 Forever welded to this chain whose rings,
 Set in my bones, are fastened to the clamp
 Fixed in my dungeon walls.

VIII.

Oh, oft in earlier years old men were wont to tell me :
 “ Young madman, cease ! or thy melodious harp

Will plunge thee in an abyss of misery ;
 Thy songs will die with thee 'neath bars and bolts !
 To-day men care not for the hymns of liberty ;
 They seek but peace, propitious to their commerce !
 Vainly thou seek'st to stigmatize corruption ;
 Such prophets now are stoned ! He who would bring
 To earth the news from Heaven, must perish wretchedly !"
 I would not hear them ; doubted all they said.
 I wished to live, not stagnate in this world ;
 Therefore while living, I am sternly doomed
 To rot beneath the surface of the earth.
 The light which shines for all, is torn from me.
 Degraded from my dignity as man,
 I've fallen so low, while God remains so high
 In Heaven, that even His eye of mercy can
 No more perceive me !

IX.

Yes, I am chained in subterranean cell.
 Above me prisons more commodious rise,
 Where light may enter ; they are ever kept
 For prisoners less unfortunate than I,
 And treated by the Czar with less severity ;
 They only having killed a father, mother,
 Brother,—and hence their doom less stern than mine !
 Ah ! they may freely gaze across their bars
 Into blue space, and track the flying clouds,
 And breathe fresh air, and see the happy sunshine,
 And know when spring comes back again to warm
 These dreary wastes of snow !
 All is permitted them : nothing to me !
 I am more guilty than those murderers,
 Because I am a *man*, a Pole, a rebel
 'Gainst foul injustice ; whence I'm surely deemed
 A Satan in this Empire of all virtue !

X.

Yes, it is true, I sought to wake the Past,
 And by my solemn chants to rouse again,
 In souls unstrung by cowardice, a faith
 More vivid in the future. . . . Yes, 'tis true,

I have been proud, and hoped where hope was none.
 I was not born to live in this, our age,—
 Age of transition given up to evil,—
 Which those who care not for the will of God—
 Industrial Chiefs and Princes of the earth,—
 Would fain perpetuate to coin in gold!
 Like Solomon's Temple, ere Christ drove away
 The money-changers, rose the structure of
 The world I knew, approaching fast its fall,
 Full of iniquity, and void of faith!
 Within, the speculators circulated,
 Striving the one to overreach the other,
 Urged on by keen avidity of lucre;
 Only arrested by the fear of war.
 The world entire was but a mighty Bourse,
 From which they had driven God! . . .
 Above this den of wily gain and fraud
 Already loomed from icy northern clime
 (Like Satan in the garb of an archangel)
 A monstrous shadow, growing every hour,
 Thrown by the Giant who has chained me here!
 They all, instead of joining to repulse this foe,
 Strike him with fire and iron, only used
 The *fire* to *forge* the *iron* into roads;
 And based their hopes on steam; while they feared war
 Far more than they feared God or infamy.
 Thus were the traders, manufacturers,
 Contented with their lot.

XI.

Thus have they ever rested peaceably
 Within their cities, near their shops and banks,
 Crowning their markets with triumphal arches;
 And I? . . . Oh, I have miserably perished!
 The foe, with arm as swift as sudden death,
 Seized me by stealth. I was allowed to breathe
 No parting wish in any human ear,
 Nor bid farewell to any whom I loved.
 Leaving no trace by which I might be found,
 At dead of night they hurried me away

In a kibitka ;* secretly, in silence !
 Only the stars of my own native sky
 Were the mute witnesses of what was done,
 And looked on my mysterious, rapid course.

XII.

Before an infamous court they summoned me ;
 Tried and condemned me. The judges scoffed because
 I, a weak Pole, for a moment could forget
 The power of that Government, which holds
 The keys of Life and Death, and said that I,
 Having offended the Czar-god, deserved
 Stern sentence for my crimes ! Then they decreed
 That I should go *on foot* to the world's confines,
 The land of ice ! I, son of a great nation,
 Should go with convicts, welded to their chain !

XIII.

And I walked on forever through sad lands,
 Chained with a drove of felons, Moscovites !
 Our hangman led a horse before the convoy,
 But never mounted it : a *Holy Thing*
 Was to its saddle constantly appended ;
 The *KNOUT* with thongs of leather, iron hooks
 To gather the torn flesh back to its place
 That the poor victim might still seem a man,
 As mutilation, death, swept over him !
 The executioner who led this horse
 Forever with his finger pointed to it,
 Crying : " Behold ! the organ of the Czar !"
 He ordered men to kneel and bow before it
 With reverence, as if it were the cross
 Of sacrifice which from the saddle rose !
 Thus did this emblem of the soul of Russia,
 The Czar's omnipotence, still lead me on
 Through never-ending steppes of desolation,
 Toward the North Pole, bound in eternal ice.

* Kibitka, a Russian wagon in which condemned political prisoners start on their journey to Siberia.

XIV.

My traveling companions, robbers, thieves,
 Forgers, assassins, had a happier fate !
 They loosed their chains, and left them on the route
 At various places to form colonies,
 And populate those wastes.* I, only I,
 Was forced to drag on ever wearily
 Behind that hangman, horse, and KNOUT accursed !
 And when my rings, welded on hands, on feet,
 Had worn away the flesh and rubbed into the bones,
 And I was suffering utmost agony,
 And begged the ruffian for a moment's rest
 Upon the horse ; the Moscovite replied :
 " Die, curséd Pole, rather than thus pollute
 With touch of thine, with stain of rebel hands,
 The symbol of the justice of the Czar !"†

* * * * *

Happy are they who may expire upon
 The very threshold of their martyrdom !
 Such death were but deliverance from worse ills !
 Wait thou until the hour of victory,
 Then wilt thou die !—but if thy life be naught
 But misery,—that life shall be prolonged !

XV.

Where are thy smiling plains, my native land ?
 Fields gay with flowers, or rich with golden grain ?

* The punishment of death in Russia is only inflicted on those guilty of political crimes. The most dreadful criminals in common law are sent to Siberia to work in the mines and fortresses; sometimes only in the view of peopling the desert country.

† This episode may appear trivial to foreign readers, but our author has inserted it in his poem as an *historic* remembrance. Prince Roman Sanguszko, who was taken prisoner in the war of 1831, was condemned to be sent to Siberia. The mother of the Prince hastened to St. Petersburg, and addressed a petition to the Emperor Nicholas, to obtain the pardon of her son. The *merciful* Czar, however, augmented the punishment by writing with his pencil at the foot of the petition of the sick-hearted mother: "He shall go on foot." The sentence was put into execution; he went on foot; and many, many years afterwards, when Prince Roman Sanguszko had been pardoned and had returned to Poland, he would often relate to his friends the above history of the executioner, the horse, and the knout.

Where are the forests where the pine-trees wave
 When the wind stirs their branches, murmuring
 Mysterious tones, solemn and sweet as prayers?
 Where is the aerial warbling of the lark?
 Where the old church where sleep my ancestors?
 Where are the Catholic litanies of my people,
 People who call the Virgin Mary, Queen?

XVI.

Oh, what has passed? . . . Where am I, O my God? . . .
 Is there still left a corner in my soul
 Where memory's lamp is not as yet quite out?
 Does any human trait still live in me?
 They say already twenty years have passed,—
 I cannot tell,—but thou must know, my God,
 Since I fell prostrate on this bed of death!
 All consciousness of Present, Past, or Future
 Then died in utter, sudden void and darkness!
 But with a flash the black clouds sweep away;
 My Guardian Angel comes again to me!
 Tears tremble in my eyes, steal through my lids,—
 'Tis long since I have wept! Oh, very long
 Since I could love, or dream of memory, hope!
 My Angel, give me back love, memory,
 In which each mortal claims his blessed share!
 I supplicate thee, Angel, let me find
 My soul again, if only for a moment,
 Oh, let me feel it! make it visible!

XVII.

My wandering thoughts, can you as yet remember
 What presages were kindling in men's minds
 When you were dizzied and obliterated?
 Were there not marvelous presentiments
 Quivering in human souls in that wild hour
 In which your agony began? . . .
 Did not a voice rising from whence none knew,
 But which reverberated everywhere,
 Then prophesy what should befall on earth?
 Peoples and kings condemned fell on their knees;
 The uncreated Word made Itself heard

In human souls, by strengthening Faith, Hope, Love !
 The ruins of the crumbling centuries past,
 With germs of future ages,—wholly freed
 From their black clouds,—the Holy Spirit mingled
 In the soft azure of the *same* horizon,
 Lighted by but *one* sun :—for He will come
 At last, the Saviour of all human races,
 Restorer of all mutilated countries,
 The avenger of all crimes against Humanity !
 Into the Politics of this vexed world
 He will bring JUSTICE,—and His coming opens
 A new—the third—last era of our Planet !
 Factitious States no longer will exist,
 Which for their profit, or their idle glory,
 Have torn apart the body of a nation,
 And stifled souls under the stones of graves.
 And, by the will of God upon His earth,
 The bodies and the souls of nations shall
 Remain no longer sundered ! . . .
 Yes, I remember now ! Such was the news ;
 Such the presentiments which stirred the world,
 Then given up to violence and woe.
 And we, the Poles, knew well the Messenger,—
 The Angel of the sphere of politics,—
 Who from the stormy waves of earth's events
 Was destined to bring peace, and reunite
 The nationalities, could only be
 Our holy Poland ; for that martyr's cross
 Had borne such woe, been bathed in such pure blood,
 As might redeem this upper, earthly Hell.
 Yes, I believed that having endured till death,
 My People would unfurl their wings, and seize
 The sword of miracle, thus to achieve
 The works of life.

