

WILLIAMS
DRAMAS
TENNYSON

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DRAMAS

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DRAMAS

BY

ALFRED LORD TENNYSON

POET LAUREATE

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QUEEN MARY

A DRAMA

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ

QUEEN MARY.

PHILIP, *King of Naples and Sicily, afterwards King of Spain.*

THE PRINCESS ELIZABETH.

REGINALD POLE, *Cardinal and Papal Legate.*

SIMON RENARD, *Spanish Ambassador.*

LE SIEUR DE NOAILLES, *French Ambassador.*

THOMAS CRANMER, *Archbishop of Canterbury.*

SIR NICHOLAS HEATH, *Archbishop of York; Lord Chancellor after Gardiner.*

EDWARD COURTENAY, *Earl of Devon.*

LORD WILLIAM HOWARD, *afterwards Lord Howard, and Lord High Admiral.*

LORD WILLIAMS OF THAME.

LORD PAGET.

LORD PETRE.

STEPHEN GARDINER, *Bishop of Winchester and Lord Chancellor.*

EDMUND BONNER, *Bishop of London.* THOMAS THIRLBY, *Bishop of Ely.*

SIR THOMAS WYATT

SIR THOMAS STAFFORD

} *Insurrectionary Leaders.*

SIR RALPH BAGENHALL.

SIR ROBERT SOUTHWELL.

SIR HENRY BEDINGFIELD.

SIR WILLIAM CECIL.

SIR THOMAS WHITE, *Lord Mayor of London.*

THE DUKE OF ALVA

THE COUNT DE FERIA

} *attending on Philip.*

PETER MARTYR.

FATHER COLE.

FATHER BOURNE.

VILLA GARCIA.

SOTO.

CAPTAIN BRETT

ANTHONY KNYVETT

} *Adherents of Wyatt.*

PETERS, *Gentleman of Lord Howard.*

ROGER, *Servant to Noailles.*

WILLIAM, *Servant to Wyatt.*

STEWARD OF HOUSEHOLD *to the Princess Elizabeth.*

OLD NOKES *and* NOKES.

MARCHIONESS OF EXETER, *Mother of Courtenay.*

LADY CLARENCE

LADY MAGDALEN DACRES } *Ladies in Waiting to the Queen.*

ALICE

MAID OF HONOUR *to the Princess Elizabeth.*

JOAN

TIB } *two Country Wives.*

Lords *and other* Attendants, Members of the Privy Council, Members of Parliament, Two Gentlemen, Aldermen, Citizens, Peasants, Ushers, Messengers, Guards, Pages, Gospellers, Marshalmen, *etc.*

ACT I

SCENE I.—ALDGATE RICHLY DECORATED

CROWD. MARSHALMEN

Marshalman. Stand back, keep a clear lane! When will her Majesty pass, sayst thou? why now, even now; wherefore draw back your heads and your horns before I break them, and make what noise you will with your tongues, so it be not treason. Long live Queen Mary, the lawful and legitimate daughter of Harry the Eighth! Shout, knaves!

Citizens. Long live Queen Mary!

First Citizen. That's a hard word, legitimate; what does it mean?

Second Citizen. It means a bastard.

Third Citizen. Nay, it means true-born.

First Citizen. Why, didn't the Parliament make her a bastard?

Second Citizen. No; it was the Lady Elizabeth.

Third Citizen. That was after, man; that was after.

First Citizen. Then which is the bastard?

Second Citizen. Troth, they be both bastards by Act of Parliament and Council.

Third Citizen. Ay, the Parliament can make every true-born man of us a bastard. Old Nokes, can't it make thee a bastard? thou shouldst know, for thou art as white as three Christmasses.

Old Nokes (dreamily). Who's a-passing? King Edward or King Richard?

Third Citizen. No, old Nokes.

Old Nokes. It's Harry!

Third Citizen. It's Queen Mary.

Old Nokes. The blessed Mary's a-passing!

[*Falls on his knees.*]

Nokes. Let father alone, my masters! he's past your questioning.

Third Citizen. Answer thou for him, then! thou'rt no such cockerel thyself, for thou was born i' the tail end of old Harry the Seventh.

Nokes. Eh! that was afore bastard-making began. I was born true man at five in the forenoon i' the tail of old Harry, and so they can't make me a bastard.

Third Citizen. But if Parliament can make the Queen a bastard, why, it follows all the more that they can make thee one, who art fray'd i' the knees, and out at elbow, and bald o' the back, and bursten at the toes, and down at heels.

Nokes. I was born of a true man and a ring'd wife, and I can't argue upon it; but I and my old woman 'ud burn upon it, that would we.

Marshalman. What are you cackling of bastardy under the Queen's own nose? I'll have you flogg'd and burnt too, by the Rood I will.

First Citizen. He swears by the Rood. Whew!

Second Citizen. Hark! the trumpets.

[*The Procession passes, Mary and Elizabeth riding side by side, and disappears under the gate.*]

Citizens. Long live Queen Mary! down with all traitors! God save her Grace; and death to Northumberland!

[*Exeunt.*]

Manent TWO GENTLEMEN.

First Gentleman. By God's light a noble creature, right royal!

Second Gentleman. She looks comelier than ordinary to-day; but to my mind the Lady Elizabeth is the more noble and royal.

First Gentleman. I mean the Lady Elizabeth. Did you hear (I have a daughter in her service who reported it) that she met the Queen at Wanstead with five hundred horse, and the Queen (tho' some say they be much divided) took her hand, call'd her sweet sister, and kiss'd not her alone, but all the ladies of her following.

Second Gentleman. Ay, that was in her hour of joy; there will be plenty to sunder and unsister them again: this Gardiner for one, who is to be made Lord Chancellor, and will pounce like a wild beast out of his cage to worry Cranmer.

First Gentleman. And furthermore, my daughter said that when there rose a talk of the late rebellion, she spoke even of Northumberland pitifully, and of the good Lady Jane as a poor innocent child who had but obeyed her father; and furthermore, she said that no one in her time should be burnt for heresy.

Second Gentleman. Well, sir, I look for happy times.

First Gentleman. There is but one thing against them. I know not if you know.

Second Gentleman. I suppose you touch upon the rumour that Charles, the master of the world, has offer'd her his son Philip, the Pope and the Devil. I trust it is but a rumour.

First Gentleman. She is going now to the Tower to loose the prisoners there, and among them Courtenay, to be made Earl of Devon, of royal blood, of splendid feature, whom the Council and all her people wish her to marry. May it be so, for we are many of us Catholics, but few Papists, and the Hot Gospellers will go mad upon it.

Second Gentleman. Was she not betroth'd in her babyhood to the Great Emperor himself?

First Gentleman. Ay, but he's too old.

Second Gentleman. And again to her cousin Reginald Pole, now Cardinal; but I hear that he too is full of aches and broken before his day.

First Gentleman. O, the Pope could dispense with his Cardinalate, and his achage, and his breakage, if that were all: will you not follow the procession?

Second Gentleman. No; I have seen enough for this day.

First Gentleman. Well, I shall follow; if I can get near enough I shall judge with my own eyes whether her Grace incline to this splendid scion of Plantagenet.

[*Exeunt.*]

SCENE II.—A ROOM IN LAMBETH PALACE

Cranmer. To Strasburg, Antwerp, Frankfort, Zurich, Worms, Geneva, Basle—our Bishops from their sees Or fled, they say, or flying—Poinet, Barlow, Bale, Scory, Coverdale; besides the Deans Of Christchurch, Durham, Exeter, and Wells—Ailmer and Bullingham, and hundreds more; So they report: I shall be left alone. No: Hooper, Ridley, Latimer will not fly.

Enter PETER MARTYR.

Peter Martyr. Fly, Cranmer! were there nothing else, your name
Stands first of those who sign'd the Letters Patent
That gave her royal crown to Lady Jane.

Cranmer. Stand first it may, but it was written last:
Those that are now her Privy Council, sign'd
Before me: nay, the Judges had pronounced
That our young Edward might bequeath the crown

Of England, putting by his father's will.
 Yet I stood out, till Edward sent for me.
 The wan boy-king, with his fast-fading eyes
 Fixt hard on mine, his frail transparent hand,
 Damp with the sweat of death, and griping mine,
 Whisper'd me, if I loved him, not to yield
 His Church of England to the Papal wolf
 And Mary; then I could no more—sign'd.
 Nay, for bare shame of inconsistency,
 She cannot pass her traitor Council by,
 To make me headless.

Peter Martyr. That might be forgiven.
 I tell you, fly, my Lord. You do not own
 The bodily presence in the Eucharist,
 Their wafer and perpetual sacrifice:
 Your creed will be your death.

Cranmer. Step after step,
 Thro' many voices crying right and left,
 Have I climb'd back into the primal church,
 And stand within the porch, and Christ with me:
 My flight were such a scandal to the faith,
 The downfall of so many simple souls,
 I dare not leave my post.

Peter Martyr. But you divorced
 Queen Catharine and her father; hence, her hate
 Will burn till you are burn'd.

Cranmer. I cannot help it.
 The Canonists and Schoolmen were with me.
 'Thou shalt not wed thy brother's wife.'—'Tis written,
 'They shall be childless.' True, Mary was born,
 But France would not accept her for a bride
 As being born from incest; and this wrought
 Upon the king; and child by child, you know,
 Were momentary sparkles out as quick
 Almost as kindled; and he brought his doubts
 And fears to me. Peter, I'll swear for him
 He *did* believe the bond incestuous.
 But wherefore am I trenching on the time

That should already have seen your steps a mile
From me and Lambeth? God be with you! Go.

Peter Martyr. Ah, but how fierce a letter you wrote
against
Their superstition when they slander'd you
For setting up a mass at Canterbury
To please the Queen.

Cranmer. It was a wheedling monk
Set up the mass.

Peter Martyr. I know it, my good Lord.
But you so bubbled over with hot terms
Of Satan, liars, blasphemy, Antichrist,
She never will forgive you. Fly, my Lord, fly!

Cranmer. I wrote it, and God grant me power to burn!

Peter Martyr. They have given me a safe conduct: for
all that

I dare not stay. I fear, I fear, I see you,
Dear friend, for the last time; farewell, and fly.

Cranmer. Fly and farewell, and let me die the death.
[*Exit* Peter Martyr.]

Enter OLD SERVANT.

O, kind and gentle master, the Queen's Officers
Are here in force to take you to the Tower.

Cranmer. Ay, gentle friend, admit them. I will go.
I thank my God it is too late to fly. [*Exeunt.*]

SCENE III.—ST. PAUL'S CROSS

FATHER BOURNE *in the pulpit.* *A crowd.* MARCHIONESS
OF EXETER, COURTENAY. *The SIEUR DE NOAILLES*
and his man ROGER in front of the stage. *Hubbub.*

Noailles. Hast thou let fall those papers in the palace?

Roger. Ay, sir.

Noailles. 'There will be no peace for Mary till Elizabeth
lose her head.'

Roger. Ay, sir.

Noailles. And the other, 'Long live Elizabeth the Queen!'

Roger. Ay, sir; she needs must tread upon them.

Noailles.

Well.

These beastly swine make such a grunting here,
I cannot catch what Father Bourne is saying.

Roger. Quiet a moment, my masters; hear what the shaveling has to say for himself.

Crowd. Hush—hear!

Bourne. —and so this unhappy land, long divided in itself, and sever'd from the faith, will return into the one true fold, seeing that our gracious Virgin Queen hath——

Crowd. No pope! no pope!

Roger (to those about him, mimicking Bourne). —hath sent for the holy legate of the holy father the Pope, Cardinal Pole, to give us all that holy absolution which——

First Citizen. Old Bourne to the life!

Second Citizen. Holy absolution! holy Inquisition!

Third Citizen. Down with the Papist! [*Hubbub.*

Bourne. —and now that your good bishop, Bonner, who hath lain so long under bonds for the faith——

[*Hubbub.*

Noailles. Friend Roger, steal thou in among the crowd,
And get the swine to shout Elizabeth.

Yon gray old Gospeller, sour as midwinter,
Begin with him.

Roger (goes). By the mass, old friend, we'll have no pope here while the Lady Elizabeth lives.

Gospeller. Art thou of the true faith, fellow, that swearest by the mass?

Roger. Ay, that am I, new converted, but the old leaven sticks to my tongue yet.

First Citizen. He says right; by the mass we'll have no mass here.

Voices of the crowd. Peace! hear him; let his own words damn the Papist. From thine own mouth I judge thee—tear him down!

Bourne. —and since our Gracious Queen, let me call her our second Virgin Mary, hath begun to re-edify the true temple——

First Citizen. Virgin Mary! we'll have no virgins here —we'll have the Lady Elizabeth!

[*Swords are drawn, a knife is hurled and sticks in the pulpit. The mob throng to the pulpit stairs.*]

Marchioness of Exeter. Son Courtenay, wilt thou see the holy father

Murdered before thy face? up, son, and save him!

They love thee, and thou canst not come to harm.

Courtenay (in the pulpit). Shame, shame, my masters! are you English-born,

And set yourselves by hundreds against one?

Crowd. A Courtenay! a Courtenay!

[*A train of Spanish servants crosses at the back of the stage.*]

Noailles. These birds of passage come before their time:

Stave off the crowd upon the Spaniard there.

Roger. My masters, yonder's fatter game for you

Than this old gaping gargoyle: look you there—

The Prince of Spain coming to wed our Queen!

After him, boys! and pelt him from the city.

[*They seize stones and follow the Spaniards. Exeunt on the other side Marchioness of Exeter and Attendants.*]

Noailles (to Roger). Stand from me. If Elizabeth lose her head—

That makes for France.

And if her people, anger'd thereupon,

Arise against her and dethrone the Queen—

That makes for France.

And if I breed confusion anyway—

That makes for France.

Good-day, my Lord of Devon;

A bold heart yours to beard that raging mob!

Courtenay. My mother said, Go up; and up I went.

I knew they would not do me any wrong,
For I am mighty popular with them, Noailles.

Noailles. You look'd a king.

Courtenay. Why not? I am king's blood.

Noailles. And in the whirl of change may come to be
one.

Courtenay. Ah!

Noailles. But does your gracious Queen entreat you
kinglike?

Courtenay. 'Fore God, I think she entreats me like a
child.

Noailles. You've but a dull life in this maiden court,
I fear, my Lord?

Courtenay. A life of nods and yawns.

Noailles. So you would honour my poor house to-night,
We might enliven you. Divers honest fellows,
The Duke of Suffolk lately freed from prison,
Sir Peter Carew and Sir Thomas Wyatt,
Sir Thomas Stafford, and some more—we play.

Courtenay. At what?

Noailles. The Game of Chess.

Courtenay. The Game of Chess!

I can play well, and I shall beat you there.

Noailles. Ay, but we play with Henry, King of France,
And certain of his court.

His Highness makes his moves across the Channel,
We answer him with ours, and there are messengers
That go between us.

Courtenay. Why, such a game, sir, were whole years
a-playing.

Noailles. Nay; not so long I trust. That all depends
Upon the skill and swiftness of the players.

Courtenay. The King is skilful at it?

Noailles. Very, my Lord.

Courtenay. And the stakes high?

Noailles. But not beyond your means.

Courtenay. Well, I'm the first of players. I shall win.

Noailles. With our advice and in our company,

And so you well attend to the king's moves,
I think you may.

Courtenay. When do you meet?

Noailles. To-night.

Courtenay (aside). I will be there; the fellow's at his
tricks—

Deep—I shall fathom him. (*Aloud.*) Good morning,
Noailles. [*Exit Courtenay.*]

Noailles. Good-day, my Lord. Strange game of chess!
a King

That with her own pawns plays against a Queen,
Whose play is all to find herself a King.
Ay; but this fine blue-blooded Courtenay seems
Too princely for a pawn. Call him a Knight,
That, with an ass's, not a horse's head,
Skips every way, from levity or from fear.
Well, we shall use him somehow, so that Gardiner
And Simon Renard spy not out our game
Too early. Roger, thinkest thou that anyone
Suspected thee to be my man?

Roger. Not one, sir.

Noailles. No! the disguise was perfect. Let's away.
[*Exeunt.*]

SCENE IV.—LONDON. A ROOM IN THE PALACE

ELIZABETH. *Enter* COURTENAY.

Courtenay. So yet am I,
Unless my friends and mirrors lie to me,
A goodlier-looking fellow than this Philip.
Pah!
The Queen is ill advised: shall I turn traitor?
They've almost talked me into it: yet the word
Affrights me somewhat: to be such a one
As Harry Bolingbroke hath a lure in it.
Good now, my Lady Queen, tho' by your age,
And by your looks you are not worth the having,

Yet by your crown you are. [Seeing Elizabeth.
The Princess there?

If I tried her and la—she's amorous.
Have we not heard of her in Edward's time,
Her freaks and frolics with the late Lord Admiral?
I do believe she'd yield. I should be still
A party in the state; and then, who knows—

Elizabeth. What are you musing on, my Lord of Devon?

Courtenay. Has not the Queen—

Elizabeth. Done what, Sir?

Courtenay. —made you follow

The Lady Suffolk and the Lady Lennox?—

You,

The heir presumptive.

Elizabeth. Why do you ask? you know it.

Courtenay. You needs must bear it hardly.

Elizabeth. No, indeed!

I am utterly submissive to the Queen.

Courtenay. Well, I was musing upon that; the Queen
Is both my foe and yours: we should be friends.

Elizabeth. My Lord, the hatred of another to us
Is no true bond of friendship.

Courtenay. Might it not
Be the rough preface of some closer bond?

Elizabeth. My Lord, you late were loosed from out the
Tower,

Where, like a butterfly in a chrysalis,
You spent your life; that broken, out you flutter
Thro' the new world, go zigzag, now would settle
Upon this flower, now that; but all things here
At court are known; you have solicited
The Queen, and been rejected.

Courtenay. Flower, she!

Half faded! but you, cousin, are fresh and sweet
As the first flower no bee has ever tried.

Elizabeth. Are you the bee to try me? why, but now
I called you butterfly.

Courtenay. You did me wrong,

I love not to be called a butterfly :

Why do you call me butterfly ?

Elizabeth. Why do you go so gay then ?

Courtenay. Velvet and gold.

This dress was made me as the Earl of Devon

To take my seat in ; looks it not right royal ?

Elizabeth. So royal that the Queen forbad you wearing it.

Courtenay. I wear it then to spite her.

Elizabeth. My Lord, my Lord ;

I see you in the Tower again. Her Majesty

Hears you affect the Prince—prelates kneel to you.—

Courtenay. I am the noblest blood in Europe, Madam, A Courtenay of Devon, and her cousin.

Elizabeth. She hears you make your boast that after all She means to wed you. Folly, my good Lord.

Courtenay. How folly ? a great party in the state Wills me to wed her.

Elizabeth. Failing her, my Lord, Doth not as great a party in the state Will you to wed me ?

Courtenay. Even so, fair lady.

Elizabeth. You know to flatter ladies.

Courtenay. Nay, I meant

True matters of the heart.

Elizabeth. My heart, my Lord,

Is no great party in the state as yet.

Courtenay. Great, said you ? nay, you shall be great.

I love you,

Lay my life in your hands. Can you be close ?

Elizabeth. Can you, my Lord ?

Courtenay. Close as a miser's casket.

Listen :

The King of France, Noailles the Ambassador,

The Duke of Suffolk and Sir Peter Carew,

Sir Thomas Wyatt, I myself, some others,

Have sworn this Spanish marriage shall not be.

If Mary will not hear us—well—conjecture—

Were I in Devon with my wedded bride,
The people there so worship me—Your ear ;
You shall be Queen.

Elizabeth. You speak too low, my Lord ;
I cannot hear you.

Courtenay. I'll repeat it.

Elizabeth. No !
Stand further off, or you may lose your head.

Courtenay. I have a head to lose for your sweet sake.

Elizabeth. Have you, my Lord ? Best keep it for your
own.

Nay, pout not, cousin.
Not many friends are mine, except indeed
Among the many. I believe you mine ;
And so you may continue mine, farewell,
And that at once.

Enter MARY, behind.

Mary. Whispering—leagued together
To bar me from my Philip.

Courtenay. Pray—consider—

Elizabeth (seeing the Queen). Well, that's a noble horse
of yours, my Lord.

I trust that he will carry you well to-day,
And heal your headache.

Courtenay. You are wild ; what headache ?
Heartache, perchance ; not headache.

Elizabeth (aside to Courtenay). Are you blind ?

[*Courtenay sees the Queen and exit. Exit Mary.*]

Enter LORD WILLIAM HOWARD.

Howard. Was that my Lord of Devon ? do not you
Be seen in corners with my Lord of Devon.
He hath fallen out of favour with the Queen.
She fears the Lords may side with you and him
Against her marriage ; therefore is he dangerous.

And if this Prince of fluff and feather come
To woo you, niece, he is dangerous everyway.

Elizabeth. Not very dangerous that way, my good
uncle.

Howard. But your own state is full of danger here.
The disaffected, heretics, reformers,
Look to you as the one to crown their ends.
Mix not yourself with any plot I pray you ;
Nay, if by chance you hear of any such,
Speak not thereof—no, not to your best friend,
Lest you should be confounded with it. Still—
Perinde ac cadaver—as the priest says,
You know your Latin—quiet as a dead body.
What was my Lord of Devon telling you ?

Elizabeth. Whether he told me anything or not,
I follow your good counsel, gracious uncle.
Quiet as a dead body.

Howard. You do right well.
I do not care to know ; but this I charge you,
Tell Courtenay nothing. The Lord Chancellor
(I count it as a kind of virtue in him,
He hath not many), as a mastiff dog
May love a puppy cur for no more reason
Than that the twain have been tied up together,
Thus Gardiner—for the two were fellow-prisoners
So many years in yon accursed Tower—
Hath taken to this Courtenay. Look to it, niece,
He hath no fence when Gardiner questions him ;
All oozes out ; yet him—because they know him
The last White Rose, the last Plantagenet
(Nay, there is Cardinal Pole, too), the people
Claim as their natural leader—ay, some say,
That you shall marry him, make him King belike.

Elizabeth. Do they say so, good uncle ?

Howard. Ay, good niece !
You should be plain and open with me, niece.
You should not play upon me.

Elizabeth. No, good uncle.

Enter GARDINER.

Gardiner. The Queen would see your Grace upon the moment.

Elizabeth. Why, my lord Bishop?

Gardiner. I think she means to counsel your with drawing

To Ashridge, or some other country house.

Elizabeth. Why, my lord Bishop?

Gardiner. I do but bring the message, know no more. Your Grace will hear her reasons from herself.

Elizabeth. 'Tis mine own wish fulfill'd before the word Was spoken, for in truth I had meant to crave Permission of her Highness to retire To Ashridge, and pursue my studies there.

Gardiner. Madam, to have the wish before the word Is man's good Fairy—and the Queen is yours. I left her with rich jewels in her hand, Whereof 'tis like enough she means to make A farewell present to your Grace.

Elizabeth. My Lord,

I have the jewel of a loyal heart.

Gardiner. I doubt it not, Madam, most loyal.

[*Bows low and exit.*

Howard.

See,

This comes of parleying with my Lord of Devon.

Well, well, you must obey; and I myself

Believe it will be better for your welfare.

Your time will come.

Elizabeth. I think my time will come.

Uncle,

I am of sovereign nature, that I know,

Not to be quell'd; and I have felt within me

Stirrings of some great doom when God's just hour

Peals—but this fierce old Gardiner—his big baldness,

That irritable forelock which he rubs,

His buzzard beak and deep-incavern'd eyes

Half fright me.

Howard. You've a bold heart ; keep it so.
He cannot touch you save that you turn traitor ;
And so take heed I pray you—you are one
Who love that men should smile upon you, niece.
They'd smile you into treason—some of them.

Elizabeth. I spy the rock beneath the smiling sea.
But if this Philip, the proud Catholic prince,
And this bald priest, and she that hates me, seek
In that lone house, to practise on my life,
By poison, fire, shot, stab—

Howard. They will not, niece.
Mine is the fleet and all the power at sea—
Or will be in a moment. If they dared
To harm you, I would blow this Philip and all
Your trouble to the dogstar and the devil.

Elizabeth. To the Pleiads, uncle ; they have lost a
sister.

Howard. But why say that ? what have you done to
lose her ?
Come, come, I will go with you to the Queen. [*Exeunt.*

SCENE V.—A ROOM IN THE PALACE

MARY *with* PHILIP'S *miniature.* ALICE.

Mary (kissing the miniature). Most goodly, Kinglike
and an Emperor's son,—
A king to be,—is he not noble, girl ?

Alice. Goodly enough, your Grace, and yet, methinks,
I have seen goodlier.

Mary. Ay ; some waxen doll
Thy baby eyes have rested on, belike ;
All red and white, the fashion of our land.
But my good mother came (God rest her soul)
Of Spain, and I am Spanish in myself,
And in my likings.

Alice. By your Grace's leave
Your royal mother came of Spain, but took
To the English red and white. Your royal father
(For so they say) was all pure lily and rose
In his youth, and like a lady.

Mary. O, just God!
Sweet mother, you had time and cause enough
To sicken of his lilies and his roses.
Cast off, betray'd, defamed, divorced, forlorn!
And then the King—that traitor past forgiveness,
The false archbishop fawning on him, married
The mother of Elizabeth—a heretic
Ev'n as *she* is; but God hath sent me here
To take such order with all heretics
That it shall be, before I die, as tho'
My father and my brother had not lived.
What wast thou saying of this Lady Jane,
Now in the Tower?

Alice. Why, Madam, she was passing
Some chapel down in Essex, and with her
Lady Anne Wharton, and the Lady Anne
Bow'd to the Pyx; but Lady Jane stood up
Stiff as the very backbone of heresy.
And wherefore bow ye not, says Lady Anne,
To him within there who made Heaven and Earth?
I cannot, and I dare not, tell your Grace
What Lady Jane replied.

Mary. But I will have it.

Alice. She said—pray pardon me, and pity her—
She hath harken'd evil counsel—ah! she said,
The baker made him.

Mary. Monstrous! blasphemous!
She ought to burn. Hence, thou. (*Exit Alice.*) No—
being traitor
Her head will fall: shall it? she is but a child.
We do not kill the child for doing that
His father whipt him into doing—a head
So full of grace and beauty! would that mine

Were half as gracious! O, my lord to be,
 My love, for thy sake only.
 I am eleven years older than he is.
 But will he care for that?
 No, by the holy Virgin, being noble,
 But love me only: then the bastard sprout,
 My sister, is far fairer than myself.
 Will he be drawn to her?
 No, being of the true faith with myself.
 Paget is for him—for to wed with Spain
 Would treble England—Gardiner is against him;
 The Council, people, Parliament against him;
 But I will have him! My hard father hated me;
 My brother rather hated me than loved;
 My sister cowers and hates me. Holy Virgin,
 Plead with thy blessed Son; grant me my prayer:
 Give me my Philip; and we two will lead
 The living waters of the Faith again
 Back thro' their widow'd channel here, and watch
 The parch'd banks rolling incense, as of old,
 To heaven, and kindled with the palms of Christ!

Enter USHER.

Who waits, sir?

Usher. Madam, the Lord Chancellor.

Mary. Bid him come in. (*Enter GARDINER.*) Good morning, my good Lord. [*Exit Usher.*]

Gardiner. That every morning of your Majesty
 May be most good, is every morning's prayer
 Of your most loyal subject, Stephen Gardiner.

Mary. Come you to tell me this, my Lord?

Gardiner. And more.

Your people have begun to learn your worth.
 Your pious wish to pay King Edward's debts,
 Your lavish household curb'd, and the remission
 Of half that subsidy levied on the people,
 Make all tongues praise and all hearts beat for you.

I'd have you yet more loved: the realm is poor,
The exchequer at neap-tide: we might withdraw
Part of our garrison at Calais.

Mary. Calais!

Our one point on the main, the gate of France!
I am Queen of England; take mine eyes, mine heart,
But do not lose me Calais.

Gardiner. Do not fear it.
Of that hereafter. I say your Grace is loved.
That I may keep you thus, who am your friend
And ever faithful counsellor, might I speak?

Mary. I can forespeak your speaking. Would I marry
Prince Philip, if all England hate him? That is
Your question, and I front it with another:
Is it England, or a party? Now, your answer.

Gardiner. My answer is, I wear beneath my dress
A shirt of mail: my house hath been assaulted,
And when I walk abroad, the populace,
With fingers pointed like so many daggers,
Stab me in fancy, hissing Spain and Philip;
And when I sleep, a hundred men-at-arms
Guard my poor dreams for England. Men would murder
me,
Because they think me favourer of this marriage.

Mary. And that were hard upon you, my Lord
Chancellor.

Gardiner. But our young Earl of Devon—

Mary. Earl of Devon?

I freed him from the Tower, placed him at Court;
I made him Earl of Devon, and—the fool—
He wrecks his health and wealth on courtesans,
And rolls himself in carrion like a dog.

Gardiner. More like a school-boy that hath broken
bounds,
Sickening himself with sweets.

Mary. I will not hear of him.
Good, then, they will revolt: but I am Tudor,
And shall control them.

Gardiner. I will help you, Madam,
Even to the utmost. All the church is grateful.
You have ousted the mock priest, repulpited
The shepherd of St. Peter, raised the rood again,
And brought us back the mass. I am all thanks
To God and to your Grace: yet I know well,
Your people, and I go with them so far,
Will brook nor Pope nor Spaniard here to play
The tyrant, or in commonwealth or church.

Mary (showing the picture). Is this the face of one who
plays the tyrant?
Peruse it; is it not goodly, ay, and gentle?

Gardiner. Madam, methinks a cold face and a haughty.
And when your Highness talks of Courtenay—
Ay, true—a goodly one. I would his life
Were half as goodly (*aside*).

Mary. What is that you mutter?

Gardiner. Oh, Madam, take it bluntly; marry Philip,
And be stepmother of a score of sons!
The prince is known in Spain, in Flanders, ha!
For Philip—

Mary. You offend us; you may leave us.
You see thro' warping glasses.

Gardiner. If your Majesty—

Mary. I have sworn upon the body and blood of
Christ
I'll none but Philip.

Gardiner. Hath your Grace so sworn?

Mary. Ay, Simon Renard knows it.

Gardiner. News to me!

It then remains for your poor Gardiner,
So you still care to trust him somewhat less
Than Simon Renard, to compose the event
In some such form as least may harm your Grace.

Mary. I'll have the scandal sounded to the mud.
I know it a scandal.

Gardiner. All my hope is now
It may be found a scandal.

Mary. You offend us.

Gardiner (aside). These princes are like children, must
be physick'd,
The bitter in the sweet. I have lost mine office,
It may be, thro' mine honesty, like a fool. [*Exit.*]

Enter USHER.

Mary. Who waits?

Usher. The Ambassador from France, your Grace.

Mary (sits down). Bid him come in. Good morning,
Sir de Noailles. [*Exit Usher.*]

Noailles (entering). A happy morning to your Majesty.

Mary. And I should some time have a happy
morning ;

I have had none yet. What says the King your master ?

Noailles. Madam, my master hears with much alarm,
That you may marry Philip, Prince of Spain—
Foreseeing, with whate'er unwillingness,
That if this Philip be the titular king
Of England, and at war with him, your Grace
And kingdom will be suck'd into the war,
Ay, tho' you long for peace ; wherefore, my master,
If but to prove your Majesty's goodwill,
Would fain have some fresh treaty drawn between you.

Mary. Why some fresh treaty ? wherefore should I
do it ?

Sir, if we marry, we shall still maintain
All former treaties with his Majesty.
Our royal word for that ! and your good master,
Pray God he do not be the first to break them,
Must be content with that ; and so, farewell.

Noailles (going, returns). I would your answer had been
other, Madam,
For I foresee dark days.

Mary. And so do I, sir ;
Your master works against me in the dark.

I do believe he holp Northumberland
Against me.

Noailles. Nay, pure phantasy, your Grace.

Why should he move against you?

Mary.

Will you hear why?

Mary of Scotland,—for I have not own'd
My sister, and I will not,—after me
Is heir of England; and my royal father,
To make the crown of Scotland one with ours,
Had mark'd her for my brother Edward's bride;
Ay, but your king stole her a babe from Scotland
In order to betroth her to your Dauphin.

See then:

Mary of Scotland, married to your Dauphin,
Would make our England, France;
Mary of England, joining hands with Spain,
Would be too strong for France.

Yea, were there issue born to her, Spain and we,
One crown, might rule the world. There lies your
fear.

That is your drift. You play at hide and seek.
Show me your faces!

Noailles.

Madam, I am amazed:

French, I must needs wish all good things for France.
That must be pardon'd me; but I protest
Your Grace's policy hath a farther flight
Than mine into the future. We but seek
Some settled ground for peace to stand upon.

Mary. Well, we will leave all this, sir, to our Council.
Have you seen Philip ever?

Noailles.

Only once.

Mary. Is this like Philip?

Noailles.

Ay, but nobler-looking.

Mary. Hath he the large ability of the Emperor?

Noailles. No, surely.

Mary. I can make allowance for thee,
Thou speakest of the enemy of thy king.

Noailles. Make no allowance for the naked truth.

He is every way a lesser man than Charles ;
Stone-hard, ice-cold—no dash of daring in him.

Mary. If cold, his life is pure.

Noailles. Why (*smiling*), no, indeed.

Mary. Sayst thou ?

Noailles. A very wanton life indeed (*smiling*).

Mary. Your audience is concluded, sir.

[*Exit Noailles.*

You cannot

Learn a man's nature from his natural foe.

Enter USHER.

Who waits ?

Usher. The Ambassador of Spain, your Grace.

[*Exit.*

Enter SIMON RENARD.

Mary (rising to meet him). Thou art ever welcome,
Simon Renard. Hast thou

Brought me the letter which thine Emperor promised
Long since, a formal offer of the hand
Of Philip ?

Renard. Nay, your Grace, it hath not reach'd me.
I know not wherefore—some mischance of flood,
And broken bridge, or spavin'd horse, or wave
And wind at their old battle : he must have written.

Mary. But Philip never writes me one poor word,
Which in his absence had been all my wealth.
Strange in a wooer !

Renard. Yet I know the Prince,
So your king-parliament suffer him to land,
Yearns to set foot upon your island shore.

Mary. God change the pebble which his kingly foot
First presses into some more costly stone
Than ever blinded eye. I'll have one mark it
And bring it me. I'll have it burnish'd firelike ;
I'll set it round with gold, with pearl, with diamond.

Let the great angel of the church come with him ;
 Stand on the deck and spread his wings for sail !
 God lay the waves and strow the storms at sea,
 And here at land among the people ! O Renard,
 I am much beset, I am almost in despair.
 Paget is ours. Gardiner perchance is ours ;
 But for our heretic Parliament—

Renard. O Madam,
 You fly your thoughts like kites. My master, Charles,
 Bad you go softly with your heretics here,
 Until your throne had ceased to tremble. Then
 Spit them like larks for aught I care. Besides,
 When Henry broke the carcase of your church
 To pieces, there were many wolves among you
 Who dragg'd the scatter'd limbs into their den.
 The Pope would have you make them render these ;
 So would your cousin, Cardinal Pole ; ill counsel !
 These let them keep at present ; stir not yet
 This matter of the Church lands. At his coming
 Your star will rise.

Mary. My star ! a baleful one.
 I see but the black night, and hear the wolf.
 What star ?

Renard. Your star will be your princely son,
 Heir of this England and the Netherlands !
 And if your wolf the while should howl for more,
 We'll dust him from a bag of Spanish gold.
 I do believe, I have dusted some already,
 That, soon or late, your Parliament is ours.

Mary. Why do they talk so foully of your Prince,
 Renard ?

Renard. The lot of Princes. To sit high
 Is to be lied about.

Mary. They call him cold,
 Haughty, ay, worse.

Renard. Why, doubtless, Philip shows
 Some of the bearing of your blue blood—still
 All within measure—nay, it well becomes him.

Mary. Hath he the large ability of his father?

Renard. Nay, some believe that he will go beyond him.

Mary. Is this like him?

Renard. Ay, somewhat; but your Philip

Is the most princelike Prince beneath the sun.

This is a daub to Philip.

Mary. Of a pure life?

Renard. As an angel among angels. Yea, by
Heaven,

The text—Your Highness knows it, ‘Whosoever
Looketh after a woman,’ would not graze

The Prince of Spain. You are happy in him there.

Chaste as your Grace!

Mary. I am happy in him there.

Renard. And would be altogether happy, Madam,
So that your sister were but look’d to closer.

You have sent her from the court, but then she goes,
I warrant, not to hear the nightingales,

But hatch you some new treason in the woods.

Mary. We have our spies abroad to catch her
tripping,

And then if caught, to the Tower.

Renard. The Tower! the block!

The word has turn’d your Highness pale; the thing
Was no such scarecrow in your father’s time.

I have heard, the tongue yet quiver’d with the jest

When the head leapt—so common! I do think

To save your crown that it must come to this.

Mary. No, Renard; it must never come to this.

Renard. Not yet; but your old Traitors of the
Tower—

Why, when you put Northumberland to death,

The sentence having past upon them all,

Spared you the Duke of Suffolk, Guildford Dudley,

Ev’n that young girl who dared to wear your crown?

Mary. Dared? nay, not so; the child obey’d her
father.

Spite of her tears her father forced it on her.

Renard. Good Madam, when the Roman wish'd to reign,
He slew not him alone who wore the purple,
But his assessor in the throne, perchance
A child more innocent than Lady Jane.

Mary. I am English Queen, not Roman Emperor.

Renard. Yet too much mercy is a want of mercy,
And wastes more life. Stamp out the fire, or this
Will smoulder and re-flame, and burn the throne
Where you should sit with Philip: he will not come
Till she be gone.

Mary. Indeed, if that were true—
For Philip comes, one hand in mine, and one
Steadying the tremulous pillars of the Church—
But no, no, no. Farewell. I am somewhat faint
With our long talk. Tho' Queen, I am not Queen
Of mine own heart, which every now and then
Beats me half dead: yet stay, this golden chain—
My father on a birthday gave it me,
And I have broken with my father—take
And wear it as memorial of a morning
Which found me full of foolish doubts, and leaves me
As hopeful.

Renard (aside). Whew—the folly of all follies
Is to be love-sick for a shadow. (*Aloud*) Madam,
This chains me to your service, not with gold,
But dearest links of love. Farewell, and trust me,
Philip is yours. [*Exit.*

Mary. Mine—but not yet all mine.

Enter USHER.

Usher. Your Council is in Session, please your Majesty.

Mary. Sir, let them sit. I must have time to breathe.
No, say I come. (*Exit Usher.*) I won by boldness once.
The Emperor counsel'd me to fly to Flanders.
I would not; but a hundred miles I rode,
Sent out my letters, call'd my friends together,

Struck home and won.

And when the Council would not crown me—thought
To bind me first by oaths I could not keep,
And keep with Christ and conscience—was it boldness
Or weakness that won there? When I, their Queen,
Cast myself down upon my knees before them,
And those hard men brake into woman tears,
Ev'n Gardiner, all amazed, and in that passion
Gave me my Crown.

Enter ALICE.

Girl; hast thou ever heard
Slanders against Prince Philip in our Court?

Alice. What slanders? I, your Grace; no, never.

Mary. Nothing?

Alice. Never, your Grace.

Mary. See that you neither hear them nor repeat!

Alice (aside). Good Lord! but I have heard a thousand
such.

Ay, and repeated them as often—mum!

Why comes that old fox-Fleming back again?

Enter RENARD.

Renard. Madam, I scarce had left your Grace's
presence

Before I chanced upon the messenger
Who brings that letter which we waited for—
The formal offer of Prince Philip's hand.

It craves an instant answer, Ay or No.

Mary. An instant Ay or No! the Council sits.
Give it me quick.

Alice (stepping before her). Your Highness is all trembling.

Mary. Make way. [*Exit into the Council Chamber.*]

Alice. O, Master Renard, Master Renard,
If you have falsely painted your fine Prince;
Praised, where you should have blamed him, I pray God
No woman ever love you, Master Renard.

It breaks my heart to hear her moan at night
As tho' the nightmare never left her bed.

Renard. My pretty maiden, tell me, did you ever
Sigh for a beard?

Alice. That's not a pretty question.

Renard. Not prettily put? I mean, my pretty maiden,
A pretty man for such a pretty maiden.

Alice. My Lord of Devon is a pretty man.
I hate him. Well, but if I have, what then?

Renard. Then, pretty maiden, you should know that
whether
A wind be warm or cold, it serves to fan
A kindled fire.

Alice. According to the song.

His friends would praise him, I believed 'em,
His foes would blame him, and I scorn'd 'em,
His friends—as Angels I received 'em,
His foes—the Devil had suborn'd 'em.