XVIII.

How many times—— Alas ! perhaps too soon,
 I've seen in dreams the God of Resurrection !
 No wounds, no blood upon His body now !
 The form might seem another Christ, and yet
 'Tis the same Christ in His eternal glory.

His Face shines like the sun ; whiter than snow
 His robe floats round Him in his heavenly course ;
 And in the dawn of worlds new-born to life
 He bathes His unnailed Hands, transfigured now !

XIX.

Behind the Man-God, slowly, very slowly,
 In dazzling beauty, with no trace of death,
 My Poland, my beloved Poland, moves !
 She stops upon the threshold of the Sion
 Promised to all the Peoples upon earth,
 And from the sacred heights her voice resounds
 So far the assembled nations clearly hear,
 Or high, or low, or in the depths of space :
 "To me ! to me, fraternal races, come !
 Finished the latest fight of the final strife ;
 The snares of treason, webs of woven lies,
 Are all destroyed, and hate is buried with them ;
 Come, mount with me into the realm of Peace !"
 The chorus of all nations then responds :
 "Glory and Benediction be to thee,
 O Poland ! for though truly all have suffered,
 Thy tortures were far fiercer than our own !
 Through deep enormity of that injustice
 Ever accumulating on thy head,
 Thou hast held constantly the enemy
 Under the lightnings of the living God !
 During the anguish of thy martyrdom,
 Thou drew'st into thy heart a stronger life
 Than that of thine oppressors, and thy sacrifice
 Hath saved us all ! To thee be Benediction ! Glory !"

XX.

Oh, often during dark autumnal nights
 My mother's voice, perhaps some ancestor's,
 Will break the grave, and come to me to speak
 Of the unknown, the future upon earth ;
 And with the mystic tones strange visions throng !
 The chant of triumph from the manly breasts
 Of myriads of men then peals through space ;
 I see the victors pass in countless ranks ;

I see the figures, white and luminous,
 Of sisters, brothers, freed from slavery ;
 A dazzling star glitters upon each brow :
 The star of immortality !

Though without wings,
 They float through air as if full-winged they were ;
 Though without crowns, they sparkle as full-crowned !
 And I move onward in the midst of them,
 Feeling myself within an unknown Heaven,—
 Unknown, and yet foreseen, anticipated !

XXI.

Ah ! who can tell? Perhaps the prophecies,
 Given me in dreams, are all accomplished now
 O'er Poland's grave, and I *alone*, the corpse,
 May still be missing 'midst her risen sons?
 Ah ! through these bars, these walls which shut me in,
 Closely as coffin-planks close round the dead,
 My spirit finds the light, and darts afar,
 Traversing Time and Space ! I *see*, not *dream* !
 There ! there *are* myriads of stars and flowers !
 The world regenerated celebrates
 Its holy marriage with young liberty !
 Over the summits of the clustering Alps,
 Along the ridges of Carpathian crests,
 The same Aurora kindles all the heavens !
 And all the Peoples surging tranquilly,
 Mingling and blending waves innumerable,
 Form but *one* mighty ocean over which
 Breathes once again the spirit of our God !

XXII.

Electric shivers shudder through my breast ;
 Each nerve is trembling, tingling every vein,
 As harps vibrate when touched by master-hands !
 Each drop of blood grows resonant within me ;
 I feel so light, as if I had no body ;
 These ponderous chains no longer weigh me down ;
 A beatific air envelops me,
 And fills my being. I elude the grasp

Of my dread foe, return to life immortal.
My very dungeon walls become transparent !

XXIII.

Clairvoyant vision has been given me !
Clearly I see the country which surrounds me ;
My second sight each moment penetrates
Farther and wider, deeper into depths.
As waves still rise behind the nearer waves,
Spaces unveil beyond the nearer space ;
Horizons spread, unroll, and disappear !
And far beyond this snow, these gloomy clouds,
Behold the Blue,—the azure vault of Heaven !
The spring is blooming in the west ; beyond
This Moscovy, this hell of snow and ice,
I see the verdure of my native soil !
Thousands of flags unfurled are floating wide
Above a crowd of limitless extent !
It is a DIET as in days of old,
Assembled in the open air of Heaven !
On that great Plain how happy are my Brothers !
How brilliant in the sun's warm golden light !
I see, I feel them with my eager looks ;
Should I advance a step, I'd touch them with my hands !
Nothing again can ever make me suffer !
Oh, let me look at them ! again ! again !
Gaze on them till my heart is satisfied !

XXIV.

The DIET opens,—they deliberate !
That living plain, covered with human heads,
Is by a single impulse tossed and swayed,
Like grain-fields when the wind breathes over them.
Above the sea of heads rise everywhere
Innumerable rows of arms, which point
All towards the North—as if in mute command.
A glorious troop of horsemen now detach
Them from the throng, and journey toward the North.
My brothers they, of Lithuania, Poland !
The assembly of the nation disappears,
Left far behind ; and I can only see

The troop of horsemen cleaving boundless space !
 How rapid is their course ! Like lightning, they
 Cross hills and valleys, flying toward the North !
 Angels of my release, my heart salutes you !
 Our national colors, scarlet, white, adorn
 Your vestments ; sabres glitter in your hands
 Like battle lightnings ! Proudly ye cleave the air,
 Eagles of God. Triumphantly ye pass
 These frozen steppes of cruel Moscovy,
 Where nor the Czar, nor any other Satan
 Can e'er again against your might prevail !
 My Brothers seek me ! My white eagles fly !

XXV.

On these vast plains, what temples numberless
 And infamous, rise for the Czar-god's worship !
 What forts of stone, with human blood cemented !
 What gloomy prisons meet you on your way !
 I see you pause at every grated door,
 Dismount, and, by some supernatural power,
 Compel the jailers to descend with you
 To subterranean cells below all light !
 My God ! I hear the joyous cry of *life*
 Re-echoing through the sepulchres of *death*,
 While shadowy ghosts, victims of Moscovy,
 Return to light of day, rescued by you !
 The Breath of God urges you on anew ;
 On, Brothers, on ! . . .

XXVI.

During the light of day, the gloom of night,
 My eye pursues your ceaseless, rapid course !
 What rapture ! Brothers ! You have already passed
 Through the Black lands ; enter my boundless plains
 Of snow ! Does not earth wear another face ?
 This is the realm of cold, of ice, of frost,
 Of exiled misery, of eternal death !
 O Heaven ! Our scarlet banner warms the very snow !
 The rays which scatter from your dazzling brows
 Clothe this ice-desert in resplendent light !
 Haste ! Haste ! My Brothers ! faster fly to me !

They urge their steeds,—they gallop proudly on!
 How beautiful—robed in our national hues!
 Aid me, my Lord! or else my heart will burst!

XXVII.

They come! They see this fortress Moscovite!
 Yes, yes, they see! They turn their horses' heads!
 They rush along the trench—like lightning leap it!
 Soon they will come to break these bolts and bars!
 A moment more,—the twinkling of an eye,—
 Poland will enter in my cell to give
 Me back the life I offered, lost for her!
 Be praised, O God, that even evil ends!
 I shall not die alone and in despair!
 Be glorified, my God!

XXVIII.

What is it, O my Brothers? Why thus rein
 Your steeds so suddenly? Ah! you have met
 A tribe nomadic,* stop to question it.
 Oh, come to me! you've but a step to make!
 Waste not your time with those poor savages!
 They only seek for moss beneath the snow;
 'Tis all they know; they have no higher care!
 Sometimes a Moscovite may join their ranks;
 But trust him not; he is more brute than they,
 For they at least are simple, frank of heart.
 Why do you stop and talk with that wild horde?
 My Brothers! O my Brothers!

XXIX.

The air is calm and still; I hear each word.
 My Brothers ask: "Within these gloomy walls,
 Are any Poles condemned to punishment
 Because their conscience would not let them kneel
 To worship the God-Czar?"
 I hear the answer one among them makes:
 "Here only suffers crime! Robbers and thieves,

* There are still in Siberia remnants of the indigenous tribes, such as the Tougouses, the Ostiaks, the Samoyedes, etc.