Renard. Peace, pretty maiden.
I hear them stirring in the Council Chamber.
Lord Paget's 'Ay' is sure—who else? and yet,
'They are all too much at odds to close at once
In one full-throated No! Her Highness comes.

Enter MARY.

Alice. How deathly pale!—a chair, your Highness.
[*Bringing one to the Queen.*

Renard. Madam,
'The Council?

Mary. Ay! My Philip is all mine.
[*Sinks into chair, half fainting.*

It lies there in six pieces at your feet ;
For all that I can carry it in my head.

Knyvett. If you can carry your head upon your
shoulders.

Wyatt. I fear you come to carry it off my shoulders,
And sonnet-making's safer.

Knyvett. Why, good Lord,
Write you as many sonnets as you will.
Ay, but not now ; what, have you eyes, ears, brains ?
This Philip and the black-faced swarms of Spain,
The hardest, cruellest people in the world,
Come loeusting upon us, eat us up,
Confiscate lands, goods, money—Wyatt, Wyatt,
Wake, or the stout old island will become
A rotten limb of Spain. They roar for you
On Penenden Heath, a thousand of them—more—
All arm'd, waiting a leader ; there's no glory
Like his who saves his country : and you sit
Sing-singing here ; but, if I'm any judge,
By God, you are as poor a poet, Wyatt,
As a good soldier.

Wyatt. You as poor a critic
As an honest friend : you stroke me on one cheek,
Buffet the other. Come, you bluster, Antony !
You know I know all this. I must not move
Until I hear from Carew and the Duke.
I fear the mine is fired before the time.

Knyvett (showing a paper). But here's some Hebrew.
Faith, I half forgot it.
Look ; can you make it English ? A strange youth
Suddenly thrust it on me, whisper'd, 'Wyatt,'
And whisking round a corner, show'd his back
Before I read his face.

Wyatt. Ha ! Courtenay's cipher. [*Reads.*

'Sir Peter Carew fled to France : it is thought the Duke
will be taken. I am with you still ; but, for appearance
sake, stay with the Queen. Gardiner knows, but the

Council are all at odds, and the Queen hath no force for resistance. Move, if you move, at once.'

Is Peter Carew fled? Is the Duke taken?
Down scabbard, and out sword! and let Rebellion
Roar till throne rock, and crown fall. No; not that;
But we will teach Queen Mary how to reign.
Who are those that shout below there?

Knyvett. Why, some fifty
That follow'd me from Penenden Heath in hope
To hear you speak.

Wyatt. Open the window, Knyvett;
The mine is fired, and I will speak to them.

Men of Kent; England of England; you that have kept your old customs upright, while all the rest of England bow'd theirs to the Norman, the cause that hath brought us together is not the cause of a county or a shire, but of this England, in whose crown our Kent is the fairest jewel. Philip shall not wed Mary; and ye have called me to be your leader. I know Spain. I have been there with my father; I have seen them in their own land; have marked the haughtiness of their nobles; the cruelty of their priests. If this man marry our Queen, however the Council and the Commons may fence round his power with restriction, he will be King, King of England, my masters; and the Queen, and the laws, and the people, his slaves. What? shall we have Spain on the throne and in the parliament; Spain in the pulpit and on the law-bench; Spain in all the great offices of state; Spain in our ships, in our forts, in our houses, in our beds?

Crowd. No! no! no Spain!

William. No Spain in our beds—that were worse than all. I have been there with old Sir Thomas, and the beds I know. I hate Spain.

A Peasant. But, Sir Thomas, must we levy war against the Queen's Grace?

Wyatt. No, my friend; war *for* the Queen's Grace—to

save her from herself and Philip—war against Spain. And think not we shall be alone—thousands will flock to us. The Council, the Court itself, is on our side. The Lord Chancellor himself is on our side. The King of France is with us; the King of Denmark is with us; the world is with us—war against Spain! And if we move not now, yet it will be known that we have moved; and if Philip come to be King, O, my God! the rope, the rack, the thumbscrew, the stake, the fire. If we move not now, Spain moves, bribes our nobles with her gold, and creeps, creeps snake-like about our legs till we cannot move at all; and ye know, my masters, that wherever Spain hath ruled she hath wither'd all beneath her. Look at the New World—a paradise made hell; the red man, that good helpless creature, starved, maim'd, flogg'd, flay'd, burn'd, boil'd, buried alive, worried by dogs; and here, nearer home, the Netherlands, Sicily, Naples, Lombardy. I say no more—only this, their lot is yours. Forward to London with me! forward to London! If ye love your liberties or your skins, forward to London!

Crowd. Forward to London! A Wyatt! a Wyatt!

Wyatt. But first to Rochester, to take the guns
From out the vessels lying in the river.

Then on.

A Peasant. Ay, but I fear we be too few, Sir
Thomas.

Wyatt. Not many yet. The world as yet, my friend,
Is not half-waked; but every parish tower
Shall clang and clash alarum as we pass,
And pour along the land, and swoll'n and fed
With indraughts and side-currents, in full force
Roll upon London.

Crowd. A Wyatt! a Wyatt! Forward!

Knyvett. Wyatt, shall we proclaim Elizabeth?

Wyatt. I'll think upon it, Knyvett.

Knyvett.

Or Lady Jane?

Wyatt. No, poor soul; no.

Ah, gray old castle of Alington, green field

Beside the brimming Medway, it may chance
That I shall never look upon you more.

Knyvett. Come, now, you're sonneting again.

Wyatt.

Not I.

I'll have my head set higher in the state ;
Or—if the Lord God will it—on the stake.

[*Exeunt.*

SCENE II.—GUILDHALL

SIR THOMAS WHITE (The Lord Mayor), LORD WILLIAM HOWARD, SIR RALPH BAGENHALL, ALDERMEN *and* CITIZENS.

White. I trust the Queen comes hither with her guards.

Howard. Ay, all in arms.

[*Several of the citizens move hastily out of the hall.*

Why do they hurry out there?

White. My Lord, cut out the rotten from your apple,
Your apple eats the better. Let them go.
They go like those old Pharisees in John
Convicted by their conscience, arrant cowards,
Or tamperers with that treason out of Kent.
When will her Grace be here?

Howard.

In some few minutes.

She will address your guilds and companies.
I have striven in vain to raise a man for her.
But help her in this exigency, make
Your city loyal, and be the mightiest man
This day in England.

White.

I am Thomas White.

Few things have fail'd to which I set my will.
I do my most and best.

Howard.

You know that after

The Captain Brett, who went with your train bands
To fight with Wyatt, had gone over to him
With all his men, the Queen in that distress

Sent Cornwallis and Hastings to the traitor,
Feigning to treat with him about her marriage—
Know too what Wyatt said.

White. He'd sooner be,
While this same marriage question was being argued,
'Trusted than trust—the scoundrel—and demanded
Possession of her person and the Tower.

Howard. And four of her poor Council too, my Lord,
As hostages.

White. I know it. What do and say
Your Council at this hour?

Howard. I will trust you.
We fling ourselves on you, my Lord. The Council,
The Parliament as well, are troubled waters ;
And yet like waters of the fen they know not
Which way to flow. All hangs on her address,
And upon you, Lord Mayor.

White. How look'd the city
When now you past it? Quiet?

Howard. Like our Council,
Your city is divided. As we past,
Some hail'd, some hiss'd us. There were citizens
Stood each before his shut-up booth, and look'd
As grim and grave as from a funeral.
And here a knot of ruffians all in rags,
With execrating execrable eyes,
Glared at the citizen. Here was a young mother,
Her face on flame, her red hair all blown back,
She shrilling 'Wyatt,' while the boy she held
Mimick'd and piped her 'Wyatt,' as red as she
In hair and cheek ; and almost elbowing her,
So close they stood, another, mute as death,
And white as her own milk ; her babe in arms
Had felt the faltering of his mother's heart,
And look'd as bloodless. Here a pious Catholic,
Mumbling and mixing up in his scared prayers
Heaven and earth's Maries ; over his bow'd shoulder
Scowl'd that world-hated and world-hating beast,

A haggard Anabaptist. Many such groups.
 The names of Wyatt, Elizabeth, Courtenay,
 Nay the Queen's right to reign—'fore God, the rogues—
 Were freely buzzed among them. So I say
 Your city is divided, and I fear
 One scruple, this or that way, of success
 Would turn it thither. Wherefore now the Queen
 In this low pulse and palsy of the state,
 Bad me to tell you that she counts on you
 And on myself as her two hands; on you,
 In your own city, as her right, my Lord,
 For you are loyal.

White. Am I Thomas White?
 One word before she comes. Elizabeth—
 Her name is much abused among these traitors.
 Where is she? She is loved by all of us.
 I scarce have heart to mingle in this matter,
 If she should be mishandled.

Howard. No; she shall not.
 The Queen had written her word to come to court:
 Methought I smelt out Renard in the letter,
 And fearing for her, sent a secret missive,
 Which told her to be sick. Happily or not,
 It found her sick indeed.

White. God send her well;
 Here comes her Royal Grace.

*Enter Guards, MARY, and GARDINER. SIR THOMAS
 WHITE leads her to a raised seat on the dais.*

White. I, the Lord Mayor, and these our companies
 And guilds of London, gathered here, beseech
 Your Highness to accept our lowliest thanks
 For your most princely presence; and we pray
 That we, your true and loyal citizens,
 From your own royal lips, at once may know
 The wherefore of this coming, and so learn

Your royal will, and do it.—I, Lord Mayor
Of London, and our guilds and companies.

Mary. In mine own person am I come to you,
To tell you what indeed ye see and know,
How traitorously these rebels out of Kent
Have made strong head against ourselves and you.
They would not have me wed the Prince of Spain ;
That was their pretext—so they spake at first—
But we sent divers of our Council to them,
And by their answers to the question ask'd,
It doth appear this marriage is the least
Of all their quarrel.

They have betrayed the treason of their hearts :
Seek to possess our person, hold our Tower,
Place and displace our councillors, and use
Both us and them according as they will.
Now what I am ye know right well—your Queen ;
To whom, when I was wedded to the realm
And the realm's laws (the spousal ring whereof,
Not ever to be laid aside, I wear
Upon this finger), ye did promise full
Allegiance and obedience to the death.
Ye know my father was the rightful heir
Of England, and his right came down to me,
Corroborate by your acts of Parliament :
And as ye were most loving unto him,
So doubtless will ye show yourselves to me.
Wherefore, ye will not brook that anyone
Should seize our person, occupy our state,
More specially a traitor so presumptuous
As this same Wyatt, who hath tamper'd with
A public ignorance, and, under colour
Of such a cause as hath no colour, seeks
To bend the laws to his own will, and yield
Full scope to persons rascal and forlorn,
To make free spoil and havock of your goods.
Now as your Prince, I say,
I, that was never mother, cannot tell

How mothers love their children ; yet, methinks,
A prince as naturally may love his people
As these their children ; and be sure your Queen
So loves you, and so loving, needs must deem
This love by you return'd as heartily ;
And thro' this common knot and bond of love,
Doubt not they will be speedily overthrown.
As to this marriage, ye shall understand
We made thereto no treaty of ourselves,
And set no foot theretoward unadvised
Of all our Privy Council ; furthermore,
This marriage had the assent of those to whom
The king, my father, did commit his trust ;
Who not alone esteem'd it honourable,
But for the wealth and glory of our realm,
And all our loving subjects, most expedient.
As to myself,
I am not so set on wedlock as to choose
But where I list, nor yet so amorous
That I must needs be husbanded ; I thank God,
I have lived a virgin, and I noway doubt
But that with God's grace, I can live so still.
Yet if it might please God that I should leave
Some fruit of mine own body after me,
To be your king, ye would rejoice thereat,
And it would be your comfort, as I trust ;
And truly, if I either thought or knew
This marriage should bring loss or danger to you,
My subjects, or impair in any way
This royal state of England, I would never
Consent thereto, nor marry while I live ;
Moreover, if this marriage should not seem,
Before our own High Court of Parliament,
To be of rich advantage to our realm,
We will refrain, and not alone from this,
Likewise from any other, out of which
Looms the least chance of peril to our realm.
Wherefore be bold, and with your lawful Prince

Stand fast against our enemies and yours,
 And fear them not. I fear them not. My Lord,
 I leave Lord William Howard in your city,
 To guard and keep you whole and safe from all
 The spoil and sackage aim'd at by these rebels,
 Who mouth and foam against the Prince of Spain.

Voices. Long live Queen Mary!

Down with Wyatt!

The Queen!

White. Three voices from our guilds and companies!
 You are shy and proud like Englishmen, my masters,
 And will not trust your voices. Understand:
 Your lawful Prince hath come to cast herself
 On loyal hearts and bosoms, hoped to fall
 Into the wide-spread arms of fealty,
 And finds you statues. Speak at once—and all!
 For whom?

Our sovereign Lady by King Harry's will;
 The Queen of England—or the Kentish Squire?
 I know you loyal. Speak! in the name of God!
 The Queen of England or the rabble of Kent?
 The recking dungfork master of the mace!
 Your havings wasted by the scythe and spade—
 Your rights and charters hobnail'd into slush—
 Your houses fired—your gutters bubbling blood——

Acclamation. No! No! The Queen! the Queen!

White.

Your Highness hears

This burst and bass of loyal harmony,
 And how we each and all of us abhor
 The venomous, bestial, devilish revolt
 Of Thomas Wyatt. Hear us now make oath
 To raise your Highness thirty thousand men,
 And arm and strike as with one hand, and brush
 This Wyatt from our shoulders, like a flea
 That might have leapt upon us unawares.
 Swear with me, noble fellow-citizens, all,
 With all your trades, and guilds, and companies.

Citizens. We swear!

Mary. We thank your Lordship and your loyal city.

[*Exit Mary attended.*]

White. I trust this day, thro' God. I have saved the crown.

First Alderman. Ay, so my Lord of Pembroke in command

Of all her force be safe ; but there are doubts.

Second Alderman. I hear that Gardiner, coming with the Queen,

And meeting Pembroke, bent to his saddle-bow,

As if to win the man by flattering him.

Is he so safe to fight upon her side ?

First Alderman. If not, there's no man safe.

White. Yes, Thomas White.

I am safe enough ; no man need flatter me.

Second Alderman. Nay, no man need ; but did you mark our Queen ?

The colour freely play'd into her face,

And the half sight which makes her look so stern,

Seem'd thro' that dim dilated world of hers,

To read our faces ; I have never seen her

So queenly or so goodly.

White. Courage, sir,

That makes or man or woman look their goodliest.

Die like the torn fox dumb, but never whine

Like that poor heart, Northumberland, at the block.

Bagenhull. The man had children, and he whined for those.

Methinks most men are but poor-hearted, else

Should we so doat on courage, were it commoner ?

The Queen stands up, and speaks for her own self ;

And all men cry, She is queenly, she is goodly.

Yet she's no goodlier ; tho' my Lord Mayor here,

By his own rule, he hath been so bold to-day,

Should look more goodly than the rest of us.

White. Goodly ? I feel most goodly heart and hand,

And strong to throw ten Wyatts and all Kent.

Ha ! ha ! sir ; but you jest ; I love it : a jest

In time of danger shows the pulses even.
 Be merry! yet, Sir Ralph, you look but sad.
 I dare avouch you'd stand up for yourself,
 Tho' all the world should bay like winter wolves.

Bagenhall. Who knows? the man is proven by the hour.

White. The man should make the hour, not this the man;

And Thomas White will prove this Thomas Wyatt,
 And he will prove an Iden to this Cade,
 And he will play the Walworth to this Wat;
 Come, sirs, we prate; hence all—gather your men—
 Myself must bustle. Wyatt comes to Southwark;
 I'll have the drawbridge hewn into the Thames,
 And see the citizens arm'd. Good day; good day.

[*Exit White.*]

Bagenhall. One of much outdoor bluster.

Howard.

For all that,

Most honest, brave, and skilful; and his wealth
 A fountain of perennial alms—his fault
 So thoroughly to believe in his own self.

Bagenhall. Yet thoroughly to believe in one's own self,
 So one's own self be thorough, were to do
 Great things, my Lord.

Howard.

It may be.

Bagenhall.

I have heard

One of your Council flee and jeer at him.

Howard. The nursery-cocker'd child will jeer at aught
 That may seem strange beyond his nursery.
 The statesman that shall jeer and flee at men,
 Makes enemies for himself and for his king;
 And if he jeer not seeing the true man
 Behind his folly, he is thrice the fool;
 And if he see the man and still will jeer,
 He is child and fool, and traitor to the State.
 Who is he? let me shun him.

Bagenhall.

Nay, my Lord,

He is damn'd enough already.

Howard. I must set
The guard at Ludgate. Fare you well, Sir Ralph.
Bagenhall. 'Who knows?' I am for England. But
who knows,
That knows the Queen, the Spaniard, and the Pope,
Whether I be for Wyatt, or the Queen? [*Exeunt.*]

SCENE III.—LONDON BRIDGE

Enter SIR THOMAS WYATT and BRETT.

Wyatt. Brett, when the Duke of Norfolk moved
against us
'Thou cried'st 'A Wyatt!' and flying to our side
Left his all bare, for which I love thee, Brett.
Have for thine asking aught that I can give,
For thro' thine help we are come to London Bridge;
But how to cross it balks me. I fear we cannot.

Brett. Nay, hardly, save by boat, swimming, or wings.

Wyatt. Last night I climb'd into the gate-house, Brett,
And scared the gray old porter and his wife.
And then I crept along the gloom and saw
'They had hewn the drawbridge down into the river.
It roll'd as black as death; and that same tide
Which, coming with our coming, seem'd to smile
And sparkle like our fortune as thou saidest,
Ran sunless down, and moan'd against the piers.
But o'er the chasm I saw Lord William Howard
By torchlight, and his guard; four guns gaped at me,
Black, silent mouths: had Howard spied me there
And made them speak, as well he might have done,
Their voice had left me none to tell you this.
What shall we do?

Brett. On somehow. 'To go back
Were to lose all.

Wyatt. On over London Bridge
We cannot: stay we cannot; there is ordnance
On the White Tower and on the Devil's Tower,

And pointed full at Southwark ; we must round
By Kingston Bridge.

Brett. Ten miles about.

Wyatt.

Ev'n so.

But I have notice from our partisans
Within the city that they will stand by us
If Ludgate can be reach'd by dawn to-morrow.

Enter one of WYATT'S men.

Man. Sir Thomas, I've found this paper ; pray your
worship read it ; I know not my letters ; the old priests
taught me nothing.

Wyatt (reads). 'Whosoever will apprehend the traitor
Thomas Wyatt shall have a hundred pounds for reward.'

Man. Is that it ? That's a big lot of money.

Wyatt. Ay, ay, my friend ; not read it ? 'tis not written
Half plain enough. Give me a piece of paper !

[*Writes 'THOMAS WYATT' large.*

There, any man can read that. [*Sticks it in his cap.*

Brett.

But that's foolhardy.

Wyatt. No ! boldness, which will give my followers
boldness.

Enter MAN with a prisoner.

Man. We found him, your worship, a-plundering o'
Bishop Winchester's house ; he says he's a poor gentle-
man.

Wyatt. Gentleman ! a thief ! Go hang him. Shall
we make

Those that we come to serve our sharpest foes ?

Brett.

Sir Thomas—

Wyatt.

Hang him, I say.

Brett. Wyatt, but now you promised me a boon.

Wyatt. Ay, and I warrant this fine fellow's life.

Brett. Ev'n so ; he was my neighbour once in Kent.

He's poor enough, has drunk and gambled out
 All that he had, and gentleman he was.
 We have been glad together ; let him live.

Wyatt. He has gambled for his life, and lost, he
 hangs.

No, no, my word's my word. Take thy poor gentleman !
 Gamble thyself at once out of my sight,
 Or I will dig thee with my dagger. Away !
 Women and children !

Enter a Crowd of WOMEN and Children.

First Woman. O Sir Thomas, Sir Thomas, pray you go
 away, Sir Thomas, or you'll make the White Tower a black
 'un for us this blessed day. He'll be the death on
 and you'll set the Divil's Tower a-spitting, and he'll smash
 all our bits o' things worse than Philip o' Spain.

Second Woman. Don't ye now go to think that we be
 for Philip o' Spain.

Third Woman. No, we know that ye be come to kill
 the Queen, and we'll pray for you all on our bended knees.
 But o' God's mercy don't ye kill the Queen here, Sir
 Thomas ; look ye, here's little Dickon, and little Robin,
 and little Jenny—though she's but a side-cousin—and all
 on our knees, we pray you to kill the Queen further off,
 Sir Thomas.

Wyatt. My friends, I have not come to kill the Queen
 Or here or there : I come to save you all,
 And I'll go further off.

Crowd. Thanks, Sir Thomas, we be beholden to you,
 and we'll pray for you on our bended knees till our lives'
 end.

Wyatt. Be happy, I am your friend. To Kingston,
 forward ! *[Exeunt.*

SCENE IV.—ROOM IN THE GATEHOUSE OF WEST-
MINSTER PALACE

MARY, ALICE, GARDINER, RENARD, LADIES.

Gardiner. Their cry is, Philip never shall be king.

Mary. Lord Pembroke in command of all our force
Will front their cry and shatter them into dust.

Alice. Was not Lord Pembroke with Northumberland?
O madam, if this Pembroke should be false?

Mary. No, girl; most brave and loyal, brave and loyal.
His breaking with Northumberland broke Northumberland.
At the park gate he hovers with our guards.
These Kentish ploughmen cannot break the guards.

Enter MESSENGER.

Messenger. Wyatt, your Grace, hath broken thro' the
guards
And gone to Ludgate.

Gardiner. Madam, I much fear
That all is lost; but we can save your Grace.
The river still is free. I do beseech you,
There yet is time, take boat and pass to Windsor.

Mary. I pass to Windsor and I lose my crown.

Gardiner. Pass, then, I pray your Highness, to the
Tower.

Mary. I shall but be their prisoner in the Tower.

Cries without. The traitor! treason! Pembroke!

Ladies. Treason! treason!

Mary. Peace.

False to Northumberland, is he false to me?
Bear witness, Renard, that I live and die
The true and faithful bride of Philip—A sound
Of feet and voices thickening hither—blows—
Hark, there is battle at the palace gates,
And I will out upon the gallery.

Ladies. No, no, your Grace ; see there the arrows flying.

Mary. I am Harry's daughter, Tudor, and not Fear.

[*Goes out on the gallery.*]

The guards are all driven in, skulk into corners
Like rabbits to their holes. A gracious guard
Truly ; shame on them ! they have shut the gates !

Enter SIR ROBERT SOUTHWELL.

Southwell. The porter, please your Grace, hath shut
the gates
On friend and foe. Your gentlemen-at-arms,
If this be not your Grace's order, cry
To have the gates set wide again, and they
With their good battleaxes will do you right
Against all traitors.

Mary. They are the flower of England ; set the gates
wide. [*Exit Southwell.*]

Enter COURTENAY.

Courtenay. All lost, all lost, all yielded ! A barge,
a barge !
The Queen must to the Tower.

Mary. Whence come you, sir ?

Courtenay. From Charing Cross ; the rebels broke us
there,
And I sped hither with what haste I might
To save my royal cousin.

Mary. Where is Pembroke ?

Courtenay. I left him somewhere in the thick of it.

Mary. Left him and fled ; and thou that would'st be
King,
And hast nor heart nor honour. I myself
Will down into the battle and there bide
The upshot of my quarrel, or die with those
That are no cowards and no Courtenays.

Courtenay. I do not love your Grace should call me
coward.

Enter another MESSENGER.

Messenger. Over, your Grace, all crush'd ; the brave
Lord William
Thrust him from Ludgate, and the traitor flying
To Temple Bar, there by Sir Maurice Berkeley
Was taken prisoner.

Mary. To the Tower with *him* !

Messenger. 'Tis said he told Sir Maurice there was
one
Cognisant of this, and party thereunto,
My Lord of Devon.

Mary. To the Tower with *him* !

Courtenay. O la, the Tower, the Tower, always the
Tower,
I shall grow into it—I shall be the Tower.

Mary. Your Lordship may not have so long to wait.
Remove him !

Courtenay. La, to whistle out my life,
And carve my coat upon the walls again !

[Exit Courtenay guarded.]

Messenger. Also this Wyatt did confess the Princess
Cognisant thereof, and party thereunto.

Mary. What ? whom—whom did you say ?

Messenger. Elizabeth,
Your Royal sister.

Mary. To the Tower with *her* !
My foes are at my feet and I am Queen.

[Gardiner and her Ladies kneel to her.]

Gardiner (rising). There let them lie, your footstool !

(Aside.) Can I strike
Elizabeth ?—not now and save the life
Of Devon : if I save him, he and his
Are bound to me—may strike hereafter. *(Aloud.)*
Madam,
What Wyatt said, or what they said he said,
Cries of the moment and the street—

Mary. He said it.

Gardiner. Your courts of justice will determine that.

Renard (advancing). I trust by this your Highness will allow

Some spice of wisdom in my telling you,
When last we talk'd, that Philip would not come
Till Guildford Dudley and the Duke of Suffolk,
And Lady Jane had left us.

Mary. They shall die.

Renard. And your so loving sister?

Mary. She shall die.

My foes are at my feet, and Philip King. [Exeunt.

ACT III

SCENE I.—THE CONDUIT IN GRACECHURCH

Painted with the Nine Worthies, among them King Henry VIII. holding a book, on it inscribed 'Verbum Dei.'

Enter SIR RALPH BAGENHALL and SIR THOMAS STAFFORD.

Bagenhall. A hundred here and hundreds hang'd in Kent.

The tigress had unsheath'd her nails at last,
And Renard and the Chancellor sharpen'd them.
In every London street a gibbet stood.
They are down to-day. Here by this house was one;
The traitor husband dangled at the door,
And when the traitor wife came out for bread
To still the petty treason therewithin,
Her cap would brush his heels.

Stafford. It is Sir Ralph,

And muttering to himself as heretofore.

Sir, see you aught up yonder?

Bagenhall. I miss something.

The tree that only bears dead fruit is gone.

Stafford. What tree, sir?

Bagenhall. Well, the tree in Virgil, sir,
That bears not its own apples.

Stafford. What! the gallows?

Bagenhall. Sir, this dead fruit was ripening overmuch,
And had to be removed lest living Spain
Should sicken at dead England.

Stafford. Not so dead,
But that a shock may rouse her.

Bagenhall. I believe
Sir Thomas Stafford?

Stafford. I am ill disguised.

Bagenhall. Well, are you not in peril here?

Stafford. I think so.

I came to feel the pulse of England, whether
It beats hard at this marriage. Did you see it?

Bagenhall. Stafford, I am a sad man and a serious.
Far liefer had I in my country hall
Been reading some old book, with mine old hound
Couch'd at my hearth, and mine old flask of wine
Beside me, than have seen it: yet I saw it.

Stafford. Good, was it splendid?

Bagenhall. Ay, if Dukes, and Earls,
And Counts, and sixty Spanish cavaliers,
Some six or seven Bishops, diamonds, pearls,
That royal commonplace too, cloth of gold,
Could make it so.

Stafford. And what was Mary's dress?

Bagenhall. Good faith, I was too sorry for the woman
To mark the dress. She wore red shoes!

Stafford. Red shoes!

Bagenhall. Scarlet, as if her feet were wash'd in
blood,
As if she had waded in it.

Stafford. Were your eyes
So bashful that you look'd no higher?

Bagenhall. A diamond,
And Philip's gift, as proof of Philip's love,

Who hath not any for any,—tho' a true one,
Blazed false upon her heart.

Stafford. But this proud Prince—

Bagenhall. Nay, he is King, you know, the King of Naples.
The father ceded Naples, that the son
Being a King, might wed a Queen—O he
Flamed in brocade—white satin his trunk-hose,
Inwrought with silver,—on his neck a collar,
Gold, thick with diamonds; hanging down from this
The Golden Fleece—and round his knee, misplaced,
Our English Garter, studded with great emeralds,
Rubies, I know not what. Have you had enough
Of all this gear?

Stafford. Ay, since you hate the telling it.
How look'd the Queen?

Bagenhall. No fairer for her jewels.
And I could see that as the new-made couple
Came from the Minster, moving side by side
Beneath one canopy, ever and anon
She cast on him a vassal smile of love,
Which Philip with a glance of some distaste,
Or so methought, return'd. I may be wrong, sir.
This marriage will not hold.

Stafford. I think with you.
The King of France will help to break it.

Bagenhall. France!
We once had half of France, and hurl'd our battles
Into the heart of Spain; but England now
Is but a ball chuck'd between France and Spain,
His in whose hand she drops; Harry of Bolingbroke
Had holpen Richard's tottering throne to stand,
Could Harry have foreseen that all our nobles
Would perish on the civil slaughter field,
And leave the people naked to the crown,
And the crown naked to the people; the crown
Female, too! Sir, no woman's regimen
Can save us. We are fallen, and as I think,
Never to rise again.

Stafford. You are too black-blooded.
I'd make a move myself to hinder that :

I know some lusty fellows there in France.

Bagenhall. You would but make us weaker, Thomas
Stafford.

Wyatt was a good soldier, yet he fail'd,
And strengthen'd Philip.

Stafford. Did not his last breath
Clear Courtenay and the Princess from the charge
Of being his co-rebels ?

Bagenhall. Ay, but then
What such a one as Wyatt says is nothing :
We have no men among us. The new Lords
Are quieted with their sop of Abbeylands,
And ev'n before the Queen's face Gardiner buys them
With Philip's gold. All greed, no faith, no courage !
Why, ev'n the haughty prince, Northumberland,
The leader of our Reformation, knelt
And blubber'd like a lad, and on the scaffold
Recanted, and resold himself to Rome.

Stafford. I swear you do your country wrong, Sir
Ralph.

I know a set of exiles over there,
Dare-devils, that would eat fire and spit it out
At Philip's beard : they pillage Spain already.
The French King winks at it. An hour will come
When they will sweep her from the seas. No men ?
Did not Lord Suffolk die like a true man ?
Is not Lord William Howard a true man ?
Yea, you yourself, altho' you are black-blooded :
And I, by God, believe myself a man.
Ay, even in the church there is a man—
Cranmer.

Fly would he not, when all men bad him fly.
And what a letter he wrote against the Pope !
There's a brave man, if any.

Bagenhall. Ay ; if it hold.

Crowd (coming on). God save their Graces !

Stafford. Bagenhall, I see
The Tudor green and white. (*Trumpets.*) They are
coming now.

And here's a crowd as thick as herring-shoals.

Bagenhall. Be limpets to this pillar, or we are torn
Down the strong wave of brawlers.

Crowd. God save their Graces!

[*Procession of Trumpeters, Javelin-men, etc.; then
Spanish and Flemish Nobles intermingled.*]

Stafford. Worth seeing, Bagenhall! These black dog-
Dons

Garb themselves bravely. Who's the long-face there,
Looks very Spain of very Spain?

Bagenhall. The Duke
Of Alva, an iron soldier.

Stafford. And the Dutchman,
Now laughing at some jest?

Bagenhall. William of Orange,
William the Silent.

Stafford. Why do they call him so?

Bagenhall. He keeps, they say, some secret that may
cost
Philip his life.

Stafford. But then he looks so merry.

Bagenhall. I cannot tell you why they call him so.

[*The King and Queen pass, attended by Peers of the
Realm, Officers of State, etc. Cannon shot off.*]

Crowd. Philip and Mary, Philip and Mary!

Long live the King and Queen, Philip and Mary!

Stafford. They smile as if content with one another.

Bagenhall. A smile abroad is oft a scowl at home.

[*King and Queen pass on. Procession.*]

First Citizen. I thought this Philip had been one of
those black devils of Spain, but he hath a yellow beard.

Second Citizen. Not red like Iscariot's.

First Citizen. Like a carrot's, as thou say'st, and
English carrot's better than Spanish licorice; but I
thought he was a beast.

Third Citizen. Certain I had heard that every Spaniard carries a tail like a devil under his trunk-hose.

Tailor. Ay, but see what trunk-hoses! Lord! they be fine; I never stitch'd none such. They make amends for the tails.

Fourth Citizen. Tut! every Spanish priest will tell you that all English heretics have tails.

Fifth Citizen. Death and the Devil—if he find I have one—

Fourth Citizen. Lo! thou hast call'd them up! here they come—a pale horse for Death and Gardiner for the Devil.

Enter GARDINER (turning back from the procession).

Gardiner. Knave, wilt thou wear thy cap before the Queen?

Man. My Lord, I stand so squeezed among the crowd I cannot lift my hands unto my head.

Gardiner. Knock off his cap there, some of you about him!

See there be others that can use their hands. Thou art one of Wyatt's men?

Man. No, my Lord, no.

Gardiner. Thy name, thou knave?

Man. I am nobody, my Lord.

Gardiner (shouting). God's passion! knave, thy name?

Man. I have ears to hear,

Gardiner. Ay, rascal, if I leave thee ears to hear.

Find out his name and bring it me (*to Attendant*).

Attendant. Ay, my Lord.

Gardiner. Knave, thou shalt lose thine ears and find thy tongue.

And shalt be thankful if I leave thee that.

[*Coming before the Conduit.*

The conduit painted—the nine worthies—ay!

But then what's here? King Harry with a scroll.

Ha—*Verbum Dei*—*verbum*—word of God!

God's passion! do you know the knave that painted it?

Attendant. I do, my Lord.

Gardiner. Tell him to paint it out,
And put some fresh device in lieu of it—
A pair of gloves, a pair of gloves, sir; ha?
There is no heresy there.

Attendant. I will, my Lord;
The man shall paint a pair of gloves. I am sure
(Knowing the man) he wrought it ignorantly,
And not from any malice.

Gardiner. Word of God
In English! over this the brainless loons
That cannot spell Esaiās from St. Paul,
Make themselves drunk and mad, fly out and flare
Into rebellions. I'll have their bibles burnt.
The bible is the priest's. Ay! fellow, what!
Stand staring at me! shout, you gaping rogue!

Man. I have, my Lord, shouted till I am hoarse.

Gardiner. What hast thou shouted, knave?

Man. Long live Queen Mary!

Gardiner. Knave, there be two. There be both King
and Queen,

Philip and Mary. Shout!

Man. Nay, but, my Lord,
The Queen comes first, Mary and Philip.

Gardiner. Shout, then,
Mary and Philip!

Man. Mary and Philip!

Gardiner. Now,
Thou hast shouted for thy pleasure, shout for mine!
Philip and Mary!

Man. Must it be so, my Lord?

Gardiner. Ay, knave.

Man. Philip and Mary!

Gardiner. I distrust thee.
Thine is a half voice and a lean assent.
What is thy name?

Man. Sanders.

Gardiner. What else?

Man. Zerubbabel.

Gardiner. Where dost thou live?

Man. In Cornhill.

Gardiner. Where, knave, where?

Man. Sign of the Talbot.

Gardiner. Come to me to-morrow.—

Rascal!—this land is like a hill of fire,

One crater opens when another shuts.

But so I get the laws against the heretic,

Spite of Lord Paget and Lord William Howard,

And others of our Parliament, revived,

I will show fire on my side—stake and fire—

Sharp work and short. The knaves are easily cow'd.

Follow their Majesties. [*Exit. The crowd following.*]

Bagenhall. As proud as Becket.

Stafford. You would not have him murder'd as Becket was?

Bagenhall. No—murder fathers murder: but I say

There is no man—there was one woman with us—

It was a sin to love her married, dead

I cannot choose but love her.

Stafford. Lady Jane?

Crowd (going off). God save their Graces!

Stafford. Did you see her die?

Bagenhall. No, no; her innocent blood had blinded me.

You call me too black-blooded—true enough

Her dark dead blood is in my heart with mine.

If ever I cry out against the Pope

Her dark dead blood that ever moves with mine

Will stir the living tongue and make the cry.

Stafford. Yet doubtless you can tell me how she died?

Bagenhall. Seventeen—and knew eight languages—in music

Peerless—her needle perfect, and her learning

Beyond the churchmen; yet so meek, so modest,

So wife-like humble to the trivial boy

Mismatch'd with her for policy ! I have heard
 She would not take a last farewell of him,
 She fear'd it might unman him for his end.
 She could not be unmann'd—no, nor outwoman'd—
 Seventeen—a rose of grace !
 Girl never breathed to rival such a rose ;
 Rose never blew that equall'd such a bud.

Stafford. Pray you go on.

Bagenhall. She came upon the scaffold,
 And said she was condemn'd to die for treason ;
 She had but follow'd the device of those
 Her nearest kin : she thought they knew the laws.
 But for herself, she knew but little law,
 And nothing of the titles to the crown ;
 She had no desire for that, and wrung her hands,
 And trusted God would save her thro' the blood
 Of Jesus Christ alone.

Stafford. Pray you go on.

Bagenhall. Then knelt and said the Miserere Mei—
 But all in English, mark you ; rose again,
 And, when the headsman pray'd to be forgiven,
 Said ' You will give me my true crown at last,
 But do it quickly ; ' then all wept but she,
 Who changed not colour when she saw the block,
 But ask'd him, childlike : ' Will you take it off
 Before I lay me down ? ' ' No, madam, ' he said,
 Gasping ; and when her innocent eyes were bound,
 She, with her poor blind hands feeling—' where is it ?
 Where is it ? '—You must fancy that which follow'd,
 If you have heart to do it !

Crowd (in the distance). God save their Graces !

Stafford. Their Graces, our disgraces ! God confound
 them !

Why, she's grown bloodier ! when I last was here,
 This was against her conscience—would be murder !

Bagenhall. The ' Thou shalt do no murder. ' which
 God's hand
 Wrote on her conscience, Mary rubb'd out pale—

She could not make it white—and over that,
Traced in the blackest text of Hell—‘Thou shalt!’
And sign’d it—Mary!

Stafford. Philip and the Pope
Must have sign’d too. I hear this Legate’s coming
To bring us absolution from the Pope.
The Lords and Commons will bow down before him—
You are of the house? what will you do, Sir Ralph?

Bagenhall. And why should I be bolder than the rest,
Or honester than all?

Stafford. But, sir, if I—
And oversea they say this state of yours
Hath no more mortice than a tower of cards;
And that a puff would do it—then if I
And others made that move I touch’d upon,
Back’d by the power of France, and landing here,
Came with a sudden splendour, shout, and show,
And dazzled men and deafen’d by some bright
Loud venture, and the people so unquiet—
And I the race of murder’d Buckingham—
Not for myself, but for the kingdom—Sir,
I trust that you would fight along with us.

Bagenhall. No; you would fling your lives into the
gulf.

Stafford. But if this Philip, as he’s like to do,
Left Mary a wife-widow here alone,
Set up a viceroy, sent his myriads hither
To seize upon the forts and fleet, and make us
A Spanish province; would you not fight then?

Bagenhall. I think I should fight then.

Stafford. I am sure of it.
Hist! there’s the face coming on here of one
Who knows me. I must leave you. Fare you well,
You’ll hear of me again.

Bagenhall. Upon the scaffold. [*Exeunt.*

SCENE II.—ROOM IN WHITEHALL PALACE

MARY. *Enter PHILIP and CARDINAL POLE.*

Pole. Ave Maria, gratia plena, Benedicta tu in mulieribus.

Mary. Loyal and royal cousin, humblest thanks.

Had you a pleasant voyage up the river?

Pole. We had your royal barge, and that same chair, Or rather throne of purple, on the deck.

Our silver cross sparkled before the prow,
The ripples twinkled at their diamond-dance,

The boats that follow'd, were as glowing-gay
As regal gardens; and your flocks of swans,

As fair and white as angels; and your shores
Wore in mine eyes the green of Paradise.

My foreign friends, who dream'd us blanketed
In ever-closing fog, were much amazed

To find as fair a sun as might have flash'd

Upon their lake of Garda, fire the Thames;

Our voyage by sea was all but miracle:

And here the river flowing from the sea,

Not toward it (for they thought not of our tides),

Seem'd as a happy miracle to make glide—

In quiet—home your banish'd countryman.

Mary. We heard that you were sick in Flanders,
cousin.

Pole. A dizziness.

Mary. And how came you round again?

Pole. The scarlet thread of Rahab saved her life;

And mine, a little letting of the blood.

Mary. Well? now?

Pole. Ay, cousin, as the heathen giant

Had but to touch the ground, his force return'd—

Thus, after twenty years of banishment,

Feeling my native land beneath my foot,

I said thereto: 'Ah, native land of mine,

Thou art much beholden to this foot of mine,
 That hastes with full commission from the Pope
 To absolve thee from thy guilt of heresy.
 Thou hast disgraced me and attainted me,
 And mark'd me ev'n as Cain, and I return
 As Peter, but to bless thee: make me well.
 Methinks the good land heard me, for to-day
 My heart beats twenty, when I see you, cousin.
 Ah, gentle cousin, since your Herod's death,
 How oft hath Peter knock'd at Mary's gate!
 And Mary would have risen and let him in,
 But, Mary, there were those within the house
 Who would not have it.