Assassins, parricides, fill all these cells.”
 O lie! O lie! believe it not, dear Brothers!
 Again the voices of my countrymen
 Resound across these desolate wastes of snow:
 “Not for such victims came we here to search
 Your prisons. Poland holy is, she seeks
 Alone the martyrs in her sacred cause!
 Let vile assassins rot in Russian dungeons!
 God only can absolve them in the sky;
 On this earth Poland has no pardon for them.”

XXX.

O God! . . . My Brothers! . . . Wait! one moment
 wait!

Turn not in haste your bridles to avoid
 This place accursed! Alas! for centuries
 I've waited for you here! This hope alone
 Has given strength to bear protracted torments!
 And now the power of the Moscovites
 Is broken; they are forced to open our cells;
 The ages of our torture are all o'er;
 And you at last are here! What rapturous joy!
 Why do you pause? . . . You are so very near me;
 Can you not hear me, Brothers, when I cry?
 I am no murderer! No parricide!
 I have not killed my father, nor my mother!
 I'm no assassin, but the constant foe
 Of him who is the assassin of us all!
 Look! this way look! I stretch my arms toward you!
 Great God! in pity turn their eyes on me!
 To me! To me! Here! Here! this is my cell!
 I strive to reach you,—this chain holds me back!
 Oh, wait one moment! Let me try again!
 With my thin hands I strive to wrench my fetters!
 Strain every nerve to break them if I can!
 Blood covers them! Alas! they do not yield!
 Do you not hear my shrieks of harrowing anguish?
 Stop in the name of God! One moment stay! . . .
 I'll try again to break away this chain!
 O grant me but one single second more!

* * * * *

O hour of bliss! . . . Of utmost agony! . . .
 My God, they turn away! they spur their steeds!
 Do you not hear me, O my countrymen,
 My Brothers, and my only friends on earth?
 See! I am here! buried within this vault!
 Return! Return! I supplicate! Return!

* * * * *

My senses reel! A fog envelops all!
 It drifts between my consciousness and me!
 My eyes no longer pierce the walls . . .

XXXI.

O God! My God! Again I hear a sound,—
 The galloping of horses o'er the snow,—
 Crackling of ice under their iron hoofs!
 Do they return to find a Brother here? . . .
 Farther and farther—ever less distinct—
 Diminishing with every step from me—
 Forever and forever die away
 The blessed footfalls o'er the waste of snow!
 Now I hear nothing more!

They have forsaken me!

* * * * *

Is it a wretched dream? No, it is truth!
 They *have been here!* My Brothers have been here!
 They have abandoned me! left me to die
 In the midst of murderers and parricides,
 In the hour of RESURRECTION!

XXXII.

Do I not hear the neigh of horses still?
 I am deceived, and there may yet be time!
 But I am chained within my coffin's vault!
 Can I not wrench the clamp? tear it away
 From these damp walls? break but one single link?
 On! on! my breast! Forward, my skeleton arms!
 All that is man within me strive! On! on!
 Ah! that is well! flow fast, my crimson blood!
 Perhaps there yet is time! Aid me, O God!

* * * * *

Ah! useless efforts! I am growing weak,
 My sight is reeling and my blood flows fast,
 My chains clash without breaking! No one comes!
 No one in all the world will *ever* come to aid me!
 Silence and immobility return
 To float forever o'er this dark, still hell!
 Where are you? Where? . . . Ah! can it really be,
 They have been here, my *Brothers* have been *here*,
 And have abandoned me,—left me to rot
 With felons, murderers, and parricides,
 In the very hour of national RESURRECTION!

XXXIII.

Are you my *Brothers*? . . . No! My *executioners*!
 You've robbed me of my poor remains of life!
 But who can say? . . . Perhaps in younger days
 I did indeed commit some dreadful crime;
 Murdered my father, mother, brother, sister,
 And now have quite forgot it in this grave?
 But they, my *Brothers*, knew it all too well,
 And so have left me in perdition's gulf!
 Nay, none of those were crimes by me committed;
 We'll seek some other possible offense!

* * * * *

Who is it driving daggers in my head?
 Who rakes my brains with talons, pincers, hooks?
 Nothing is left me but to drag myself
 Over these stones, and gnash and grind my teeth
 As grinds my chain into my naked bones!
 What horror grapples thus my inmost being?
 I know! I understand! I feel it now!
 My senses leave me! I am growing mad!

XXXIV.

Where am I? . . . In my cell? . . . Yes . . . the same
 lamp
 Casts the same sickly light . . . round the dim flame,
 Naught save the eternal Dark of the Sepulchre!
 Here the same sleepless bed, . . . and nothing, *nothing*
more!
 And Thou! *Where art Thou, God?* I do not know!

I look . . . but cannot find Thee in this gloom !
 I only know I must die here alone ;
 Die like a dog ! Nay, it may be, far worse !
 To whom do I owe thanks in this blank world ?
 I've lived, and I must die, in the Czar's House !—
 Other protection I have never known !
 God ! *Must I hate* all I once loved and trusted ?
 My will no longer o'er my body rules,
 My eyelids press my eyes so heavily !

XXXV.

Remember, God, after such earthly woes,
 I do not wish to keep my soul alive
 For other, it may be, *eternal* pangs !
 There is no love within, without, this world ;
 But irony immense as immensity !
 'God is no Father ! Nor the angels, Brothers !
 On earth, in Heaven, the same deceptions rule !
 God ! I renounce my immortality !
 What can it do but change my present grief
 Into another woe ! And I am tired ! . . .
 I've had enough of anguish, misery !
 Give me annihilation ; for I seek
 Deliverance ! Forget me, my Creator !
 After long years, which were for me a hell,
 Harken the only prayer I breathe at death :
 Let me not go where universal life
 Blazes with glory !

Let my soul lose itself
 Without a trace in Thy eternity,
 As they have lost all memory of me !
 Alas ! in Poland they will never know
 The horrors of this living sepulchre,
 My agonies, deserted by my Brothers,
 That no fraternal clasp e'er came to press
 My dying hand, bid me a last Farewell !

XXXVI.

Poland ! . . . What, Poland risen from the grave ?
 Oh, is it true, my God ? My country now
 No longer waits death still enchained, like me ?

O Father! Pardon all a child's despair,
 Who, wrung to sudden madness, dared blaspheme!
 It was not love of self inflamed my soul;
 No, I loved Thee and Poland! Pardon, my God!
 She lives on earth; as Thou dost in the skies!
 And with her name and Thine upon the lips
 So soon to be forever mute—I die!
 Holy Thy will! Holy my long captivity!
 Holy the horrors of my lonely death,—
 Since as I die, my fathers' land is free!

XXXVII.

I thank Thee, that in vision I have seen
 My happy country, Lord! I give Thee thanks,
 That Thou hast shown me those who serve her cause!
 Thou deignest to permit I here should close
 The endless vaults of Polish cemeteries!
 That I should be the *last* of Polish corpses
 Buried alive in dungeons of the Czars!
 I bless Thee, Lord! Alas! I cannot rise!
 This skeleton body has no strength to kneel!
 But my *heart* kneels! I fold my trembling hands
 In symbol of Thy Cross upon my breast!
 On which side is the sky? It is so dark,
 So long since I came here, I cannot tell.
 Ha! sudden inspiration wakes my heart!
 I must pray, pray, pray ever for my Poland!

XXXVIII.

Since Thou hast to thy martyr given, O Lord,
 The sceptre of true power, aid her to conquer that
 Which has been still invincible on earth!
 That which no Rulers ever have accomplished,
 Nor emperors, nor kings, nor nobles, nor
 The middle classes, nor the various Peoples,—
 All tyrants differing only in their names,
 But the same despots when possessed of power,—
 Lord, let Thy martyr conquer it for all!
 Floating aloft on archangelic wings,
 Above the temptations and the snares of pride,
 Above the abysses which corrupt our times,—

Let her bring back to man, drunk with his brother's blood,
 Holy Fraternity! *The strength of Love,*
Which is immortal, cannot be exhausted!
 And as triumphant she has left the grave,
 So grant her, Lord, to triumph over death!
 No, she will not go out in smoke and ashes,
 As stolen states kneaded of dust and blood;
 For in her breast she'll bear Thy Virtue, Wisdom,
 The elements of Victory and Power!
 May all the nations of the earth still bless her,
 Because she joys in all the nations' bliss!
 Oh, may Thy Christ be glorified in her,
 And manifest Himself in every human act!
 And may through her Thy Kingdom come on earth!

* * * * *

My forces sink! . . . Perhaps this may be Death!
 Thanks, Lord!

XXXIX.

A white light scintillates before my eyes!
 Ineffable well-being fills my breast!
 All painful recollections, one by one,
 Of my sad life fade from my memory!
 The air vibrates with the full tones of harps:
 The human ear ne'er heard such harmonies!
 Ah! Yes! These *are* the angels! They announce
 The good, good news!
 Each moment, less of sadness—less of pain!
 O Poland, my Beloved! . . . My raptured soul,
 Delivered from all evil, rushes on
 To the Infinite! Hosanna! O Hosanna,
 Forever and forever! . . .