Mary. True, good cousin Pole;
 And there were also those without the house
 Who would not have it.

Pole. I believe so, cousin.
 State-policy and church-policy are conjoint,
 But Janus-faces looking diverse ways.
 I fear the Emperor much misvalued me.
 But all is well; 'twas ev'n the will of God.
 Who, waiting till the time had ripen'd, now,
 Makes me his mouth of holy greeting. 'Hail,
 Daughter of God, and saver of the faith.
 Sit benedictus fructus ventris tui!'

Mary. Ah, heaven!

Pole. Unwell, your Grace?

Mary. No, cousin, happy—
 Happy to see you; never yet so happy
 Since I was crown'd.

Pole. Sweet cousin, you forget
 That long low minster where you gave your hand
 To this great Catholic King.

Philip. Well said, Lord Legate.

Mary. Nay, not well said; I thought of you, my
 liege,
 Ev'n as I spoke.

Philip. Ay, Madam; my Lord Paget

Waits to present our Council to the Legate.

Sit down here, all ; Madam, between us you.

Pole. Lo, now you are enclosed with boards of cedar,
Our little sister of the Song of Songs !
You are doubly fenced and shielded sitting here
Between the two most high-set thrones on earth,
The Emperor's highness happily symbol'd by
The King your husband, the Pope's Holiness
By mine own self.

Mary. True, cousin, I am happy.
When will you that we summon both our houses
To take this absolution from your lips,
And be regather'd to the Papal fold ?

Pole. In Britain's calendar the brightest day
Beheld our rough forefathers break their Gods,
And clasp the faith in Christ ; but after that
Might not St. Andrew's be her happiest day ?

Mary. Then these shall meet upon St. Andrew's day.

Enter PAGET, who presents the Council. Dumb show.

Pole. I am an old man wearied with my journey,
Ev'n with my joy. Permit me to withdraw.
To Lambeth ?

Philip. Ay, Lambeth has ousted Cranmer.
It was not meet the heretic swine should live
In Lambeth.

Mary. There or anywhere, or at all.

Philip. We have had it swept and garnish'd after him

Pole. Not for the seven devils to enter in ?

Philip. No, for we trust they parted in the swine.

Pole. True, and I am the Angel of the Pope.
Farewell, your Graces.

Philip. Nay, not here— to me ;
I will go with you to the waterside.

Pole. Not be my Charon to the counter side ?

Philip. No, my Lord Legate, the Lord Chancellor
goes.

Pole. And unto no dead world ; but Lambeth palace,
Henceforth a centre of the living faith.

[*Exeunt Philip, Pole, Paget, etc.*

Manet Mary.

Mary. He hath awaked ! he hath awaked !
He stirs within the darkness !
Oh, Philip, husband ! now thy love to mine
Will cling more close, and those bleak manners thaw,
That make me shamed and tongue-tied in my love.
The second Prince of Peace—
The great unborn defender of the Faith,
Who will avenge me of mine enemies—
He comes, and my star rises.
The stormy Wyatts and Northumberlands,
The proud ambitions of Elizabeth,
And all her fieriest partisans—are pale
Before my star !
The light of this new learning wanes and dies :
The ghosts of Luther and Zuinglius fade
Into the deathless hell which is their doom
Before my star !
His sceptre shall go forth from Ind to Ind !
His sword shall hew the heretic peoples down !
His faith shall clothe the world that will be his,
Like universal air and sunshine ! Open,
Ye everlasting gates ! The King is here !—
My star, my son !

Enter PHILIP, DUKE OF ALVA, etc.

Oh, Philip, come with me ;
Good news have I to tell you, news to make
Both of us happy—ay, the Kingdom too.
Nay come with me—one moment !

Philip (to Alva). More than that :
There was one here of late—William the Silent
They call him—he is free enough in talk,

But tells me nothing. You will be, we trust,
Sometime the viceroy of those provinces--
He must deserve his surname better.

Alva. Ay, sir;

Inherit the Great Silence.

Philip. True; the provinces
Are hard to rule and must be hardly ruled;
Most fruitful, yet, indeed, an empty rind,
All hollow'd out with stinging heresies;
And for their heresies, Alva, they will fight;
You must break them or they break you.

Alva (proudly). The first.

Philip. Good!

Well, Madam, this new happiness of mine? [*Exeunt.*]

Enter THREE PAGES.

First Page. News, mates! a miracle, a miracle! news!
The bells must ring; Te Deums must be sung;
The Queen hath felt the motion of her babe!

Second Page. Ay; but see here!

First Page. See what?

Second Page. This paper, Dickon.

I found it fluttering at the palace gates:--

'The Queen of England is delivered of a dead dog!'

Third Page. These are the things that madden her.
Fie upon it!

First Page. Ay; but I hear she hath a dropsy, lad,
Or a high-dropsy, as the doctors call it.

Third Page. Fie on her dropsy, so she have a dropsy!

I know that she was ever sweet to me.

First Page. For thou and thine are Roman to the core.

Third Page. So thou and thine must be. Take heed!

First Page. Not I.

And whether this flash of news be false or true,

So the wine run, and there be revelry,

Content am I. Let all the steeples clash,

Till the sun dance, as upon Easter Day. [*Exeunt.*]

SCENE III.—GREAT HALL IN WHITEHALL

At the far end a dais. On this three chairs, two under one canopy for MARY and PHILIP, another on the right of these for POLE. Under the dais on POLE'S side, ranged along the wall, sit all the Spiritual Peers, and along the wall opposite, all the Temporal. The Commons on cross benches in front, a line of approach to the dais between them. In the foreground, SIR RALPH BAGENHALL and other Members of the Commons.

First Member. St. Andrew's day ; sit close, sit close,
we are friends.

Is reconciled the word ? the Pope again ?
It must be thus ; and yet, cocksbody ! how strange
That Gardiner, once so one with all of us
Against this foreign marriage, should have yielded
So utterly !—strange ! but stranger still that he,
So fierce against the Headship of the Pope,
Should play the second actor in this pageant
That brings him in ; such aameleon he !

Second Member. This Gardiner turn'd his coat in
Henry's time ;

The serpent that hath slough'd will slough again.

Third Member. Tut, then we all are serpents.

Second Member. Speak for yourself.

Third Member. Ay, and for Gardiner ! being English
citizen,

How should he bear a bridegroom out of Spain ?
The Queen would have him ! being English churchman
How should he bear the headship of the Pope ?
The Queen would have it ! Statesmen that are wise
Shape a necessity, as a sculptor clay,
To their own model.

Second Member. Statesmen that are wise
Take truth herself for model. What say you ?

[To Sir Ralph Bagenhall.

Bagenhall. We talk and talk.

First Member. Ay, and what use to talk?
Philip's no sudden alien—the Queen's husband,
He's here, and king, or will be—yet cocksbody!
So hated here! I watch'd a hive of late;
My seven-years' friend was with me, my young boy;
Out crept a wasp, with half the swarm behind.
'Philip!' says he. I had to cuff the rogue
For infant treason.

Third Member. But they say that bees,
If any creeping life invade their hive
Too gross to be thrust out, will build him round,
And bind him in from harming of their combs.
And Philip by these articles is bound
From stirring hand or foot to wrong the realm.

Second Member. By bonds of beeswax, like your creeping
thing;
But your wise bees had stung him first to death.

Third Member. Hush, hush!
You wrong the Chancellor: the clauses added
To that same treaty which the emperor sent us
Were mainly Gardiner's: that no foreigner
Hold office in the household, flect, forts, army;
That if the Queen should die without a child,
The bond between the kingdoms be dissolved;
That Philip should not mix us any way
With his French wars—

Second Member. Ay, ay, but what security,
Good sir, for this, if Philip——

Third Member. Peace—the Queen,
Philip, and Pole. [*All rise, and stand.*]

Enter MARY, PHILIP, and POLE.

[*Gardiner conducts them to the three chairs of state.
Philip sits on the Queen's left, Pole on her right.*]

Gardiner. Our short-lived sun, before his winter plunge,
Laughs at the last red leaf, and Andrew's Day.

Mary. Should not this day be held in after years
More solemn than of old?

Philip. Madam, my wish
Echoes your Majesty's.

Pole. It shall be so.

Gardiner. Mine echoes both your Graces'; (*aside*) but
the Pope—

Can we not have the Catholic church as well
Without as with the Italian? if we cannot,
Why then the Pope.

My lords of the upper house,
And ye, my masters, of the lower house,
Do ye stand fast by that which ye resolved?

Voices. We do.

Gardiner. And be you all one mind to supplicate
The Legate here for pardon, and acknowledge
The primacy of the Pope?

Voices. We are all one mind.

Gardiner. Then must I play the vassal to this Pole.

[*Aside.*

[*He draws a paper from under his robes and presents it
to the King and Queen, who look through it and
return it to him; then ascends a tribune, and reads.*

We, the Lords Spiritual and Temporal,
And Commons here in Parliament assembled,
Presenting the whole body of this realm
Of England, and dominions of the same,
Do make most humble suit unto your Majesties,
In our own name and that of all the state,
That by your gracious means and intercession
Our supplication be exhibited
To the Lord Cardinal Pole, sent here as Legate
From our most Holy Father Julius, Pope,
And from the Apostolic see of Rome;
And do declare our penitence and grief
For our long schism and disobedience,
Either in making laws and ordinances
Against the Holy Father's primacy,

Or else by doing or by speaking aught
 Which might impugn or prejudice the same ;
 By this our supplication promising,
 As well for our own selves as all the realm,
 That now we be and ever shall be quick,
 Under and with your Majesties' authorities,
 To do to the utmost all that in us lies
 Towards the abrogation and repeal
 Of all such laws and ordinances made ;
 Whereon we humbly pray your Majesties,
 As persons undefiled with our offence,
 So to set forth this humble suit of ours
 That we the rather by your intercession
 May from the Apostolic see obtain,
 Thro' this most reverend Father, absolution,
 And full release from danger of all censures
 Of Holy Church that we be fall'n into,
 So that we may, as children penitent,
 Be once again received into the bosom
 And unity of Universal Church ;
 And that this noble realm thro' after years
 May in this unity and obedience
 Unto the holy see and reigning Pope
 Serve God and both your Majesties.

Voices.

Amen.

[*All sit.*

[*He again presents the petition to the King and Queen,
 who hand it reverentially to Pole.*

Pole (sitting). This is the loveliest day that ever smiled
 On England. All her breath should, incenselike,
 Rise to the heavens in grateful praise of Him
 Who now recalls her to His ancient fold.
 Lo! once again God to this realm hath given
 A token of His more especial Grace ;
 For as this people were the first of all
 The islands call'd into the dawning church
 Out of the dead, deep night of heathendom,
 So now are these the first whom God hath given
 Grace to repent and sorrow for their schism ;

And if your penitence be not mockery,
 Oh how the blessed angels who rejoice
 O'er one saved do triumph at this hour
 In the reborn salvation of a land
 So noble.

[*A pause.*]

For ourselves we do protest
 That our commission is to heal, not harm ;
 We come not to condemn, but reconcile ;
 We come not to compel, but call again ;
 We come not to destroy, but edify ;
 Nor yet to question things already done ;
 These are forgiven—matters of the past—
 And range with jetsam and with offal thrown
 Into the blind sea of forgetfulness.

[*A pause.*]

Ye have reversed the attainder laid on us
 By him who sack'd the house of God ; and we,
 Amplier than any field on our poor earth
 Can render thanks in fruit for being sown,
 Do here and now repay you sixty-fold,
 A hundred, yea, a thousand thousand-fold,
 With heaven for earth.

[*Rising and stretching forth his hands. All kneel but Sir
 Ralph Bagenhall, who rises and remains standing.*]

The Lord who hath redeem'd us
 With His own blood, and wash'd us from our sins,
 To purchase for Himself a stainless bride ;
 He, whom the Father hath appointed Head
 Of all his church, He by His mercy absolve you !

[*A pause.*]

And we by that authority Apostolic
 Given unto us, his Legate, by the Pope,
 Our Lord and Holy Father, Julius,
 God's Vicar and Vicegerent upon earth,
 Do here absolve you and deliver you
 And every one of you, and all the realm
 And its dominions from all heresy,
 All schism, and from all and every censure,
 Judgment, and pain accruing thereupon ;

And also we restore you to the bosom
And unity of Universal Church.

[*Turning to Gardiner.*

Our letters of commission will declare this plainlier.

[*Queen heard sobbing. Cries of Amen! Amen!
Some of the Members embrace one another.
All but Sir Ralph Bagenhall pass out into
the neighbouring chapel, whence is heard the
Te Deum.*

Bagenhall. We strove against the papacy from the first,
In William's time, in our first Edward's time,
And in my master Henry's time ; but now,
The unity of Universal Church,
Mary would have it ; and this Gardiner follows ;
The unity of Universal Hell,
Philip would have it ; and this Gardiner follows !
A Parliament of imitative apes !
Sheep at the gap which Gardiner takes, who not
Believes the Pope, nor any of them believe—
These spaniel-Spaniard English of the time,
Who rub their fawning noses in the dust,
For that is Philip's gold-dust, and adore
This Vicar of their Vicar. Would I had been
Born Spaniard ! I had held my head up then.
I am ashamed that I am Bagenhall,
English.

Enter OFFICER.

Officer. Sir Ralph Bagenhall !

Bagenhall. What of that ?

Officer. You were the one sole man in either house
Who stood upright when both the houses fell.

Bagenhall. The houses fell !

Officer. I mean the houses knelt
Before the Legate.

Bagenhall. Do not scrimp your phrase,
But stretch it wider ; say when England fell.

Officer. I say you were the one sole man who stood.

Bagenhall. I am the one sole man in either house,
Perchance in England, loves her like a son.

Officer. Well, you one man, because you stood upright,
Her Grace the Queen commands you to the Tower.

Bagenhall. As traitor, or as heretic, or for what?

Officer. If any man in any way would be
The one man, he shall be so to his cost.

Bagenhall. What! will she have my head?

Officer. A round fine likelier.
Your pardon. [Calling to Attendant.

By the river to the Tower. [Exeunt.

SCENE IV.—WHITEHALL. A ROOM IN THE PALACE

MARY, GARDINER, POLE, PAGET, BONNER, *etc.*

Mary. The King and I, my Lords, now that all traitors
Against our royal state have lost the heads
Wherewith they plotted in their treasonous malice,
Have talk'd together, and are well agreed
That those old statutes touching Lollardism
To bring the heretic to the stake, should be
No longer a dead letter, but requicken'd.

One of the Council. Why, what hath fluster'd Gardiner?
how he rubs

His forelock!

Paget. I have changed a word with him
In coming, and may change a word again.

Gardiner. Madam, your Highness is our sun, the King
And you together our two suns in one;
And so the beams of both may shine upon us,
The faith that seem'd to droop will feel your light,
Lift head, and flourish; yet not light alone,
There must be heat—there must be heat enough
To scorch and wither heresy to the root.
For what saith Christ? 'Compel them to come in.'
And what saith Paul? 'I would they were cut off'

That trouble you.' Let the dead letter live !
 Trace it in fire, that all the louts to whom
 Their A B C is darkness, clowns and grooms
 May read it ! so you quash rebellion too,
 For heretic and traitor are all one :
 Two vipers of one breed—an amphisbæna,
 Each end a sting : Let the dead letter burn !

Paget. Yet there be some disloyal Catholics,
 And many heretics loyal ; heretic throats
 Cried no God-bless-her to the Lady Jane,
 But shouted in Queen Mary. So there be
 Some traitor-heretic, there is axe and cord.
 'To take the lives of others that are loyal,
 And by the churchman's pitiless doom of fire,
 Were but a thankless policy in the crown,
 Ay, and against itself ; for there are many.

Mary. If we could burn out heresy, my Lord Paget,
 We reckon not tho' we lost this crown of England—
 Ay ! tho' it were ten Englands !

Gardiner. Right, your Grace.
 Paget, you are all for this poor life of ours,
 And care but little for the life to be.

Paget. I have some time, for curiousness, my Lord,
 Watch'd children playing at *their* life to be,
 And cruel at it, killing helpless flies ;
 Such is our time—all times for aught I know.

Gardiner. We kill the heretics that sting the soul—
 They, with right reason, flies that prick the flesh.

Paget. They had not reach'd right reason ; little
 children !
 They kill'd but for their pleasure and the power
 They felt in killing.

Gardiner. A spice of Satan, ha !
 Why, good ! what then ? granted !—we are fallen
 creatures ;

Look to your Bible, Paget ! we are fallen.

Paget. I am but of the laity, my Lord Bishop,
 And may not read your Bible, yet I found

One day, a wholesome scripture, 'Little children,
Love one another.'

Gardiner. Did you find a scripture,
'I come not to bring peace but a sword'? 'The sword
Is in her Grace's hand to smite with. Paget,
You stand up here to fight for heresy,
You are more than guess'd at as a heretic,
And on the steep-up track of the true faith
Your lapses are far seen.

Paget. The faultless Gardiner!

Mary. You brawl beyond the question; speak, Lord
Legate!

Pole. Indeed, I cannot follow with your Grace:
Rather would say—the shepherd doth not kill
The sheep that wander from his flock, but sends
His careful dog to bring them to the fold.
Look to the Netherlands, wherein have been
Such holocausts of heresy! to what end?
For yet the faith is not established there.

Gardiner. The end's not come.

Pole. No—nor this way will come,
Seeing there lie two ways to every end,
A better and a worse—the worse is here
To persecute, because to persecute
Makes a faith hated, and is furthermore
No perfect witness of a perfect faith
In him who persecutes: when men are tost
On tides of strange opinion, and not sure
Of their own selves, they are wroth with their own selves,
And thence with others; then, who lights the faggot?
Not the full faith, no, but the lurking doubt.
Old Rome, that first made martyrs in the Church,
Trembled for her own gods, for these were trembling—
But when did our Rome tremble?

Paget. Did she not
In Henry's time and Edward's?

Pole. What, my Lord!
The Church on Peter's rock? never! I have seen

A pine in Italy that cast its shadow
 Athwart a cataract ; firm stood the pine—
 The cataract shook the shadow. To my mind,
 The cataract typed the headlong plunge and fall
 Of heresy to the pit : the pine was Rome.
 You see, my Lords,
 It was the shadow of the Church that trembled ;
 Your church was but the shadow of a church,
 Wanting the Papal mitre.

Gardiner (muttering). Here be tropes.

Pole. And tropes are good to clothe a naked truth,
 And make it look more seemly.

Gardiner. Tropes again !

Pole. You are hard to please. Then without tropes,
 my Lord,

An overmuch severeness, I repeat,
 When faith is wavering makes the waverer pass
 Into more settled hatred of the doctrines
 Of those who rule, which hatred by and by
 Involves the ruler (thus there springs to light
 That Centaur of a monstrous Commonweal,
 The traitor-heretic) then tho' some may quail
 Yet others are that dare the stake and fire,
 And their strong torment bravely borne, begets
 An admiration and an indignation,
 And hot desire to imitate ; so the plague
 Of schism spreads ; were there but three or four
 Of these misleaders, yet I would not say
 Burn ! and we cannot burn whole towns ; they are many,
 As my Lord Paget says.

Gardiner. Yet my Lord Cardinal—

Pole. I am your Legate ; please you let me finish.
 Methinks that under our Queen's regimen
 We might go softlier than with crimson rowel
 And streaming lash. When Herod-Henry first
 Began to batter at your English Church,
 This was the cause, and hence the judgment on her.
 She seethed with such adulteries, and the lives

Of many among your churchmen were so foul
 That heaven wept and earth blush'd. I would advise
 That we should thoroughly cleanse the Church within
 Before these bitter statutes be requicken'd.
 So after that when she once more is seen
 White as the light, the spotless bride of Christ,
 Like Christ himself on Tabor, possibly
 The Lutheran may be won to her again ;
 Till when, my Lords, I counsel tolerance.

Gardiner. What, if a mad dog bit your hand, my
 Lord,

Would you not chop the bitten finger off,
 Lest your whole body should madden with the poison ?
 I would not, were I Queen, tolerate the heretic,
 No, not an hour. The ruler of a land
 Is bounden by his power and place to see
 His people be not poison'd. Tolerate them !
 Why? do they tolerate you? Nay, many of them
 Would burn—have burnt each other ; call they not
 The one true faith, a loathsome idol-worship ?
 Beware, Lord Legate, of a heavier crime
 Than heresy is itself ; beware, I say,
 Lest men accuse you of indifference
 To all faiths, all religion ; for you know
 Right well that you yourself have been supposed
 Tainted with Lutheranism in Italy.

Pole (angered). But you, my Lord, beyond all supposition,
 In clear and open day were congruent
 With that vile Cranmer in the accursed lie
 Of good Queen Catharine's divorce—the spring
 Of all those evils that have flow'd upon us ;
 For you yourself have truckled to the tyrant,
 And done your best to bastardise our Queen,
 For which God's righteous judgment fell upon you
 In your five years of imprisonment, my Lord,
 Under young Edward. Who so bolster'd up
 The gross King's headship of the Church, or more
 Denied the Holy Father !

Gardiner. Ha! what! eh?

But you, my Lord, a polish'd gentleman,
A bookman, flying from the heat and tussle,
You lived among your vines and oranges,
In your soft Italy yonder! You were sent for,
You were appeal'd to, but you still preferr'd
Your learned leisure. As for what I did
I suffer'd and repented. You, Lord Legate
And Cardinal-Deacon, have not now to learn
That ev'n St. Peter in his time of fear
Denied his Master, ay, and thrice, my Lord.

Pole. But not for five-and-twenty years, my Lord.

Gardiner. Ha! good! it seems then I was summon'd
hither

But to be mock'd and baited. Speak, friend Bonner,
And tell this learned Legate he lacks zeal.
The Church's evil is not as the King's,
Cannot be heal'd by stroking. The mad bite
Must have the cautery—tell him—and at once.
What would'st thou do hadst thou his power, thou
That layest so long in heretic bonds with me;
Would'st thou not burn and blast them root and branch?

Bonner. Ay, after you, my Lord.

Gardiner. Nay, God's passion, before me! speak!

Bonner. I am on fire until I see them flame.

Gardiner. Ay, the psalm-singing weavers, cobblers,
scum—

But this most noble prince Plantagenet,
Our good Queen's cousin—dallying over seas
Even when his brother's, nay, his noble mother's,
Head fell—

Pole. Peace, madman!

Thou stirrest up a grief thou canst not fathom.
Thou Christian Bishop, thou Lord Chancellor
Of England! no more rein upon thine anger
Than any child! Thou mak'st me much ashamed
That I was for a moment wroth at thee.

Mary. I come for counsel and ye give me feuds,

Like dogs that set to watch their master's gate,
 Fall, when the thief is ev'n within the walls,
 To worrying one another. My Lord Chancellor,
 You have an old trick of offending us ;
 And but that you are art and part with us
 In purging heresy, well we might, for this
 Your violence and much roughness to the Legate,
 Have shut you from our counsels. Cousin Pole,
 You are fresh from brighter lands. Retire with me.
 His Highness and myself (so you allow us)
 Will let you learn in peace and privacy
 What power this cooler sun of England hath
 In breeding godless vermin. And pray Heaven
 That you may see according to our sight.

Come, cousin. [*Exeunt Queen and Pole, etc.*

Gardiner. Pole has the Plantagenet face,
 But not the force made them our mightiest kings.
 Fine eyes—but melancholy, irresolute—
 A fine beard, Bonner, a very full fine beard.
 But a weak mouth, an indeterminate—ha ?

Bonner. Well, a weak mouth, perchance.

Gardiner. And not like thine
 To gorge a heretic whole, roasted or raw.

Bonner. I'd do my best, my Lord ; but yet the Legate
 Is here as Pope and Master of the Church,
 And if he go not with you—

Gardiner. Tut, Master Bishop,
 Our bashful Legate, saw'st not how he flush'd ?
 Touch him upon his old heretical talk,
 He'll burn a diocese to prove his orthodoxy.
 And let him call me truckler. In those times,
 Thou knowest we had to dodge, or duck, or die ;
 I kept my head for use of Holy Church ;
 And see you, we shall have to dodge again,
 And let the Pope trample our rights, and plunge
 His foreign fist into our island Church
 To plump the leaner pouch of Italy.
 For a time, for a time.

Why? that these statutes may be put in force,
And that his fan may thoroughly purge his floor.

Bonner. So then you hold the Pope—

Gardiner. I hold the Pope!

What do I hold him? what do I hold the Pope?
Come, come, the morsel stuck—this Cardinal's fault—
I have gulpt it down. I am wholly for the Pope,
Utterly and altogether for the Pope,
The Eternal Peter of the changeless chair,
Crown'd slave of slaves, and mitred king of kings,
God upon earth! what more? what would you have?
Hence, let's be gone.

Enter USHER.

Usher. Well that you be not gone,
My Lord. The Queen, most wroth at first with you,
Is now content to grant you full forgiveness,
So that you crave full pardon of the Legate.
I am sent to fetch you.

Gardiner. Doth Pole yield, sir, ha!
Did you hear 'em? were you by?

Usher. I cannot tell you,
His bearing is so courtly-delicate;
And yet methinks he falters: their two Graces
Do so dear-cousin and royal-cousin him,
So press on him the duty which as Legate
He owes himself, and with such royal smiles—

Gardiner. Smiles that burn men. Bonner, it will be
carried.

He falters, ha? 'fore God, we change and change;
Men now are bow'd and old, the doctors tell you,
At three-score years; then if we change at all
We needs must do it quickly; it is an age
Of brief life, and brief purpose, and brief patience,
As I have shown to-day. I am sorry for it
If Pole be like to turn. Our old friend Cranmer,
Your more especial love, hath turn'd so often,
He knows not where he stands, which, if this pass,

We two shall have to teach him ; let 'em look to it,
 Cranmer and Hooper, Ridley and Latimer,
 Rogers and Ferrar, for their time is come,
 Their hour is hard at hand, their 'dies Iræ,'
 Their 'dies Illa,' which will test their sect.
 I feel it but a duty—you will find in it
 Pleasure as well as duty, worthy Bonner,—
 To test their sect. Sir, I attend the Queen
 To crave most humble pardon—of her most
 Royal, Infallible, Papal Legate-cousin.

[*Exeunt.*]

SCENE V.—WOODSTOCK

ELIZABETH, LADY IN WAITING.

Elizabeth. So they have sent poor Courtenay over sea.

Lady. And banish'd us to Woodstock, and the fields.
 The colours of our Queen are green and white,
 These fields are only green, they make me gape.

Elizabeth. 'There's whitethorn, girl.

Lady. Ay, for an hour in May.
 But court is always May, buds out in masques,
 Breaks into feather'd merriments, and flowers
 In silken pageants. Why do they keep us here?
 Why still suspect your Grace?

Elizabeth. Hard upon both.

[*Writes on the window with a diamond.*]

Much suspected, of me
 Nothing proven can be.

Quoth Elizabeth, prisoner.

Lady. What hath your Highness written?

Elizabeth. A true rhyme.

Lady. Cut with a diamond ; so to last like truth.

Elizabeth. Ay, if truth last.

Lady. But truth, they say, will out,
 So it must last. It is not like a word,
 That comes and goes in uttering.

Elizabeth.

Truth, a word!

The very Truth and very Word are one.
But truth of story, which I glanced at, girl,
Is like a word that comes from olden days,
And passes thro' the peoples: every tongue
Alters it passing, till it spells and speaks
Quite other than at first.

Lady.

I do not follow.

Elizabeth. How many names in the long sweep of time
That so foreshortens greatness, may but hang
On the chance mention of some fool that once
Broke bread with us, perhaps: and my poor chronicle
Is but of glass. Sir Henry Bedingfield
May split it for a spite.

Lady.

God grant it last,
And witness to your Grace's innocence,
Till doomsday melt it.

Elizabeth.

Or a second fire,
Like that which lately crackled underfoot
And in this very chamber, fuse the glass,
And char us back again into the dust
We spring from. Never peacock against rain
Scream'd as you did for water.

Lady.

And I got it.
I woke Sir Henry—and he's true to you—
I read his honest horror in his eyes.

Elizabeth. Or true to you?

Lady.

Sir Henry Bedingfield!
I will have no man true to me, your Grace,
But one that pares his nails; to me? the clown!

Elizabeth. Out, girl! you wrong a noble gentleman.

Lady.

For, like his cloak, his manners want the nap
And gloss of court; but of this fire he says,
Nay swears, it was no wicked wilfulness,
Only a natural chance.

Elizabeth.

A chance—perchance
One of those wicked wilfuls that men make,
Nor shame to call it nature. Nay, I know

They hunt my blood. Save for my daily range
 Among the pleasant fields of Holy Writ
 I might despair. But there hath some one come ;
 The house is all in movement. Hence, and see.

[*Exit* Lady.]

Milkmaid (*singing without*).

Shame upon you, Robin,
 Shame upon you now !
 Kiss me would you ? with my hands
 Milking the cow ?
 Daisies grow again,
 Kingcups blow again,
 And you came and kiss'd me milking the cow.

Robin came behind me,
 Kiss'd me well I vow ;
 Cuff him could I ? with my hands
 Milking the cow ?
 Swallows fly again,
 Cuckoos cry again,
 And you came and kiss'd me milking the cow.

Come, Robin, Robin,
 Come and kiss me now ;
 Help it can I ? with my hands
 Milking the cow ?
 Ringdoves coo again,
 All things woo again,
 Come behind and kiss me milking the cow !

Elizabeth. Right honest and red-check'd ; Robin was
 violent,

And she was crafty—a sweet violence,
 And a sweet craft. I would I were a milkmaid,
 To sing, love, marry, churn, brew, bake, and die,
 Then have my simple headstone by the church,
 And all things lived and ended honestly.
 I could not if I would. I am Harry's daughter :
 Gardiner would have my head. They are not sweet,

The violence and the craft that do divide
 The world of nature ; what is weak must lie ;
 The lion needs but roar to guard his young ;
 The lapwing lies, says ' here ' when they are there.
 Threaten the child ; ' I'll scourge you if you did it : '
 What weapon hath the child, save his soft tongue,
 To say ' I did not ' ? and my rod's the block.
 I never lay my head upon the pillow
 But that I think, ' Wilt thou lie there to-morrow ? '
 How oft the falling axe, that never fell,
 Hath shock'd me back into the daylight truth
 That it may fall to-day ! ' Those damp, black, dead
 Nights in the Tower ; dead—with the fear of death
 Too dead ev'n for a death-watch ! ' Toll of a bell,
 Stroke of a clock, the scurrying of a rat
 Affrighted me, and then delighted me,
 For there was life—And there was life in death—
 The little murder'd princes, in a pale light,
 Rose hand in hand, and whisper'd, ' come away !
 The civil wars are gone for evermore :
 Thou last of all the Tudors, come away !
 With us is peace ! ' ' The last ? ' It was a dream ;
 I must not dream, not wink, but watch. She has gone,
 Maid Marian to her Robin—by and by
 Both happy ! a fox may filch a hen by night,
 And make a morning outcry in the yard ;
 But there's no Renard here to ' catch her tripping. '
 Catch me who can ; yet, sometime I have wish'd
 That I were caught, and kill'd away at once
 Out of the flutter. ' The gray rogue, Gardiner,
 Went on his knees, and pray'd me to confess
 In Wyatt's business, and to cast myself
 Upon the good Queen's mercy ; ay, when, my Lord ?
 God save the Queen ! My jailor—

Enter SIR HENRY BEDINGFIELD.

Bedingfield. One, whose bolts,
 That jail you from free life, bar you from death.

There haunt some Papist ruffians hereabout
Would murder you.

Elizabeth. I thank you heartily, sir,
But I am royal, tho' your prisoner,
And God hath blest or cursed me with a nose—
Your boots are from the horses.

Bedingfield. Ay, my Lady.
When next there comes a missive from the Queen
It shall be all my study for one hour
To rose and lavender my horsiness,
Before I dare to glance upon your Grace.

Elizabeth. A missive from the Queen: last time she
wrote,
I had like to have lost my life: it takes my breath:
O God, sir, do you look upon your boots,
Are you so small a man? Help me: what think you,
Is it life or death?

Bedingfield. I thought not on my boots;
The devil take all boots were ever made
Since man went barefoot. See, I lay it here,
For I will come no nearer to your Grace;

[*Laying down the letter.*]

And, whether it bring you bitter news or sweet,
And God hath given your Grace a nose, or not,
I'll help you, if I may.

Elizabeth. Your pardon, then;
It is the heat and narrowness of the cage
That makes the captive testy; with free wing
The world were all one Araby. Leave me now,
Will you, companion to myself, sir?

Bedingfield. Will I?
With most exceeding willingness, I will;
You know I never come till I be call'd.

[*Exit.*]

Elizabeth. It lies there folded: is there venom in it?
A snake—and if I touch it, it may sting.
Come, come, the worst!
Best wisdom is to know the worst at once.

[*Reads:*]

‘It is the King’s wish, that you should wed Prince Philibert of Savoy. You are to come to Court on the instant; and think of this in your coming.

‘MARY THE QUEEN.’

Think! I have many thoughts;
 I think there may be birdlime here for me;
 I think they fain would have me from the realm;
 I think the Queen may never bear a child;
 I think that I may be some time the Queen,
 Then, Queen indeed: no foreign prince or priest
 Should fill my throne, myself upon the steps.
 I think I will not marry anyone,
 Specially not this landless Philibert
 Of Savoy; but, if Philip menace me,
 I think that I will play with Philibert,—
 As once the Holy Father did with mine,
 Before my father married my good mother,—
 For fear of Spain.

Enter LADY.

Lady. O Lord! your Grace, your Grace,
 I feel so happy: it seems that we shall fly
 These bald, blank fields, and dance into the sun
 That shines on princes.

Elizabeth. Yet, a moment since,
 I wish’d myself the milkmaid singing here,
 To kiss and cuff among the birds and flowers—
 A right rough life and healthful.

Lady. But the wench
 Hath her own troubles; she is weeping now;
 For the wrong Robin took her at her word.
 Then the cow kick’d, and all her milk was spilt.
 Your Highness such a milkmaid?

Elizabeth. I had kept
 My Robins and my cows in sweeter order
 Had I been such.

Lady (slyly). And had your Grace a Robin?

Elizabeth. Come, come, you are chill here ; you want
the sun
That shines at court ; make ready for the journey.
Pray God, we 'scape the sunstroke. Ready at once.
[*Exeunt.*]

SCENE VI.—LONDON. A ROOM IN THE PALACE

LORD PETRE *and* LORD WILLIAM HOWARD.

Petre. You cannot see the Queen. Renard denied her,
Ev'n now to me.

Howard. Their Flemish go-between
And all-in-all. I came to thank her Majesty
For freeing my friend Bagenhall from the Tower ;
A grace to me ! Mercy, that herb-of-grace,
Flowers now but seldom.

Petre. Only now perhaps.
Because the Queen hath been three days in tears
For Philip's going—like the wild hedge-rose
Of a soft winter, possible, not probable,
However you have prov'n it.

Howard. I must see her.

Enter RENARD.

Renard. My Lords, you cannot see her Majesty.

Howard. Why then the King ! for I would have him
bring it
Home to the leisure wisdom of his Queen,
Before he go, that since these statutes past,
Gardiner out-Gardiners Gardiner in his heat,
Bonner cannot out-Bonner his own self—
Beast !—but they play with fire as children do,
And burn the house. I know that these are breeding
A fierce resolve and fixt heart-hate in men
Against the King, the Queen, the Holy Father,
The faith itself. Can I not see him ?

Renard.

Not now.

And in all this, my Lord, her Majesty
Is flint of flint, you may strike fire from her,
Not hope to melt her. I will give your message.

[*Exeunt Petre and Howard.*]

Enter PHILIP (musing)

Philip. She will not have Prince Philibert of Savoy,
I talk'd with her in vain—says she will live
And die true maid—a goodly creature too.
Would *she* had been the Queen! yet she must have him;
She troubles England: that she breathes in England
Is life and lungs to every rebel birth
That passes out of embryo.

Simon Renard!—

This Howard, whom they fear, what was he saying?

Renard. What your imperial father said, my liege,
To deal with heresy gentlier. Gardiner burns,
And Bonner burns; and it would seem this people
Care more for our brief life in their wet land,
Than yours in happier Spain. I told my Lord
He should not vex her Highness; she would say
These are the means God works with, that His church
May flourish.

Philip. Ay, sir, but in statesmanship
To strike too soon is oft to miss the blow.
Thou knowest I bad my chaplain, Castro, preach
Against these burnings.

Renard. And the Emperor
Approved you, and when last he wrote, declared
His comfort in your Grace that you were bland
And affable to men of all estates,
In hope to charm them from their hate of Spain.

Philip. In hope to crush all heresy under Spain.
But, Renard, I am sicker staying here
Than any sea could make me passing hence,
Tho' I be ever deadly sick at sea.

So sick am I with bidding for this child.
 Is it the fashion in this clime for women
 To go twelve months in bearing of a child?
 The nurses yawn'd, the cradle gaped, they led
 Processions, chanted litanies, clash'd their bells,
 Shot off their lying cannon, and her priests
 Have preach'd, the fools, of this fair prince to come;
 'Till, by St. James, I find myself the fool.
 Why do you lift your eyebrow at me thus?

Renard. I never saw your Highness moved till now.

Philip. So weary am I of this wet land of theirs,
 And every soul of man that breathes therein.

Renard. My liege, we must not drop the mask before
 The masquerade is over—

Philip. —Have I dropt it?
 I have but shown a loathing face to you,
 Who knew it from the first.

Enter MARY.

Mary (aside). With Renard. Still
 Parleying with Renard, all the day with Renard,
 And scarce a greeting all the day for me—
 And goes to-morrow.

[*Exit Mary.*

Philip (to Renard, who advances to him). Well, sir, is
 there more?

Renard (who has perceived the Queen). May Simon
 Renard speak a single word?

Philip. Ay.

Renard. And be forgiven for it?

Philip. Simon Renard
 Knows me too well to speak a single word
 That could not be forgiven.

Renard. Well, my liege,
 Your Grace hath a most chaste and loving wife.

Philip. Why not? The Queen of Philip should be chaste.

Renard. Ay, but, my Lord, you know what Virgil sings,
 Woman is various and most mutable.

Philip. She play the harlot ! never.

Renard.

No, sire, no,

Not dream'd of by the rabidest gospeller.

There was a paper thrown into the palace,
'The King hath wearied of his barren bride.'

She came upon it, read it, and then rent it,

With all the rage of one who hates a truth

He cannot but allow. Sire, I would have you—

What should I say, I cannot pick my words—

Be somewhat less—majestic to your Queen.

Philip. Am I to change my manners, Simon Renard,
Because these islanders are brutal beasts ?

Or would you have me turn a sonneteer,

And warble those brief-sighted eyes of hers ?

Renard. Brief-sighted tho' they be, I have seen them,
sire,

When you perchance were trifling royally

With some fair dame of court, suddenly fill

With such fierce fire—had it been fire indeed

It would have burnt both speakers.

Philip.

Ay, and then ?

Renard. Sire, might it not be policy in some matter
Of small importance now and then to cede
A point to her demand ?

Philip.

Well, I am going.

Renard. For should her love when you are gone, my
liege,

Witness these papers, there will not be wanting

Those that will urge her injury—should her love—

And I have known such women more than one—

Veer to the counterpoint, and jealousy

Hath in it an alchemic force to fuse

Almost into one metal love and hate,—

And she impress her wrongs upon her Council,

And these again upon her Parliament—

We are not loved here, and would be then perhaps

Not so well holpen in our wars with France,

As else we might be—here she comes.

Enter MARY.

Mary.

O Philip

Nay, must you go indeed ?

Philip.

Madam, I must.

Mary. The parting of a husband and a wife
Is like the cleaving of a heart ; one half
Will flutter here, one there.

Philip.

You say true, Madam.

Mary. The Holy Virgin will not have me yet
Lose the sweet hope that I may bear a prince.
If such a prince were born and you not here !

Philip. I should be here if such a prince were born.

Mary. But must you go ?

Philip.

Madam, you know my father,

Retiring into cloistral solitude
To yield the remnant of his years to heaven,
Will shift the yoke and weight of all the world
From off his neck to mine. We meet at Brussels.
But since mine absence will not be for long,
Your Majesty shall go to Dover with me,
And wait my coming back.

Mary.

To Dover ? no,

I am too feeble. I will go to Greenwich,
So you will have me with you ; and there watch
All that is gracious in the breath of heaven
Draw with your sails from our poor land, and pass
And leave me, Philip, with my prayers for you.