TEMPTATION.

[KRASINSKI published a short tale in Paris under this title, at the close of which is found the "*sole cry*" which he ever suffered to escape his lips on his own situation. It is also believed a real event is figured therein: a meeting between the Poet and the Emperor Nicholas.

The students of Lithuania resolved to reprint the tale, which had indeed appeared in a journal of that country, stamped with the *imprimatur* of the censor, who had not understood the manuscript. But information soon came from St. Petersburg, and several hundred young men were thereupon exiled to Siberia! They were the flower of young manhood, and heart-rending was the grief of the bereaved families. Imagine the despair of the tortured Poet.—TR.]

Thick, crimsoned with blood, and swollen with tears ever falling,
Our life-waves run gloomily on!
From the whirlpools and depths of the stormful and gathering currents,
Rises the moan of anguish eternal! *almost*
Behind, roars the abyss, fathomless, heavily shrouded
In black mists, tossed and piled, streaming up from the pangs of the Past!
Before, lies the far-off Heaven; its blue blazing with flames red as blood;
Around, struggle onward the swimmers, in surges so cold, hopeless, murky,
That fierce agony wrenches from each as he floats the wild cry:
"WOE! WOE! THE OLD CURSE IS UPON ME!"

MOTHER, many times murdered! Unhappy mother!
with the long and countless blades of thy ever green
grasses, with the waving stems of thy grain-fields, thou
wilt bind our undying memories closely to thee, but hence-
forth must thy sons wander and suffer, as they love thee.
Behind them, from sea to sea, is the Grave; before them,
wheresoever they may roam, the sunset; while monarchs
and merchants curse the endless progression!

The Living cannot understand those reared on the bosom
of the Dead—human faces grow pale at the approach of
the spectres—at the echo of their footsteps the home-fires
glimmer and flicker low on the hearthstone—the mother

hides her child—the wife leads away the husband that he may not clasp hands with the wandering exile,—the evening star alone, the star of graves, smiles from Heaven on them!

* * * * *

Was not the silence of the forests holy? When the wind swept over the pines, did not the mystic murmurs, sacred as the prayers of the priest, say to you: “Nowhere *there* will you find your God”? The spaces are filled with the giant skeletons torn from the dim woods; they are chained and clamped with iron and fed with steam; the eagles soar not in the air above them, nor do the glad birds twitter in the swaying branches; none among you may mount the strong horse of the desert and fly afar over the boundless steppes, rejoicing in his arrowy swiftness;—you are alone in the midst of the world!

* * * * *

As you wander on, poor exiles, your very gratitude is half disdain! When they lead you into cities without castles or temples, where trade and commerce rule; among whitewashed houses where the spirit of Beauty is not, and the green window-shutters are the sole adornment—murmur ye: THE DEAD!

* * * * *

On the shores of the seas when you dwell with Jews, Armenians, and Greeks, quarreling forever over their vile profits; seeing not the heavens, nor hearing the thunder as it booms over the waves—murmur ye: THE DEAD!

* * * * *

When women in rich attire move around you, and you feel that the faint fluttering of the silken robe is far more spiritual than the life-breath of their souls—murmur ye: THE DEAD!

* * * * *

Float on, then, like the sacred whispers from the un-^{us}hewn forests! The world will not know you, because you are of the race spring from coffins; born and cradled in coffins; but as you rise from the grave, strew upon the ground beneath your feet the mouldering rags of your ^{own}

shrouds,—and *he*, seated on the verge of the abyss, on the steep and slippery declivity; *he*, robed in the royal purple of power, will not survive ^{our} Resurrection—but must himself descend into the coffin!

I saw imaged before me, as in a wondrous vision, the varied scenes and changes, as it were, of a long life,—rising, progressing, and vanishing, as if bound in a single day, beginning with the morning and fleeting away with the evening shadows.

It seemed to me in my vision that the morning was strangely transparent. No clouds dulled the ether above. Far over the wide green space rose the sun, and in front of the House on the Hill stood a horse already saddled, impatiently wounding the velvety grass with his iron hoofs, and snuffing with wide nostrils the fresh breeze from the valley. Near him stood his young master. The light in his blue eye was bright as the young beam of the day. He had one foot in the stirrup, and the other on the soft home-turf; with one hand caressing the long waving mane of the steed, and the other clasped in the grasp of the man from whom he was taking leave—they knew not for how long, but yet felt it was not forever. Words were pouring from the heart of the one into the heart of the other. The elder, he who stood on the ground and was to move on on foot, kept his gaze steadily fixed on the rocks and forests lying beyond the smooth green turf. The younger, with raised eyes, gazed into the sky, as if absorbing its light in the lustrous pupils; and when he spoke his voice was like the fresh breath of spring. The elder spoke more slowly, almost sternly, as though advising, warning, beseeching,—as if he loved deeply, yet doubted, feared; but the younger had no fear, no doubts,—he pledged himself and vowed—threw himself first into the arms of his friend, then leaped into his saddle. He pushed his horse rapidly on, swift as the arrow skims the plain, or the mountain stream plunges below. A cloud of servants poured forth from the halls of the ancient House, and followed their young Lord.

He who remained behind, knelt; and fragments of his prayer were brought me by the wind. “O Heavenly

Father! let not that blooming soul wither away upon this arid earth! Lead it not into the temptation of human servitude; remove from it all sinful stain! Let it serve Thee alone! Thee and the many times murdered Mother!"

He continued kneeling, although sunk in silence, as if wrapped in deep meditation, scarcely knowing whether to indulge in the dim prophecies then surging his soul, or to prolong his prayers. Then I saw him start, clasp his hands forcibly together—and again his words were borne to me by the wind.

"O Heavenly Father! I ask Thee not to sweeten the bitter cup of life for my friend; I know that all who live must suffer; but, O merciful God, spare him the blush of shame, the infamy of weakness!"

Then I saw the Wanderer rise from his knees, descend the hill, and make his way on foot through the forest to the distant rocks.

* * * * *

About high noon of the same day they met again before the gate of a great city. The young man was still on his horse, his fair brow already darkened by the heat of the sun; the dew from the fresh home-turf was quite dry upon his stirrups, and the glitter of the steel dimmed with rust. The horse gladly stopped, as if wearied with his rapid flight through the distant space, but the blue eye of the youth still sparkled with its early fire.

The elder, gray from head to foot with the dust of the road, seated himself on a stone by the wayside. The youth jumped lightly to the earth, and threw himself into the arms of his friend. I saw him give his horse in charge to his servants, take the arm of his companion, enter the gate of the great city, and lead him to the imperial Palace. In one of the inner chambers they sat down together to rest. They conversed, however, in whispers, as if they feared the ear of the enemy even through the massive stone walls. Stretching himself on the soft Persian carpet, the younger raised the cup of wrought silver to his thirsty lip. But when he handed it to the elder he refused to taste the wine from the rich goblet. Nor would he look upon the tapestried walls, nor the objects of luxury lying

profusely scattered around the room, even when pointed out to him by his young companion. At last he rose, and, taking the hand of the youth, led him to a window, from which the entire city was seen lying below, with the moving crowds of the populous nation. The immense city, wonderfully monotonous in its whitewashed walls! the immense nation, wonderfully monotonous in its black garments! The young man looked on curiously; the Wanderer sighed, and said: "When they shall lead you into cities without castles or temples, where the spirit of freedom is chained, murmur ye: **THE DEAD!**"

But the younger continued to gaze with ever-growing interest. Carriages filled with women dressed in brilliant hues were rapidly driving by, drawn by strong, fleet horses. He saw one drive aside from the throng, the snowy veil and white draperies of the fair one within fluttering and floating far on the breeze, as if the flying chariot were borne onward by the outspread sails. The Wanderer sighed, and said: "When women in rich attire move around you, and you feel that the faint fluttering of the snowy robe is more spiritual than the life-breath of their souls—murmur ye: **THE DEAD!**"

The young man seemed not to hear the words of his friend. Heavy masses of lurid clouds gathered from every direction, and obscured the face of the sky. How different the hour of the gloomy noon from that of the fresh, transparent morning!

The men before whom the People of the Black Nation kneel and prostrate themselves, now began to move through the streets. Their garments glittered with gold, and were richly embroidered in gorgeous colors. They wore long thin swords at their sides, and thick tufts of plumes on their heads. Shouting with harsh voices, they passed on in power, striking the children who were lingering in the road as they moved forward. The children cried and wept; the crowd drew back and fled; and they remained alone upon the Great Square. More and more of them were ever thronging there; more and more courteously they ever bowed to one another, and lower and lower grew their salutes, until at last One rode forward on a steed richly caparisoned,—and then they all fell down with

their faces upon the ground—as if he were the Lord of Life and Death.