Philip. And doubtless I shall profit by your prayers.

Mary. Methinks that would you tarry one day more
(The news was sudden) I could mould myself
To bear your going better ; will you do it ?

Philip. Madam, a day may sink or save a realm.

Mary. A day may save a heart from breaking too.

Philip. Well, Simon Renard, shall we stop a day ?

Renard. Your Grace's business will not suffer, sire,
For one day more, so far as I can tell.

Philip. Then one day more to please her Majesty.

Mary. The sunshine sweeps across my life again.

O if I knew you felt this parting, Philip,
As I do!

Philip. By St. James I do protest,
Upon the faith and honour of a Spaniard,
I am vastly grieved to leave your Majesty.
Simon, is supper ready?

Renard. Ay, my liege,

I saw the covers laying.

Philip. Let us have it. [Exeunt.

ACT IV

SCENE I.—A ROOM IN THE PALACE

MARY, CARDINAL POLE.

Mary. What have you there?

Pole. So please your Majesty,

A long petition from the foreign exiles
To spare the life of Cranmer. Bishop Thirlby,
And my Lord Paget and Lord William Howard,
Crave, in the same cause, hearing of your Grace.
Hath he not written himself—infatuated—
To sue you for his life?

Mary. His life? Oh, no;
Not sued for that—he knows it were in vain.
But so much of the anti-papal leaven
Works in him yet, he hath pray'd me not to sully
Mine own prerogative, and degrade the realm
By seeking justice at a stranger's hand
Against my natural subject. King and Queen,
To whom he owes his loyalty after God,
Shall these accuse him to a foreign prince?

Death would not grieve him more. I cannot be
True to this realm of England and the Pope
Together, says the heretic.

Pole. And there errs ;

As he hath ever err'd thro' vanity.
A secular kingdom is but as the body
Lacking a soul ; and in itself a beast.
The Holy Father in a secular kingdom
Is as the soul descending out of heaven
Into a body generate.

Mary. Write to him, then.

Pole. I will.

Mary. And sharply, Pole.

Pole. Here come the Cranmerites !

Enter THIRLBY, LORD PAGET, LORD WILLIAM HOWARD.

Howard. Health to your Grace ! Good morrow, my
Lord Cardinal ;

We make our humble prayer unto your Grace
That Cranmer may withdraw to foreign parts,
Or into private life within the realm.
In several bills and declarations, Madam,
He hath recanted all his heresies.

Paget. Ay, ay ; if Bonner have not forged the bills.

[*Aside.*

Mary. Did not More die, and Fisher ? he must burn.

Howard. He hath recanted, Madam.

Mary. The better for him.

He burns in Purgatory, not in Hell.

Howard. Ay, ay, your Grace ; but it was never seen
That any one recanting thus at full,
As Cranmer hath, came to the fire on earth.

Mary. It will be seen now, then.

Thirlby. O Madam, Madam !

I thus implore you, low upon my knees,
To reach the hand of mercy to my friend.
I have err'd with him ; with him I have recanted.

What human reason is there why my friend
Should meet with lesser mercy than myself?

Mary. My Lord of Ely, this. After a riot
We hang the leaders, let their following go.
Cranmer is head and father of these heresies,
New learning as they call it: yea, may God
Forget me at most need when I forget
Her foul divorce—my sainted mother—No!

Howard. Ay, ay, but mighty doctors doubted there.
The Pope himself waver'd; and more than one
Row'd in that galley—Gardiner to wit,
Whom truly I deny not to have been
Your faithful friend and trusty councillor.
Hath not your Highness ever read his book,
His tractate upon True Obedience,
Writ by himself and Bonner?

Mary. I will take
Such order with all bad, heretical books
That none shall hold them in his house and live,
Henceforward. No, my Lord.

Howard. Then never read it.
The truth is here. Your father was a man
Of such colossal kinghood, yet so courteous,
Except when wroth, you scarce could meet his eye
And hold your own; and were he wroth indeed,
You held it less, or not at all. I say,
Your father had a will that beat men down;
Your father had a brain that beat men down—

Pole. Not me, my Lord.

Howard. No, for you were not here;
You sit upon this fallen Cranmer's throne;
And it would more become you, my Lord Legate,
To join a voice, so potent with her Highness,
To ours in plea for Cranmer than to stand
On naked self-assertion.

Mary. All your voices
Are waves on flint. The heretic must burn.

Howard. Yet once he saved your Majesty's own life;

Stood out against the King in your behalf,
At his own peril.

Mary. I know not if he did ;
And if he did I care not, my Lord Howard.
My life is not so happy, no such boon,
That I should spare to take a heretic priest's,
Who saved it or not saved. Why do you vex me ?

Paget. Yet to save Cranmer were to serve the Church,
Your Majesty's I mean ; he is effaced,
Self-blotted out ; so wounded in his honour,
He can but creep down into some dark hole
Like a hurt beast, and hide himself and die ;
But if you burn him,—well, your Highness knows
The saying, ' Martyr's blood—seed of the Church.'

Mary. Of the true Church ; but his is none, nor will be.
You are too politic for me, my Lord Paget.
And if he have to live so loath'd a life,
It were more merciful to burn him now.

Thirlby. O yet relent. O, Madam, if you knew him
As I do, ever gentle, and so gracious,
With all his learning—

Mary. Yet a heretic still.
His learning makes his burning the more just.

Thirlby. So worshipt of all those that came across
him ;

The stranger at his hearth, and all his house—

Mary. His children and his concubine, belike.

Thirlby. To do him any wrong was to beget
A kindness from him, for his heart was rich,
Of such fine mould, that if you sow'd therein
The seed of Hate, it blossom'd Charity.

Pole. ' After his kind it costs him nothing,' there's
An old world English adage to the point.
These are but natural graces, my good Bishop,
Which in the Catholic garden are as flowers,
But on the heretic dunghill only weeds.

Howard. Such weeds make dunghills gracious.

Mary. Enough, my Lords.

It is God's will, the Holy Father's will,
 And Philip's will, and mine, that he should burn.
 He is pronounc'd anathema.

Howard. Farewell, Madam,

God grant you ampler mercy at your call

Than you have shown to Cranmer. [*Exeunt* Lords.

Pole. After this,

Your Grace will hardly care to overlook

This same petition of the foreign exiles

For Cranmer's life.

Mary. Make out the writ to-night.

[*Exeunt.*

SCENE II.—OXFORD. CRANMER IN PRISON

Cranmer. Last night, I dream'd the faggots were alight,
 And that myself was fasten'd to the stake,
 And found it all a visionary flame,
 Cool as the light in old decaying wood ;
 And then King Harry look'd from out a cloud,
 And bad me have good courage ; and I heard
 An angel cry 'There is more joy in Heaven,'—
 And after that, the trumpet of the dead.

[*Trumpets without.*

Why, there are trumpets blowing now : what is it ?

Enter FATHER COLE.

Cole. Cranmer, I come to question you again ;
 Have you remain'd in the true Catholic faith
 I left you in ?

Cranmer. In the true Catholic faith,
 By Heaven's grace, I am more and more confirm'd.
 Why are the trumpets blowing, Father Cole ?

Cole. Cranmer, it is decided by the Council
 That you to-day should read your recantation
 Before the people in St. Mary's Church.

And there be many heretics in the town,
 Who loathe you for your late return to Rome,
 And might assail you passing through the street,
 And tear you piecemeal: so you have a guard.

Cranmer. Or seek to rescue me. I thank the Council.

Cole. Do you lack any money?

Cranmer. Nay, why should I?

The prison fare is good enough for me.

Cole. Ay, but to give the poor.

Cranmer. Hand it me, then!

I thank you.

Cole. For a little space, farewell;

Until I see you in St. Mary's Church. [*Exit Cole.*]

Cranmer. It is against all precedent to burn
 One who recants; they mean to pardon me.

To give the poor—they give the poor who die.

Well, burn me or not burn me I am fixt;

It is but a communion, not a mass:

A holy supper, not a sacrifice;

No man can make his Maker—Villa Garcia.

Enter VILLA GARCIA.

Villa Garcia. Pray you write out this paper for me,
Cranmer.

Cranmer. Have I not writ enough to satisfy you?

Villa Garcia. It is the last.

Cranmer. Give it me, then.

[*He writes.*]

Villa Garcia.

Now sign.

Cranmer. I have sign'd enough, and I will sign no
 more.

Villa Garcia. It is no more than what you have sign'd
 already,

The public form thereof.

Cranmer. It may be so;

I sign it with my presence, if I read it.

Villa Garcia. But this is idle of you. Well, sir, well,

You are to beg the people to pray for you ;
 Exhort them to a pure and virtuous life ;
 Declare the Queen's right to the throne ; confess
 Your faith before all hearers ; and retract
 That Eucharistic doctrine in your book.
 Will you not sign it now ?

Cranmer. No, Villa Garcia,

I sign no more. Will they have mercy on me ?

Villa Garcia. Have you good hopes of mercy ! So,
 farewell. [*Exit.*

Cranmer. Good hopes, not theirs, have I that I am
 fixt,

Fixt beyond fall ; however, in strange hours,
 After the long brain-dazing colloquies,
 And thousand-times recurring argument
 Of those two friars ever in my prison,
 When left alone in my despondency,
 Without a friend, a book, my faith would seem
 Dead or half-drown'd, or else swam heavily
 Against the huge corruptions of the Church,
 Monsters of mistradition, old enough
 To scare me into dreaming, 'what am I,
 Cranmer, against whole ages ?' was it so,
 Or am I slandering my most inward friend,
 To veil the fault of my most outward foe—
 The soft and tremulous coward in the flesh ?
 O higher, holier, earlier, purer church,
 I have found thee and not leave thee any more.
 It is but a communion, not a mass—
 No sacrifice, but a life-giving feast !
 (*Writes.*) So, so ; this will I say—thus will I pray.

[*Puts up the paper.*

Enter BONNER.

Bonner. Good day, old friend ; what, you look some-
 what worn ;
 And yet it is a day to test your health

Ev'n at the best : I scarce have spoken with you
 Since when?—your degradation. At your trial
 Never stood up a bolder man than you ;
 You would not cap the Pope's commissioner—
 Your learning, and your stoutness, and your heresy,
 Dumbfounded half of us. So, after that,
 We had to dis-archbishop and unlord,
 And make you simple Cranmer once again.
 The common barber clipt your hair, and I
 Scraped from your finger-points the holy oil ;
 And worse than all, you had to kneel to *me* ;
 Which was not pleasant for you, Master Cranmer.
 Now you, that would not recognise the Pope,
 And you, that would not own the Real Presence,
 Have found a real presence in the stake,
 Which frights you back into the ancient faith ;
 And so you have recanted to the Pope.
 How are the mighty fallen, Master Cranmer !

Cranmer. You have been more fierce against the Pope
 than I ;

But why fling back the stone he strikes me with ?

[*Aside.*]

O Bonner, if I ever did you kindness—
 Power hath been given you to try faith by fire—
 Pray you, remembering how yourself have changed,
 Be somewhat pitiful, after I have gone,
 'To the poor flock—to women and to children—
 That when I was archbishop held with me.

Bonner. Ay—gentle as they call you—live or die !
 Pitiful to this pitiful heresy ?

I must obey the Queen and Council, man.
 Win thro' this day with honour to yourself,
 And I'll say something for you—so—good-bye.

[*Exit.*]

Cranmer. This hard coarse man of old hath crouch'd
 to me

'Till I myself was half ashamed for him.

Enter THIRLBY.

Weep not, good Thirlby.

Thirlby. Oh, my Lord, my Lord!

My heart is no such block as Bonner's is:

Who would not weep?

Cranmer. Why do you so my-lord me,

Who am disgraced?

Thirlby. On earth; but saved in heaven

By your recanting.

Cranmer. Will they burn me, Thirlby?

Thirlby. Alas, they will; these burnings will not help

The purpose of the faith; but my poor voice

Against them is a whisper to the roar

Of a spring-tide.

Cranmer. And they will surely burn me?

Thirlby. Ay; and besides, will have you in the church

Repeat your recantation in the ears

Of all men, to the saving of their souls,

Before your execution. May God help you

'Thro' that hard hour!

Cranmer. And may God bless you, Thirlby!

Well, they shall hear my recantation there.

[Exit Thirlby.]

Disgraced, dishonour'd!—not by them, indeed,

By mine own self—by mine own hand!

O thin-skinn'd hand and jutting veins, 'twas you

That sign'd the burning of poor Joan of Kent;

But then she was a witch. You have written much,

But you were never raised to plead for Prith,

Whose dogmas I have reach'd: he was deliver'd

To the secular arm to burn; and there was Lambert;

Who can foresee himself? truly these burnings,

As Thirlby says, are profitless to the burners,

And help the other side. You shall burn too,

Burn first when I am burnt.

Fire—inch by inch to die in agony! Latimer

Had a brief end—not Ridley. Hooper burn'd
 Three-quarters of an hour. Will my faggots
 Be wet as his were? It is a day of rain.
 I will not muse upon it.
 My fancy takes the burner's part, and makes
 The fire seem even crueller than it is.
 No, I not doubt that God will give me strength,
 Albeit I have denied him.

Enter SOTO and VILLA GARCIA.

Villa Garcia. We are ready
 To take you to St. Mary's, Master Cranmer.

Cranmer. And I: lead on; ye loose me from my
 bonds. [*Exeunt.*

SCENE III.—ST. MARY'S CHURCH

COLE *in the Pulpit*, LORD WILLIAMS OF THAME *presiding*.
 LORD WILLIAM HOWARD, LORD PAGET, *and others*.
 CRANMER *enters between SOTO and VILLA GARCIA, and*
the whole Choir strike up 'Nunc Dimittis.' CRANMER
is set upon a Scaffold before the people.

Cole. Behold him—

[*A pause: people in the foreground.*

People. Oh, unhappy sight!

First Protestant. See how the tears run down his
 fatherly face.

Second Protestant. James, didst thou ever see a carrion
 crow

Stand watching a sick beast before he dies?

First Protestant. Him perch'd up there? I wish some
 thunderbolt

Would make this Cole a cinder, pulpit and all.

Cole. Behold him, brethren: he hath cause to weep!—
 So have we all: weep with him if ye will,

Yet——

It is expedient for one man to die,
 Yea, for the people, lest the people die.
 Yet wherefore should he die that hath return'd
 To the one Catholic Universal Church,
 Repentant of his errors?

Protestant murmurs. Ay, tell us that.

Cole. Those of the wrong side will despise the man,
 Deeming him one that thro' the fear of death
 Gave up his cause, except he seal his faith
 In sight of all with flaming martyrdom.

Cranmer. Ay.

Cole. Ye hear him, and albeit there may seem
 According to the canons pardon due
 To him that so repents, yet are there causes
 Wherefore our Queen and Council at this time
 Adjudge him to the death. He hath been a traitor,
 A shaker and confounder of the realm;
 And when the King's divorce was sued at Rome,
 He here, this heretic metropolitan,
 As if he had been the Holy Father, sat
 And judg'd it. Did I call him heretic?
 A huge heresiarch! never was it known
 That any man so writing, preaching so,
 So poisoning the Church, so long continuing,
 Hath found his pardon; therefore he must die,
 For warning and example.

Other reasons

There be for this man's ending, which our Queen
 And Council at this present deem it not
 Expedient to be known.

Protestant murmurs. I warrant you.

Cole. Take therefore, all, example by this man,
 For if our Holy Queen not pardon him,
 Much less shall others in like cause escape,
 That all of you, the highest as the lowest,
 May learn there is no power against the Lord.
 There stands a man, once of so high degree,

Chief prelate of our Church, archbishop, first
 In Council, second person in the realm,
 Friend for so long time of a mighty King ;
 And now ye see downfallen and debased
 From councillor to caitiff—fallen so low,
 The leprous flutterings of the byway, scum
 And offal of the city would not change
 Estates with him ; in brief, so miserable,
 There is no hope of better left for him,
 No place for worse.

Yet, Cranmer, be thou glad.

This is the work of God. He is glorified
 In thy conversion : lo ! thou art reclaim'd ;
 He brings thee home : nor fear but that to-day
 Thou shalt receive the penitent thief's award,
 And be with Christ the Lord in Paradise.
 Remember how God made the fierce fire seem
 To those three children like a pleasant dew.
 Remember, too,
 The triumph of St. Andrew on his cross,
 The patience of St. Lawrence in the fire.
 Thus, if thou call on God and all the saints,
 God will beat down the fury of the flame,
 Or give thee saintly strength to undergo.
 And for thy soul shall masses here be sung
 By every priest in Oxford. Pray for him.

Cranmer. Ay, one and all, dear brothers, pray for me ;
 Pray with one breath, one heart, one soul for me.

Cole. And now, lest anyone among you doubt
 The man's conversion and remorse of heart,
 Yourselves shall hear him speak. Speak, Master
 Cranmer,

Fulfil your promise made me, and proclaim
 Your true undoubted faith, that all may hear.

Cranmer. And that I will. O God. Father of
 Heaven !

O Son of God, Redeemer of the world !
 O Holy Ghost ! proceeding from them both,

Three persons and one God, have mercy on me,
Most miserable sinner, wretched man.
I have offended against heaven and earth
More grievously than any tongue can tell.
Then whither should I flee for any help?
I am ashamed to lift my eyes to heaven,
And I can find no refuge upon earth.
Shall I despair then?—God forbid! O God,
For thou art merciful, refusing none
That come to Thee for succour, unto Thee,
Therefore, I come; humble myself to Thee;
Saying, O Lord God, although my sins be great,
For thy great mercy have mercy! O God the Son,
Not for slight faults alone, when thou becamest
Man in the Flesh, was the great mystery wrought;
O God the Father, not for little sins
Didst thou yield up thy Son to human death;
But for the greatest sin that can be sinn'd,
Yea, even such as mine, incalculable,
Unpardonable,—sin against the light,
The truth of God, which I had proven and known.
Thy mercy must be greater than all sin.
Forgive me, Father, for no merit of mine,
But that Thy name by man be glorified,
And Thy most blessed Son's, who died for man.

Good people, every man at time of death
Would fain set forth some saying that may live
After his death and better humankind,
For death gives life's last word a power to live,
And, like the stone cut epitaph, remain
After the vanish'd voice, and speak to men.
God grant me grace to glorify my God!
And first I say it is a grievous case,
Many so dote upon this bubble world,
Whose colours in a moment break and fly,
They care for nothing else. What saith St. John:—
'Love of this world is hatred against God.'
Again, I pray you all that, next to God,

You do un murmuringly and willingly
 Obey your King and Queen, and not for dread
 Of these alone, but from the fear of Him
 Whose ministers they be to govern you.
 Thirdly, I pray you all to live together
 Like brethren; yet what hatred Christian men
 Bear to each other, seeming not as brethren,
 But mortal foes! But do you good to all
 As much as in you lieth. Hurt no man more
 Than you would harm your loving natural brother
 Of the same roof, same breast. If any do,
 Albeit he think himself at home with God,
 Of this be sure, he is whole worlds away.

Protestant murmurs. What sort of brothers then be
 those that lust
 To burn each other?

Williams. Peace among you, there!

Cranmer. Fourthly, to those that own exceeding
 wealth,

Remember that sore saying spoken once
 By Him that was the truth, 'How hard it is
 For the rich man to enter into Heaven;'
 Let all rich men remember that hard word.
 I have not time for more: if ever, now
 Let them flow forth in charity, seeing now
 The poor so many, and all food so dear.
 Long have I lain in prison, yet have heard
 Of all their wretchedness. Give to the poor,
 Ye give to God. He is with us in the poor.

And now, and forasmuch as I have come
 To the last end of life, and thereupon
 Hangs all my past, and all my life to be,
 Either to live with Christ in Heaven with joy,
 Or to be still in pain with devils in hell;
 And, seeing in a moment, I shall find

[*Pointing upwards.*

Heaven or else hell ready to swallow me,

[*Pointing downwards.*

I shall declare to you my very faith
Without all colour.

Cole. Hear him, my good brethren.

Cranmer. I do believe in God, Father of all ;
In every article of the Catholic faith,
And every syllable taught us by our Lord,
His prophets, and apostles, in the Testaments,
Both Old and New.

Cole. Be plainer, Master Cranmer.

Cranmer. And now I come to the great cause that
weighs

Upon my conscience more than anything
Or said or done in all my life by me ;
For there be writings I have set abroad
Against the truth I knew within my heart,
Written for fear of death, to save my life,
If that might be ; the papers by my hand
Sign'd since my degradation—by this hand

[*Holding out his right hand.*

Written and sign'd—I here renounce them all ;
And, since my hand offended, having written
Against my heart, my hand shall first be burnt,
So I may come to the fire.

[*Dead silence.*

Protestant murmurs.

First Protestant. I knew it would be so.

Second Protestant. Our prayers are heard !

Third Protestant. God bless him !

Catholic murmurs. Out upon him ! out upon him !

Liar ! dissembler ! traitor ! to the fire !

Williams (raising his voice). You know that you recanted
all you said

Touching the sacrament in that same book
You wrote against my Lord of Winchester ;
Dissemble not ; play the plain Christian man.

Cranmer. Alas, my Lord,

I have been a man loved plainness all my life ;
I *did* dissemble, but the hour has come
For utter truth and plainness ; wherefore, I say,

I hold by all I wrote within that book.

Moreover,

As for the Pope I count him Antichrist,
With all his devil's doctrines; and refuse,
Reject him, and abhor him. I have said.

[*Cries on all sides, 'Pull him down! Away with him!'*]

Cole. Ay, stop the heretic's mouth! Hale him away!

Williams. Harm him not, harm him not, have him to the fire!

[*CRANMER goes out between Two Priars, smiling; hands are reached to him from the crowd. LORD WILLIAM HOWARD and LORD PAGET are left alone in the church.*]

Paget. The nave and aisles all empty as a fool's jest!
No, here's Lord William Howard. What, my Lord,
You have not gone to see the burning?

Howard.

Fie!

'To stand at ease, and stare as at a show,
And watch a good man burn. Never again.
I saw the deaths of Latimer and Ridley.
Moreover, tho' a Catholic, I would not,
For the pure honour of our common nature,
Hear what I might—another recantation
Of Cranmer at the stake.

Paget.

You'd not hear that.

He pass'd out smiling, and he walk'd upright;
His eye was like a soldier's, whom the general
He looks to and he leans on as his God,
Hath rated for some backwardness and bidd'n him
Charge one against a thousand, and the man
Hurls his soil'd life against the pikes and dies.

Howard. Yet that he might not after all those papers
Of recantation yield again, who knows?

Paget. Papers of recantation! Think you then
That Cranmer read all papers that he sign'd?
Or sign'd all those they tell us that he sign'd?

Nay, I trow not: and you shall see, my Lord,
 That howsoever hero-like the man
 Dies in the fire, this Bonner or another
 Will in some lying fashion misreport
 His ending to the glory of their church.
 And you saw Latimer and Ridley die?
 Latimer was eighty, was he not? his best
 Of life was over then.

Howard. His eighty years
 Look'd somewhat crooked on him in his frieze;
 But after they had stript him to his shroud,
 He stood upright, a lad of twenty-one,
 And gather'd with his hands the starting flame,
 And wash'd his hands and all his face therein,
 Until the powder suddenly blew him dead.
 Ridley was longer burning; but he died
 As manfully and boldly, and, 'fore God,
 I know them heretics, but right English ones.
 If ever, as heaven grant, we clash with Spain,
 Our Ridley-soldiers and our Latimer-sailors
 Will teach her something.

Paget. Your mild Legate Pole
 Will tell you that the devil helpt them thro' it.

[A murmur of the Crowd in the distance.]

Hark, how those Roman wolfdogs howl and bay him!

Howard. Might it not be the other side rejoicing
 In his brave end?

Paget. They are too crush'd, too broken,
 They can but weep in silence.

Howard. Ay, ay, Paget,
 They have brought it in large measure on themselves.
 Have I not heard them mock the blessed Host
 In songs so lewd, the beast might roar his claim
 To being in God's image, more than they?
 Have I not seen the gamekeeper, the groom,
 Gardener, and huntsman, in the parson's place,
 The parson from his own spire swung out dead,
 And Ignorance crying in the streets, and all men

Regarding her? I say they have drawn the fire
 On their own heads: yet, Paget, I do hold
 The Catholic, if he have the greater right,
 Hath been the crueller.

Paget. Action and re-action,
 The miserable see-saw of our child-world,
 Make us despise it at odd hours, my Lord.
 Heaven help that this re-action not re-act
 Yet fiercelier under Queen Elizabeth,
 So that she come to rule us.

Howard. 'The world's mad.
Paget. My Lord, the world is like a drunken man,
 Who cannot move straight to his end—but reels
 Now to the right, then as far to the left,
 Push'd by the crowd beside—and underfoot
 An earthquake; for since Henry for a doubt—
 Which a young lust had clapt upon the back,
 Crying, 'Forward!'—set our old church rocking, men
 Have hardly known what to believe, or whether
 They should believe in anything; the currents
 So shift and change, they see not how they are borne,
 Nor whither. I conclude the King a beast;
 Verily a lion if you will—the world
 A most obedient beast and fool—myself
 Half beast and fool as appertaining to it;
 Altho' your Lordship hath as little of each
 Cleaving to your original Adam-clay,
 As may be consonant with mortality.

Howard. We talk and Cranmer suffers.
 The kindest man I ever knew; see, see,
 I speak of him in the past. Unhappy land!
 Hard-natured Queen, half-Spanish in herself,
 And grafted on the hard-grain'd stock of Spain—
 Her life, since Philip left her, and she lost
 Her fierce desire of bearing him a child,
 Hath, like a brief and bitter winter's day,
 Gone narrowing down and darkening to a close.
 There will be more conspiracies, I fear.

Paget. Ay, ay, beware of France.

Howard. O Paget, Paget!

I have seen heretics of the poorer sort,
Expectant of the rack from day to day,
To whom the fire were welcome, lying chain'd
In breathless dungeons over steaming sewers,
Fed with rank bread that crawl'd upon the tongue,
And putrid water, every drop a worm,
Until they died of rotted limbs; and then
Cast on the dunghill naked, and become
Hideously alive again from head to heel,
Made even the carrion-nosing mongrel vomit
With hate and horror.

Paget. Nay, you sicken *me*
To hear you.

Howard. Fancy-sick; these things are done,
Done right against the promise of this Queen
Twice given.

Paget. No faith with heretics, my Lord!
Hist! there be two old gossips—gospellers,
I take it; stand behind the pillar here;
I warrant you they talk about the burning.

Enter TWO OLD WOMEN. JOAN, and after her TIB

Joan. Why, it be Tib!

Tib. I cum behind tha, gall, and couldn't make tha hear. Eh, the wind and the wet! What a day, what a day! nigh upo' judgement daay loike. Pwoaps be pretty things, Joan, but they wunt set i' the Lord's cheer o' that daay.

Joan. I must set down myself, Tib; it be a var waay vor my owld legs up vro' Islip. Eh, my rheumatizy be that bad howiver be I to win to the burnin'?

Tib. I should saay 'twur ower by now. I'd ha' been here avore, but Dumble wur blow'd wi' the wind, and Dumble's the best milcher in Islip.

Joan. Our Daisy's as good 'z her.

Tib. Noa, Joan.

Joan. Our Daisy's butter's as good 'z hern.

Tib. Noa, Joan.

Joan. Our Daisy's cheeses be better.

Tib. Noa, Joan.

Joan. Eh, then ha' thy waay wi' me, 'Tib; ez thou hast wi' thy owld man.

Tib. Ay, Joan, and my owld man wur up and awaay betimes wi' drec hard eggs for a good plice at the burnin'; and barrin' the wet, Hodge 'ud ha' been a-harrowin' o' white peasen i' the outfield—and barrin' the wind, Dumble wur blow'd wi' the wind, so 'z we was forced to stiek her, but we fetched her round at last. Thank the Lord therevore. Dumble's the best milcher in Islip.

Joan. 'Thou's thy way wi' man and beast, 'Tib. I wonder at tha, it beats me! Eh, but I do know ez Pwoaps and vires be bad things; tell 'ee now, I heerd summot as summun towld summun o' owld Bishop Gardiner's end; there wur an owld lord a-cum to dine wi' un, and a wur so owld a couldn't bide vor his dinner, but a had to bide howsomiver, vor 'I wunt dine,' says my Lord Bishop, says he, 'not till I hears ez Latimer and Ridley be a-vire;' and so they bided on and on till vour o' the clock, till his man cum in post vro' here, and tells un ez the vire has tuk holt. 'Now,' says the Bishop, says he, 'we'll gwo to dinner;' and the owld lord fell to 's meat wi' a will, God bless un! but Gardiner wur struck down like by the hand o' God avore a could taste a mossel, and a set un all a-vire, so 'z the tongue on un cum a-lolluping out o' 'is mouth as black as a rat. Thank the Lord, therevore.

Paget. The fools!

Tib. Ay, Joan; and Queen Mary gwoes on a-burnin' and a-burnin', to get her baaby born; but all her burnin' 'ill never burn out the hypocrisy that makes the water in her. There's nought but the vire of God's hell ez can burn out that.

Joan. Thank the Lord, therevore.

Paget. The fools!

Tib. A-burnin', and a-burnin', and a-makin' o' volk madder and madder; but tek thou my word vor't, Joan,—and I bean't wrong not twice i' ten year—the burnin' o' the owld archbishop 'll burn the Pwoap out o' this 'ere land vor iver and iver.

Howard. Out of the church, you brace of cursed crones,

Or I will have you duck'd! (*Women hurry out.*) Said I not right?

For how should reverend prelate or throned prince
Brook for an hour such brute malignity?

Ah, what an acrid wine has Luther brew'd!

Paget. Pooh, pooh, my Lord! poor garrulous country-wives.

Buy you their cheeses, and they'll side with you;
You cannot judge the liquor from the lees.

Howard. I think that in some sort we may. But see,

Enter PETERS.

Peters, my gentleman, an honest Catholic,
Who follow'd with the crowd to Cranmer's fire.

One that would neither misreport nor lie,
Not to gain paradise: no, nor if the Pope
Charged him to do it—he is white as death.

Peters, how pale you look! you bring the smoke
Of Cranmer's burning with you.

Peters. Twice or thrice

The smoke of Cranmer's burning wrapt me round.

Howard. Peters, you know me Catholic, but English.
Did he die bravely? Tell me that, or leave
All else untold.

Peters. My Lord, he died most bravely.

Howard. Then tell me all.

Paget.

Ay, Master Peters, tell us.

Peters. You saw him how he past among the crowd ;
 And ever as he walk'd the Spanish friars
 Still plied him with entreaty and reproach :
 But Cranmer, as the helmsman at the helm
 Steers, ever looking to the happy haven
 Where he shall rest at night, moved to his death ;
 And I could see that many silent hands
 Came from the crowd and met his own ; and thus,
 When we had come where Ridley burnt with Latimer,
 He, with a cheerful smile, as one whose mind
 Is all made up, in haste put off the rags
 They had mock'd his misery with, and all in white,
 His long white beard, which he had never shaven
 Since Henry's death, down-sweeping to the chain,
 Wherewith they bound him to the stake, he stood
 More like an ancient father of the Church,
 Than heretic of these times ; and still the friars
 Plied him, but Cranmer only shook his head,
 Or answer'd them in smiling negatives ;
 Whereat Lord Williams gave a sudden cry :—
 ' Make short ! make short ! ' and so they lit the wood.
 Then Cranmer lifted his left hand to heaven,
 And thrust his right into the bitter flame ;
 And crying, in his deep voice, more than once,
 ' This hath offended—this unworthy hand !
 So held it till it all was burn'd, before
 The flame had reach'd his body ; I stood near—
 Mark'd him—he never uttered moan of pain :
 He never stirr'd or writhed, but, like a statue,
 Unmoving in the greatness of the flame,
 Gave up the ghost ; and so past martyr-like—
 Martyr I may not call him—past—but whither ?

Paget. To purgatory, man, to purgatory.

Peters. Nay, but, my Lord, he denied purgatory.

Paget. Why then to heaven, and God ha' mercy
 on him.

Howard. Paget, despite his fearful heresies,

I loved the man, and needs must moan for him ;
O Cranmer !

Paget. But your moan is useless now :
Come out, my Lord, it is a world of fools. [*Exeunt.*

ACT V

SCENE I.—LONDON. HALL IN THE PALACE

QUEEN, SIR NICHOLAS HEATH.

Heath. Madam,
I do assure you, that it must be look'd to :
Calais is but ill-garrison'd, in Guisnes
Are scarce two hundred men, and the French fleet
Rule in the narrow seas. It must be look'd to,
If war should fall between yourself and France ;
Or you will lose your Calais.

Mary. It shall be look'd to ;
I wish you a good morning, good Sir Nicholas :
Here is the King. [*Exit* Heath.

Enter PHILIP.

Philip. Sir Nicholas tells you true,
And you must look to Calais when I go.

Mary. Go? must you go, indeed—again—so soon?
Why, nature's licensed vagabond, the swallow,
That might live always in the sun's warm heart,
Stays longer here in our poor north than you :—
Knows where he nested—ever comes again.

Philip. And, Madam, so shall I.

Mary. O, will you? will you?
I am faint with fear that you will come no more.

Philip. Ay, ay ; but many voices call me hence.

Mary. Voices—I hear unhappy rumours—nay,
I say not, I believe. What voices call you

Dearer than mine that should be dearest to you?
Alas, my Lord! what voices and how many?

Philip. The voices of Castille and Aragon,
Granada, Naples, Sicily, and Milan,—
The voices of Franche-Comté, and the Netherlands,
The voices of Peru and Mexico,
Tunis, and Oran, and the Philippines,
And all the fair spice-islands of the East.

Mary (admiringly). You are the mightiest monarch
upon earth,
I but a little Queen: and, so indeed,
Need you the more.

Philip. A little Queen! but when
I came to wed your majesty, Lord Howard,
Sending an insolent shot that dash'd the seas
Upon us, made us lower our kingly flag
To yours of England.

Mary. Howard is all English!
There is no king, not were he ten times king,
Ten times our husband, but must lower his flag
To that of England in the seas of England.

Philip. Is that your answer?

Mary. Being Queen of England,
I have none other.

Philip. So.

Mary. But wherefore not
Helm the huge vessel of your state, my liege,
Here by the side of her who loves you most?

Philip. No, Madam, no! a candle in the sun
Is all but smoke—a star beside the moon
Is all but lost; your people will not crown me—
Your people are as cheerless as your clime;
Hate me and mine: witness the brawls, the gibbets.
Here swings a Spaniard—there an Englishman;
The peoples are unlike as their complexion;
Yet will I be your swallow and return—
But now I cannot bide.

Mary. Not to help *me*?

They hate *me* also for my love to you,
My Philip; and these judgments on the land—
Harvestless autumns, horrible agues, plague—

Philip. The blood and sweat of heretics at the stake
Is God's best dew upon the barren field.

Burn more!

Mary. I will, I will; and you will stay?

Philip. Have I not said? Madam, I came to sue
Your Council and yourself to declare war.

Mary. Sir, there are many English in your ranks
To help your battle.

Philip. So far, good. I say
I came to sue your Council and yourself
To declare war against the King of France.

Mary. Not to see me?

Philip. Ay, Madam, to see you.
Unalterably and pesteringly fond! [*Aside.*]
But, soon or late you must have war with France;
King Henry warms your traitors at his hearth.
Carew is there, and Thomas Stafford there.
Courtenay, belike—

Mary. A fool and featherhead!

Philip. Ay, but they use his name. In brief, this
Henry
Stirs up your land against you to the intent
That you may lose your English heritage.
And then, your Scottish namesake marrying
The Dauphin, he would weld France, England, Scotland,
Into one sword to hack at Spain and me.

Mary. And yet the Pope is now collegued with
France;
You make your wars upon him down in Italy:
Philip, can that be well?

Philip. Content you, Madam;
You must abide my judgment, and my father's,
Who deems it a most just and holy war.
The Pope would cast the Spaniard out of Naples:
He calls us worse than Jews, Moors, Saracens.

The Pope has pushed his horns beyond his mitre—
 Beyond his province. Now,
 Duke Alva will but touch him on the horns,
 And he withdraws; and of his holy head—
 For Alva is true son of the true church—
 No hair is harm'd. Will you not help me here?

Mary. Alas! the Council will not hear of war.
 They say your wars are not the wars of England.
 They will not lay more taxes on a land
 So hunger-nipt and wretched; and you know
 The crown is poor. We have given the church-lands
 back:

The nobles would not; nay, they clapt their hands
 Upon their swords when ask'd; and therefore God
 Is hard upon the people. What's to be done?
 Sir, I will move them in your cause again,
 And we will raise us loans and subsidies
 Among the merchants; and Sir Thomas Gresham
 Will aid us. There is Antwerp and the Jews.

Philip. Madam, my thanks.

Mary. And you will stay your going?

Philip. And further to discourage and lay lame
 The plots of France, altho' you love her not,
 You must proclaim Elizabeth your heir.
 She stands between you and the Queen of Scots.

Mary. The Queen of Scots at least is Catholic.

Philip. Ay, Madam, Catholic; but I will not have
 The King of France the King of England too.

Mary. But she's a heretic, and, when I am gone,
 Brings the new learning back.

Philip. It must be done.
 You must proclaim Elizabeth your heir.

Mary. Then it is done; but you will stay your going
 Somewhat beyond your settled purpose?

Philip. No!

Mary. What, not one day?

Philip. You beat upon the rock.

Mary. And I am broken there.

Philip. Is this a place
To wail in, Madam? what! a public hall.
Go in, I pray you.

Mary. Do not seem so changed.
Say go; but only say it lovingly.

Philip. You do mistake. I am not one to change.
I never loved you more.

Mary. Sire, I obey you.
Come quickly.

Philip. Ay. [*Exit Mary.*]

Enter COUNT DE FERIA

Feria (*aside*). The Queen in tears!

Philip. Feria!

Hast thou not mark'd—come closer to mine ear—
How doubly aged this Queen of ours hath grown
Since she lost hope of bearing us a child?

Feria. Sire, if your Grace hath mark'd it, so have I.

Philip. Hast thou not likewise mark'd Elizabeth,
How fair and royal—like a Queen, indeed?

Feria. Allow me the same answer as before—
That if your Grace hath mark'd her, so have I.

Philip. Good, now; methinks my Queen is like enough
To leave me by and by.

Feria. To leave you, sire?

Philip. I mean not like to live. Elizabeth—
To Philibert of Savoy, as you know,
We meant to wed her; but I am not sure
She will not serve me better—so my Queen
Would leave me—as—my wife.

Feria. Sire, even so.

Philip. She will not have Prince Philibert of Savoy.

Feria. No, sire.

Philip. I have to pray you, some odd time,
To sound the Princess carelessly on this;
Not as from me, but as your phantasy;
And tell me how she takes it.

Feria. Sire, I will.

Philip. I am not certain but that Philibert
Shall be the man ; and I shall urge his suit
Upon the Queen, because I am not certain :
You understand, *Feria*.

Feria. Sire, I do.

Philip. And if you be not secret in this matter,
You understand me there, too ?

Feria. Sire, I do.

Philip. You must be sweet and supple, like a French-
man.
She is none of those who loathe the honeycomb.

[*Exit Feria.*]

Enter RENARD.

Renard. My liege, I bring you goodly tidings.

Philip. Well ?

Renard. There *will* be war with France, at last, my
liege ;

Sir Thomas Stafford, a bull-headed ass,
Sailing from France, with thirty Englishmen,
Hath taken Scarboro' Castle, north of York ;
Proclaims himself protector, and affirms
The Queen has forfeited her right to reign
By marriage with an alien—other things
As idle ; a weak Wyatt ! Little doubt
This buzz will soon be silenced ; but the Council
(I have talk'd with some already) are for war.
This is the fifth conspiracy hatch'd in France ;
They show their teeth upon it ; and your Grace,
So you will take advice of mine, should stay
Yet for awhile, to shape and guide the event.

Philip. Good ! Renard, I will stay then.

Renard. Also, sire,

Might I not say—to please your wife, the Queen ?

Philip. Ay, Renard, if you care to put it so. [*Exeunt.*]

SCENE II.—A ROOM IN THE PALACE

MARY, *sitting: a rose in her hand.* LADY CLARENCE.
ALICE *in the background.*

Mary. Look! I have play'd with this poor rose so
long
I have broken off the head.

Lady Clarence. Your Grace hath been
More merciful to many a rebel head
That should have fallen, and may rise again.

Mary. There were not many hang'd for Wyatt's rising.

Lady Clarence. Nay, not two hundred.

Mary. I could weep for them
And her, and mine own self and all the world.