Then said the Wanderer: “He is already on the verge of the abyss, on the slope of the steep and slippery declivity; he, robed in the purple of power, must himself descend into the coffin!”

But the young man riveted his gaze on the magnificence of the rider, as if absorbing the diamond glitter into the lustrous pupils of his eyes, as in the morning they had absorbed and reflected the clear blue of the skies. He seemed not to hear the words of his friend. When they were earnestly repeated to him, he covered his face with his hands, and tenderly uttered the holy name of the murdered Mother, as if the love of childhood were upon his heart. The Wanderer pressed him to his breast, and said: “Look not upon them! Look not upon them!”

“Never! never!” he replied, as he again threw himself down to rest upon the Persian carpet.

As the Wanderer rose to depart, I heard the prayer again rising to God from his divining soul:

“O Heavenly Father! even at the burning noon of this bitter trial, I implore Thee for him whom I love! O God! I now entreat Thee to work a miracle in his behalf,—to sweeten the bitter cup of life for this young, eager, thirsting soul! Deliver it from the temptations with which Thou hast seen good to surround the strong on this earth, led like him into these snares! Let him not fall, I beseech Thee, as did even the mighty and beautiful angels round Thy Throne, when the thirst for power was upon them. Save him, O God!”

The young man remained alone, utterly alone, in the midst of the great city, and was soon forced to seek companionship with his fellow-beings. It was strange, meanwhile, how black the heavens grew, as if the whole sky were sheeted with a curtain of lead. I saw him now constantly in the streets, the rooms, and in the midst of the people: he fascinated my gaze as if I saw only him. Under the calm of a tranquil face, he concealed bitter torment, intense suffering. Evil thoughts are winding through him like swarms of black and poisonous worms,

while the good are also thronging near him like clouds of bright fireflies. The worms crawl over his heart, boring and bleeding it as they writhe; the fireflies would burn out the black congested gore, and cure the festering wounds, but new swarms of reptiles are forever sliming into life, and ever deeper and more gangrened are the wounds they make. Everywhere danger, everywhere torment; there is no human being whom he may trust! He too must learn to deceive in turn, to betray even women and children; must learn to lie as the masterpiece of art. He attains skill in the profession, and can command looks, smiles, tears, emotions; but alas! the light in his clear eye, once rivaling the young beam of day, no longer flashes from his pupils. Pity him, O God! his very garments become a lie; he throws aside the costume of his nation, in which he once rode so freely over the boundless steppe. He mounts on his head the tall tufts of plumes; he girds the thin sword to his side; and I saw in my dream that the people began to fall back before him, and bow as he drew near.

But I saw that the steed of the desert refused to recognize his master when he entered the courtyard of the Palace. In vain he pats, with his own hand, the wavy silken mane: no neigh of joy now answers his caress; he strives to leap upon him as in the morning of this eventful day, but the haughty charger rears, stands erect upon his hind legs, and refuses to be mounted. Enraged beyond control, he thrusts his long sword into the glossy flanks. The startled animal breaks away, spurns the blood-sprinkled soil, and flies thundering afar, rattling and clashing his iron hoofs on the pavement, marking his track with a long line of glittering sparks, flashing but to die in the dying light of evening!

The hour of twilight is already on the earth!

* * * * *

Again, for the third time in that day of life, met the Wanderer and his friend. They stood together in a Church, which was without the gates, and the cross on its towers was different from those on the Basilicas within the walls of the city. The altar was without adornment, and, as well as the walls and ceilings, was shrouded in the

deepest mourning. Three tapers only were upon it, and they struggled vainly with the surrounding gloom.

I saw the Wanderer take one of the lights, and gaze, with a look of woe, upon the face of his friend. The young man was silent, he found no utterance, he had lost the secret of revealing, by honest words, the depths of the soul. But the bitter truth was expressed in the long wild cry which burst spasmodically from his lips. In it might be read the seduction and destruction of a young spirit, not consenting to its own shame and ruin!

He laid his head on the strong shoulder of his friend, and closed his heavy eyelids, as if he dreamed, in this trying moment, it would be possible for him thus to close them forever. But the Wanderer, suddenly calling him back to consciousness, said: "Follow me! follow me, that thou mayst remember forever the Form of the murdered Mother!"

So saying, he led the young man to a low door which opened behind the Great Altar. A whirlwind, as if from plains of ice, blew upon them from the subterranean passages below, and the flame of the taper streamed upon the blast, swaying and torn into a line of dying sparks. And thus they commenced the plunge into the very bosom of night, descending ever lower and lower, exploring depth after depth, until at last they had worked their way through the narrow and winding passages, and stood in the sublime silence of the immensity of space.

Their taper had long ago gone out, but they needed not its flickering light. The swamp-fires of the night, the corpse-lights, the will-o'-the-wisps, sometimes fell like falling stars; sometimes rose like rising moons. Countless cemeteries seemed moving on in this weird light, one solemnly following the other, and on the dark gate of each glittered, as if graven in frosted silver, the name of the Murdered Nation, and on the white crosses gleaming within, the names of her martyred children. Vast piles of skeletons, of bones and skulls, lay in the path of the young man, and as he advanced he read the glorious inscriptions.

It now seemed to him that the ghosts of the buried were also moving on before him, increasing constantly in

number, and all moaning as they sped on, until at last they seemed to condense into a murky vapor like a trailing storm-cloud, growing ever more and more pervading, and murmuring with myriad voices sad, but spirit-stirring national songs. The air gleamed with the flashing of sabres and wild waving of standards; conflagrations and flames filled the intervening spaces, like vivid flashes of restless lightning, now gleaming, now sinking into the bosom of the cloud. Faster and faster, farther and farther whirled the cloud of spirits. Then in my dream I saw them suddenly descend, driven over the earth like the withered leaves of autumn,—beaten low upon the ground and drifting on like the summer's dust,—while a strong cry burst from the hunted shadows: "O God, have mercy upon us!"

The Wanderer stopped before the gate of an open sepulchre, on which was graven the name of the many times Murdered. The letters blazed with a soft, lambent flame, and he fell reverently upon his knees. Penetrated with mystic awe, he quivered from head to foot when he arose, and wept tenderly as he crossed the threshold.

A soft light, like that of an evening late in autumn, dimly illumined the space within. I saw the holy Coffin as it lay on the gentle slope of a hill; a giant pine stood at its head, in whose topmost branches perched an Eagle, pierced to the heart and sleeping in its own blood. Within the Coffin lay the sacred Form, with the cross on her breast, the veil on her face, the fetters on her hands, and the crown upon her head. I saw six such hills rising one after the other, separated from one another by the long grass, through which, in place of sunny brooks, flowed crimson streams of human gore. Hilts and shivered fragments of broken swords, overgrown with weeds and covered with rust, were lying scattered in every direction through the rank grass. On each of the six hills lay the same Coffin; the same Form. But always more and more strongly surged the streams of human blood; heavier and heavier grew the chains on the hands of the Dead; and paler and paler the dim autumnal light. At the foot of the last hill it was dark, and bitter cold; the currents of blood were frozen; the icicles hung from the

branches of the pine; the Eagle lay in his congealed gore; and in place of the veil, the face of the six times murdered Mother was closely covered with a sheet of snow.

When the young man reached this spot of gloom, he fell with his face upon the frozen earth, and cursed his life! In the distance sounded the moans of the shadows left at the gate of the sepulchre; he bowed his head and wept. He heard them ask: "Is the six times Murdered really dead? will she rise no more to deliver her faithful children from mortal anguish?"

The Wanderer replied not, but looked with eyes of melancholy love upon his friend who had thrown himself upon the frozen earth, and gently raised him in his strong arms.

Then rose the wail of all the armies of the grave; they broke the silence of death with loud and fearful cries: "O Heavenly Father, Thou hast betrayed us! Thou hast delivered us up to Hell, for our Saint is really dead!"

The Wanderer answered the cry, and his voice pealed like distant thunder. "Blaspheme not! Our Saint yet breathes! I see her lying in her last coffin on the hill of ice,—there is no seventh beyond it—from it comes the Resurrection!" The wails and sobs of the spirits suddenly ceased, and a murmuring chant of the Mother's was intoned, low and sweet as the first sigh of a germinating hope.

The young man now perceived, for hitherto he had not seen it, the illimitable space beyond the coffin. Afar over the infinite blue gleamed the growing splendor of the early dawn,—the clash and clamor of battles yet unborn broke through the veil of Time,—and above it all he heard the Mother's ancient hymn of victory!

The young dawn shone but for a moment, the clash of battle ceased, the song of triumph died upon the ear,—the gloomy silence of the twilight was again around them, and frost and cold upon the earth. The two friends reverently pressed their lips upon the still feet of the fettered Form; together listened to the faint breathing from the icy lips, catching it even through the veil of snow shrouding the sacred face; together they ascended the frozen hill, bowing their heads in their hands to hide their tears.