Lady Clarence. For her? for whom, your Grace?

Enter USHER.

Usher. The Cardinal.

Enter CARDINAL POLE. (MARY *rises.*)

Mary. Reginald Pole, what news hath plagued thy
heart?
What makes thy favour like the bloodless head
Fall'n on the block, and held up by the hair?
Philip?—

Pole. No, Philip is as warm in life
As ever.

Mary. Ay, and then as cold as ever.
Is Calais taken?

Pole. Cousin, there hath chanced
A sharper harm to England and to Rome,
Than Calais taken. Julius the Third
Was ever just, and mild, and father-like;
But this new Pope Caraffa, Paul the Fourth,
Not only reft me of that legateship

Which Julius gave me, and the legateship
Annex'd to Canterbury—nay, but worse—
And yet I must obey the Holy Father,
And so must you, good cousin ;—worse than all,
A passing bell toll'd in a dying ear—
He hath cited me to Rome, for heresy,
Before his Inquisition.

Mary. I knew it, cousin,
But held from you all papers sent by Rome,
That you might rest among us, till the Pope,
To compass which I wrote myself to Rome,
Reversed his doom, and that you might not seem
To disobey his Holiness.

Pole. He hates Philip ;
He is all Italian, and he hates the Spaniard ;
He cannot dream that *I* advised the war ;
He strikes thro' me at Philip and yourself.
Nay, but I know it of old, he hates me too ;
So brands me in the stare of Christendom
A heretic !
Now, even now, when bow'd before my time,
The house half-ruin'd ere the lease be out ;
When I should guide the Church in peace at home,
After my twenty years of banishment,
And all my lifelong labour to uphold
The primacy—a heretic. Long ago
When I was ruler in the patrimony,
I was too lenient to the Lutheran,
And I and learned friends among ourselves
Would freely canvass certain Lutheranisms.
What then, he knew I was no Lutheran.
A heretic !
He drew this shaft against me to the head,
When it was thought I might be chosen Pope,
But then withdrew it. In full consistory,
When I was made Archbishop, he approved me.
And how should he have sent me Legate hither,
Deeming me heretic ? and what heresy since ?

But he was evermore mine enemy,
 And hates the Spaniard—fiery-choleric,
 A drinker of black, strong, volcanic wines,
 That ever make him fierier. I, a heretic?
 Your Highness knows that in pursuing heresy
 I have gone beyond your late Lord Chancellor,—
 He cried Enough! enough! before his death.—
 Gone beyond him and mine own natural man
 (It was God's cause); so far they call me now,
 The scourge and butcher of their English church.

Mary. Have courage, your reward is Heaven itself.

Pole. They groan amen; they swarm into the fire
 Like flies—for what? no dogma. They know nothing:
 They burn for nothing.

Mary. You have done your best.

Pole. Have done my best, and as a faithful son,
 That all day long hath wrought his father's work,
 When back he comes at evening hath the door
 Shut on him by the father whom he loved,
 His early follies cast into his teeth,
 And the poor son turn'd out into the street
 To sleep, to die— I shall die of it, cousin.

Mary. I pray you be not so disconsolate;
 I still will do mine utmost with the Pope.
 Poor cousin!

Have not I been the fast friend of your life
 Since mine began, and it was thought we two
 Might make one flesh, and cleave unto each other
 As man and wife?

Pole. Ah, cousin, I remember
 How I would dandle you upon my knee
 At lisping-age. I watch'd you dancing once
 With your huge father; he look'd the Great Harry,
 You but his cockboat; prettily you did it,
 And innocently. No—we were not made
 One flesh in happiness, no happiness here;
 But now we are made one flesh in misery;
 Our bridemaids are not lovely—Disappointment,

Ingratitude, Injustice, Evil-tongue,
Labour-in-vain.

Mary. Surely, not all in vain.

Peace, cousin, peace! I am sad at heart myself.

Pole. Our altar is a mound of dead men's clay,
Dug from the grave that yawns for us beyond;
And there is one Death stands behind the Groom,
And there is one Death stands behind the Bride—

Mary. Have you been looking at the 'Dance of Death'?

Pole. No; but these libellous papers which I found
Strewn in your palace. Look you here—the Pope
Pointing at me with 'Pole, the heretic,
Thou hast burnt others, do thou burn thyself,
Or I will burn thee;' and this other; see!—
'We pray continually for the death
Of our accursed Queen and Cardinal Pole.'
This last—I dare not read it her.

[*Aside.*

Mary. Away!

Why do you bring me these?

I thought you knew me better. I never read,
I tear them; they come back upon my dreams.
The hands that write them should be burnt clean off
As Cranmer's, and the fiends that utter them
Tongue-torn with pincers, lash'd to death, or lie
Famishing in black cells, while famish'd rats
Eat them alive. Why do they bring me these?
Do you mean to drive me mad?

Pole. I had forgotten

How these poor libels trouble you. Your pardon,
Sweet cousin, and farewell! 'O bubble world,
Whose colours in a moment break and fly!'

Why, who said that? I know not—true enough!

[*Puts up the papers, all but the last, which falls.*

Exit Pole.

Alice. If Cranmer's spirit were a mocking one,
And heard these two, there might be sport for him. [*Aside.*

Mary. Clarence, they hate me; even while I speak
There lurks a silent dagger, listening

In some dark closet, some long gallery, drawn,
And panting for my blood as I go by.

Lady Clarence. Nay, Madam, there be loyal papers too,
And I have often found them.

Mary. Find me one!

Lady Clarence. Ay, Madam; but Sir Nicholas Heath,
the Chancellor,
Would see your Highness.

Mary. Wherefore should I see him?

Lady Clarence. Well, Madam, he may bring you news
from Philip.

Mary. So, Clarence.

Lady Clarence. Let me first put up your hair;
It tumbles all abroad.

Mary. And the gray dawn
Of an old age that never will be mine
Is all the clearer seen. No, no; what matters?
Forlorn I am, and let me look forlorn.

Enter SIR NICHOLAS HEATH.

Heath. I bring your Majesty such grievous news
I grieve to bring it. Madam, Calais is taken.

Mary. What traitor spoke? Here, let my cousin Pole
Seize him and burn him for a Lutheran.

Heath. Her Highness is unwell. I will retire.

Lady Clarence. Madam, your Chancellor, Sir Nicholas
Heath.

Mary. Sir Nicholas! I am stunn'd—Nicholas Heath?
Methought some traitor smote me on the head.
What said you, my good Lord, that our brave English
Had sallied out from Calais and driven back
The Frenchmen from their trenches?

Heath. Alas! no.
That gateway to the mainland over which
Our flag hath floated for two hundred years
Is France again.

Mary. So; but it is not lost—

Not yet. Send out : let England as of old
 Rise lionlike, strike hard and deep into
 The prey they are rending from her—ay, and rend
 The renders too. Send out, send out, and make
 Musters in all the counties ; gather all
 From sixteen years to sixty ; collect the fleet ;
 Let every craft that carries sail and gun
 Steer toward Calais. Guisnes is not taken yet ?

Heath. Guisnes is not taken yet.

Mary. There yet is hope.

Heath. Ah, Madam, but your people are so cold ;
 I do much fear that England will not care.
 Methinks there is no manhood left among us.

Mary. Send out ; I am too weak to stir abroad :
 Tell my mind to the Council—to the Parliament :
 Proclaim it to the winds. Thou art cold thyself
 To babble of their coldness. O would I were
 My father for an hour ! Away now—Quick !

[*Exit* Heath.

I hoped I had served God with all my might !
 It seems I have not. Ah ! much heresy
 Shelter'd in Calais. Saints, I have rebuilt
 Your shrines, set up your broken images ;
 Be comfortable to me. Suffer not
 That my brief reign in England be defamed
 Thro' all her angry chronicles hereafter
 By loss of Calais. Grant me Calais. Philip,
 We have made war upon the Holy Father
 All for your sake : what good could come of that ?

Lady Clarence. No, Madam, not against the Holy
 Father ;

You did but help King Philip's war with France,
 Your troops were never down in Italy.

Mary. I am a byword. Heretic and rebel
 Point at me and make merry. Philip gone !
 And Calais gone ! Time that I were gone too !

Lady Clarence. Nay, if the fetid gutter had a voice
 And cried I was not clean, what should I care ?

Or you, for heretic cries? And I believe,
Spite of your melancholy Sir Nicholas,
Your England is as loyal as myself.

Mary (seeing the paper dropt by Pole). There! there!
another paper! Said you not
Many of these were loyal? Shall I try
If this be one of such?

Lady Clarence. Let it be, let it be.
God pardon me! I have never yet found one. [*Aside.*

Mary (reads). 'Your people hate you as your husband
hates you.'

Clarence, Clarence, what have I done? what sin
Beyond all grace, all pardon? Mother of God,
'Thou knowest never woman meant so well,
And fared so ill in this disastrous world.
My people hate me and desire my death.

Lady Clarence. No, Madam, no.

Mary. My husband hates me, and desires my death.

Lady Clarence. No, Madam; these are libels.

Mary. I hate myself, and I desire my death.

Lady Clarence. Long live your Majesty! Shall Alice
sing you

One of her pleasant songs? Alice, my child,
Bring us your lute (*Alice goes*). They say the gloom of
Saul

Was lighten'd by young David's harp.

Mary. Too young!

And never knew a Philip.

Re-enter Alice.

Give *me* the lute.

He hates me!

(*She sings.*)

Hapless doom of woman happy in betrothing!
Beauty passes like a breath and love is lost in loathing:
Low, my lute; speak low, my lute, but say the world is
nothing—

Low, lute, low!

God help me, but methinks I love her less
 For such a dotage upon such a man.
 I would I were as tall and strong as you.

Lady Magdalen. I seem half-shamed at times to be so tall.

Alice. You are the stateliest deer in all the herd—
 Beyond his aim—but I am small and scandalous,
 And love to hear bad tales of Philip.

Lady Magdalen. Why?
 I never heard him utter worse of you
 Than that you were low-statured.

Alice. Does he think
 Low stature is low nature, or all women's
 Low as his own?

Lady Magdalen. There you strike in the nail.
 This coarseness is a want of phantasy.
 It is the low man thinks the woman low;
 Sin is too dull to see beyond himself.

Alice. Ah, Magdalen, sin is bold as well as dull.
 How dared he?

Lady Magdalen. Stupid soldiers oft are bold.
 Poor lads, they see not what the general sees,
 A risk of utter ruin. I am *not*
 Beyond his aim, or was not.

Alice. Who? Not you?
 Tell, tell me; save my credit with myself.

Lady Magdalen. I never breathed it to a bird in the
 caves,
 Would not for all the stars and maiden moon
 Our drooping Queen should know! In Hampton Court
 My window look'd upon the corridor;
 And I was robing;—this poor throat of mine,
 Barer than I should wish a man to see it,—
 When he we speak of drove the window back,
 And, like a thief, push'd in his royal hand;
 But by God's providence a good stout staff
 Lay near me; and you know me strong of arm;
 I do believe I lamed his Majesty's

For a day or two, tho', give the Devil his due,
I never found he bore me any spite.

Alice. I would she could have wedded that poor
youth,

My Lord of Devon—light enough, God knows,
And mixt with Wyatt's rising—and the boy
Not out of him—but neither cold, coarse, cruel,
And more than all—no Spaniard.

Lady Clarence. Not so loud.

Lord Devon, girls! what are you whispering here?

Alice. Probing an old state-secret—how it chanced
That this young Earl was sent on foreign travel,
Not lost his head.

Lady Clarence. There was no proof against him.

Alice. Nay, Madam; did not Gardiner intercept
A letter which the Count de Noailles wrote
To that dead traitor Wyatt, with full proof
Of Courtenay's treason? What became of that?

Lady Clarence. Some say that Gardiner, out of love
for him,

Burnt it, and some relate that it was lost
When Wyatt sack'd the Chancellor's house in Southwark.
Let dead things rest.

Alice. Ay, and with him who died
Alone in Italy.

Lady Clarence. Much changed, I hear,
Had put off levity and put graveness on.
The foreign courts report him in his manner
Noble as his young person and old shield.
It might be so—but all is over now;
He caught a chill in the lagoons of Venice,
And died in Padua.

Mary (looking up suddenly). Died in the true faith?

Lady Clarence. Ay, Madam, happily.

Mary. Happier he than I.

Lady Magdalen. It seems her Highness hath awaken'd.
Think you

That I might dare to tell her that the Count—

Mary. I will see no man hence for evermore,
Saving my confessor and my cousin Pole.

Lady Magdalen. It is the Count de Feria, my dear lady.

Mary. What Count?

Lady Magdalen. The Count de Feria, from his Majesty
King Philip.

Mary. Philip! quick! loop up my hair!
Throw cushions on that seat, and make it throne-like.
Arrange my dress—the gorgeous Indian shawl
That Philip brought me in our happy days!—
That covers all. So—am I somewhat Queenlike,
Bride of the mightiest sovereign upon earth?

Lady Clarence. Ay, so your Grace would bide a
moment yet.

Mary. No, no, he brings a letter. I may die
Before I read it. Let me see him at once.

Enter COUNT DE FERIA (*kneels*).

Feria. I trust your Grace is well. (*Aside*) How her
hand burns!

Mary. I am not well, but it will better me,
Sir Count, to read the letter which you bring.

Feria. Madam, I bring no letter.

Mary. How! no letter?

Feria. His Highness is so vex'd with strange affairs—

Mary. That his own wife is no affair of his.

Feria. Nay, Madam, nay! he sends his veriest love,
And says, he will come quickly.

Mary. Doth he, indeed?
You, sir, do *you* remember what *you* said
When last you came to England?

Feria. Madam, I brought
My King's congratulations; it was hoped
Your Highness was once more in happy state
To give him an heir male.

Mary. Sir, you said more;
You said he would come quickly. I had horses

On all the road from Dover, day and night ;
 On all the road from Harwich, night and day ;
 But the child came not, and the husband came not ;
 And yet he will come quickly. . . Thou hast learnt
 Thy lesson, and I mine. There is no need
 For Philip so to shame himself again.

Return,
 And tell him that I know he comes no more.
 Tell him at last I know his love is dead,
 And that I am in state to bring forth death—
 Thou art commission'd to Elizabeth,
 And not to me !

Feria. Mere compliments and wishes.

But shall I take some message from your Grace ?

Mary. Tell her to come and close my dying eyes,
 And wear my crown, and dance upon my grave.

Feria. Then I may say your Grace will see your sister ?
 Your Grace is too low-spirited. Air and sunshine.
 I would we had you, Madam, in our warm Spain.
 You droop in your dim London.

Mary. Have him away !

I sicken of his readiness.

Lady Clarence. My Lord Count,

Her Highness is too ill for colloquy.

Feria (kneels, and kisses her hand). I wish her Highness
 better. (*Aside*) How her hand burns ! [*Exeunt.*]

SCENE III.—A HOUSE NEAR LONDON

ELIZABETH, STEWARD OF THE HOUSEHOLD, ATTENDANTS.

Elizabeth. There's half an angel wrong'd in your
 account ;

Methinks I am all angel, that I bear it
 Without more ruffling. Cast it o'er again.

Steward. I were whole devil if I wrong'd you, Madam.
 [*Exit Steward.*]

Attendant. The Count de Feria, from the King of Spain.

Elizabeth. Ah!—let him enter. Nay, you need not go:
[*To her Ladies.*

Remain within the chamber, but apart.

We'll have no private conference. Welcome to England!

Enter FERIA.

Feria. Fair island star!

Elizabeth. I shine! What else, Sir Count?

Feria. As far as France, and into Philip's heart.
My King would know if you be fairly served,
And lodged, and treated.

Elizabeth. You see the lodging, sir,
I am well-served, and am in everything
Most loyal and most grateful to the Queen.

Feria. You should be grateful to my master, too.
He spoke of this; and unto him you owe
That Mary hath acknowledged you her heir.

Elizabeth. No, not to her nor him; but to the people,
Who know my right, and love me, as I love
The people! whom God aid!

Feria. You will be Queen,
And, were I Philip—

Elizabeth. Wherefore pause you—what?

Feria. Nay, but I speak from mine own self, not him;
Your royal sister cannot last; your hand
Will be much coveted! What a delicate one!
Our Spanish ladies have none such—and there,
Were you in Spain, this fine fair gossamer gold—
Like sun-gilt breathings on a frosty dawn—
That hovers round your shoulder—

Elizabeth. Is it so fine?
Troth, some have said so.

Feria. —would be deemed a miracle.

Elizabeth. Your Philip hath gold hair and golden beard;
There must be ladies many with hair like mine.

Feria. Some few of Gothic blood have golden hair,
But none like yours.

Elizabeth. I am happy you approve it.

Feria. But as to Philip and your Grace—consider,—
If such a one as you should match with Spain,
What hinders but that Spain and England join'd,
Should make the mightiest empire earth has known.
Spain would be England on her seas, and England
Mistress of the Indies.

Elizabeth. It may chance, that England
Will be the Mistress of the Indies yet,
Without the help of Spain.

Feria. Impossible ;
Except you put Spain down.
Wide of the mark ev'n for a madman's dream.

Elizabeth. Perhaps ; but we have seamen. Count de
Feria,
I take it that the King hath spoken to you ;
But is Don Carlos such a goodly match ?

Feria. Don Carlos, Madam, is but twelve years old.

Elizabeth. Ay, tell the King that I will muse upon it ;
He is my good friend, and I would keep him so ;
But—he would have me Catholic of Rome,
And that I scarce can be ; and, sir, till now
My sister's marriage, and my father's marriages,
Make me full fain to live and die a maid.
But I am much beholden to your King.
Have you aught else to tell me ?

Feria. Nothing, Madam,
Save that methought I gather'd from the Queen
That she would see your Grace before she—died.

Elizabeth. God's death ! and wherefore spake you not
before ?

We dally with our lazy moments here,
And hers are number'd. Horses there, without !
I am much beholden to the King, your master.
Why did you keep me prating ? Horses, there !

[*Exit Elizabeth, etc.*]

Feria. So from a clear sky falls the thunderbolt !
Don Carlos ? Madam, if you marry Philip,

Then I and he will snaffle your 'God's death,'
 And break your paces in, and make you tame;
 God's death, forsooth—you do not know King Philip.

[*Exit.*

SCENE IV.—LONDON. BEFORE THE PALACE

A light burning within. Voices of the night passing.

First. Is not yon light in the Queen's chamber?

Second.

Ay,

They say she's dying.

First.

So is Cardinal Pole.

May the great angels join their wings, and make
 Down for their heads to heaven!

Second.

Amen. Come on.

[*Exeunt.*

TWO OTHERS.

First. There's the Queen's light. I hear she cannot
 live.

Second. God curse her and her Legate! Gardiner burns
 Already; but to pay them full in kind,
 The hottest hold in all the devil's den
 Were but a sort of winter; sir, in Guernsey,
 I watch'd a woman burn; and in her agony
 The mother came upon her—a child was born—
 And, sir, they hurl'd it back into the fire,
 That, being but baptized in fire, the babe
 Might be in fire for ever. Ah, good neighbour,
 There should be something fierier than fire
 To yield them their deserts.

First.

Amen to all

Your wish, and further.

A Third Voice. Deserts! Amen to what? Whose
 deserts? Yours? You have a gold ring on your finger,
 and soft raiment about your body; and is not the woman
 up yonder sleeping after all she has done, in peace and

quietness, on a soft bed, in a closed room, with light, fire, physic, tendance; and I have seen the true men of Christ lying famine-dead by scores, and under no ceiling but the cloud that wept on them, not for them.

First. Friend, tho' so late, it is not safe to preach. You had best go home. What are you?

Third. What am I? One who cries continually with sweat and tears to the Lord God that it would please Him out of His infinite love to break down all kingship and queenship, all priesthood and prelacy; to cancel and abolish all bonds of human allegiance, all the magistracy, all the nobles, and all the wealthy; and to send us again, according to His promise, the one King, the Christ, and all things in common, as in the day of the first church, when Christ Jesus was King.

First. If ever I heard a madman,—let's away! Why, you long-winded—— Sir, you go beyond me. I pride myself on being moderate. Good night! Go home. Besides, you curse so loud, The watch will hear you. Get you home at once.

[*Exeunt.*]

SCENE V.—LONDON. A ROOM IN THE PALACE

A Gallery on one side. The moonlight streaming through a range of windows on the wall opposite. MARY, LADY CLARENCE, LADY MAGDALEN DACRES, ALICE. QUEEN pacing the Gallery. A writing-table in front. QUEEN comes to the table and writes and goes again, pacing the Gallery.

Lady Clarence. Mine eyes are dim: what hath she written? read.

Alice. 'I am dying, Philip; come to me.'

Lady Magdalen. There—up and down, poor lady, up and down.

Alice. And how her shadow crosses one by one

The moonlight casements pattern'd on the wall,
Following her like her sorrow. She turns again.

[Queen *sits and writes, and goes again.*

Lady Clarence. What hath she written now?

Alice. Nothing; but 'come, come, come,' and all
awry,

And blotted by her tears. This cannot last.

[Queen *returns.*

Mary. I whistle to the bird has broken cage,
And all in vain.

[*Sitting down.*

Calais gone—Guisnes gone, too—and Philip gone!

Lady Clarence. Dear Madam, Philip is but at the
wars;

I cannot doubt but that he comes again;

And he is with you in a measure still.

I never look'd upon so fair a likeness

As your great King in armour there, his hand

Upon his helmet.

[*Pointing to the portrait of Philip on the wall.*

Mary. Doth he not look noble?

I had heard of him in battle over seas,

And I would have my warrior all in arms.

He said it was not courtly to stand helmeted

Before the Queen. He had his gracious moment,

Altho' you'll not believe me. How he smiles

As if he loved me yet!

Lady Clarence. And so he does.

Mary. He never loved me—nay, he could not love me.

It was his father's policy against France.

I am eleven years older than he,

Poor boy!

[*Weeps.*

Alice. That was a lusty boy of twenty-seven; [*Aside.*

Poor enough in God's grace!

Mary. And all in vain!

The Queen of Scots is married to the Dauphin,

And Charles, the lord of this low world, is gone;

And all his wars and wisdoms past away;

And in a moment I shall follow him.

Lady Clarence. Nay, dearest Lady, see your good physician.

Mary. Drugs—but he knows they cannot help me—says

That rest is all—tells me I must not think—

That I must rest—I shall rest by and by.

Catch the wild cat, cage him, and when he springs

And maims himself against the bars, say 'rest':

Why, you must kill him if you would have him rest—

Dead or alive you cannot make him happy.

Lady Clarence. Your Majesty has lived so pure a life,
And done such mighty things by Holy Church,
I trust that God will make you happy yet.

Mary. What is the strange thing happiness? Sit
down here:

Tell me thine happiest hour.

Lady Clarence. I will, if that

May make your Grace forget yourself a little.

There runs a shallow brook across our field

For twenty miles, where the black crow flies five,

And doth so bound and babble all the way

As if itself were happy. It was May-time,

And I was walking with the man I loved.

I loved him, but I thought I was not loved.

And both were silent, letting the wild brook

Speak for us—till he stoop'd and gather'd one

From out a bed of thick forget-me-nots,

Look'd hard and sweet at me, and gave it me.

I took it, tho' I did not know I took it,

And put it in my bosom, and all at once

I felt his arms about me, and his lips—

Mary. O God! I have been too slack, too slack;

There are Hot Gospellers even among our guards—

Nobles we dared not touch. We have but burnt

The heretic priest, workmen, and women and children.

Wet, famine, ague, fever, storm, wreck, wrath,—

We have so play'd the coward; but by God's grace,

We'll follow Philip's leading, and set up

The Holy Office here—garner the wheat,
And burn the tares with unquenchable fire !
Burn !—

Fie, what a savour ! tell the cooks to close
The doors of all the offices below.

Latimer !

Sir, we are private with our women here—
Ever a rough, blunt, and uncourtly fellow—
Thou light a torch that never will go out !
'Tis out—mine flames. Women, the Holy Father
Has ta'en the legateship from our cousin Pole—
Was that well done ? and poor Pole pines of it,
As I do, to the death. I am but a woman,
I have no power.—Ah, weak and meek old man,
Seven-fold dishonour'd even in the sight
Of thine own sectaries—No, no. No pardon !—
Why that was false : there is the right hand still
Beckons me hence.

Sir, you were burnt for heresy, not for treason,
Remember that ! 'twas I and Bonner did it,
And Pole ; we are three to one—Have you found mercy
there,
Grant it me here : and see, he smiles and goes,
Gentle as in life.

Alice. Madam, who goes ? King Philip ?

Mary. No, Philip comes and goes, but never goes.
Women, when I am dead,
Open my heart, and there you will find written
Two names, Philip and Calais ; open his,—
So that he have one,—
You will find Philip only, policy, policy.—
Ay, worse than that—not one hour true to me !
Foul maggots crawling in a fester'd vice !
Adulterous to the very heart of Hell.
Hast thou a knife ?

Alice. Ay, Madam, but o' God's mercy—

Mary. Fool, think'st thou I would peril mine own soul
By slaughter of the body ? I could not, girl,

Not this way—callous with a constant stripe,
Unwoundable. The knife!

Alice. Take heed, take heed!

The blade is keen as death.

Mary. This Philip shall not
Stare in upon me in my haggardness;
Old, miserable, diseased,
Incapable of children. Come thou down.

[*Cuts out the picture and throws it down.*]

Lie there. (*Wails*) O God, I have kill'd my Philip!

Alice. No,

Madam, you have but cut the canvas out;
We can replace it.

Mary. All is well then; rest—
I will to rest; he said, I must have rest.

[*Cries of 'Elizabeth' in the street.*]

A cry! What's that? Elizabeth? revolt?

A new Northumberland, another Wyatt?

I'll fight it on the threshold of the grave.

Lady Clarence. Madam, your royal sister comes to
see you.

Mary. I will not see her.

Who knows if Boleyn's daughter be my sister?

I will see none except the priest. Your arm.

[*To Lady Clarence.*]

O Saint of Aragon, with that sweet worn smile

Among thy patient wrinkles—Help me hence. [*Exeunt.*]

*The Priest passes. Enter ELIZABETH and SIR
WILLIAM CECIL.*

Elizabeth. Good counsel yours—

No one in waiting? still,

As if the chamberlain were Death himself!

The room she sleeps in—is not this the way?

No, that way there are voices. Am I too late?

Cecil . . . God guide me lest I lose the way.

[*Exit Elizabeth.*]

Cecil. Many points weather'd, many perilous ones,
 At last a harbour opens ; but therein
 Sunk rocks—they need fine steering—much it is
 To be nor mad, nor bigot—have a mind—
 Nor let Priests' talk, or dream of worlds to be,
 Miscolour things about her—sudden touches
 For him, or him—sunk rocks ; no passionate faith—
 But—if let be—balance and compromise ;
 Brave, wary, sane to the heart of her—a Tudor
 School'd by the shadow of death—a Boleyn, too,
 Glancing across the Tudor—not so well.

Enter ALICE.

How is the good Queen now ?

Alice. Away from Philip.
 Back in her childhood—prattling to her mother
 Of her betrothal to the Emperor Charles,
 And childlike-jealous of him again—and once
 She thank'd her father sweetly for his book
 Against that godless German. Ah, those days
 Were happy. It was never merry world
 In England, since the Bible came among us.

Cecil. And who says that ?

Alice. It is a saying among the Catholics.

Cecil. It never will be merry world in England,
 Till all men have their Bible, rich and poor.

Alice. The Queen is dying, or you dare not say it.

Enter ELIZABETH.

Elizabeth. The Queen is dead.

Cecil. Then here she stands ! my homage.

Elizabeth. She knew me, and acknowledged me her
 heir,

Pray'd me to pay her debts, and keep the Faith ;
 Then claspt the cross, and pass'd away in peace.
 I left her lying still and beautiful,

More beautiful than in life. Why would you vex yourself,
Poor sister? Sir, I swear I have no heart
To be your Queen. To reign is restless fence,
Tierce, quart, and trickery. Peace is with the dead.
Her life was winter, for her spring was nipt:
And she loved much: pray God she be forgiven.

Cecil. Peace with the dead, who never were at peace!
Yet she loved one so much—I needs must say—
That never English monarch dying left
England so little.

Elizabeth. But with Cecil's aid
And others, if our person be secured
From traitor stabs—we will make England great.

*Enter PAGET, and other LORDS OF THE COUNCIL,
SIR RALPH BAGENHALL, etc.*

Lords. God save Elizabeth, the Queen of England!

Bagenhall. God save the Crown! the Papacy is no
more.

Paget (aside). Are we so sure of that?

Acclamation. God save the Queen!

HAROLD

A DRAMA

TO HIS EXCELLENCY

THE RIGHT HON. LORD LYTTON

Viceroy and Governor-General of India

MY DEAR LORD LYTTON,—After old-world records—such as the Bayeux tapestry and the Roman de Rou,—Edward Freeman's History of the Norman Conquest, and your father's Historical Romance treating of the same times, have been mainly helpful to me in writing this Drama. Your father dedicated his 'Harold' to my father's brother; allow me to dedicate my 'Harold' to yourself.

A. TENNYSON.

SHOW-DAY AT BATTLE ABBEY, 1876

A GARDEN here—May breath and bloom of spring—
The cuckoo yonder from an English elm
Crying 'with my false egg I overwhelm
The native nest:' and fancy hears the ring
Of harness, and that deathful arrow sing,
And Saxon battleaxe clang on Norman helm.
Here rose the dragon-banner of our realm:
Here fought, here fell, our Norman-slander'd king.

O Garden blossoming out of English blood !
 O strange hate-healer Time ! We stroll and stare
 Where might made right eight hundred years ago ;
 Might, right ? ay good, so all things make for good—
 But he and he, if soul be soul, are where
 Each stands full face with all he did below.

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ

KING EDWARD THE CONFESSOR.

STIGAND, *created Archbishop of Canterbury by the Antipope Benedict.*

ALDRED, *Archbishop of York.*

THE NORMAN BISHOP OF LONDON.

HAROLD, *Earl of Wessex, afterwards King of England*

TOSTIG, *Earl of Northumbria*

GURTH, *Earl of East Anglia*

LEOFWIN, *Earl of Kent and Essex*

WULFNOTH

COUNT WILLIAM OF NORMANDY.

WILLIAM RUFUS.

WILLIAM MALET, *a Norman Noble.*¹

EDWIN, *Earl of Mercia*

MORCAR, *Earl of Northumbria after Tostig*

GAMEL, *a Northumbrian Thane.*

GUY, *Count of Ponthieu.*

ROLF, *a Ponthieu Fisherman.*

HUGH MARGOT, *a Norman Monk.*

OSGOD and ATHELRIC, *Canons from Waltham.*

THE QUEEN, *Edward the Confessor's Wife, Daughter of Godwin.*

ALDWYTH, *Daughter of Alfgar and Widow of Griffyth, King of Wales.*

EDITH, *Ward of King Edward.*

Courtiers, Earls and Thanes, Men-at-Arms, Canons of
 Waltham, Fishermen, etc.

¹ . . . quidam partim Normannus et Anglus
 Compater Herald. (*Guy of Amiens*, 587.)

ACT I

SCENE I.—LONDON. THE KING'S PALACE

(*A comet seen through the open window*)

ALDWYTH, GAMEL, COURTIERS *talking together.*

First Courtier. Lo! there once more—this is the seventh night!

Yon grimly-glaring, treble-brandish'd scourge
Of England!

Second Courtier. Horrible!

First Courtier. Look you, there's a star
That dances in it as mad with agony!

Third Courtier. Ay, like a spirit in Hell who skips
and flies
To right and left, and cannot scape the flame.

Second Courtier. Steam'd upward from the un-
descendible

Abysm.

First Courtier. Or floated downward from the throne
Of God Almighty.

Aldwyth. Gamel, son of Orm,
What thinkest thou this means?

Gamel. War, my dear lady!

Aldwyth. Doth this affright thee?

Gamel. Mightily, my dear lady!

Aldwyth. Stand by me then, and look upon my face,
Not on the comet.

Enter MORCAR.

Brother! why so pale?

Morcar. It glares in heaven, it flares upon the Thames,
The people are as thick as bees below,
They hum like bees,—they cannot speak—for awe;

Look to the skies, then to the river, strike
 Their hearts, and hold their babies up to it.
 I think that they would Molochize them too,
 To have the heavens clear.

Aldreyth.

They fright not me.

Enter LEOFWIN, *after him* GURTH.

Ask thou Lord Leofwin what he thinks of this!

Morcar. Lord Leofwin, dost thou believe, that these
 Three rods of blood-red fire up yonder mean
 The doom of England and the wrath of Heaven?

Bishop of London (passing). Did ye not cast with bestial
 violence

Our holy Norman bishops down from all
 Their thrones in England? I alone remain.
 Why should not Heaven be wroth?

Leofwin.

With us, or thee?

Bishop of London. Did ye not outlaw your archbishop
 Robert,

Robert of Jumiéges—well-nigh murder him too?
 Is there no reason for the wrath of Heaven?

Leofwin. Why then the wrath of Heaven hath three
 tails,

The devil only one.

[*Exit* Bishop of London.]

Enter ARCHBISHOP STIGAND.

Ask *our* Archbishop.

Stigand should know the purposes of Heaven.

Stigand. Not I. I cannot read the face of heaven;
 Perhaps our vines will grow the better for it.

Leofwin (laughing). He can but read the king's face
 on his coins.

Stigand. Ay, ay, young lord, *there* the king's face is
 power.

Gurth. O father, mock not at a public fear,

But tell us, is this pendent hell in heaven
A harm to England?

Stigand. Ask it of King Edward!
And he may tell thee, *I* am a harm to England.
Old uncanonical Stigand—ask of *me*
Who had my pallium from an Antipope!
Not he the man—for in our windy world
What's up is faith, what's down is heresy.
Our friends, the Normans, help to shake his chair.
I have a Norman fever on me, son,
And cannot answer sanely . . . What it means?
Ask our broad Earl. [*Pointing to HAROLD, who enters.*]

Harold (seeing Gamel). Hail, Gamel, son of Orm!
Albeit no rolling stone, my good friend Gamel,
Thou hast rounded since we met. Thy life at home
Is easier than mine here. Look! am I not
Work-wan, flesh-fallen?

Gamel. Art thou sick, good Earl?

Harold. Sick as an autumn swallow for a voyage,
Sick for an idle week of hawk and hound
Beyond the seas—a change! When camest thou hither?

Gamel. To-day, good Earl.

Harold. Is the North quiet, Gamel?

Gamel. Nay, there be murmurs, for thy brother breaks

us

With over-taxing—quiet, ay, as yet—
Nothing as yet.

Harold. Stand by him, mine old friend,
Thou art a great voice in Northumberland!
Advise him: speak him sweetly, he will hear thee.
He is passionate but honest. Stand thou by him!
More talk of this to-morrow, if yon weird sign
Not blast us in our dreams.—Well, father Stigand—

[*To Stigand, who advances to him.*]

Stigand (pointing to the comet). War there, my son?
is that the doom of England?

Harold. Why not the doom of all the world as well?
For all the world sees it as well as England.

These meteors came and went before our day,
 Not harming any : it threatens us no more
 Than French or Norman. War? the worst that follows
 Things that seem jerk'd out of the common rut
 Of Nature is the hot religious fool,
 Who, seeing war in heaven, for heaven's credit
 Makes it on earth : but look, where Edward draws
 A faint foot hither, leaning upon Tostig.
 He hath learnt to love our Tostig much of late.

Leofwin. And *he* hath learnt, despite the tiger in
 him,

To sleek and supple himself to the king's hand.

Gurth. I trust the kingly touch that cures the evil
 May serve to charm the tiger out of him.

Leofwin. He hath as much of cat as tiger in him.
 Our Tostig loves the hand and not the man.

Harold. Nay! Better die than lie!

Enter KING, QUEEN, and TOSTIG.

Edward.

In heaven signs!

Signs upon earth! signs everywhere! your Priests
 Gross, worldly, simoniacal, unlearn'd!
 They scarce can read their Psalter; and your churches
 Uncouth, unhandsome, while in Normanland
 God speaks thro' abler voices, as He dwells
 In statelier shrines. I say not this, as being
 Half Norman-blooded, nor as some have held,
 Because I love the Norman better—no,
 But dreading God's revenge upon this realm
 For narrowness and coldness: and I say it
 For the last time perchance, before I go
 To find the sweet refreshment of the Saints.
 I have lived a life of utter purity:
 I have builded the great church of Holy Peter:
 I have wrought miracles—to God the glory—
 And miracles will in my name be wrought
 Hereafter.—I have fought the fight and go—

I see the flashing of the gates of pearl—
 And it is well with me, tho' some of you
 Have scorn'd me—ay—but after I am gone
 Woe, woe to England! I have had a vision;
 The seven sleepers in the cave at Ephesus
 Have turn'd from right to left.

Harold. My most dear Master,
 What matters? let them turn from left to right
 And sleep again.

Tostig. Too hardy with thy king!
 A life of prayer and fasting well may see
 Deeper into the mysteries of heaven
 Than thou, good brother.

Aldwyth (aside). Sees he into thine,
 That thou wouldst have his promise for the crown?

Edward. Tostig says true; my son, thou art too hard,
 Not stagger'd by this ominous earth and heaven:
 But heaven and earth are threads of the same loom,
 Play into one another, and weave the web
 That may confound thee yet.

Harold. Nay, I trust not,
 For I have served thee long and honestly.

Edward. I know it, son; I am not thankless: thou
 Hast broken all my foes, lighten'd for me
 The weight of this poor crown, and left me time
 And peace for prayer to gain a better one.
 Twelve years of service! England loves thee for it.
 Thou art the man to rule her!

Aldwyth (aside). So, not Tostig!

Harold. And after those twelve years a boon, my king,
 Respite, a holiday: thyself wast wont
 To love the chase: thy leave to set my feet
 On board, and hunt and hawk beyond the seas!

Edward. What, with this flaming horror overhead?

Harold. Well, when it passes then.

Edward. Ay if it pass.
 Go not to Normandy—go not to Normandy.

Harold. And wherefore not, my king, to Normandy?

Is not my brother Wulfnoth hostage there
For my dead father's loyalty to thee?

I pray thee, let me hence and bring him home.

Edward. Not thee, my son: some other messenger.

Harold. And why not me, my lord, to Normandy?

Is not the Norman Count thy friend and mine?

Edward. I pray thee, do not go to Normandy.

Harold. Because my father drove the Normans out
Of England?—That was many a summer gone—
Forgotten and forgiven by them and thee.

Edward. Harold, I will not yield thee leave to go.

Harold. Why then to Flanders. I will hawk and hunt
In Flanders.

Edward. Be there not fair woods and fields
In England? Wilful, wilful. Go—the Saints
Pilot and prosper all thy wandering out
And homeward. Tostig, I am faint again.
Son Harold, I will in and pray for thee.

[*Exit, leaning on Tostig, and followed by Stigand,
Morcar, and Courtiers.*]

Harold. What lies upon the mind of our good king
That he should harp this way on Normandy?

Queen. Brother, the king is wiser than he seems;
And Tostig knows it; Tostig loves the king.

Harold. And love should know; and—be the king so
wise,—

Then Tostig too were wiser than he seems.
I love the man but not his phantasies.

Re-enter TOSTIG.

Well, brother,
When didst thou hear from thy Northumbria?

Tostig. When did I hear aught but this 'When' from
thee?

Leave me alone, brother, with my Northumbria:
She is *my* mistress, let *me* look to her!

The King hath made me Earl; make me not fool!
Nor make the King a fool, who made me Earl!

Harold. No, Tostig—lest I make myself a fool
Who made the King who made thee, make thee Earl.

Tostig. Why chafe me then? Thou knowest I soon
go wild.

Gurth. Come, come! as yet thou art not gone so
wild

But thou canst hear the best and wisest of us.

Harold. So says old Gurth, not I: yet hear! thine
earldom,

Tostig, hath been a kingdom. Their old crown
Is yet a force among them, a sun set
But leaving light enough for Alfgar's house
To strike thee down by—nay, this ghastly glare
May heat their fancies.

Tostig. My most worthy brother,
Thou art the quietest man in all the world—
Ay, ay and wise in peace and great in war—
Pray God the people choose thee for their king!
But all the powers of the house of Godwin
Are not enframed in thee.

Harold. Thank the Saints, no!
But thou hast drain'd them shallow by thy tolls,
And thou art ever here about the King:
Thine absence well may seem a want of care.
Cling to their love; for, now the sons of Godwin
Sit topmost in the field of England, envy,
Like the rough bear beneath the tree, good brother,
Waits till the man let go.

Tostig. Good counsel truly!
I heard from my Northumbria yesterday.

Harold. How goes it then with thy Northumbria?
Well?