I saw them again as they were returning by the same

road, and overheard them binding themselves with fearful oaths. The Wanderer took leave of the young man at the entrance of the church, saying with wonderfully tender and conjuring tones: "Be not deceived by those who would fain ruin thy soul, and blot out thy name from the number of honorable sounds on earth! Remember, whatsoever the splendor of the things thou shalt this night see, they are but deceptions from the lowest Hell!" Then placing his hand on the heart of the young man, he prayed: "O Heavenly Father! have mercy upon him and upon me, for if he withstands not this terrible Temptation, Thou knowest we shall both have lived in vain, and our part on earth is done forever!" After this they parted, and went their way on different routes.

* * * * * * *

It was already night in the great city. Innumerable throngs were crowding the streets, all moving in the same direction, to the palace lighted with a thousand lamps, sounding with music, and gay with the dance. Old and young, men and women, thronged the brazen stairs leading to the upper rooms; hurrying on as eagerly, as unceasingly, as if ascending into Heaven!

The hours of the night passed slowly by, seeming longer to me than the whole of the preceding day. It was almost one o'clock before I again saw the young man, and the traces of the oaths he had taken were cunningly hidden under smiles. Groups of servants stood around him; he carelessly threw them his cloak, and climbed with the rest the brazen stairs. He was richly dressed; the magnificent guest was worthy of the splendor of the wedding feast. He entered gracefully, and gazed curiously on the thousands who were dancing around him. His eyes fell upon the rich and varied spoils overhanging the Hall; broken swords were wrought into the walls like mosaics; the flags of the conquered nations were draped in their varied hues across the vaulted ceiling; but as he looked on all these trophies of power, I saw him suddenly turn pale with rage, and bite his lips until the blood followed the pressure of his teeth; but then the whirling crowds caught him in their midst—violins, harps, flutes, and horns poured the reeling air into his dizzied brain—

clouds of incense intoxicated his senses—piled and mossy carpets luxuriously yielded to the pressure of his feet—rainbow hues shifted gayly before his dazzled eyes—until giddy, fascinated, stimulated, he sank upon a pile of cushions, resting his hot temples in his burning palms, dreaming of snowy hands and taper fingers, of azure eyes and cheeks like rose-leaves.

As he thus rested, I heard the bell heavily toll one ; I felt that this long night was in its darkest hour !

When he raised his eyes, he saw, through the long vista of the illuminated apartments, the Throne of the Splendor of the Sun. It stood above the moving sea of dancers ; upon it sat the Autocrat of Life and Death ; and above him waved the canopy of flags torn from the dying nations. The young man started, for he saw one among them dyed in gore, and tattered into rags, and from its torn streamers, drop by drop, the blood was ever falling ; but no one saw or heeded it save himself. When this sight fell upon his reeling gaze, he determined to repel with all his force the allurements of temptation ; and again his eye gleamed blue and pure as it had done in the early morning.

A movement now began in the crowd. It dispersed, divided and formed into long lines upon the right and the left, leaving a wide, open pathway through the whole length of the long vista of the apartments. The Lord of the Palace descended from his Throne, and moved through the living walls as if he were a God, while all prostrated themselves as he passed along. He turned not aside, but went directly to the spot where the young man was seated. Nearer and nearer he approached, wondrously beautiful and strong. The young man rose, and looked boldly into his eyes. The Master of Life and Death did not frown upon him, but said gently : “ Come, let us take a stroll together ; I will show you the wonders of my Palace ! ”

The youth stood as if transfixed to the spot, but the Lord of Life and Death drew closer to him, stooped and pressed a kiss on his brow, and led him away with easy grace.

Although he seemed to see the coffin of the murdered Mother ever winding on before him, the young man accompanied the Monarch. His arm trembled with the quick beating of his boiling blood as it lay on the hard

one of the Autocrat, who, thunder as he might to the bowing throng prostrating themselves before him, continued to speak in soft tones and with a noble, courteous air to his present companion. He spoke of the past, he uttered without trembling even the name of the murdered Mother, as if her assassination did not weigh upon his conscience. He did not seem to have the least doubt that she was really dead, vanished forever from the face of the earth. He artfully pointed out to the young man another immense future,* graven, as he said, in the Book of Fate. He painted it in the most alluring colors, awakening his young desires for its attainment; he spared no promises, and as if he held himself to be one of God's prophets, he parodied inspiration. The unhappy young man turned his eyes toward the ground, away from the handsome face, as though it had been that of Antichrist. Each word of the Tempter fell like a drop of poison on his heart, engendering and hatching the worms within. They walked together through the long ranges of apartments, the close ranks of men prostrating themselves as they passed, until they struck with their foreheads the malachites wrought into the tessellated floor.

When they arrived at the other end of the Palace, the gates of bronze upon the order of the Master were suddenly thrown open, while the mass behind, lifting their heads from the ground, looked enviously after them.

"Behold, this is my Treasury," said the Monarch. "Look and have faith in the extent of my power!"

The young man looked before him. He was standing at the portals of deep mines of wealth, endlessly extended. Alas! the glowing splendor from the hills and valleys burned into the blue eyes of the young man; his pupils rapidly absorbed the molten torrents of gold and silver; circles of light from amethyst, opal, and emerald, bent like rainbows round the azure orbs. The subterranean flames roared and crackled; the hills were shaken to their centre; the caves were heaving in their depths, and fresh, glittering, golden, diamantine lumps came ever gushing from the fused and seething mass.

* Pansclavism?

But strange sounds were ever and anon heard amidst the hissing and sputtering of the boiling metals. Long cries came up as if from men in the agonies of death; a clatter as of chains sounded from the abyss; muttered curses; and bent and wretched human figures were seen moving over swards of diamonds and precious stones, like the dark stains passing athwart the bright face of the moon. The eye of the Monarch then flamed with wrath. Sometimes clanging their chains as they moved their fettered limbs, these melancholy figures raised to him their suppliant hands, begging with anguished cries for one drop of water, for one moment of respite to breathe the free air of heaven. He vouchsafed to them no answer, and with every moment the wretched and emaciated shadows fell from utter exhaustion into the molten metals seething in the depths of the mine. But what mattered that, since with every instant, new bands of living shadows, equally fettered, doomed, and wretched, arrived to fill the vacant places? The young man thought he had seen some of these melancholy faces before in the high places of the earth, that the noble traits once had been dear to him; but the flashes of lightning blinded him, and the features were rapidly lost in the depths of the succeeding gloom. The roar of the seething, fusing metals, deafened the sound of the groans from the chained and broken-hearted miners. And as I gazed, an all-pervading splendor, like the golden calm of the Desert, settled over all, covering with glittering veil the anguish which had been revealed.

As this light overflowed the scene with its brilliant haze, the gates of bronze swung to with heavy clang. The Master of Life and Death took leave of the young man, and as he departed, said: "When the great bell again strikes, be in the Hall of the Throne; thy seat at my Banquet is next my own."

As the young man turned to move away, the throng greeted him with shouts and cheers. Many knelt to kiss his hand, because it had touched the hand of the Master. They asked him what music he would hear, and when his choice was made, the grand orchestra rolled it forth in massive waves of sound. They bore him luscious wines in jeweled vases, kneeling as he took the cup. He mar-

veiled, and at first scorned the homage, but again I saw him look proudly round him, and assume an air of command.

In a recess of the most exquisite beauty, veiled by groves of perfumed flowers, he meets resplendent groups of married women, blooming clusters of budding maidens. They surround him as he enters, greeting him with lovely smiles, and scattering rose-leaves o'er him. His cheeks flame as with fever; his blood boils in his veins; he grows giddy, faint:—alas, he feels at last that he might find happiness in the Palace of the mortal enemy of his Mother! This feeling falls upon him like a thunderbolt, and scathes his heart. He turns to fly, but they pursue, the perfumed wind bearing onward and wafting around him the full drapery of their floating trains of luxury. Their long ringlets kiss his cheeks, and weave their nets around him.

Through two long hours of this fitful night I watched him with the keenest interest. I saw him struggle, confused, bewildered, reeling, giddy, dazzled; sometimes almost yielding to temptation, sometimes earnestly imploring the Heavenly Father for strength to resist delusion. As if in despair, I saw him hurrying through the long suite of apartments in search of a sword to pierce his weak, vacillating heart; but no arms were here to be found. Sometimes I saw him rush to meet the alluring Circes of the Palace, as if seeking their fascinations; then, suddenly turning upon them, he would curse and insult the seductive Sirens. I saw him tear from them their veils of snow, rend them asunder, and trample the costly fragments under his feet. They knelt, wept, and humiliated themselves before him. They prayed for love, saying: "Once, only once, we implore thee, confess that thou lovest!" Utter madness came upon him; electric flashes fired his veins; rapture tingled through every fibre of his young frame; and in the voluptuous delirium of the moment he wildly cried: "I love! I love!"