Tostig. And wouldst thou that it went aught else than
well?

Harold. I would it went as well as with mine earldom,
Leofwin's and Gurth's.

Tostig. Ye govern milder men.

Gurth. We have made them milder by just government.

Tostig. Ay, ever give yourselves your own good word.

Leafwin. An honest gift, by all the Saints, if giver
And taker be but honest! but they bribe
Each other, and so often, an honest world
Will not believe them.

Harold. I may tell thee, Tostig,
I heard from thy Northumberland to-day.

Tostig. From spies of thine to spy my nakedness
In my poor North!

Harold. There is a movement there,
A blind one—nothing yet.

Tostig. Crush it at once
With all the power I have!—I must—I will!—
Crush it half-born! Fool still? or wisdom there,
My wise head-shaking Harold?

Harold. Make not thou
The nothing something. Wisdom when in power
And wisest, should not frown as Power, but smile
As kindness, watching all, till the true *must*
Shall make her strike as Power: but when to strike—
O Tostig, O dear brother—If they prance,
Rein in, not lash them, lest they rear and run
And break both neck and axle.

Tostig. Good again!
Good counsel tho' scarce needed. Pour not water
In the full vessel running out at top
To swamp the house.

Leafwin. Nor thou be a wild thing
Out of the waste, to turn and bite the hand
Would help thee from the trap.

Tostig. Thou playest in tune.

Leafwin. To the deaf adder thee, that wilt not dance
However wisely charm'd.

Tostig. No more, no more!

Gurth. I likewise cry 'no more.' Unwholesome talk
For Godwin's house! Leafwin, thou hast a tongue!
Tostig, thou look'st as thou wouldst spring upon him.
St. Olaf, not while I am by! Come, come,

Join hands, let brethren dwell in unity ;
 Let kith and kin stand close as our shield-wall,
 Who breaks us then? I say, thou hast a tongue,
 And Tostig is not stout enough to bear it.
 Vex him not, Leofwin.

Tostig. No, I am not vext,—
 Altho' ye seek to vex me, one and all.
 I have to make report of my good earldom
 To the good king who gave it—not to you—
 Not any of you.—I am not vext at all.

Harold. The king? the king is ever at his prayers ;
 In all that handles matter of the state
 I am the king.

Tostig. That shalt thou never be
 If I can thwart thee.

Harold. Brother, brother !

Tostig.

Away !

[*Exit* Tostig.]

Queen. Spite of this grisly star ye three must gall
 Poor Tostig.

Leofwin. Tostig, sister, galls himself ;
 He cannot smell a rose but pricks his nose
 Against the thorn, and rails against the rose.

Queen. I am the only rose of all the stock
 That never thorn'd him ; Edward loves him, so
 Ye hate him Harold always hated him.
 Why—how they fought when boys—and, Holy Mary !
 How Harold used to beat him !

Harold. Why, boys will fight.
 Leofwin would often fight me, and I beat him.
 Even old Gurth would fight. I had much ado
 To hold mine own against old Gurth. Old Gurth,
 We fought like great states for grave cause ; but Tostig—
 On a sudden—at a something—for a nothing—
 The boy would fist me hard, and when we fought
 I conquer'd, and he loved me none the less,
 Till thou wouldst get him all apart, and tell him
 That where he was but worsted, he was wrong'd.

Ah! thou hast taught the king to spoil him too ;
 Now the spoilt child sways both. Take heed, take heed ;
 Thou art the Queen ; ye are boy and girl no more :
 Side not with Tostig in any violence,
 Lest thou be sideways guilty of the violence.

Queen. Come fall not foul on me. I leave thee,
 brother.

Harold. Nay, my good sister—

[*Exeunt Queen, Harold, Gurth, and Leofwin.*

Aldwyth. Gamel, son of Orm,

What thinkest thou this means? [*Pointing to the comet.*

Gamel. War, my dear lady,

War, waste, plague, famine, all malignities.

Aldwyth. It means the fall of Tostig from his earldom.

Gamel. That were too small a matter for a comet!

Aldwyth. It means the lifting of the house of Alfgar.

Gamel. Too small! a comet would not show for that!

Aldwyth. Not small for thee, if thou canst compass it.

Gamel. Thy love?

Aldwyth. As much as I can give thee, man ;

This Tostig is, or like to be, a tyrant ;

Stir up thy people: oust him!

Gamel. And thy love?

Aldwyth. As much as thou canst bear.

Gamel. I can bear all,

And not be giddy.

Aldwyth. No more now: to-morrow.

SCENE II.—IN THE GARDEN. THE KING'S HOUSE
 NEAR LONDON. SUNSET

Edith. Mad for thy mate, passionate nightingale . . .
 I love thee for it—ay, but stay a moment :

He can but stay a moment: he is going.

I fain would hear him coming! . . . near me . . . near,
 Somewhere—To draw him nearer with a charm

Like thine to thine.

(*Singing.*)

Love is come with a song and a smile,
 Welcome Love with a smile and a song :
 Love can stay but a little while.
 Why cannot he stay? They call him away :
 Ye do him wrong, ye do him wrong ;
 Love will stay for a whole life long.

Enter HAROLD.

Harold. The nightingales in Havering-atte-Bower
 Sang out their loves so loud, that Edward's prayers
 Were deafen'd and he pray'd them dumb, and thus
 I dumb thee too, my wingless nightingale! [*Kissing her.*]

Edith. Thou art my music! Would their wings were
 mine

To follow thee to Flanders! Must thou go?

Harold. Not must, but will. It is but for one moon.

Edith. Leaving so many foes in Edward's hall
 To league against thy weal. The Lady Aldwyth
 Was here to-day, and when she touch'd on thee,
 She stammer'd in her hate; I am sure she hates thee,
 Pants for thy blood.

Harold. Well, I have given her cause—
 I fear no woman.

Edith. Hate not one who felt
 Some pity for thy hater! I am sure
 Her morning wanted sunlight, she so praised
 The convent and lone life—within the pale—
 Beyond the passion. Nay—she held with Edward,
 At least methought she held with holy Edward,
 That marriage was half sin.

Harold. A lesson worth
 Finger and thumb—thus (*snaps his fingers*). And my
 answer to it—
 See here—an interwoven H and E!

'Take thou this ring ; I will demand his ward
 From Edward when I come again. Ay, would she ?
 She to shut up my blossom in the dark !
 'Thou art *my* nun, thy cloister in mine arms.

Edith (taking the ring). Yea, but Earl Tostig—

Harold. That's a truer fear !

For if the North take fire, I should be back ;
 I shall be, soon enough.

Edith. Ay, but last night
 An evil dream that ever came and went—

Harold. A gnat that vext thy pillow ! Had I been by,
 I would have spoil'd his horn. My girl, what was it ?

Edith. Oh ! that thou wert not going !
 For so methought it was our marriage-morn,
 And while we stood together, a dead man
 Rose from behind the altar, tore away
 My marriage ring, and rent my bridal veil ;
 And then I turn'd, and saw the church all fill'd
 With dead men upright from their graves, and all
 The dead men made at thee to murder thee,
 But thou didst back thyself against a pillar,
 And strike among them with thy battle-axe—
 'There, what a dream !

Harold. Well, well—a dream—no more !

Edith. Did not Heaven speak to men in dreams
 of old ?

Harold. Ay—well—of old. I tell thee what, my
 child ;

'Thou hast misread this merry dream of thine,
 'Taken the rifted pillars of the wood
 For smooth stone columns of the sanctuary,
 The shadows of a hundred fat dead deer
 For dead men's ghosts. True, that the battle-axe
 Was out of place ; it should have been the bow.—
 Come, thou shalt dream no more such dreams ; I
 swear it,

By mine own eyes—and these two sapphires—these
 Twin rubies, that are amulets against all

The kisses of all kind of womankind
In Flanders, till the sea shall roll me back
To tumble at thy feet.

Edith. That would but shame me,
Rather than make me vain. The sea may roll
Sand, shingle, shore-weed, not the living rock
Which guards the land.

Harold. Except it be a soft one,
And undereaten to the fall. Mine amulet . . .
This last . . . upon thine eyelids, to shut in
A happier dream. Sleep, sleep, and thou shalt see
My grayhounds fleeting like a beam of light,
And hear my peregrine and her bells in heaven;
And other bells on earth, which yet are heaven's;
Guess what they be.

Edith. He cannot guess who knows.
Farewell, my king.

Harold. Not yet, but then—my queen. [*Exeunt.*]

Enter ALDWYTH from the thicket.

Aldwyth. The kiss that charms thine eyelids into
sleep,
Will hold mine waking. Hate him? I could love him
More, tenfold, than this fearful child can do;
Griffyth I hated: why not hate the foe
Of England? Griffyth when I saw him flee,
Chased deer-like up his mountains, all the blood
That should have only pulsed for Griffyth, beat
For his pursuer. I love him or think I love him.
If he were King of England, I his queen,
I might be sure of it. Nay, I do love him.—
She must be cloister'd somehow, lest the king
Should yield his ward to Harold's will. What harm?
She hath but blood enough to live, not love.—
When Harold goes and Tostig, shall I play
The craftier Tostig with him? fawn upon him?
Chime in with all? 'O thou more saint than king!'

And that were true enough. 'O blessed relics!'
 'O Holy Peter!' If he found me thus,
 Harold might hate me; he is broad and honest,
 Breathing an easy gladness . . . not like Aldwyth . . .
 For which I strangely love him. Should not England
 Love Aldwyth, if she stay the feuds that part
 The sons of Godwin from the sons of Alfgar
 By such a marrying? Courage, noble Aldwyth!
 Let all thy people bless thee!

Our wild Tostig,
 Edward hath made him Earl: he would be king:—
 'The dog that snapt the shadow, dropt the bone.—
 I trust he may do well, this Gamel, whom
 I play upon, that he may play the note
 Whereat the dog shall howl and run, and Harold
 Hear the king's music, all alone with him,
 Pronounced his heir of England.
 I see the goal and half the way to it.—
 Peace-lover is our Harold for the sake
 Of England's wholeness—so—to shake the North
 With earthquake and disruption—some division—
 'Then fling mine own fair person in the gap
 A sacrifice to Harold, a peace-offering,
 A scape-goat marriage—all the sins of both
 'The houses on mine head—then a fair life
 And bless the Queen of England.

Morcar (coming from the thicket). Art thou assured
 By this, that Harold loves but Edith?

Aldwyth.

Morcar!

Why creep'st thou like a timorous beast of prey
 Out of the bush by night?

Morcar.

I follow'd thee.

Aldwyth. Follow my lead, and I will make thee
 earl.

Morcar. What lead then?

Aldwyth.

Thou shalt flash it secretly
 Among the good Northumbrian folk, that I—
 'That Harold loves me—yea, and presently

That I and Harold are betroth'd—and last—
Perchance that Harold wrongs me ; tho' I would not
That it should come to that.

Morcar. I will both flash
And thunder for thee.

Aldwyth. I said 'secretly ;'
It is the flash that murders, the poor thunder
Never harm'd head.

Morcar. But thunder may bring down
That which the flash hath stricken.

Aldwyth. Down with Tostig !
That first of all.—And when doth Harold go ?

Morcar. To-morrow — first to Bosham, then to
Flanders.

Aldwyth. Not to come back till Tostig shall have
shown
And redden'd with his people's blood the teeth
That shall be broken by us—yea, and thou
Chair'd in his place. Good-night, and dream thyself
Their chosen Earl. [Exit Aldwyth.]

Morcar. Earl first, and after that
Who knows I may not dream myself their king !

ACT II

SCENE I.—SEASHORE. PONTHEU. NIGHT

HAROLD and his Men, wrecked.

Harold. Friends, in that last inhospitable plunge
Our boat hath burst her ribs ; but ours are whole ;
I have but bark'd my hands.

Attendant. I dug mine into
My old fast friend the shore, and clinging thus
Felt the remorseless outdraught of the deep
Haul like a great strong fellow at my legs,

And then I rose and ran. The blast that came
So suddenly hath fallen as suddenly—
Put thou the comet and this blast together—

Harold. Put thou thyself and mother-wit together.
Be not a fool!

Enter Fishermen with torches, HAROLD going up to one of them, ROLF

Wicked sea-will-o'-the-wisp!
Wolf of the shore! dog, with thy lying lights
Thou hast betray'd us on these rocks of thine!

Rolf. Ay, but thou liest as loud as the black herring-
pond behind thee. We be fishermen; I came to see after
my nets.

Harold. To drag us into them. Fishermen? devils!
Who, while ye fish for men with your false fires,
Let the great Devil fish for your own souls.

Rolf. Nay then, we be liker the blessed Apostles; *they*
were fishers of men, Father Jean says.

Harold. I had liefer that the fish had swallowed me,
Like Jonah, than have known there were such devils.
What's to be done? [*To his Men—goes apart with them.*]

Fisherman. Rolf, what fish did swallow Jonah?

Rolf. A whale!

Fisherman. Then a whale to a whelk we have swallowed
the King of England. I saw him over there. Look thee,
Rolf, when I was down in the fever, *she* was down with
the hunger, and thou didst stand by her and give her thy
crabs, and set her up again, till now, by the patient Saints,
she's as crabb'd as ever.

Rolf. And I'll give her my crabs again, when thou art
down again.

Fisherman. I thank thee, Rolf. Run thou to Count
Guy; he is hard at hand. Tell him what hath crept into
our creel, and he will see thee as freely as he will wrench
this outlander's ransom out of him—and why not? for

what right had he to get himself wrecked on another man's land?

Rolf. Thou art the human-heartedest, Christian-charitiest of all crab-catchers. Share and share alike! [*Exit.*]

Harold (to Fisherman). Fellow, dost thou catch crabs?

Fisherman. As few as I may in a wind, and less than I would in a calm. Ay!

Harold. I have a mind that thou shalt catch no more.

Fisherman. How?

Harold. I have a mind to brain thee with mine axe.

Fisherman. Ay, do, do, and our great Count-crab will make his nippers meet in thine heart; he'll sweat it out of thee, he'll sweat it out of thee. Look, he's here! He'll speak for himself! Hold thine own, if thou canst!

Enter GUY, COUNT OF PONTIEU.

Harold. Guy, Count of Ponthieu?

Guy. Harold, Earl of Wessex!

Harold. Thy villains with their lying lights have wreck'd us!

Guy. Art thou not Earl of Wessex?

Harold. In mine earldom

A man may hang gold bracelets on a bush,
And leave them for a year, and coming back
Find them again.

Guy. Thou art a mighty man

In thine own earldom!

Harold. Were such murderous liars

In Wessex—if I caught them, they should hang
Cliff-gibbeted for sea-marks; our sea mew
Winging their only wail!

Guy. Ay, but my men

Hold that the shipwreckt are accursed of God;—
What hinders me to hold with mine own men?

Harold. The Christian manhood of the man who reigns!

Guy. Ay, rave thy worst, but in our oubliettes
 Thou shalt or rot or ransom. Hale him hence!
 [To one of his Attendants.
 Fly thou to William; tell him we have Harold.

SCENE II.—BAYEUX. PALACE

COUNT WILLIAM *and* WILLIAM MALET.

William. We hold our Saxon woodcock in the springe,
 But he begins to flutter. As I think
 He was thine host in England when I went
 To visit Edward.

Malet. Yea, and there, my lord,
 To make allowance for their rougher fashions,
 I found him all a noble host should be.

William. Thou art his friend: thou know'st my claim
 on England
 Thro' Edward's promise: we have him in the toils.
 And it were well, if thou shouldst let him feel,
 How dense a fold of danger nets him round,
 So that he bristle himself against my will.

Malet. What would I do, my lord, if I were you?

William. What wouldst thou do?

Malet. My lord, he is thy guest.

William. Nay, by the splendour of God, no guest of
 mine.

He came not to see me, had past me by
 To hunt and hawk elsewhere, save for the fate
 Which hunted *him* when that un-Saxon blast,
 And bolts of thunder, moulded in high heaven
 To serve the Norman purpose, drave and crack'd
 His boat on Ponthieu beach; where our friend Guy
 Had wrung his ransom from him by the rack,
 But that I stept between and purchased him,
 Translating his captivity from Guy
 To mine own hearth at Bayeux, where he sits
 My ransom'd prisoner.

Malet. Well, if not with gold,
With golden deeds and iron strokes that brought
Thy war with Brittany to a goodlier close
Than else had been, he paid his ransom back.

William. So that henceforth they are not like to
league
With Harold against *me*.

Malet. A marvel, how
He from the liquid sands of Coeson
Haled thy shore-swallow'd, armour'd Normans up
To fight for thee again!

William. Perchance against
Their saver, save thou save him from himself.

Malet. But I should let him home again, my lord.

William. Simple! let fly the bird within the hand,
To catch the bird again within the bush!
No.

Smooth thou my way, before he clash with me;
I want his voice in England for the crown,
I want thy voice with him to bring him round;
And being brave he must be subtly cow'd,
And being truthful wrought upon to swear
Vows that he dare not break. England our own
'Thro' Harold's help, he shall be my dear friend
As well as thine, and thou thyself shalt have
Large lordship there of lands and territory.

Malet. I knew thy purpose; he and Wulfnoth never
Have met, except in public; shall they meet
In private? I have often talk'd with Wulfnoth,
And stuff'd the boy with fears that these may act
On Harold when they meet.

William. Then let them meet!

Malet. I can but love this noble, honest Harold.

William. Love him! why not? thine is a loving
office,
I have commission'd thee to save the man:
Help the good ship, showing the sunken rock,
Or he is wreckt for ever.

Enter WILLIAM RUFUS.

William Rufus. Father.

William. Well, boy.

William Rufus. They have taken away the toy thou gavest me,
The Norman knight.

William. Why, boy?

William Rufus. Because I broke
The horse's leg—it was mine own to break;
I like to have my toys, and break them too.

William. Well, thou shalt have another Norman knight!

William Rufus. And may I break his legs?

William. Yea,—get thee gone!

William Rufus. I'll tell them I have had my way with thee. *[Exit.*

Malet. I never knew thee check thy will for ought
Save for the prattling of thy little ones.

William. Who shall be kings of England. I am heir
Of England by the promise of her king.

Malet. But there the great Assembly choose their king,
The choice of England is the voice of England.

William. I will be king of England by the laws,
The choice, and voice of England.

Malet. Can that be?

William. The voice of any people is the sword
That guards them, or the sword that beats them down.
Here comes the would-be what I will be . . . kinglike . . .
Tho' scarce at ease; for, save our meshes break,
More kinglike he than like to prove a king.

Enter HAROLD, musing, with his eyes on the ground.

He sees me not—and yet he dreams of me.
Earl, wilt thou fly my falcons this fair day?
They are of the best, strong-wing'd against the wind.

Harold (looking up suddenly, having caught but the last word.) Which way does it blow?

William. Blowing for England, ha?
Not yet. 'Thou hast not learnt thy quarters here.
The winds so cross and jostle among these towers.

Harold. Count of the Normans, thou hast ransom'd
us,
Maintain'd, and entertain'd us royally!

William. And thou for us hast fought as loyally,
Which binds us friendship-fast for ever!

Harold. Good!
But lest we turn the scale of courtesy
By too much pressure on it, I would fain,
Since thou hast promised Wulfnoth home with us,
Be home again with Wulfnoth.

William. Stay—as yet
Thou hast but seen how Norman hands can strike,
But walk'd our Norman field, scarce touch'd or tasted
The splendours of our Court.

Harold. I am in no mood:
I should be as the shadow of a cloud
Crossing your light.

William. Nay, rest a week or two,
And we will fill thee full of Norman sun,
And send thee back among thine island mists
With laughter.

Harold. Count, I thank thee, but had rather
Breathe the free wind from off our Saxon downs,
Tho' charged with all the wet of all the west.

William. Why if thou wilt, so let it be—thou shalt.
That were a graceless hospitality
To chain the free guest to the banquet-board;
To-morrow we will ride with thee to Harfleur,
And see thee shipt, and pray in thy behalf
For happier homeward winds than that which crack'd
Thy bark at Ponthieu,—yet to us, in faith,
A happy one—whereby we came to know
Thy valour and thy value, noble earl.

Ay, and perchance a happy one for thee,
 Provided—I will go with thee to-morrow—
 Nay—but there be conditions, easy ones,
 So thou, fair friend, will take them easily.

Enter PAGE.

Page. My lord, there is a post from over seas
 With news for thee. [*Exit Page.*

William. Come, Malet, let us hear!

[*Exeunt Count William and Malet.*

Harold. Conditions! What conditions? pay him back
 His ransom? 'easy'—that were easy—nay—
 No money-lover he! What said the King?
 'I pray you do not go to Normandy.'
 And fate hath blown me hither, bound me too
 With bitter obligation to the Count—
 Have I not fought it out? What did he mean?
 There lodged a gleaming grimness in his eyes,
 Gave his shorn smile the lie. The walls oppress me,
 And yon huge keep that hinders half the heaven.
 Free air! free field!

[*Moves to go out. A Man-at-arms follows him.*

Harold (to the Man-at-arms). I need thee not. Why
 dost thou follow me?

Man-at-arms. I have the Count's commands to follow
 thee.

Harold. What then? Am I in danger in this court?

Man-at-arms. I cannot tell. I have the Count's
 commands.

Harold. Stand out of earshot then, and keep me still
 In eyeshot.

Man-at-arms. Yea, lord Harold. [*Withdraws.*

Harold. And arm'd men

Ever keep watch beside my chamber door,
 And if I walk within the lonely wood,
 There is an arm'd man ever glides behind!

Enter MALET.

Why am I follow'd, haunted, harass'd, watch'd?
See yonder! [*Pointing to the Man-at-arms.*]

Malet. 'Tis the good Count's care for thee!
The Normans love thee not, nor thou the Normans,
Or—so they deem.

Harold. But wherefore is the wind,
Which way soever the vane-arrow swing,
Not ever fair for England? Why but now
He said (thou heardest him) that I must not hence
Save on conditions.

Malet. So in truth he said.

Harold. Malet, thy mother was an Englishwoman;
There somewhere beats an English pulse in thee!

Malet. Well—for my mother's sake I love your
England,
But for my father I love Normandy.

Harold. Speak for thy mother's sake, and tell me true.

Malet. Then for my mother's sake, and England's
sake
That suffers in the daily want of thee,
Obey the Count's conditions, my good friend.

Harold. How, Malet, if they be not honourable!

Malet. Seem to obey them.

Harold. Better die than lie!

Malet. Choose therefore whether thou wilt have thy
conscience
White as a maiden's hand, or whether England
Be shatter'd into fragments.

Harold. News from England?

Malet. Morcar and Edwin have stirr'd up the Thanes
Against thy brother Tostig's governance;
And all the North of Humber is one storm.

Harold. I should be there, Malet, I should be there!

Malet. And Tostig in his own hall on suspicion
Hath massacred the Thane that was his guest,

Gamel, the son of Örm : and there be more
As villainously slain.

Harold. The wolf ! the beast !

Ill news for guests, ha, Malet ! More ? What more ?
What do they say ? did Edward know of this ?

Malet. They say, his wife was knowing and abetting.

Harold. They say, his wife !—To marry and have no
husband

Makes the wife fool. My God, I should be there.
I'll hack my way to the sea.

Malet. Thou canst not, Harold ;

Our Duke is all between thee and the sea,
Our Duke is all about thee like a God ;
All passes block'd. Obey him, speak him fair,
For he is only debonair to those
That follow where he leads, but stark as death
To those that cross him.—Look thou, here is Wulfnoth !
I leave thee to thy talk with him alone ;
How wan, poor lad ! how sick and sad for home !

[*Exit* Malet.

Harold (*muttering*). Go not to Normandy—go not to
Normandy !

Enter WULFNOTH.

Poor brother ! still a hostage !

Wulfnoth. Yea, and I

Shall see the dewy kiss of dawn no more
Make blush the maiden-white of our tall cliffs,
Nor mark the sea-bird rouse himself and hover
Above the windy ripple, and fill the sky
With free sea-laughter—never—save indeed
Thou canst make yield this iron-mooded Duke
To let me go.

Harold. Why, brother, so he will ;

But on conditions. Canst thou guess at them ?

Wulfnoth. Draw nearer,—I was in the corridor,
I saw him coming with his brother Odo
The Bayeux bishop, and I hid myself.

Harold. They did thee wrong who made thee hostage ;
thou
Wast ever fearful.

Wulfnoth. And he spoke—I heard him—
'This Harold is not of the royal blood,
Can have no right to the crown,' and Odo said,
'Thine is the right, for thine the might ; he is here,
And yonder is thy keep.'

Harold. No, Wulfnoth, no.

Wulfnoth. And William laugh'd and swore that might
was right,
Far as he knew in this poor world of ours—
'Marry, the Saints must go along with us,
And, brother, we will find a way,' said he—
Yea, yea, he would be king of England.

Harold. Never !

Wulfnoth. Yea, but thou must not this way answer *him*.

Harold. Is it not better still to speak the truth ?

Wulfnoth. Not here, or thou wilt never hence nor I :
For in the racing toward this golden goal
He turns not right or left, but tramples flat
Whatever thwarts him ; hast thou never heard
His savagery at Alençon,—the town
Hung out raw hides along their walls, and cried
'Work for the tanner.'

Harold. That had anger'd *me*
Had I been William.

Wulfnoth. Nay, but he had prisoners,
He tore their eyes out, sliced their hands away,
And flung them streaming o'er the battlements
Upon the heads of those who walk'd within—
O speak him fair, Harold, for thine own sake.

Harold. Your Welshman says, 'The Truth against the
World,'
Much more the truth against myself.

Wulfnoth. Thyself ?
But for my sake, oh brother ! oh ! for my sake !

Harold. Poor Wulfnoth ! do they not entreat thee well ?

Wulfnoth. I see the blackness of my dungeon loom
Across their lamps of revel, and beyond
The merriest murmurs of their banquet clank
The shackles that will bind me to the wall.

Harold. Too fearful still!

Wulfnoth. Oh no, no—speak him fair!
Call it to temporize; and not to lie;
Harold, I do not counsel thee to lie.
The man that hath to foil a murderous aim
May, surely, play with words.

Harold. Words are the man.
Not ev'n for thy sake, brother, would I lie.

Wulfnoth. Then for thine Edith?

Harold. There thou prick'st me deep.

Wulfnoth. And for our Mother England?

Harold. Deeper still.

Wulfnoth. And deeper still the deep-down oubliette,
Down thirty feet below the smiling day—
In blackness—dogs' food thrown upon thy head.
And over thee the suns arise and set,
And the lark sings, the sweet stars come and go,
And men are at their markets, in their fields,
And woo their loves and have forgotten thee;
And thou art upright in thy living grave,
Where there is barely room to shift thy side,
And all thine England hath forgotten thee;
And he our lazy-pious Norman King,
With all his Normans round him once again,
Counts his old beads, and hath forgotten thee.

Harold. Thou art of my blood, and so methinks, my
boy,
Thy fears infect me beyond reason. Peace!

Wulfnoth. And then our fiery Tostig, while thy hands
Are palsied here, if his Northumbrians rise
And hurl him from them,—I have heard the Normans
Count upon this confusion—may he not make
A league with William, so to bring him back?

Harold. That lies within the shadow of the chance.

Wulfnoth. And like a river in flood thro' a burst dam
Descends the ruthless Norman—our good King
Kneels mumbling some old bone—our helpless folk
Are wash'd away, wailing, in their own blood—

Harold. Wailing! not warring? Boy, thou hast
forgotten
That thou art English.

Wulfnoth. Then our modest women—
I know the Norman license—thine own Edith—

Harold. No more! I will not hear thee—William
comes.

Wulfnoth. I dare not well be seen in talk with thee.
Make thou not mention that I spake with thee.

[*Moves away to the back of the stage.*]

Enter WILLIAM, MALET, and Officer.

Officer. We have the man that rail'd against thy birth.

William. Tear out his tongue.

Officer. He shall not rail again.
He said that he should see confusion fall
On thee and on thine house.

William. Tear out his eyes,
And plunge him into prison.

Officer. It shall be done.

[*Exit Officer.*]

William. Look not amazed, fair earl! Better leave
undone
Than do by halves—tongueless and eyeless, prison'd—

Harold. Better methinks have slain the man at once!

William. We have respect for man's immortal soul,
We seldom take man's life, except in war;
It frights the traitor more to maim and blind.

Harold. In mine own land I should have scorn'd the
man,
Or lash'd his rascal back, and let him go.

William. And let him go? To slander thee again!
Yet in thine own land in thy father's day

They blinded my young kinsman, Alfred—ay,
Some said it was thy father's deed.

Harold. They lied.

William. But thou and he—whom at thy word, for
thou

Art known a speaker of the truth, I free
From this foul charge—

Harold. Nay, nay, he freed himself
By oath and compurgation from the charge.
The king, the lords, the people clear'd him of it.

William. But thou and he drove our good Normans
out
From England, and this rankles in us yet.
Archbishop Robert hardly scaped with life.

Harold. Archbishop Robert! Robert the Archbishop!
Robert of Jumiéges, he that—

Malet. Quiet! quiet!

Harold. Count! if there sat within the Norman chair
A ruler all for England—one who fill'd
All offices, all bishopricks with English—
We could not move from Dover to the Humber
Saving thro' Norman bishopricks—I say
Ye would applaud that Norman who should drive
The stranger to the fiends!

William. Why, that is reason!
Warrior thou art, and mighty wise withal!
Ay, ay, but many among our Norman lords
Hate thee for this, and press upon me—saying
God and the sea have given thee to our hands—
'To plunge thee into life-long prison here:—
Yet I hold out against them, as I may,
Yea—would hold out, yea, tho' they should revolt—
For thou hast done the battle in my cause;
I am thy fastest friend in Normandy.

Harold. I am doubly bound to thee . . . if this be so.

William. And I would bind thee more, and would
myself
Be bounden to thee more.

Harold. Then let me hence
With Wulfnoth to King Edward.

William. So we will.
We hear he hath not long to live.

Harold. It may be.

William. Why then the heir of England, who is he?

Harold. The Atheling is nearest to the throne.

William. But sickly, slight, half-witted and a child,
Will England have him king?

Harold. It may be, no.

William. And hath King Edward not pronounced his
heir?

Harold. Not that I know.

William. When he was here in Normandy,
He loved us and we him, because we found him
A Norman of the Normans.

Harold. So did we.

William. A gentle, gracious, pure and saintly man!
And grateful to the hand that shielded him,
He promised that if ever he were king
In England, he would give his kingly voice
To me as his successor. Knowest thou this?

Harold. I learn it now.

William. Thou knowest I am his cousin,
And that my wife descends from Alfred?

Harold. Ay.

William. Who hath a better claim then to the crown
So that ye will not crown the Atheling?

Harold. None that I know . . . if that but hung
upon
King Edward's will.

William. Wilt thou uphold my claim?

Malet (aside to Harold). Be careful of thine answer,
my good friend.

Wulfnoth (aside to Harold). Oh! Harold, for my sake,
and for thine own!

Harold. Ay . . . if the king have not revoked his
promise.

William. But hath he done it then?

Harold. Not that I know.

William. Good, good, and thou wilt help me to the crown?

Harold. Ay . . . if the Witan will consent to this.

William. Thou art the mightiest voice in England, man,

Thy voice will lead the Witan—shall I have it?

Wulfnoth (aside to Harold). Oh! Harold, if thou love thine Edith, ay

Harold. Ay, if—

Malet (aside to Harold). Thine 'ifs' will scar thine eyes out—ay.

William. I ask thee, wilt thou help me to the crown?

And I will make thee my great Earl of Earls,
Foremost in England and in Normandy;
Thou shalt be verily king—all but the name—
For I shall most sojourn in Normandy;
And thou be my vice-king in England. Speak.

Wulfnoth (aside to Harold). Ay, brother—for the sake of England—ay.

Harold. My lord—

Malet (aside to Harold). Take heed now.

Harold. Ay.

William. I am content,

For thou art truthful, and thy word thy bond.
To-morrow will we ride with thee to Harfleur.

[*Exit William.*]

Malet. Harold, I am thy friend, one life with thee,
And even as I should bless thee saving mine,
I thank thee now for having saved thyself. [*Exit Malet.*]

Harold. For having lost myself to save myself,
Said 'ay' when I meant 'no,' lied like a lad
That dreads the pendent scourge, said 'ay' for 'no'!
Ay! No!—he hath not bound me by an oath—
Is 'ay' an oath? is 'ay' strong as an oath?
Or is it the same sin to break my word

As break mine oath? He call'd my word my bond!
 He is a liar who knows I am a liar,
 And makes believe that he believes my word—
 The crime be on his head—not bounden—no.

[Suddenly doors are flung open, discovering in an inner hall COUNT WILLIAM in his state robes, seated upon his throne, between two Bishops, ODO OF BAYEUX being one: in the centre of the hall an ark covered with cloth of gold; and on either side of it the Norman barons.]

Enter a JAILOR before William's throne.

William (to Jailor). Knave, hast thou let thy prisoner
 scape?

Jailor. Sir Count,
 He had but one foot, he must have hopt away,
 Yea, some familiar spirit must have help'd him.

William. Woe knave to thy familiar and to thee!
 Give me thy keys. *[They fall clashing.]*
 Nay let them lie. Stand there and wait my will.

[The Jailor stands aside.]

William (to Harold). Hast thou such trustless jailors
 in thy North?

Harold. We have few prisoners in mine earldom
 there,
 So less chance for false keepers.

William. We have heard
 Of thy just, mild, and equal governance;
 Honour to thee! thou art perfect in all honour!
 Thy naked word thy bond! confirm it now.
 Before our gather'd Norman baronage,
 For they will not believe thee—as I believe.

[Descends from his throne and stands by the ark.]
 Let all men here bear witness of our bond!

[Beckons to Harold, who advances.]

Enter MALET behind him.

Lay thou thy hand upon this golden pall!

Behold the jewel of St. Pancratius

Woven into the gold. Swear thou on this!

Harold. What should I swear? Why should I swear on this?

William (savagely). Swear thou to help me to the crown of England.

Malet (whispering Harold). My friend, thou hast gone too far to palter now.

Wulfnoth (whispering Harold). Swear thou to-day, to-morrow is thine own.

Harold. I swear to help thee to the crown of England . . .

According as King Edward promises.

William. Thou must swear absolutely, noble Earl.

Malet (whispering). Delay is death to thee, ruin to England.

Wulfnoth (whispering). Swear, dearest brother, I beseech thee, swear!

Harold (putting his hand on the jewel). I swear to help thee to the crown of England.

William. Thanks, truthful Earl; I did not doubt thy word,

But that my barons might believe thy word,

And that the Holy Saints of Normandy

When thou art home in England, with thine own,

Might strengthen thee in keeping of thy word,

I made thee swear.—Show him by whom he hath sworn.

[The two Bishops advance, and raise the cloth of gold.

The bodies and bones of Saints are seen lying in the ark.

The holy bones of all the Canonised

From all the holiest shrines in Normandy!

Harold. Horrible! *[They let the cloth fall again.*

William. Ay, for thou hast sworn an oath

Which, if not kept, would make the hard earth rive

To the very Devil's horns, the bright sky cleave
 To the very feet of God, and send her hosts
 Of injured Saints to scatter sparks of plague
 Thro' all your cities, blast your infants, dash
 The torch of war among your standing corn,
 Dabble your hearths with your own blood.—Enough!
 Thou wilt not break it! I, the Count—the King—
 Thy friend—am grateful for thine honest oath,
 Not coming fiercely like a conqueror, now,
 But softly as a bridegroom to his own.
 For I shall rule according to your laws,
 And make your ever-jarring Earldoms move
 To music and in order—Angle, Jute,
 Dane, Saxon, Norman, help to build a throne
 Out-towering hers of France . . . The wind is fair
 For England now . . . To-night we will be merry.
 To-morrow will I ride with thee to Harfleur.

[*Exeunt William and all the Norman barons, etc.*]

Harold. To-night we will be merry—and to-morrow—
 Juggler and bastard—bastard—he hates that most—
 William the tanner's bastard! Would he heard me!
 O God, that I were in some wide, waste field
 With nothing but my battle-axe and him
 To spatter his brains! Why let earth rive, gulf in
 These cursed Normans—yea and mine own self.
 Cleave heaven, and send thy saints that I may say
 Ev'n to their faces, 'If ye side with William
 Ye are not noble.' How their pointed fingers
 Glared at me! Am I Harold, Harold, son
 Of our great Godwin? Lo! I touch mine arms.
 My limbs—they are not mine—they are a liar's—
 I mean to be a liar—I am not bound—
 Stigand shall give me absolution for it—
 Did the chest move? did it move? I am utter craven!
 O Wulfnoth, Wulfnoth, brother, thou hast betray'd
 me!

Wulfnoth. Forgive me, brother, I will live here and
 die.

Enter PAGE.

Page. My lord! the Duke awaits thee at the banquet.

Harold. Where they eat dead men's flesh, and drink
their blood.

Page. My lord—

Harold. I know your Norman cookery is so spiced,
It masks all this.

Page. My lord! thou art white as death.

Harold. With looking on the dead. Am I so white?
Thy Duke will seem the darker. Hence, I follow.

[*Exeunt.*

ACT III

SCENE I.—THE KING'S PALACE. LONDON

KING EDWARD *dying on a couch, and by him standing the*
QUEEN, HAROLD, ARCHBISHOP STIGAND, GURTH,
LEOFWIN, ARCHBISHOP ALDRED, ALDWYTH, *and*
EDITH.

Stigand. Sleeping or dying there? If this be death,
Then our great Council wait to crown thee King—
Come hither, I have a power; [To Harold.

They call me near, for I am close to thee
And England—I, old shrivell'd Stigand, I,
Dry as an old wood-fungus on a dead tree,
I have a power!

See here this little key about my neck!
There lies a treasure buried down in Ely:
If e'er the Norman grow too hard for thee,
Ask me for this at thy most need, son Harold,
At thy most need—not sooner.

Harold. So I will.

Stigand. Red gold—a hundred purses—yea, and more!
If thou canst make a wholesome use of these

To chink against the Norman, I do believe
My old crook'd spine would bud out two young wings
To fly to heaven straight with.

Harold. Thank thee, father!

Thou art English, Edward too is English now,
He hath clean repented of his Normanism.

Stigand. Ay, as the libertine repents who cannot
Make done undone, when thro' his dying sense
Shrills 'lost thro' thee.' They have built their castles here;
Our priories are Norman; the Norman adder
Hath bitten us; we are poison'd: our dear England
Is demi-Norman. He!—

[*Pointing to King Edward, sleeping.*]

Harold. I would I were

As holy and as passionless as he!
That I might rest as calmly! Look at him—
The rosy face, and long down-silvering beard,
The brows unwrinkled as a summer mere.—

Stigand. A summer mere with sudden wreckful gusts
From a side-gorge. Passionless? How he flamed
When Tostig's anger'd earldom flung him, nay,
He fain had calcined all Northumbria
To one black ash, but that thy patriot passion
Siding with our great Council against Tostig,
Out-passion'd his! Holy? ay, ay, forsooth,
A conscience for his own soul, not his realm;
A twilight conscience lighted thro' a chink;
Thine by the sun; nay, by some sun to be,
When all the world hath learnt to speak the truth,
And lying were self-murder by that state
Which was the exception.

Harold. That sun may God speed!

Stigand. Come, Harold, shake the cloud off!

Harold. Can I, father?

Our Tostig parted cursing me and England;
Our sister hates us for his banishment;
He hath gone to kindle Norway against England,
And Wulfnoth is alone in Normandy.

For when I rode with William down to Harfleur,
 'Wulfnoth is sick,' he said; 'he cannot follow;'
 Then with that friendly-fiendly smile of his,
 'We have learnt to love him, let him a little longer
 Remain a hostage for the loyalty
 Of Godwin's house.' As far as touches Wulfnoth
 I that so prized plain word and naked truth
 Have sinn'd against it—all in vain.

Leofwin.

Good brother,

By all the truths that ever priest hath preach'd,
 Of all the lies that ever men have lied,
 Thine is the pardonablest.

Harold.

May be so!

I think it so, I think I am a fool
 To think it can be otherwise than so.

Stigand. Tut, tut, I have absolved thee: dost thou
 scorn me,

Because I had my Canterbury pallium,
 From one whom they disposed?

Harold.

No, Stigand, no!

Stigand. Is naked truth actable in true life?

I have heard a saying of thy father Godwin,
 That, were a man of state nakedly true,
 Men would but take him for the craftier liar.

Leofwin. Be men less delicate than the Devil himself?

I thought that naked Truth would shame the Devil
 The Devil is so modest.

Gurth.

He never said it!

Leofwin. Be thou not stupid-honest, brother Gurth!

Harold. Better to be a liar's dog, and hold

My master honest, than believe that lying
 And ruling men are fatal twins that cannot
 Move one without the other. Edward wakes!—
 Dazed—he hath seen a vision.

Edward.

The green tree!

Then a great Angel past along the highest
 Crying 'the doom of England,' and at once
 He stood beside me, in his grasp a sword

Of lightnings, wherewithal he cleft the tree
 From off the bearing trunk, and hurl'd it from him
 Three fields away, and then he dash'd and drench'd,
 He dyed, he soak'd the trunk with human blood,
 And brought the sunder'd tree again, and set it
 Straight on the trunk, that thus baptized in blood
 Grew ever high and higher, beyond my seeing,
 And shot out sidelong boughs across the deep
 That dropt themselves, and rooted in far isles
 Beyond my seeing: and the great Angel rose
 And past again along the highest crying
 'The doom of England!'—Tostig, raise my head!

[*Falls back senseless.*]

Harold (raising him). Let Harold serve for Tostig!

Queen.

Harold served

Tostig so ill, he cannot serve for Tostig!
 Ay, raise his head, for thou hast laid it low!
 The sickness of our saintly king, for whom
 My prayers go up as fast as my tears fall,
 I well believe, hath mainly drawn itself
 From lack of Tostig—thou hast banish'd him.

Harold. Nay—but the council, and the king himself.

Queen. Thou hatest him, hatest him.

Harold (coldly).

Ay—Stigand, unriddle

This vision, canst thou?

Stigand.

Dotage!

Edward (starting up).

It is finish'd.

I have built the Lord a house—the Lord hath dwelt
 In darkness. I have built the Lord a house—
 Palms, flowers, pomegranates, golden cherubim
 With twenty-cubit wings from wall to wall—
 I have built the Lord a house—sing, Asaph! clash
 The cymbal, Heman! blow the trumpet, priest!
 Fall, cloud, and fill the house—lo! my two pillars,
 Jachin and Boaz!—

[*Seeing Harold and Gurth.*]

Harold, Gurth,—where am I?

Where is the charter of our Westminster?

Stigand. It lies beside thee, king, upon thy bed.

Edward. Sign, sign at once—take, sign it, Stigand,
Aldred!

Sign it, my good son Harold, Gurth, and Leofwin,
Sign it, my queen!

All. We have sign'd it.

Edward. It is finish'd!

The kingliest Abbey in all Christian lands,
The lordliest, loftiest minster ever built
To Holy Peter in our English isle!

Let me be buried there, and all our kings,
And all our just and wise and holy men
That shall be born hereafter. It is finish'd!

Hast thou had absolution for thine oath? [*To Harold.*]

Harold. Stigand hath given me absolution for it.

Edward. Stigand is not canonical enough
To save thee from the wrath of Norman Saints.

Stigand. Norman enough! Be there no Saints of
England

To help us from their brethren yonder?

Edward. Prelate,

The Saints are one, but those of Normanland
Are mightier than our own. Ask it of Aldred. [*To Harold.*]

Aldred. It shall be granted him, my king; for he
Who vows a vow to strangle his own mother
Is guiltier keeping this, than breaking it.

Edward. O friends, I shall not overlive the day.

Stigand. Why then the throne is empty. Who inherits?
For tho' we be not bound by the king's voice
In making of a king, yet the king's voice
Is much toward his making. Who inherits?
Edgar the Atheling?

Edward. No, no, but Harold.

I love him: he hath served me: none but he
Can rule all England. Yet the curse is on him
For swearing falsely by those blessed bones;
He did not mean to keep his vow.

Harold. Not mean

To make our England Norman.

Edward. There spake Godwin,
Who hated all the Normans : but their Saints
Have heard thee, Harold.

Edith. Oh ! my lord, my king !
He knew not whom he sware by.

Edward. Yea, I know
He knew not, but those heavenly ears have heard,
Their curse is on him ; wilt thou bring another,
Edith, upon his head ?

Edith. No, no, not I.

Edward. Why then, thou must not wed him.

Harold. Wherefore, wherefore ?

Edward. O son, when thou didst tell me of thine
oath,

I sorrow'd for my random promise given
To yon fox-lion. I did not dream then
I should be king.—My son, the Saints are virgins ;
They love the white rose of virginity,
The cold, white lily blowing in her cell :
I have been myself a virgin ; and I sware
To consecrate my virgin here to heaven—
The silent, cloister'd, solitary life,
A life of life-long prayer against the curse
That lies on thee and England.

Harold. No, no, no.

Edward. Treble denial of the tongue of flesh,
Like Peter's when he fell, and thou wilt have
To wail for it like Peter. O my son !
Are all oaths to be broken then, all promises
Made in our agony for help from heaven ?
Son, there is one who loves thee : and a wife,
What matters who, so she be serviceable
In all obedience, as mine own hath been :
God bless thee, wedded daughter.

[*Laying his hand on the Queen's head.*

Queen. Bless thou too
That brother whom I love beyond the rest,
My banish'd Tostig.

Edward. All the sweet Saints bless him !
Spare and forbear him, Harold, if he comes !
And let him pass unscathed ; he loves me, Harold !
Be kindly to the Normans left among us,
Who follow'd me for love ! and dear son, swear
When thou art king, to see my solemn vow
Accomplish'd.

Harold. Nay, dear lord, for I have sworn
Not to swear falsely twice.

Edward. Thou wilt not swear ?

Harold. I cannot.

Edward. Then on thee remains the curse,
Harold, if thou embrace her : and on thee,
Edith, if thou abide it,—

[*The King swoons ; Edith falls and kneels by the couch.*

Stigand. He hath swoon'd !

Death? . . . no, as yet a breath.

Harold. Look up ! look up !
Edith !

Aldred. Confuse her not ; she hath begun
Her life-long prayer for thee.

Aldwyth. O noble Harold,
I would thou couldst have sworn.

Harold. For thine own pleasure ?

Aldwyth. No, but to please our dying king, and
those

Who make thy good their own—all England, Earl.

Aldred. I would thou couldst have sworn. Our holy
king

Hath given his virgin lamb to Holy Church
To save thee from the curse.

Harold. Alas ! poor man,
His promise brought it on me.

Aldred. O good son !
That knowledge made him all the carefuller
To find a means whereby the curse might glance
From thee and England.

Harold. Father, we so loved—

Aldred. The more the love, the mightier is the prayer ;
 The more the love, the more acceptable
 The sacrifice of both your loves to heaven.
 No sacrifice to heaven, no help from heaven ;
 That runs thro' all the faiths of all the world.
 And sacrifice there must be, for the king
 Is holy, and hath talk'd with God, and seen
 A shadowing horror ; there are signs in heaven—

Harold. Your comet came and went.

Aldred. And signs on earth !
 Knowest thou Senlac hill ?

Harold. I know all Sussex ;
 A good entrenchment for a perilous hour !

Aldred. Pray God that come not suddenly ! There is
 one

Who passing by that hill three nights ago—
 He shook so that he scarce could out with it—
 Heard, heard—

Harold. The wind in his hair ?

Aldred. A ghostly horn
 Blowing continually, and faint battle-hymns,
 And cries, and clashes, and the groans of men ;
 And dreadful shadows strove upon the hill,
 And dreadful lights crept up from out the marsh—
 Corpse-candles gliding over nameless graves—

Harold. At Senlac ?

Aldred. Senlac.

Edward (waking). Senlac ! Sanguelac,
 The Lake of Blood !

Stigand. This lightning before death
 Plays on the word,—and Normanizes too !

Harold. Hush, father, hush !

Edward. Thou uncanonical fool,
 Wilt *thou* play with the thunder ? North and South
 Thunder together, showers of blood are blown
 Before a never-ending blast, and hiss
 Against the blaze they cannot quench—a lake,
 A sea of blood—we are drown'd in blood—for God

Has fill'd the quiver, and Death has drawn the bow—
 Sanguelac! Sanguelac! the arrow! the arrow! [Dies.
Stigand. It is the arrow of death in his own heart—
 And our great Council wait to crown thee King.

SCENE II.—IN THE GARDEN. THE KING'S HOUSE
 NEAR LONDON

Edith. Crown'd, crown'd and lost, crown'd King—and
 lost to me!

(*Singing.*)

Two young lovers in winter weather,
 None to guide them,
 Walk'd at night on the misty heather;
 Night, as black as a raven's feather;
 Both were lost and found together,
 None beside them,

That is the burthen of it—lost and found
 Together in the cruel river Swale
 A hundred years ago; and there's another,

Lost, lost, the light of day,

To which the lover answers lovingly

'I am beside thee.'

Lost, lost, we have lost the way.

'Love, I will guide thee.'

Whither, O whither? into the river,
 Where we two may be lost together,
 And lost for ever? 'Oh! never, oh! never,
 Tho' we be lost and be found together.'

Some think they loved within the pale forbidden
 By Holy Church: but who shall say? the truth
 Was lost in that fierce North, where *they* were lost,
 Where all good things are lost, where Tostig lost
 The good hearts of his people. It is Harold!

Enter HAROLD.

Harold the King!

Harold. Call me not King, but Harold.

Edith. Nay, thou art King!

Harold. Thine, thine, or King or churl!

My girl, thou hast been weeping: turn not thou
Thy face away, but rather let me be
King of the moment to thee, and command
That kiss my due when subject, which will make
My kingship kinglier to me than to reign
King of the world without it.

Edith. Ask me not,
Lest I should yield it, and the second curse
Descend upon thine head, and thou be only
King of the moment over England.

Harold. Edith,
Tho' somewhat less a king to my true self
Than ere they crown'd me one, for I have lost
Somewhat of upright stature thro' mine oath,
Yet thee I would not lose, and sell not thou
Our living passion for a dead man's dream;
Stigand believed he knew not what he spake.
Oh God! I cannot help it, but at times
They seem to me too narrow, all the faiths
Of this grown world of ours, whose baby eye
Saw them sufficient. Fool and wise, I fear
This curse, and scorn it. But a little light!—
And on it falls the shadow of the priest;
Heaven yield us more! for better, Woden, all
Our cancell'd warrior-gods, our grim Walhalla,
Eternal war, than that the Saints at peace
The Holiest of our Holiest one should be
This William's fellow-tricksters;—better die
Than credit this, for death is death, or else
Lifts us beyond the lie. Kiss me—thou art not
A holy sister yet, my girl, to fear

There might be more than brother in my kiss,
And more than sister in thine own.

Edith. I dare not.

Harold. Scared by the church—'Love for a whole
life long'

When was that sung?

Edith. Here to the nightingales.

Harold. Their anthems of no church, how sweet they
are!

Nor kingly priest, nor priestly king to cross
Their billings ere they nest.

Edith. They are but of spring,

They fly the winter change—not so with us—

No wings to come and go.

Harold. But wing'd souls flying

Beyond all change and in the eternal distance

To settle on the Truth.

Edith. They are not so true,

They change their mates.

Harold. Do they? I did not know it.

Edith. They say thou art to wed the Lady Aldwyth.

Harold. They say, they say.

Edith. If this be politic,

And well for thee and England—and for her—

Care not for me who love thee.

Gurth (calling). Harold, Harold!

Harold. The voice of Gurth! (*Enter GURTH.*) Good
even, my good brother!

Gurth. Good even, gentle Edith.

Edith. Good even, Gurth.

Gurth. Ill news hath come! Our hapless brother,
Tostig—

He, and the giant King of Norway, Harold
Hardrada—Scotland, Ireland, Iceland, Orkney,
Are landed North of Humber, and in a field
So packt with carnage that the dykes and brooks
Were bridged and damm'd with dead, have overthrown
Morcar and Edwin.

Harold. Well then, we must fight.
How blows the wind?

Gurth. Against St. Valery
And William.

Harold. Well then, we will to the North.

Gurth. Ay, but worse news: this William sent to
Rome,
Swearing thou swarest falsely by his Saints:
The Pope and that Archdeacon Hildebrand
His master, heard him, and have sent him back
A holy gonfalon, and a blessed hair
Of Peter, and all France, all Burgundy,
Poitou, all Christendom is raised against thee;
He hath cursed thee, and all those who fight for thee,
And given thy realm of England to the bastard.

Harold. Ha! ha!

Edith. Oh! laugh not! . . . Strange and ghastly in
the gloom
And shadowing of this double thunder-cloud
That lours on England—laughter!

Harold. No, not strange!
This was old human laughter in old Rome
Before a Pope was born, when that which reign'd
Call'd itself God.—A kindly rendering
Of 'Render unto Cæsar.' 'The Good Shepherd!
'Take this, and render that.

Gurth. They have taken York.

Harold. The Lord was God and came as man—the
Pope
Is man and comes as God.—York taken?

Gurth. Yea,
'Tostig hath taken York!

Harold. To York then. Edith,
Hadst thou been braver, I had better braved
All—but I love thee and thou me—and that
Remains beyond all chances and all churches,
And that thou knowest.

Edith. Ay, but take back thy ring.

It burns my hand—a curse to thee and me.

I dare not wear it.

[*Proffers Harold the ring, which he takes.*

Harold.

But I dare. God with thee!

[*Exeunt Harold and Gurth.*

Edith. The King hath cursed him, if he marry me;
The Pope hath cursed him, marry me or no!
God help me! I know nothing—can but pray
For Harold—pray, pray, pray—no help but prayer,
A breath that fleets beyond this iron world,
And touches Him that made it.

ACT IV

SCENE I.—IN NORTHUMBRIA

ARCHBISHOP ALDRED, MORCAR, EDWIN, *and* Forces.

Enter HAROLD. The standard of the golden Dragon of Wessex preceding him.

Harold. What! are thy people sullen from defeat?
Our Wessex dragon flies beyond the Humber,
No voice to greet it.

Edwin. Let not our great king
Believe us sullen—only shamed to the quick
Before the king—as having been so bruised
By Harold, king of Norway; but our help
Is Harold, king of England. Pardon us, thou!
Our silence is our reverence for the king!

Harold. Earl of the Mercians! if the truth be gall,
Cram me not thou with honey, when our good hive
Needs every sting to save it.

Voices. Aldwyth! Aldwyth!

Harold. Why cry thy people on thy sister's name?

Morcar. She hath won upon our people thro' her beauty,
And pleasantness among them.

Voices. Aldwyth, Aldwyth!

Harold. They shout as they would have her for a queen.

Morcar. She hath followed with our host, and suffer'd all.

Harold. What would ye, men?

Voice. Our old Northumbrian crown,
And kings of our own choosing.

Harold. Your old crown
Were little help without our Saxon carles
Against Hardrada.

Voice. Little! we are Danes,
Who conquer'd what we walk on, our own field.

Harold. They have been plotting here! [*Aside.*

Voice. He calls us little!

Harold. The kingdoms of this world began with little,
A hill, a fort, a city—that reach'd a hand
Down to the field beneath it, 'Be thou mine,'
Then to the next, 'Thou also!' If the field
Cried out 'I am mine own;' another hill
Or fort, or city, took it, and the first
Fell, and the next became an Empire.

Voice. Yet
Thou art but a West Saxon: *we* are Danes!

Harold. My mother is a Dane, and I am English;
There is a pleasant fable in old books,
Ye take a stick, and break it; bind a score
All in one faggot, snap it over knee,
Ye cannot.

Voice. Hear King Harold! he says true!

Harold. Would ye be Norsemen?

Voices. No!

Harold. Or Norman?

Voices. No!

Harold. Snap not the faggot-band then.

Voice. That is true!

Voice. Ay, but thou art not kingly, only grandson
To Wulfnoth, a poor cow-herd.

Harold. This old Wulfnoth
 Would take me on his knees and tell me tales
 Of Alfred and of Athelstan the Great
 Who drove you Danes ; and yet he held that Dane,
 Jute, Angle, Saxon, were or should be all
 One England, for this cow-herd, like my father,
 Who shook the Norman scoundrels off the throne,
 Had in him kingly thoughts—a king of men,
 Not made but born, like the great king of all,
 A light among the oxen.

Voice. That is true !

Voice. Ay, and I love him now, for mine own father
 Was great, and cobbled.

Voice. Thou art Tostig's brother,
 Who wastes the land.

Harold. This brother comes to save
 Your land from waste ; I saved it once before,
 For when your people banish'd Tostig hence,
 And Edward would have sent a host against you,
 Then I, who loved my brother, bad the king
 Who doted on him, sanction your decree
 Of Tostig's banishment, and choice of Morcar,
 To help the realm from scattering.

Voice. King ! thy brother,
 If one may dare to speak the truth, was wrong'd.
 Wild was he, born so : but the plots against him
 Had madden'd tamer men.

Morcar. Thou art one of those
 Who brake into Lord Tostig's treasure-house
 And slew two hundred of his following,
 And now, when Tostig hath come back with power,
 Are frighted back to Tostig.

Old Thane. Ugh ! Plots and feuds !
 This is my ninetieth birthday. Can ye not
 Be brethren ? Godwin still at feud with Alfgar,
 And Alfgar hates King Harold. Plots and feuds !
 This is my ninetieth birthday !

Harold. Old man, Harold

Hates nothing ; not *his* fault, if our two houses
Be less than brothers.

Voices. Aldwyth, Harold, Aldwyth!

Harold. Again! Morcar! Edwin! What do they
mean?

Edwin. So the good king would deign to lend an
ear

Not overscornful, we might chance—perchance—
To guess their meaning.

Morcar. Thine own meaning, Harold,
To make all England one, to close all feuds,
Mixing our bloods, that thence a king may rise
Half-Godwin and half-Alfgar, one to rule
All England beyond question, beyond quarrel.

Harold. Who sow'd this fancy here among the people?

Morcar. Who knows what sows itself among the
people?

A goodly flower at times.

Harold. The Queen of Wales?

Why, Morcar, it is all but duty in her
To hate me ; I have heard she hates me.

Morcar. No!

For I can swear to that, but cannot swear
That these will follow thee against the Norsemen,
If thou deny them this.

Harold. Morcar and Edwin,
When will ye cease to plot against my house?

Edwin. The king can scarcely dream that we, who
know

His prowess in the mountains of the West,
Should care to plot against him in the North.

Morcar. Who dares arraign us, king, of such a plot?

Harold. Ye heard one witness even now.

Morcar. The craven!

There is a faction risen again for Tostig,
Since Tostig came with Norway—fright not love.

Harold. Morcar and Edwin, will ye, if I yield,
Follow against the Norseman?

Morcar. Surely, surely!

Harold. Morcar and Edwin, will ye upon oath
Help us against the Norman?

Morcar. With good will;
Yea, take the Sacrament upon it, king.

Harold. Where is thy sister?

Morcar. Somewhere hard at hand.
Call and she comes. [*One goes out, then enter Aldwyth.*]

Harold. I doubt not but thou knowest
Why thou art summon'd.

Aldwyth. Why?—I stay with these,
Lest thy fierce Tostig spy me out alone,
And flay me all alive.

Harold. Canst thou love one
Who did discrown thine husband, unqueen thee?
Didst thou not love thine husband?

Aldwyth. Oh! my lord,
The nimble, wild, red, wiry, savage king—
That was, my lord, a match of policy.

Harold. Was it?
I knew him brave: he loved his land: he fain
Had made her great: his finger on her harp
(I heard him more than once) had in it Wales,
Her floods, her woods, her hills: had I been his,
I had been all Welsh.

Aldwyth. Oh, ay—all Welsh—and yet
I saw thee drive him up his hills—and women
Cling to the conquer'd, if they love, the more;
If not, they cannot hate the conqueror.
We never—oh! good Morcar, speak for us,
His conqueror conquer'd Aldwyth.

Harold. Goodly news!

Morcar. Doubt it not thou! Since Griffyth's head
was sent
To Edward, she hath said it.

Harold. I had rather
She would have loved her husband. Aldwyth, Aldwyth,
Canst thou love me, thou knowing where I love?

Aldwyth. I can, my lord, for mine own sake, for
thine,
For England, for thy poor white dove, who flutters
Between thee and the porch, but then would find
Her nest within the cloister, and be still.

Harold. Canst thou love one, who cannot love
again?

Aldwyth. Full hope have I that love will answer
love.

Harold. Then in the name of the great God, so
be it!

Come, Aldred, join our hands before the hosts,
That all may see.

[*Aldred joins the hands of Harold and Aldwyth and
blesses them.*]

Voices. Harold, Harold and Aldwyth!

Harold. Set forth our golden Dragon, let him flap
The wings that beat down Wales!
Advance our Standard of the Warrior,
Dark among gems and gold: and thou, brave banner.
Blaze like a night of fatal stars on those
Who read their doom and die.
Where lie the Norsemen? on the Derwent? ay
At Stamford-bridge.
Morcar, collect thy men; Edwin, my friend—
Thou lingerest.—Gurth,—
Last night King Edward came to me in dreams—
The rosy face and long down-silvering beard—
He told me I should conquer:—
I am no woman to put faith in dreams.

(*To his army.*)

Last night King Edward came to me in dreams,
And told me we should conquer.

Voices.

Forward! Forward!

Harold and Holy Cross!

Aldwyth.

The day is won!

SCENE II.—A PLAIN. BEFORE THE BATTLE OF
STAMFORD-BRIDGE

HAROLD *and his Guard.*

Harold. Who is it comes this way? Tostig? (*Enter
TOSTIG with a small force.*) O brother,

What art thou doing here?

Tostig. I am foraging

For Norway's army.

Harold. I could take and slay thee.

Thou art in arms against us.

Tostig. Take and slay me,

For Edward loved me.

Harold. Edward bad me spare thee.

Tostig. I hate King Edward, for he join'd with thee
To drive me outlaw'd. Take and slay me, I say,
Or I shall count thee fool.

Harold. Take thee, or free thee,

Free thee or slay thee, Norway will have war;

No man would strike with Tostig, save for Norway.

Thou art nothing in thine England, save for Norway,

Who loves not thee but war. What dost thou here,

Trampling thy mother's bosom into blood?

Tostig. She hath wear'd me from it with such bitter-
ness.

I come for mine own Earldom, my Northumbria;

Thou hast given it to the enemy of our house.

Harold. Northumbria threw thee off, she will not have
thee,

Thou hast misused her: and, O crowning crime!

Hast murder'd thine own guest, the son of Orm,

Gamel, at thine own hearth.

Tostig. The slow, fat fool!

He draw'd and prated so, I smote him suddenly,

I knew not what I did. He held with Morcar.—

I hate myself for all things that I do.

Harold. And Morcar holds with us. Come back with him. Know what thou dost ; and we may find for thee, So thou be chasten'd by thy banishment, Some easier earldom.

Tostig. What for Norway then ?
He looks for land among us, he and his.

Harold. Seven feet of English land, or something more, Seeing he is a giant.

Tostig. That is noble !
That sounds of Godwin.

Harold. Come thou back, and be .
Once more a son of Godwin.

Tostig (turns away). O brother, brother,
O Harold—

Harold (laying his hand on Tostig's shoulder). Nay then,
come thou back to us !

Tostig (after a pause turning to him). Never shall any
man say that I, that Tostig
Conjured the mightier Harold from his North
To do the battle for me here in England,
Then left him for the meaner ! thee !—
Thou hast no passion for the House of Godwin—
Thou hast but cared to make thyself a king—
Thou hast sold me for a cry.—
Thou gavest thy voice against me in the Council—
I hate thee, and despise thee, and defy thee.
Farewell for ever !

[*Exit.*

Harold. On to Stamford-bridge !

SCENE III. AFTER THE BATTLE OF STAMFORD-
BRIDGE. BANQUET

HAROLD and ALDWYTH. GURTH, LEOFWIN, MORCAR,
EDWIN, and other Earls and Thanes.

Voices. Hail ! Harold ! Aldwyth ! hail, bridegroom and
bride !

Aldwyth (*talking with Harold*). Answer them thou!
Is this our marriage-banquet? Would the wines
Of wedding had been dash'd into the cups
Of victory, and our marriage and thy glory
Been drunk together! these poor hands but sew,
Spin, broider—would that they were man's to have held
The battle-axe by thee!

Harold. There *was* a moment
When being forced aloof from all my guard,
And striking at Hardrada and his madmen
I had wish'd for any weapon.

Aldwyth. Why art thou sad?

Harold. I have lost the boy who play'd at ball with
me,
With whom I fought another fight than this
Of Stamford-bridge.

Aldwyth. Ay! ay! thy victories
Over our own poor Wales, when at thy side
He conquer'd with thee.

Harold. No—the childish fist
That cannot strike again.

Aldwyth. Thou art too kindly.
Why didst thou let so many Norsemen hence?
Thy fierce forekings had clench'd their pirate hides
To the bleak church doors, like kites upon a barn.

Harold. Is there so great a need to tell thee why?

Aldwyth. Yea, am I not thy wife?

Voices. Hail, Harold, Aldwyth!
Bridegroom and bride!

Aldwyth. Answer them! [*To Harold*.

Harold (*to all*). Earls and Thaness!
Full thanks for your fair greeting of my bride!
Earls, Thaness, and all our countrymen! the day,
Our day beside the Derwent will not shine
Less than a star among the goldenest hours
Of Alfred, or of Edward his great son,
Or Athelstan, or English Ironside
Who fought with Knut, or Knut who coming Dane

Died English. Every man about his king
 Fought like a king; the king like his own man,
 No better; one for all, and all for one,
 One soul! and therefore have we shatter'd back
 The hugest wave from Norseland ever yet
 Surged on us, and our battle-axes broken
 The Raven's wing, and dumb'd his carrion croak
 From the gray sea for ever. Many are gone—
 Drink to the dead who died for us, the living
 Who fought and would have died, but happier lived,
 If happier be to live; they both have life
 In the large mouth of England, till *her* voice
 Die with the world. Hail—hail!

Morcar. May all invaders perish like Hardrada!
 All traitors fail like Tostig! [*All drink but Harold.*]

Aldwyth. Thy cup's full!

Harold. I saw the hand of Tostig cover it.
 Our dear, dead, traitor-brother, Tostig, him
 Reverently we buried. Friends, had I been here,
 Without too large self-lauding I must hold
 The sequel had been other than his league
 With Norway, and this battle. Peace be with him!
 He was not of the worst. If there be those
 At banquet in this hall, and hearing me—
 For there be those I fear who prick'd the lion
 To make him spring, that sight of Danish blood
 Might serve an end not English—peace with them
 Likewise, if *they* can be at peace with what
 God gave us to divide us from the wolf!

Aldwyth (aside to Harold). Make not our Morcar
 sullen: it is not wise.

Harold. Hail to the living who fought, the dead who fell!

Voices. Hail, hail!

First Thane. How ran that answer which King Harold
 gave

To his dead namesake, when he ask'd for England?

Leofwin. 'Seven feet of English earth, or something more,
 Seeing he is a giant!'

First Thane. Then for the bastard
Six feet and nothing more!

Leofwin. Ay, but belike
Thou hast not learnt his measure.

First Thane. By St. Edmund
I over-measure him. Sound sleep to the man
Here by dead Norway without dream or dawn!

Second Thane. What is he bragging still that he will come
To thrust our Harold's throne from under him?
My nurse would tell me of a molehill crying
To a mountain 'Stand aside and room for me!'

First Thane. Let him come! let him come. Here's to
him, sink or swim! [*Drinks.*]

Second Thane. God sink him!

First Thane. Cannot hands which had the strength
To shove that stranded iceberg off our shores,
And send the shatter'd North again to sea,
Scuttle his cockle-shell? What's Brunanburg
To Stamford-bridge? a war-crash, and so hard,
So loud, that, by St. Dunstan, old St. Thor—
By God, we thought him dead—but our old Thor
Heard his own thunder again, and woke and came
Among us again, and mark'd the sons of those
Who made this Britain England, break the North:

Mark'd how the war-axe swang,
Heard how the war-horn sang,
Mark'd how the spear-head sprang,
Heard how the shield-wall rang,
Iron on iron clang,
Anvil on hammer bang—

Second Thane. Hammer on anvil, hammer on anvil.
Old dog,
Thou art drunk, old dog!

First Thane. Too drunk to fight with thee!

Second Thane. Fight thou with thine own double, not
with me,
Keep that for Norman William!

First Thane. Down with William !
Third Thane. The washerwoman's brat !
Fourth Thane. The tanner's bastard !
Fifth Thane. The Falaise byblow !

Enter a Thane, from Pevensey, spatter'd with mud.

Harold. Ay, but what late guest,
 As haggard as a fast of forty days,
 And caked and plaster'd with a hundred mires,
 Hath stumbled on our cups ?

Thane from Pevensey. My lord the King !
 William the Norman, for the wind had changed—

Harold. I felt it in the middle of that fierce fight
 At Stamford-bridge. William hath landed, ha ?

Thane from Pevensey. Landed at Pevensey—I am from
 Pevensey—

Hath wasted all the land at Pevensey—
 Hath harried mine own cattle—God confound him !
 I have ridden night and day from Pevensey—
 A thousand ships—a hundred thousand men—
 Thousands of horses, like as many lions
 Neighing and roaring as they leapt to land—

Harold. How oft in coming hast thou broken bread ?

Thane from Pevensey. Some thrice, or so.

Harold. Bring not thy hollowness
 On our full feast. Famine is fear, were it but
 Of being starved. Sit down, sit down, and eat,
 And, when again red-blooded, speak again ;

(Aside.) The men that guarded England to the South
 Were scatter'd to the harvest. . . . No power mine
 To hold their force together. . . . Many are fallen
 At Stamford-bridge . . . the people stupid-sure
 Sleep like their swine . . . in South and North at once
 I could not be.

(Aloud.) Gurth, Leofwin, Morcar, Edwin !

(Pointing to the revellers.) The curse of England ! these
 are drown'd in wassail,

And cannot see the world but thro' their wines!
 Leave them! and thee too, Aldwyth, must I leave—
 Harsh is the news! hard is our honeymoon!
 Thy pardon. (*Turning round to his attendants.*) Break the
 banquet up . . . Ye four!
 And thou, my carrier-pigeon of black news,
 Cram thy crop full, but come when thou art call'd.
[*Exit* Harold.]

ACT V

SCENE I.—A TENT ON A MOUND, FROM WHICH
 CAN BE SEEN THE FIELD OF SENLAC

HAROLD, *sitting*; by him standing HUGH MARGOT the
 Monk, GURTH, LEOFWIN.

Harold. Refer my cause, my crown to Rome! . . .
 The wolf

Mudded the brook and predetermined all.

Monk,

'Thou hast said thy say, and had my constant 'No'
 For all but instant battle. I hear no more.

Margot. Hear me again—for the last time. Arise,
 Scatter thy people home, descend the hill,
 Lay hands of full allegiance in thy Lord's
 And crave his mercy, for the Holy Father
 Hath given this realm of England to the Norman.

Harold. Then for the last time, monk, I ask again
 When had the Lateran and the Holy Father
 To do with England's choice of her own king?

Margot. Earl, the first Christian Cæsar drew to the
 East

To leave the Pope dominion in the West.

He gave him all the kingdoms of the West.

Harold. So!—did he?—Earl—I have a mind to
 play

The William with thine eyesight and thy tongue.

Earl—ay—thou art but a messenger of William.

I am weary—go: make me not wroth with thee!

Margot. Mock-king, I am the messenger of God,
His Norman Daniel! Mene, Mene, Tekel!
Is thy wrath Hell, that I should spare to cry,
Yon heaven is wroth with *thee*? Hear me again!
Our Saints have moved the Church that moves the
world,

And all the Heavens and very God: they heard—
They know King Edward's promise and thine—thine.

Harold. Should they not know free England crowns
herself?

Not know that he nor I had power to promise?
Not know that Edward cancell'd his own promise?
And for *my* part therein—Back to that juggler, [*Rising.*
Tell him the Saints are nobler than he dreams,
Tell him that God is nobler than the Saints,
And tell him we stand arm'd on Senlac Hill,
And hide the doom of God.

Margot. Hear it thro' me.
The realm for which thou art forsworn is cursed,
The babe enwomb'd and at the breast is cursed,
The corpse thou whelme'st with thine earth is cursed,
The soul who fighteth on thy side is cursed,
The seed thou sowest in thy field is cursed,
The steer wherewith thou plowest thy field is cursed,
The fowl that fleeth o'er thy field is cursed,
And thou, usurper, liar—

Harold. Out, beast monk!
[*Lifting his hand to strike him. GURTH stops the blow.*
I ever hated monks.

Margot. I am but a voice
Among you: murder, martyr me if ye will—

Harold. Thanks, Gurth! The simple, silent, selfless
man
Is worth a world of tonguesters. (*To Margot.*) Get thee
gone!

He means the thing he says. See him out safe!

Leofwin. He hath blown himself as red as fire with curses.

An honest fool! Follow me, honest fool,
But if thou blurt thy curse among our folk,
I know not—I may give that egg-bald head
The tap that silences.

Harold. See him out safe.

[*Exeunt Leofwin and Margot.*]

Gurth. Thou hast lost thine even temper, brother
Harold!

Harold. Gurth, when I past by Waltham, my
foundation

For men who serve the neighbour, not themselves,
I cast me down prone, praying; and, when I rose,
They told me that the Holy Rood had lean'd
And bow'd above me; whether that which held it
Had weaken'd, and the Rood itself were bound
To that necessity which binds us down;
Whether it bow'd at all but in their fancy;
Or if it bow'd, whether it symbol'd ruin
Or glory, who shall tell? but they were sad,
And somewhat sadden'd me.

Gurth. Yet if a fear,

Or shadow of a fear, lest the strange Saints
By whom thou swarest, should have power to balk
Thy puissance in this fight with him, who made
And heard thee swear—brother—I have not sworn—
If the king fall, may not the kingdom fall?
But if I fall, I fall, and thou art king;
And, if I win, I win, and thou art king;
Draw thou to London, there make strength to breast
Whatever chance, but leave this day to me.

Leofwin (entering). And waste the land about thee as
thou goest,
And be thy hand as winter on the field,
To leave the foe no forage.

Harold. Noble Gurth!

Best son of Godwin! If I fall, I fall—

The doom of God! How should the people fight
 When the king flies? And, Leofwin, art thou mad?
 How should the King of England waste the fields
 Of England, his own people?—No glance yet
 Of the Northumbrian helmet on the heath?

Leofwin. No, but a shoal of wives upon the heath,
 And someone saw thy willy-nilly nun
 Vying a tress against our golden fern.

Harold. Vying a tear with our cold dews, a sigh
 With these low-moaning heavens. Let her be fetch'd,
 We have parted from our wife without reproach,
 Tho' we have pierced thro' all her practices:
 And that is well.

Leofwin. I saw her even now:
 She hath not left us.

Harold. Nought of Morcar then?

Gurth. Nor seen, nor heard; thine, William's or
 his own
 As wind blows, or tide flows: belike he watches,
 If this war-storm in one of its rough rolls
 Wash up that old crown of Northumberland.

Harold. I married her for Morcar—a sin against
 The truth of love. Evil for good, it seems,
 Is oft as childless of the good as evil
 For evil.

Leofwin. Good for good hath borne at times
 A bastard false as William.

Harold. Ay, if Wisdom
 Pair'd not with Good. But I am somewhat worn,
 A snatch of sleep were like the peace of God.
Gurth, Leofwin, go once more about the hill—
 What did the dead man call it—Sanguelac,
 The lake of blood?

Leofwin. A lake that dips in William
 As well as Harold.

Harold. Like enough. I have seen
 The trenches dug, the palisades uprear'd
 And wattled thick with ash and willow-wands;

Yea, wrought at them myself. Go round once more ;
 See all be sound and whole. No Norman horse
 Can shatter England, standing shield by shield ;
 Tell that again to all.

Gurth. I will, good brother.

Harold. Our guardsman hath but toil'd his hand
 and foot,

I hand, foot, heart and head. Some wine ! (*One pours
 wine into a goblet which he hands to Harold.*)

Too much !

What ? we must use our battle-axe to-day.

Our guardsmen have slept well, since we came in ?

Leofwin. Ay, slept and snored. Your second-sighted
 man

That scared the dying conscience of the king,
 Misheard their snores for groans. They are up again
 And chanting that old song of Brunanburg
 Where England conquer'd.

Harold. That is well. The Norman,
 What is he doing ?

Leofwin. Praying for Normandy ;
 Our scouts have heard the tinkle of their bells.

Harold. And our old songs are prayers for England too !
 But by all Saints—

Leofwin. Barring the Norman !

Harold. Nay,

Were the great trumpet blowing doomsday dawn,
 I needs must rest. Call when the Norman moves—

[*Exeunt all, but Harold.*]

No horse—thousands of horses—our shield wall—
 Wall—break it not—break not—break— [.*Sleeps.*]

Vision of Edward. Son Harold, I thy king, who came
 before

To tell thee thou shouldst win at Stamford-bridge,
 Come yet once more, from where I am at peace,
 Because I loved thee in my mortal day,
 To tell thee thou shalt die on Senlac hill—
 Sanguelac !

Vision of Wulfnoth. O brother, from my ghastly
oubliette

I send my voice across the narrow seas—
No more, no more, dear brother, nevermore—
Sanguelac!

Vision of Tostig. O brother, most unbrotherlike to me,
Thou gavest thy voice against me in my life,
I give my voice against thee from the grave—
Sanguelac!

Vision of Norman Saints. O hapless Harold! King
but for an hour!

Thou swarest falsely by our blessed bones,
We give our voice against thee out of heaven!
Sanguelac! Sanguelac! The arrow! the arrow!

Harold (starting up, battle-axe in hand). Away!
My battle-axe against your voices. Peace!
The king's last word—'the arrow!' I shall die—
I die for England then, who lived for England—
What nobler? men must die.

I cannot fall into a falser world—
I have done no man wrong. Tostig, poor brother,
Art *thou* so anger'd?

Fain had I kept thine earldom in thy hands
Save for thy wild and violent will that wrench'd
All hearts of freemen from thee. I could do
No other than this way advise the king
Against the race of Godwin. Is it possible
That mortal men should bear their earthly heats
Into yon bloodless world, and threaten us thence
Unschool'd of Death? Thus then thou art revenged—

I left our England naked to the South
To meet thee in the North. The Norseman's raid
Hath helpt the Norman, and the race of Godwin
Hath ruin'd Godwin. No—our waking thoughts
Suffer a stormless shipwreck in the pools
Of sullen slumber, and arise again
Disjointed: only dreams—where mine own self
Takes part against myself! Why? for a spark

Of self-disdain born in me when I swear
 Falsely to him, the falser Norman, over
 His gilded ark of mummy-saints, by whom
 I knew not that I swear,—not for myself—
 For England—yet not wholly—

Enter EDITH.

Edith, Edith,
 Get thou into thy cloister as the king
 Will'd it: be safe: the perjury-mongering Count
 Hath made too good an use of Holy Church
 To break her close! There the great God of truth
 Fill all thine hours with peace!—A lying devil
 Hath haunted me—mine oath—my wife—I fain
 Had made my marriage not a lie; I could not:
 Thou art my bride! and thou in after years
 Praying perchance for this poor soul of mine
 In cold, white cells beneath an icy moon—
 This memory to thee!—and this to England,
 My legacy of war against the Pope
 From child to child, from Pope to Pope, from age to age,
 Till the sea wash her level with her shores,
 Or till the Pope be Christ's.

Enter ALDWYTH.

Aldwyth (to Edith). Away from him!

Edith. I will . . . I have not spoken to the king
 One word; and one I must. Farewell! [*Going.*

Harold. Not yet.

Stay.

Edith. To what use?

Harold. The king commands thee, woman!

(*To Aldwyth.*)

Have thy two brethren sent their forces in?

Aldwyth. Nay, I fear not.

Harold. Then there's no force in thee!

Thou didst possess thyself of Edward's ear
 To part me from the woman that I loved!
 Thou didst arouse the fierce Northumbrians!
 Thou hast been false to England and to me!—
 As . . . in some sort . . . I have been false to thee.
 Leave me. No more—Pardon on both sides—Go!

Aldwyth. Alas, my lord, I loved thee.

Harold (bitterly). With a love

Passing thy love for Griffyth! wherefore now
 Obey my first and last commandment. Go!

Aldwyth. O Harold! husband! Shall we meet again?

Harold. After the battle—after the battle. Go.

Aldwyth. I go. (*Aside.*) That I could stab her
 standing there! [*Exit Aldwyth.*

Edith. Alas, my lord, she loved thee.

Harold. Never! never!

Edith. I saw it in her eyes!

Harold. I see it in thine.

And not on thee—nor England—fall God's doom!

Edith. On *thee*? on me. And thou art England!

Alfred

Was England. Ethelred was nothing. England

Is but her king, and thou art Harold!