As he spake, he caught in his arms the Houri of the foreign race; he fastened his burning lips upon her rosebud mouth; and by the magic of her breath she drew him on to the Hall of the Throne!

There sat the Master of Life and Death, with the flags

and standards of the conquered nations floating around and above him. As the youth and maiden entered, I again heard the great bell toll the hour. Throngs of courtiers stood around the Throne. Slowly the curtain of inwrought tapestry rose from the platina door. Those who had been waiting beyond its threshold for admittance, were summoned by the Heralds to appear. Ambassadors from the Kings of the East and the Kings of the West entered the Presence Chamber. On they filed in long and solemn procession. They all bowed as they passed the Throne, each one depositing an urn of pure gold at the feet of the Monarch. The urns were filled with the ashes of those who had fallen in battle, heroes killed in holy causes, patriots and martyrs from different parts of the world. The Grand Duke entered last in the train; he was clad in the ermine only worn by Princes, and as he bowed his head, he placed the last urn on the floor. The young man started,—the name of the murdered Mother was deeply graven on the sculptured swells. Then all grew dark before him; he saw neither the Throne of the Monarch nor the fair girl still clinging to his arm. But his ear quickened as his eye grew dim, and the question of the Monarch rang loudly through his brain: “Are they all really dead, and will they rise from the grave no more?”

And as if with one voice answered the Ambassadors: “They are all surely dead and will rise no more forever.” At a sign from the Monarch, the courtiers approached, took up the urns, and solemnly deposited them upon the columns of black marble ranged on either side of the Hall. Flaming torches were then handed by the attendants, taken by those high in the favor of the court, and held over the open crypt of the urn. The ashes within kindled, and burned with a dim, bluish flame. The pale smoke rose from the shrine, spread through the air, and wafted the smell of Death to the nostrils of the Lord!

It now seemed to the young man as if all he had seen at the hour of twilight was but a dream; he looked upon these throngs as the sole masters of the world, and on their Monarch as omnipotent and eternal. At that moment the table of festival rose in the Hall, everywhere

surrounded by the blazing funereal urns. The maiden begged the bridegroom to take his seat at the banquet ; the Master, descending from his Throne, placed his arm in his, and led him to the post of honor, at his side. The great bell again tolled the hour. The guests also took their places at the feast.

Directly in front of the young man stood the column of black marble bearing the urn containing the ashes of his Mother. And whenever he saw her holy name, his long lashes veiled his sinking eyes ; but his bride constantly recalled his attention to the blue flames of the crypt.

More and more madly, fiercely, fearfully, his reeling and wretched soul struggled to regain its ancient faith, to return to its early hopes ; but temptation was around him ; his brain was bewildered ; his understanding darkened ; and madness within.

Healths poisonous to his heart went round, and he was forced to drain them in honor of the Master. An inward shivering disjointed his members, unstrung his nerves ; heart and frame fainted into weakness, a dew cold as death covered his temples, and his head fell wearily upon his breast ; the walls, the floors, the ceilings, the men, the burning urns, danced, reeled, and tottered in wild confusion before him ! The murmuring voices, the buzz of sound, the swell of the triumphant music, the strange words of the foreign bride, mingled and boomed like the roar of the sea in the ears of the swooning man,—and so the last hours passed away !

He still lived, if life be measured by the wild throbs of the heart. Like the clap of doom the last hour struck upon his ear. He opened his heavy eyelids, the blue flames from the urns were dying out. The Master of Life and Death, graciously smiling and courteously inclining toward him, said : “Guest of my Banquet, the hour has struck in which thou art to swear to serve me ; in which thou must abjure thine ancient faith and name.”

As he spake, he threw to him across the table jeweled orders and diamond crosses, saying : “Wear these in memory of me !” The Herald then drew near, and read to him from the Black Book the form of abjuration. The

agonizing and swooning man mechanically repeated the words one by one after him, not even hearing the sound of his own voice. His head had fallen on the bosom of his bride, his lips still moved, but his eyes were glaring in the whiteness of death,—and so he uttered all the prescribed words until the very last was said!

Scarcely had he finished, when the Master of Life and Death arose and said: “Servant of my servants art thou now,—beware! shouldst thou prove false to thy oath, the rope of the hangman surely awaits thee.” Then he broke into a loud, coarse laugh of triumph!

The unfortunate man raised his wretched head, and his first look fell upon the urn of his murdered Mother. In place of her name of glory another word was standing now: “INFAMY!” “Infamy,”—he looked again; he shrieked aloud, “Infamy;” and started from his seat with the last effort of his failing strength. “Infamy!” shouted the thousands from before, behind, from either side. “Infamy!” sounded from the ceilings of the Palace, the Hall of the Throne, the deep mines and limitless Treasury! Some among the crowd hastened to greet him by his new name, while others fastened to his garments the glittering orders and diamond crosses. Some commanded him to bow before them, while others ordered him to trample underfoot the still smouldering ashes of his Mother!

That thought sends the blood back in hot torrents to his heart. He breaks through the surrounding throng, rushes on, flees from the Presence Chamber, eagerly looking for his bride. He sees her leaning on the arm of another, mocking and jeering with the rest. He glides on behind the statues, steals along the recesses, is discovered, and again flies before the enemy. The Palace winds before him into countless labyrinths—nowhere is shelter to be found—sneers, menaces, insults are everywhere around him,—but, worse than all, *the curse is now within his own soul!*

Then he suddenly turns to meet his enemies; he baffles them at first, but countless numbers are upon him. They hurl him to the ground, trample him underfoot, and pass on singing a song from the land of his Mother. As he rises, fresh numbers assail him; he bids defiance to them

all, struggles, advances, until foaming, bleeding, sinking, he is again driven back, again forced to seek an outlet from the Palace. Thus fighting, running, falling, fainting, he makes his way until the first dim dawn of day, and, as it breaks, he falls heavily down the brazen staircase, and rolls below into the court of the Palace. There strong arms seize him, and bear him rapidly away to the steps of the church,—the same church which he had left in the evening twilight.

It is the hour of the young dawn, but the sun of this earth will never rise for him again! Light will awake the world, but it will shine into his blue eyes no more!

He awakes to consciousness on the steps of the church, and finds himself face to face alone with the Wanderer. He is mute in his despair. The Wanderer, regarding him sternly, says: "In other times and scenes thou mightst perchance have been a hero, but the Fates doomed thee to heavy trial, and thou wert not strong enough to preserve thy virtue! The *visible reality* prevailed with thee above the *invisible, holy, and eternal truth!* Alas, thou art lost!"

"Give me back my horse!" cried the young man, as life again began to flow through his veins. "Give me the free dress of the steppes, give me my arms, and thou shalt see that I know how to revenge the wrongs inflicted on my brethren, to redress my own infamy!"

He grasped the hand of his friend, and threw himself into his arms, quivering with rage. Far more sadly than before, the Wanderer replied:

"The hour for bold and open defiance is not yet near. It is the time for silent sacrifice. But even shouldst thou live until the Day of Judgment, the hour of Resurrection, thy brethren will always number thee among those who have renounced the Mother. Hark! thy enemies are in pursuit of thee, already near. Should they capture thee, thou must be the slave of their wills, the partner of their crimes, the sport and butt of all their bitter jests throughout the remnant of thy wretched life. One only refuge remains for thee!" And, as he spoke, he drew his glittering sword.

The young man understood his meaning. With dauntless courage he tore aside the covering from his breast.

“Strike!” he exclaimed. “I die as a true son of the many times murdered Mother,—honor to her holy name for ever and ever!”

The Wanderer groaned from the depths of his soul. He plunged the sharp, cold steel into the young naked heart. The unfortunate victim fell without a moan. He fell in the first rays of the rising sun, and in the same hour in which but yesterday, full of strength and hope, he had mounted his swift horse from the green home-turf, urging him down the hill to push eagerly over the broad steppe of life.

He fell in silence, but his dying eye again flashed forth a light rivaling the young beam of Day.

The Wanderer knelt beside him, and, lifting his clasped hands to Heaven, said: “O Heavenly Father! Thou knowest that I loved him better than aught else on earth! As long as it was possible I shielded him from the Temptation of Hell, and in the first moment of his fall, I tore his soul from the grasp of the enemy, and sent it back to Thee! Save it in eternity, merciful Father! Let the crimson tide, poured out by me, be joined to that sea of innocent blood which is ever wailing and moaning at the foot of Thy Throne! Let it with that sea fall upon the head of the Tempters!”

After these words I saw him, with the point of the same sword, draw blood from under his own heart, and write with the sharp, red blade on the stone above the head of the dead: SENT HOME BY THE HAND OF A FRIEND!

The echoing steps and voices of the pursuers fell loudly on the ear; they were close at hand. The Wanderer arose, and rapidly disappeared from my eyes in the sanctuary of the ancient church.

Thus passed and ended that one day of my vision!

O Mother, many times murdered! When thou shalt waken from sleep, and again rest on the long grass of the home-turf, again hear the holy whispers of thy unhewn forests green from sea to sea, again feel thy youth returning upon thee, thou wilt remember thy long night of death, the terrible phantoms of thy protracted agonies.

Weep not then, O Mother! weep not for those who fell in glorious battle, nor for those who perished on alien soil,—although their flesh was torn by the vulture and devoured by the wolf, they were still happy! Neither weep for those who died in the dark and silent dungeon underground by the hand of the executioner, though the dismal prison-lamp was their only star, and the harsh words of the oppressor the last farewell they heard on earth,—they too were happy!

But drop a tear, O Mother! one tear of tender pity for those who were deceived by thy Murderers, misled by their tissues of glittering falsehood, blinded by misty veils woven of specious deceptions, when the command of the tyrant had no power to tear their true hearts from thee! Alas, Mother, these victims have suffered the most of all thy martyred children! Deceitful hopes, born but to die, like blades of naked steel forever pierced their breasts! Thousands of fierce combats, unknown to fame, were waging in their souls; combats fuller of bitter suffering than the bloody battles thundering on in the broad light of the sun, clashing with the gleam of steel, and booming with the roar of artillery. No glory shone on the dim paths of thy deceived sons; thy reproachful phantom walked ever beside them, as part of their own shadow! The glittering eye of the enemy lured them to the steep slopes of ice, down into the abyss of eternal snow, and at every step into the frozen depths, their tears fell fast for thee! They waited until their hearts withered in the misery of hope long deferred; until their hands sank in utter weariness; until they could no longer move their emaciated limbs in the fetters of their invisible chain; still conscious of life, they moved as living corpses with frozen hearts—alone amidst a hating People—alone even in the sanctuary of their own homes—alone forever on the face of the earth!

My Mother! When thou shalt again live in thy olden glory, shed a tear over their wretched fate, over the agony of agonies; and whisper upon their dark and silent graves, the sublime word: PARDON.

RESURRECTURIS.

WRITTEN IN 1846.

AMID this slough kneaded with blood and tears,
This world where none his Golgotha avoids,
In vain the spirit struggles when the hand
Of sorrow strikes. Against the storms of life
No port of refuge here is ever found.

At every moment we are mocked by Fate ;
The brave engulfed within the dark abyss ;
The loved, the saintly, die,—the hated, live ;
All eddies in a maze without a clue :
Pale Death is near, and far—so far—away
Across the loitering waves of future ages,
Yet scarcely breaks the Resurrection's dawn.

Must we then grow inert, insensible,
And still the voice of conscience? 'Mid the vile
Grow viler, murder with the murderers,
Lie, hate, blaspheme, and kill? . . . Unto this world
Return the evil it hath wrought on us?
At such price *Power* is ours,—else wield we none !
Then let us eat and drink, the body sate,
And, chasing from the brain each noble thought,
Swell high the list of fortunate, and fools !

Oh, no ! Pause ! Pause, my soul ! Not with such arms
Can those who guide humanity meet evil !
There is no force but that of sacrifice
Able to crush the fate that crushes us !

It is the sole unconquerable power
 In this world's history.
 Servility and pride are idle straws
 A passing breath may sweep to nothingness.

Oh, learn to know thyself! Seek not to grow
 Omnipotent, like Him who is in Heaven!
 Ne'er give consent to bend thee like a brute,
 Knowing no good save some fat pasture-land!
 This side the tomb, ere breaks the distant dawn
 Of Resurrection, be thou constant Will,
 Immovable though worlds should crash around!
 Be tireless Patience which, amid misfortune,
 Can slowly rear from naught the edifice,
 And which, unshaken by defeat, prepares
 The future, certain, final victory!
 Be thou Tranquillity amid the storm;
 Order in chaos; Harmony in discord;
 Amid the eternal combat of this life,
 Be thou the eternal Beauty!

For cowards and for Pharisees, be Wrath
 And Menace, or the Silence of contempt!
 Angelic Inspiration be for men;
 The Nourishment that nourishes the heart!
 A Sister's Tear be for the suffering;
 A Manly Voice, when long-tried courage reels!
 For wandering exiles be their Home of Birth;
 Be Hope for the despairing, Thunder to wake
 The drowsy souls lulled in a corpse's sleep;
 Always and everywhere be thou the Force
 That reconciles,—the force of Self-devotion,
 Stronger than death: and in the unending strife
 Against the abyss of this mad world of Hate,
 Be thou the Abyss of Love!

Ne'er cease to give
 Thyself unto thy brethren under form
 Of teaching and example. Still multiply
 Thyself by *living* acts; and thus alone
 Thou shalt outweigh thousands of other men!
 Even in irons never cease to act!

Learn to bear pain and bitterest agony ;
 Be thy whole Nation living in thy breast !
 Be thou the miracle joins Heaven to earth !
 The holy Labarum in slavery !

Haste not toward death, till, like the buried seed,
 Thy thought be sown and germinating in the hearts
 Of thy compatriots ; till martyrdom
 Shall be the pledge of *certain* victory !
 The crown of false vainglory leave to fools !
 The loftiest souls heed not the siren voice.

But when the tocsin of events shall ring
 The signal for thy final holocaust
 With sad, wild peal,—and from thy *native land*,—
 Kneel down upon the threshold of Eternity !
 When deep within thy soul, contrite and humble
 Thou hear'st the voice that only comes from God,—
 Rise like a strong athlete who wins the goal !
 Shake off thy feet the clinging dust of earth !
 With infinite love, stretch forth thine arms to Heaven !
 Without complaint, wail, inward bitterness,
 March forth to meet thine executioners,
 Saluting them with inmost, pitying glance
 Of immortality !
 Thus for the future shall thy sacrifice
 A fruitful witness be, and from thy death
 Will spring the germ of life for other men !

Those hopes the world deems folly, idle dreams,
 Incorporate in *actuality*,
 In faith, in justice, something palpable,
 Which, like a probe, shall sink in all men's hearts,
 And dwell forever there, although it touch
 Them lightly in a breath, a quivering sigh ! . . .
 And then the world, thy murderer, will kneel
 Before thee, and confess that brutal force
 Is impotent to strike Country, or God,
 From the conscience of the nations !

Behold ! the blood that floweth from thy wounds
 Hath sanctified thy Thought : that Thought will draw

The dazzling light of God's sure judgment down
From highest heaven upon the impious throng !
And neither troops, nor bayonets, nor lies,
Corruption, kings, nor peoples shall prevail
Against that Thought.

And when the Third Day breaks, above the gulf
Of thy past agonies, and on the tomb
Of thine own martyrdom, shall spring at last
The boon thy Nation long has waited for :
JUSTICE,—the child of God !

IN MEMORIAM.

THIS volume was prepared by the gifted translator as an offering to departed worth and genius, in the person of its author, Count Sigismund Krasinski, and also as opening to her compatriots a glimpse into the rich and peculiar literature of that most unfortunate of modern nations, unhappy Poland.

The translation was with her a labor of love, and its only reward, the pleasure of well-doing and the hope that the work might bear fruit in the hearts of her countrymen. She had been warned repeatedly that the chords were too finely strung to awaken many echoes, but she felt confident that there must be a considerable number of Americans to whom the volume would speak in tones readily understood and warmly welcomed.

She did not live to oversee the issuing of the work, and hence there may remain imperfections which her taste and judgment would finally have eliminated. It seems fitting that we should in this place say a few words with regard to one who labored so assiduously and conscientiously in the cause of simple justice.

Mrs. Martha Walker Cook was born in 1807, at Northumberland, Penna. Her father was Judge J. H. Walker, one of the pioneers of civilization and legal and classical learning in Western Pennsylvania. The career of her brother, Hon. Robert J. Walker, is identified with the history of his country during many eventful years, and the State of New Jersey will not soon forget the varied services of her husband, General William Cook. Rather shrinking from, than occupying, the place thus naturally open to her in the great world, she devoted much time to the improvement of her mind and the instruction of

her children. Accomplished in many ways, her epistolary and conversational gifts were of the highest order. She possessed the rare quality of drawing forth from her associates the best that was in them, and the meanest intelligence expanded in her presence as in the sunshine of sympathy and ready comprehension.

Having had her attention called many years ago to the actual condition of Polish music and literature, she was naturally led to a study of the people and their history. The knowledge thus acquired determined her to spare no pains in the diffusion of correct ideas on a subject regarding which there are but few sources of information in the English tongue. Not only did she advocate the cause of Poland by every means in her power, but she always stood ready to welcome the Polish emigrant to America, giving sympathy, friendly counsel, and such aid as the limited circle of her influence would permit. It was one of her most heartfelt gratifications to know that her name was held in esteem and veneration by the Poles on both sides of the Atlantic.

She passed away from the scene of her activity on the 15th of September, 1874.

This work is issued in accordance with her desires, and as a tribute of honor to disinterested labor and love of abstract justice.

EDITOR.

THE END.