Harold. Edith,

The sign in heaven—the sudden blast at sea—

My fatal oath—the dead Saints—the dark dreams—

The Pope's Anathema—the Holy Rood

That bow'd to me at Waltham—Edith, if

I, the last English King of England—

Edith. No,

First of a line that coming from the people,

And chosen by the people—

Harold. And fighting for

And dying for the people—

Edith. Living! living!

Harold. Yea so, good cheer! thou art Harold, I am

Edith!

Look not thus wan!

Edith. What matters how I look?
 Have we not broken Wales and Norseland? slain,
 Whose life was all one battle, incarnate war,
 Their giant-king, a mightier man-in-arms
 Than William.

Harold. Ay, my girl, no tricks in him—
 No bastard he! when all was lost, he yell'd,
 And bit his shield, and dash'd it on the ground,
 And swaying his two-handed sword about him,
 Two deaths at every swing, ran in upon us
 And died so, and I loved him as I hate
 This liar who made me liar. If Hate can kill,
 And Loathing wield a Saxon battle-axe—

Edith. Waste not thy might before the battle!

Harold. No,
 And thou must hence. Stigand will see thee safe,
 And so—Farewell. [*He is going, but turns back.*]

The ring thou darest not wear,
 I have had it fashion'd, see, to meet my hand.
 [*Harold shows the ring which is on his finger.*]

Farewell! [*He is going, but turns back again.*]
 I am dead as Death this day to ought of earth's
 Save William's death or mine.

Edith. Thy death!—to-day!
 Is it not thy birthday?

Harold. Ay, that happy day!
 A birthday welcome! happy days and many!
 One—this! [*They embrace.*]
 Look, I will bear thy blessing into the battle
 And front the doom of God.

Norman cries (heard in the distance). Ha Rou! Ha
 Rou!

Enter GURTH.

Gurth. The Norman moves!

Harold. Harold and Holy Cross!
 [*Exeunt Harold and Gurth.*]

Enter STIGAND.

Stigand. Our Church in arms—the lamb the lion—not
Spear into pruning-hook—the counter way—
Cowl, helm; and crozier, battle-axe. Abbot Alfwig,
Leofric, and all the monks of Peterboro'
Strike for the king; but I, old wretch, old Stigand,
With hands too limp to brandish iron—and yet
I have a power—would Harold ask me for it—
I have a power.

Edith. What power, holy father?

Stigand. Power now from Harold to command thee
hence
And see thee safe from Senlac.

Edith. I remain!

Stigand. Yea, so will I, daughter, until I find
Which way the battle balance. I can see it
From where we stand: and, live or die, I would
I were among them!

Canons from Waltham (singing without).

Salva patriam
Sancte Pater,
Salva Fili,
Salva Spiritus,
Salva patriam,
Sancta Mater.¹

Edith. Are those the blessed angels quiring, father?

Stigand. No, daughter, but the canons out of Waltham,
The king's foundation, that have follow'd him.

Edith. O God of battles, make their wall of shields
Firm as thy cliffs, strengthen their palisades!
What is that whirring sound?

Stigand. The Norman arrow!

¹ The *a* throughout these Latin hymns should be sounded broad, as in 'father.'

Edith. Look out upon the battle—is he safe?

Stigand. The king of England stands between his banners.

He glitters on the crowning of the hill.

God save King Harold!

Edith. —chosen by his people

And fighting for his people!

Stigand. There is one

Come as Goliath came of yore—he flings

His brand in air and catches it again,

He is chanting some old warsong.

Edith. And no David

To meet him?

Stigand. Ay, there springs a Saxon on him,

Falls—and another falls.

Edith. Have mercy on us!

Stigand. Lo! our good Gurth hath smitten him to the death.

Edith. So perish all the enemies of Harold!

Canons (singing).

Hostis in Angliam
Ruit prædator,
Illorum, Domine,
Scutum scindatur!
Hostis per Angliæ
Plagas bacchatur;
Casa crematur,
Pastor fugatur
Grex trucidatur—

Stigand. Illos trucidâ, Domine.

Edith. Ay, good father.

Canons (singing).

Illorum scelera
Pœna sequatur!

English cries Harold and Holy Cross! Out! out!

Stigand. Our javelins
 Answer their arrows. All the Norman foot
 Are storming up the hill. The range of knights
 Sit, each a statue on his horse, and wait.
English cries. Harold and God Almighty!
Norman cries. Ha Rou! Ha Rou!

Canons (singing).

Eques cum pedite
 Præpediatur!
 Illorum in lacrymas
 Cruor fundatur!
 Pereant, pereant,
 Anglia precatur.

Stigand. Look, daughter, look.
Edith. Nay, father, look for *me!*
Stigand. Our axes lighten with a single flash
 About the summit of the hill, and heads
 And arms are sliver'd off and splinter'd by
 Their lightning—and they fly—the Norman flies.
Edith. Stigand, O father, have we won the day?
Stigand. No, daughter, no—they fall behind the
 horse—
 Their horse are thronging to the barricades;
 I see the gonfanon of Holy Peter
 Floating above their helmets—ha! he is down!
Edith. He down! Who down?
Stigand. The Norman Count is down.
Edith. So perish all the enemies of England!
Stigand. No, no, he hath risen again—he bares his
 face—
 Shouts something—he points onward—all their horse
 Swallow the hill locust-like, swarming up.
Edith. O God of battles, make his battle-axe keen
 As thine own sharp-dividing justice, heavy
 As thine own bolts that fall on crimeful heads
 Charged with the weight of heaven wherefrom they fall!

Canons (singing).

Jacta tonitrua
 Deus bellator !
 Surgas e tenebris,
 Sis vindicator !
 Fulmina, fulmina
 Deus vastator !

Edith. O God of battles, they are three to one,
 Make thou one man as three to roll them down !

Canons (singing).

Equus cum equite
 Dejiciatur !
 Acies, Acies
 Prona sternatur !
 Illorum lanceas
 Frange Creator !

Stigand. Yea, yea, for how their lances snap and shiver
 Against the shifting blaze of Harold's axe !
 War-woodman of old Woden, how he fells
 The mortal copse of faces ! There ! And there !
 The horse and horseman cannot meet the shield,
 The blow that brains the horseman cleaves the horse,
 The horse and horseman roll along the hill,
 They fly once more, they fly, the Norman flies !

Equus cum equite
 Præcipitatur.

Edith. O God, the God of truth hath heard my cry.
 Follow them, follow them, drive them to the sea !

Illorum scelera
 Pœna sequatur !

Stigand. Truth ! no ; a lie ; a trick, a Norman trick !
 They turn on the pursuer, horse against foot.
 They murder all that follow.

Edith. Have mercy on us!

Stigand. Hot-headed fools—to burst the wall of shields!
They have broken the commandment of the king!

Edith. His oath was broken—O holy Norman Saints,
Ye that are now of heaven, and see beyond
Your Norman shrines, pardon it, pardon it,
That he forswore himself for all he loved,
Me, me and all! Look out upon the battle!

Stigand. They thunder again upon the barricades.
My sight is eagle, but the strife so thick—
This is the hottest of it: hold, ash! hold, willow!

English cries. Out, out!

Norman cries. Ha Rou!

Stigand. Ha! Gurth hath leapt upon him
And slain him: he hath fallen.

Edith. And I am heard.
Glory to God in the Highest! fallen, fallen!

Stigand. No, no, his horse—he mounts another—
wields
His war-club, dashes it on Gurth, and Gurth,
Our noble Gurth, is down!

Edith. Have mercy on us!

Stigand. And Leofwin is down!

Edith. Have mercy on us!

O Thou that knowest, let not my strong prayer
Be weaken'd in thy sight, because I love
The husband of another!

Norman cries. Ha Rou! Ha Rou!

Edith. I do not hear our English war-cry.

Stigand. No.

Edith. Look out upon the battle—is he safe?

Stigand. He stands between the banners with the dead
So piled about him he can hardly move.

Edith (takes up the war-cry). Out! out!

Norman cries. Ha Rou!

Edith (cries out). Harold and Holy Cross!

Norman cries. Ha Rou! Ha Rou!

Edith. What is that whirring sound?

Stigand. The Norman sends his arrows up to Heaven,
They fall on those within the palisade!

Edith. Look out upon the hill—is Harold there?

Stigand. Sanguelac—Sanguelac—the arrow—the arrow!
—away!

SCENE II.—FIELD OF THE DEAD. NIGHT

ALDWYTH *and* EDITH.

Aldwyth. O Edith, art thou here? O Harold,
Harold—

Our Harold—we shall never see him more.

Edith. For there was more than sister in my kiss,
And so the saints were wroth. I cannot love them,
For they are Norman saints—and yet I should—
They are so much holier than their harlot's son
With whom they play'd their game against the king!

Aldwyth. The king is slain, the kingdom overthrown!

Edith. No matter!

Aldwyth. How no matter, Harold slain?—
I cannot find his body. O help me thou!
O Edith, if I ever wrought against thee,
Forgive me thou, and help me here!

Edith. No matter!

Aldwyth. Not help me, nor forgive me?

Edith. So thou saidest.

Aldwyth. I say it now, forgive me!

Edith. Cross me not!

I am seeking one who wedded me in secret.
Whisper! God's angels only know it. Ha!
What art *thou* doing here among the dead?

They are stripping the dead bodies naked yonder,
And thou art come to rob them of their rings!

Aldwyth. O Edith, Edith, I have lost both crown
And husband.

Edith. So have I.

Aldwyth. I tell thee, girl,
I am seeking my dead Harold.

Edith. And I mine !
The Holy Father strangled him with a hair
Of Peter, and his brother Tostig helpt ;
The wicked sister clapt her hands and laugh'd ;
Then all the dead fell on him.

Aldwyth. Edith, Edith—
Edith. What was he like, this husband ? like to thee ?
Call not for help from me. I knew him not.
He lies not here : not close beside the standard.
Here fell the truest, manliest hearts of England.
Go further hence and find him.

Aldwyth. She is crazed !
Edith. That doth not matter either. Lower the light.
He must be here.

Enter two CANONS, OSGOD and ATHELRIC, with torches.
They turn over the dead bodies and examine them as they pass.

Osgod. I think that this is Thurkill.
Athelric. More likely Godric.
Osgod. I am sure this body
Is Alfwig, the king's uncle.

Athelric. So it is !
No, no—brave Gurth, one gash from brow to knee !
Osgod. And here is Leofwin.

Edith. And here is *He* !
Aldwyth. Harold ? Oh no—nay, if it were—my God,
They have so maim'd and murder'd all his face
There is no man can swear to him.

Edith. But one woman !
Look you, we never mean to part again.
I have found him, I am happy.
Was there not someone ask'd me for forgiveness ?
I yield it freely, being the true wife
Of this dead King, who never bore revenge.

Enter COUNT WILLIAM *and* WILLIAM MALET.

William. Who be these women? And what body is this?

Edith. Harold, thy better!

William. Ay, and what art thou?

Edith. His wife!

Malet. Not true, my girl, here is the Queen!
[*Pointing out* Aldwyth.

William (*to* Aldwyth). Wast thou his Queen?

Aldwyth. I was the Queen of Wales.

William. Why then of England. Madam, fear us not.
(*To* Malet.) Knowest thou this other?

Malet. When I visited England,
Some held she was his wife in secret—some—
Well—some believed she was his paramour.

Edith. Norman, thou liest! liars all of you,
Your Saints and all! I am his wife! and she—
For look, our marriage ring!

[*She draws it off the finger of* Harold.
I lost it somehow—

I lost it, playing with it when I was wild.

That bred the doubt! but I am wiser now . . .

I am too wise . . . Will none among you all

Bear me true witness—only for this once—

That I have found it here again? [*She puts it on.*

And thou,

Thy wife am I for ever and evermore.

[*Falls on the body and dies.*

William. Death!—and enough of death for this one
day,

The day of St. Calixtus, and the day,

My day when I was born.

Malet. And this dead king's
Who, king or not, hath kinglike fought and fallen,
His birthday, too. It seems but yestereven
I held it with him in his English halls,

His day, with all his roof-tree ringing 'Harold,'
Before he fell into the snare of Guy ;
When all men counted Harold would be king,
And Harold was most happy.

William.

Thou art half English.

Take them away !

Malet, I vow to build a church to God
Here on the hill of battle ; let our high altar
Stand where their standard fell . . . where these two lie.
Take them away, I do not love to see them.
Pluck the dead woman off the dead man, Malet !

Malet. Faster than ivy. Must I hack her arms off?
How shall I part them ?

William.

Leave them. Let them be !

Bury him and his paramour together.
He that was false in oath to me, it seems
Was false to his own wife. We will not give him
A Christian burial : yet he was a warrior,
And wise, yea truthful, till that blighted vow
Which God avenged to-day.
Wrap them together in a purple cloak
And lay them both upon the waste sea-shore
At Hastings, there to guard the land for which
He did forswear himself—a warrior—ay,
And but that Holy Peter fought for us,
And that the false Northumbrian held aloof,
And save for that chance arrow which the Saints
Sharpen'd and sent against him—who can tell?—
Three horses had I slain beneath me : twice
I thought that all was lost. Since I knew battle,
And that was from my boyhood, never yet—
No, by the splendour of God—have I fought men
Like Harold and his brethren, and his guard
Of English. Every man about his king
Fell where he stood. They loved him : and, pray God
My Normans may but move as true with me
To the door of death. Of one self-stock at first,
Make them again one people—Norman, English ;

And English, Norman ; we should have a hand
To grasp the world with, and a foot to stamp it . . .
Flat. Praise the Saints. It is over. No more blood !
I am king of England, so they thwart me not,
And I will rule according to their laws.

(To Aldwyth). Madam, we will entreat thee with all
honour.

Aldwyth. My punishment is more than I can bear.

BECKET

TO THE LORD CHANCELLOR

THE RIGHT HONOURABLE EARL OF SELBORNE

MY DEAR SELBORNE—To you, the honoured Chancellor of our own day, I dedicate this dramatic memorial of your great predecessor ;—which, altho' not intended in its present form to meet the exigencies of our modern theatre, has nevertheless—for so you have assured me—won your approbation.—Ever yours,
TENNYSON.

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ

HENRY II. (*son of the Earl of Anjou*).

THOMAS BECKET, *Chancellor of England, afterwards Archbishop of Canterbury.*

GILBERT FOLIOT, *Bishop of London.*

ROGER, *Archbishop of York.*

Bishop of Hereford.

HILARY, *Bishop of Chichester.*

JOCELYN, *Bishop of Salisbury.*

JOHN OF SALISBURY } *friends of Becket.*

HERBERT OF BOSHAM }

WALTER MAP. *reputed author of 'Goliath,' Latin poems against the priesthood.*

KING LOUIS OF FRANCE.

GEOFFREY, *son of Rosamund and Henry.*

GRIM, *a Monk of Cambridge.*

SIR REGINALD FITZURSE }

SIR RICHARD DE BRITO } *the four knights of the King's household,*

SIR WILLIAM DE TRACY } *enemies of Becket.*

SIR HUGH DE MORVILLE }

DE BROC OF SALTWOOD CASTLE.

LORD LEICESTER.

PHILIP DE ELEEMOSYNA.

TWO KNIGHT TEMPLARS.

JOHN OF OXFORD (*called the Swearer*).

ELEANOR OF AQUITAINE, *Queen of England (divorced from Louis of France)*.

ROSAMUND DE CLIFFORD.

MARGERY.

Knights, Monks, Beggars, etc.

PROLOGUE

*A Castle in Normandy. Interior of the Hall. Roofs
of a City seen thro' Windows.*

HENRY and BECKET at chess.

Henry. So then our good Archbishop Theobald
Lies dying.

Becket. I am grieved to know as much.

Henry. But we must have a mightier man than he
For his successor.

Becket. Have you thought of one?

Henry. A cleric lately poison'd his own mother,
And being brought before the courts of the Church,
They but degraded him. I hope they whipt him.
I would have hang'd him.

Becket. It is your move.

Henry. Well—there. [*Moves.*]

The Church in the pell-mell of Stephen's time
Hath climb'd the throne and almost clutch'd the crown;
But by the royal customs of our realm
The Church should hold her baronies of me,
Like other lords amenable to law.
I'll have them written down and made the law.

Becket. My liege, I move my bishop.

Henry. And if I live,
No man without my leave shall excommunicate
My tenants or my household.

Becket. Look to your king.

Henry. No man without my leave shall cross the
seas

To set the Pope against me—I pray your pardon.

Becket. Well—will you move?

Henry. There. [*Moves.*

Becket. Check—you move so wildly.

Henry. There then! [*Moves.*

Becket. Why—there then. for you see my bishop

Hath brought your king to a standstill. You are beaten.

Henry (kicks over the board). Why, there then—down
go bishop and king together.

I loathe being beaten; had I fixt my fancy

Upon the game I should have beaten thee,

But that was vagabond.

Becket. Where, my liege? With Phryne,
Or Lais, or thy Rosamund, or another?

Henry. My Rosamund is no Lais, Thomas Becket;
And yet she plagues me too—no fault in her—
But that I fear the Queen would have her life.

Becket. Put her away, put her away, my liege!
Put her away into a nunnery!

Safe enough there from her to whom thou art bound

By Holy Church. And wherefore should she seek

The life of Rosamund de Clifford more

Than that of other paramours of thine?

Henry. How dost thou know I am not wedded to her?

Becket. How should I know?

Henry. That is my secret, Thomas.

Becket. State secrets should be patent to the statesman
Who serves and loves his king, and whom the king
Loves not as statesman, but true lover and friend.

Henry. Come, come, thou art but deacon, not yet
bishop,
No, nor archbishop, nor my confessor yet.

I would to God thou wert, for I should find
An easy father confessor in thee.

Becket. St. Denis, that thou shouldst not. I should beat
Thy kingship as my bishop hath beaten it.

Henry. Hell take thy bishop then, and my kingship too!
Come, come, I love thee and I know thee, I know thee,
A doter on white pheasant-flesh at feasts,
A sauce-deviser for thy days of fish,
A dish-designer, and most amorous
Of good old red sound liberal Gascon wine :

Will not thy body rebel, man, if thou flatter it?

Becket. That palate is insane which cannot tell
A good dish from a bad, new wine from old.

Henry. Well, who loves wine loves woman.

Becket.

So I do.

Men are God's trees, and women are God's flowers ;
And when the Gascon wine mounts to my head,
The trees are all the statchier, and the flowers
Are all the fairer.

Henry. And thy thoughts, thy fancies ?

Becket. Good dogs, my liege, well train'd, and easily
call'd

Off from the game.

Henry. Save for some once or twice,

When they ran down the game and worried it.

Becket. No, my liege, no!—not once—in God's name, no!

Henry. Nay, then, I take thee at thy word—believe
thee

The veriest Galahad of old Arthur's hall.

And so this Rosamund, my true heart-wife,

Not Eleanor—she whom I love indeed

As a woman should be loved—Why dost thou smile

So dolorously ?

Becket. My good liege, if a man

Wastes himself among women, how should he love

A woman, as a woman should be loved ?

Henry. How shouldst thou know that never hast loved
one ?

Come, I would give her to thy care in England
When I am out in Normandy or Anjou.

Becket. My lord, I am your subject, not your——

Henry. Pander.

God's eyes! I know all that—not my purveyor
Of pleasures, but to save a life—her life;
Ay, and the soul of Eleanor from hell-fire.
I have built a secret bower in England, Thomas,
A nest in a bush.

Becket. And where, my liege?

Henry (whispers). Thine ear.

Becket. That's lone enough.

Henry (laying paper on table). This chart here mark'd
'*Her Bower,*'

Take, keep it, friend. See, first, a circling wood,
A hundred pathways running everyway,
And then a brook, a bridge; and after that
This labyrinthine brickwork maze in maze,
And then another wood, and in the midst
A garden and my Rosamund. Look, this line—
The rest you see is colour'd green—but this
Draws thro' the chart to her.

Becket. This blood-red line?

Henry. Ay! blood, perchance, except thou see to her.

Becket. And where is she? There in her English
nest?

Henry. Would God she were—no, here within the
city.

We take her from her secret bower in Anjou
And pass her to her secret bower in England.
She is ignorant of all but that I love her.

Becket. My liege, I pray thee let me hence: a widow
And orphan child, whom one of thy wild barons——

Henry. Ay, ay, but swear to see to her in England.

Becket. Well, well, I swear, but not to please myself.

Henry. Whatever come between us?

Becket. What should come

Between us, Henry?

Henry. Nay—I know not, Thomas.

Becket. What need then? Well—whatever come
between us. [*Going.*

Henry. A moment! thou didst help me to my throne
In Theobald's time, and after by thy wisdom
Hast kept it firm from shaking; but now I,
For my realm's sake, myself must be the wizard
To raise that tempest which will set it trembling
Only to base it deeper. I, true son
Of Holy Church—no croucher to the Gregories
That tread the kings their children underheel—
Must curb her; and the Holy Father, while
This Barbarossa butts him from his chair,
Will need my help—be facile to my hands.
Now is my time. Yet—lest there should be flashes
And fulminations from the side of Rome,
An interdict on England—I will have
My young son Henry crown'd the King of England,
That so the Papal bolt may pass by England,
As seeming his, not mine, and fall abroad.
I'll have it done—and now.

Becket. Surely too young
Even for this shadow of a crown; and tho'
I love him heartily, I can spy already
A strain of hard and headstrong in him. Say,
The Queen should play his kingship against thine!

Henry. I will not think so, Thomas. Who shall crown
him?
Canterbury is dying.

Becket. The next Canterbury.

Henry. And who shall he be, my friend Thomas? Who?

Becket. Name him; the Holy Father will confirm him.

Henry (*lays his hand on Becket's shoulder*). Here!

Becket. Mock me not. I am not even a monk.
Thy jest—no more. Why—look—is this a sleeve
For an archbishop?

Henry. But the arm within
Is Becket's, who hath beaten down my foes.

Becket. A soldier's, not a spiritual arm.

Henry. I lack a spiritual soldier, Thomas—
A man of this world and the next to boot.

Becket. There's Gilbert Foliot.

Henry. He! too thin, too thin.
Thou art the man to fill out the Church robe;
Your Foliot fasts and fawns too much for me.

Becket. Roger of York.

Henry. Roger is Roger of York.
King, Church, and State to him but foils wherein
To set that precious jewel, Roger of York.
No.

Becket. Henry of Winchester?

Henry. Him who crown'd Stephen—
King Stephen's brother! No; too royal for me.
And I'll have no more Anselms.

Becket. Sire, the business
Of thy whole kingdom waits me: let me go.

Henry. Answer me first.

Becket. Then for thy barren jest
Take thou mine answer in bare commonplace—
Nolo episcopari.

Henry. Ay, but *Nolo*
Archiepiscopari, my good friend,
Is quite another matter.

Becket. A more awful one.
Make *me* archbishop! Why, my liege, I know
Some three or four poor priests a thousand times
Fitter for this grand function. *Me* archbishop!
God's favour and king's favour might so clash
That thou and I—— That were a jest indeed!

Henry. Thou angerest me, man: I do not jest.

Enter ELEANOR and SIR REGINALD FITZURSE.

Eleanor (singing). Over! the sweet summer closes,
The reign of the roses is done——

Henry (to Becket, *who is going*). Thou shalt not go.
I have not ended with thee.

Eleanor (*seeing chart on table*). This chart with the red line! her bower! whose bower?

Henry. The chart is not mine, but Becket's: take it, Thomas.

Eleanor. Becket! O—ay—and these chessmen on the floor—the king's crown broken! Becket hath beaten thee again—and thou hast kicked down the board. I know thee of old.

Henry. True enough, my mind was set upon other matters.

Eleanor. What matters? State matters? love matters?

Henry. My love for thee, and thine for me.

Eleanor. Over! the sweet summer closes,
The reign of the roses is done;
Over and gone with the roses,
And over and gone with the sun.

Here; but our sun in Aquitaine lasts longer. I would I were in Aquitaine again—your north chills me.

Over! the sweet summer closes,
And never a flower at the close;
Over and gone with the roses,
And winter again and the snows.

That was not the way I ended it first—but unsymmetrically, preposterously, illogically, out of passion, without art—like a song of the people. Will you have it? The last Parthian shaft of a forlorn Cupid at the King's left breast, and all left-handedness and under-handedness.

And never a flower at the close,
Over and gone with the roses,
Not over and gone with the rose.

True, one rose will outblossom the rest, one rose in a bower. I speak after my fancies, for I am a Troubadour,

you know, and won the violet at Toulouse ; but my voice is harsh here, not in tune, a nightingale out of season ; for marriage, rose or no rose, has killed the golden violet.

Becket. Madam, you do ill to scorn wedded love.

Eleanor. So I do. Louis of France loved me, and I dreamed that I loved Louis of France : and I loved Henry of England, and Henry of England dreamed that he loved me ; but the marriage-garland withers even with the putting on, the bright link rusts with the breath of the first after-marriage kiss, the harvest moon is the ripening of the harvest, and the honeymoon is the gall of love ; he dies of his honeymoon. I could pity this poor world myself that it is no better ordered.

Henry. Dead is he, my Queen ? What, altogether ? Let me swear nay to that by this cross on thy neck. God's eyes ! what a lovely cross ! what jewels !

Eleanor. Doth it please you ? Take it and wear it on that hard heart of yours—there. [*Gives it to him.*]

Henry (puts it on). On this left breast before so hard a heart,

To hide the scar left by thy Parthian dart.

Eleanor. Has my simple song set you jingling ? Nay, if I took and translated that hard heart into our Provençal facilities, I could so play about it with the rhyme—

Henry. That the heart were lost in the rhyme and the matter in the metre. May we not pray you, Madam, to spare us the hardness of your facility ?

Eleanor. The wells of Castaly are not wasted upon the desert. We did but jest.

Henry. There's no jest on the brows of Herbert there. What is it, Herbert ?

Enter HERBERT OF BOSHAM.

Herbert. My liege, the good Archbishop is no more.

Henry. Peace to his soul !

Herbert. I left him with peace on his face—that sweet

other-world smile, which will be reflected in the spiritual body among the angels. But he longed much to see your Grace and the Chancellor ere he past, and his last words were a commendation of Thomas Becket to your Grace as his successor in the archbishoprick.

Henry. Ha, Becket! thou rememberest our talk!

Becket. My heart is full of tears—I have no answer.

Henry. Well, well, old men must die, or the world would grow mouldy, would only breed the past again. Come to me to-morrow. Thou hast but to hold out thy hand. Meanwhile the revenues are mine. A-hawking, a-hawking! If I sit, I grow fat.

[*Leaps over the table, and exit.*]

Becket. He did prefer me to the chancellorship, Believing I should ever aid the Church—
But have I done it? He commends me now
From out his grave to this archbishoprick.

Herbert. A dead man's dying wish should be of weight.

Becket. *His* should. Come with me. Let me learn at full

The manner of his death, and all he said.

[*Exeunt Herbert and Becket.*]

Eleanor. Fitzurse, that chart with the red line—thou sawest it—her bower.

Fitzurse. Rosamund's?

Eleanor. Ay—there lies the secret of her whereabouts, and the King gave it to his Chancellor.

Fitzurse. To this son of a London merchant—how your Grace must hate him.

Eleanor. Hate him? as brave a soldier as Henry and a goodlier man: but thou—dost thou love this Chancellor, that thou hast sworn a voluntary allegiance to him?

Fitzurse. Not for my love toward him, but because he had the love of the King. How should a baron love a beggar on horseback, with the retinue of three kings behind him, outroyalling royalty? Besides, he holp the King to break down our castles, for the which I hate him.

Eleanor. For the which I honour him. Statesman not Churchman he. A great and sound policy that: I could embrace him for it: you could not see the King for the kinglings.

Fitzurse. Ay, but he speaks to a noble as tho' he were a churl, and to a churl as if he were a noble.

Eleanor. Pride of the plebeian!

Fitzurse. And this plebeian like to be Archbishop!

Eleanor. True, and I have an inherited loathing of these black sheep of the Papacy. Archbishop? I can see further into a man than our hot-headed Henry, and if there ever come feud between Church and Crown, and I do not then charm this secret out of our loyal Thomas, I am not Eleanor.

Fitzurse. Last night I followed a woman in the city here. Her face was veiled, but the back methought was Rosamund—his paramour, thy rival. I can feel for thee.

Eleanor. Thou feel for me!—paramour—rival! King Louis had no paramours, and I loved him none the more. Henry had many, and I loved him none the less—now neither more nor less—not at all; the cup's empty. I would she were but his paramour, for men tire of their fancies; but I fear this one fancy hath taken root, and borne blossom too, and she, whom the King loves indeed, is a power in the State. Rival!—ay, and when the King passes, there may come a crash and embroilment as in Stephen's time; and her children—canst thou not—that secret matter which would heat the King against thee (*whispers him and he starts*). Nay, that is safe with me as with thyself: but canst thou not—thou art drowned in debt—thou shalt have our love, our silence, and our gold—canst thou not—if thou light upon her—free me from her?

Fitzurse. Well, Madam, I have loved her in my time.

Eleanor. No, my bear, thou hast not. My Courts of Love would have held thee guiltless of love—the fine attractions and repulses, the delicacies, the subtleties.

Fitzurse. Madam, I loved according to the main purpose and intent of nature.

Eleanor. I warrant thee! thou wouldst hug thy Cupid till his ribs cracked—enough of this. Follow me this Rosamund day and night, whithersoever she goes; track her, if thou canst, even into the King's lodging, that I may (*clenches her fist*)—may at least have my cry against him and her,—and thou in thy way shouldst be jealous of the King, for thou in thy way didst once, what shall I call it, affect her thine own self.

Fitzurse. Ay, but the young colt winced and whinnied and flung up her heels; and then the King came honeying about her, and this Becket, her father's friend, like enough staved us from her.

Eleanor. Us!

Fitzurse. Yea, by the Blessed Virgin! There were more than I buzzing round the blossom—De Tracy—even that flint De Brito.

Eleanor. Carry her off among you; run in upon her and devour her, one and all of you; make her as hateful to herself and to the King, as she is to me.

Fitzurse. I and all would be glad to wreak our spite on the rosefaced minion of the King, and bring her to the level of the dust, so that the King——

Eleanor. Let her eat it like the serpent, and be driven out of her paradise.

ACT I

SCENE I.—BECKET'S HOUSE IN LONDON

Chamber barely furnished. BECKET unrobing. HERBERT OF BOSHAM and SERVANT.

Servant. Shall I not help your lordship to your rest?

Becket. Friend, am I so much better than thyself That thou shouldst help me? Thou art wearied out

With this day's work, get thee to thine own bed.

Leave me with Herbert, friend. [Exit Servant.]

Help me off, Herbert, with this—and this.

Herbert. Was not the people's blessing as we past
Heart-comfort and a balsam to thy blood?

Becket. The people know their Church a tower of
strength,

A bulwark against Throne and Baronage.

Too heavy for me, this; off with it, Herbert!

Herbert. Is it so much heavier than thy Chancellor's
robe?

Becket. No; but the Chancellor's and the Archbishop's
Together more than mortal man can bear.

Herbert. Not heavier than thine armour at Thoulouse?

Becket. O Herbert, Herbert, in my chancellorship
I more than once have gone against the Church.

Herbert. To please the King?

Becket. Ay, and the King of kings,
Or justice; for it seem'd to me but just
The Church should pay her scutage like the lords.

But hast thou heard this cry of Gilbert Foliot

That I am not the man to be your Primate,

For Henry could not work a miracle—

Make an Archbishop of a soldier?

Herbert. Ay,

For Gilbert Foliot held himself the man.

Becket. Am I the man? My mother, ere she bore me,
Dream'd that twelve stars fell glittering out of heaven
Into her bosom.

Herbert. Ay, the fire, the light,
The spirit of the twelve Apostles enter'd
Into thy making.

Becket. And when I was a child,
The Virgin, in a vision of my sleep,
Gave me the golden keys of Paradise. Dream,
Or prophecy, that?

Herbert. Well, dream and prophecy both.

Becket. And when I was of Theobald's household, once—

The good old man would sometimes have his jest—
 He took his mitre off, and set it on me,
 And said, 'My young Archbishop—thou wouldst make
 A stately Archbishop!' Jest or prophecy there?

Herbert. Both, Thomas, both.

Becket. Am I the man? That rang
 Within my head last night, and when I slept
 Methought I stood in Canterbury Minster,
 And spake to the Lord God, and said, 'O Lord,
 I have been a lover of wines, and delicate meats,
 And secular splendours, and a favourer
 Of players, and a courtier, and a feeder
 Of dogs and hawks, and apes, and lions, and lynxes.
 Am I the man?' And the Lord answer'd me,
 'Thou art the man, and all the more the man.'
 And then I asked again, 'O Lord my God,
 Henry the King hath been my friend, my brother,
 And mine uplifter in this world, and chosen me
 For this thy great archbishoprick, believing
 That I should go against the Church with him,
 And I shall go against him with the Church,
 And I have said no word of this to him:
 Am I the man?' And the Lord answer'd me,
 'Thou art the man, and all the more the man.'
 And thereupon, methought, He drew toward me,
 And smote me down upon the Minster floor.
 I fell.

Herbert. God make not thee, but thy foes, fall.

Becket. I fell. Why fall? Why did He smite me?
 What?

Shall I fall off—to please the King once more?
 Not fight—tho' somehow traitor to the King—
 My truest and mine utmost for the Church?

Herbert. Thou canst not fall that way. Let traitor
 be;

For how have fought thine utmost for the Church,
 Save from the throne of thine archbishoprick?
 And how been made Archbishop hadst thou told him,

'I mean to fight mine utmost for the Church,
Against the King'?

Becket. But dost thou think the King
Forced mine election?

Herbert. I do think the King
Was potent in the election, and why not?
Why should not Heaven have so inspired the King?
Be comforted. Thou art the man—be thou
A mightier Anselm.

Becket. I do believe thee, then. I am the man.
And yet I seem appall'd—on such a sudden
At such an eagle-height I stand and see
The rift that runs between me and the King.
I served our Theobald well when I was with him;
I served King Henry well as Chancellor;
I am his no more, and I must serve the Church.
This Canterbury is only less than Rome,
And all my doubts I fling from me like dust,
Winnow and scatter all scruples to the wind,
And all the puissance of the warrior,
And all the wisdom of the Chancellor,
And all the heap'd experiences of life,
I cast upon the side of Canterbury—
Our holy mother Canterbury, who sits
With tatter'd robes. Laics and barons, thro'
The random gifts of careless kings, have graspt
Her livings, her advowsons, granges, farms,
And goodly acres—we will make her whole;
Not one rood lost. And for these Royal customs,
These ancient Royal customs—they *are* Royal,
Not of the Church—and let them be anathema,
And all that speak for them anathema.

Herbert. Thomas, thou art moved too much.

Becket. O Herbert, here
I gash myself asunder from the King,
Tho' leaving each, a wound; mine own, a grief
To show the scar for ever—his, a hate
Not ever to be heal'd.

Enter ROSAMUND DE CLIFFORD, flying from SIR REGINALD FITZURSE. Drops her veil.

Becket. Rosamund de Clifford!

Rosamund. Save me, father, hide me—they follow me
—and I must not be known.

Becket. Pass in with Herbert there.

[*Exeunt Rosamund and Herbert by side door.*]

Enter FITZURSE.

Fitzurse. The Archbishop!

Becket. Ay! what wouldst thou, Reginald?

Fitzurse. Why—why, my lord, I follow'd—follow'd
one——

Becket. And then what follows? Let me follow thee.

Fitzurse. It much imports me I should know her name.

Becket. What her?

Fitzurse. The woman that I follow'd hither.

Becket. Perhaps it may import her all as much
Not to be known.

Fitzurse. And what care I for that?
Come, come, my lord Archbishop; I saw that door
Close even now upon the woman.

Becket. Well?

Fitzurse (making for the door). Nay, let me pass, my
lord, for I must know.

Becket. Back, man!

Fitzurse. Then tell me who and what she is.

Becket. Art thou so sure thou followedst anything?
Go home, and sleep thy wine off, for thine eyes
Glare stupid-wild with wine.

Fitzurse (making to the door). I must and will.
I care not for thy new archbishoprick.

Becket. Back, man, I tell thee! What!
Shall I forget my new archbishoprick

And smite thee with my crozier on the skull?

'Fore God, I am a mightier man than thou.

Fitzurse. It well befits thy new archbishoprick
To take the vagabond woman of the street
Into thine arms!

Becket. O drunken ribaldry!
Out, beast! out, bear!

Fitzurse. I shall remember this.

Becket. Do, and begone! [*Exit Fitzurse.*

[*Going to the door, sees De Tracy.*

Tracy, what dost thou here?

De Tracy. My lord, I follow'd Reginald Fitzurse.

Becket. Follow him out!

De Tracy. I shall remember this
Discourtesy. [*Exit.*

Becket. Do. These be those baron-brutes
That havock'd all the land in Stephen's day.
Rosamund de Clifford.

Re-enter ROSAMUND and HERBERT.

Rosamund. Here am I.

Becket. Why here?

We gave thee to the charge of John of Salisbury,
To pass thee to thy secret bower to-morrow.

Wast thou not told to keep thyself from sight?

Rosamund. Poor bird of passage! so I was; but,
father,

They say that you are wise in winged things,
And know the ways of Nature. Bar the bird
From following the fled summer—a chink—he's out,
Gone! And there stole into the city a breath
Full of the meadows, and it minded me
Of the sweet woods of Clifford, and the walks
Where I could move at pleasure, and I thought
Lo! I must out or die.

Becket. Or out *and* die.
And what hast thou to do with this Fitzurse?

Rosamund. Nothing. He sued my hand. I shook at him.
He found me once alone. Nay—nay—I cannot
Tell you: my father drove him and his friends,
De Tracy and De Brito, from our castle.
I was but fourteen and an April then.
I heard him swear revenge.

Becket. Why will you court it
By self-exposure? flutter out at night?
Make it so hard to save a moth from the fire?

Rosamund. I have saved many of 'em. You catch
'em, so,
Softly, and fling them out to the free air.
They burn themselves *within*-door.

Becket. Our good John
Must speed you to your bower at once. The child
Is there already.

Rosamund. Yes—the child—the child—
O rare, a whole long day of open field.

Becket. Ay, but you go disguised.

Rosamund. O rare again!
We'll baffle them, I warrant. What shall it be?
I'll go as a nun.

Becket. No.

Rosamund. What, not good enough
Even to play at nun?

Becket. Dan John with a nun,
That Map, and these new railers at the Church
May plaister his clean name with scurrilous rhymes!
No!

Go like a monk, cowling and clouding up
That fatal star, thy Beauty, from the squint
Of lust and glare of malice. Good night! good night!

Rosamund. Father, I am so tender to all hardness!
Nay, father, first thy blessing.

Becket. Wedded?

Rosamund. Father!

Becket. Well, well! I ask no more. Heaven bless
thee! hence!

Rosamund. O, holy father, when thou seest him next,
Commend me to thy friend.

Becket. What friend?

Rosamund. The King.

Becket. Herbert, take out a score of armed men
To guard this bird of passage to her cage ;
And watch Fitzurse, and if he follow thee,
Make him thy prisoner. I am Chancellor yet.

[*Exeunt Herbert and Rosamund.*]

Poor soul ! poor soul !
My friend, the King ! . . . O thou Great Seal of England,
Given me by my dear friend the King of England—
We long have wrought together, thou and I—
Now must I send thee as a common friend
To tell the King, my friend, I am against him.
We are friends no more : he will say that, not I.
The worldly bond between us is dissolved,
Not yet the love : can I be under him
As Chancellor ? as Archbishop over him ?
Go therefore like a friend slighted by one
That hath climb'd up to nobler company.
Not slighted—all but moan'd for : thou must go.
I have not dishonour'd thee—I trust I have not ;
Not mangled justice. May the hand that next
Inherits thee be but as true to thee
As mine hath been ! O, my dear friend, the King !
O brother !—I may come to martyrdom.
I am martyr in myself already. — Herbert !

Herbert (re-entering). My lord, the town is quiet, and
the moon

Divides the whole long street with light and shade.
No footfall—no Fitzurse. We have seen her home.

Becket. The hog hath tumbled himself into some
corner,
Some ditch, to snore away his drunkenness
Into the sober headache,—Nature's moral
Against excess. Let the Great Seal be sent
Back to the King to-morrow.

Herbert. Must that be?
The King may rend the bearer limb from limb.
Think on it again.

Becket. Against the moral excess
No physical ache, but failure it may be
Of all we aim'd at. John of Salisbury
Hath often laid a cold hand on my heats,
And Herbert hath rebuked me even now.
I will be wise and wary, not the soldier
As Foliot swears it.—John, and out of breath!

Enter JOHN OF SALISBURY.

John of Salisbury. Thomas, thou wast not happy taking
charge
Of this wild Rosamund to please the King,
Nor am I happy having charge of her—
'The included Danaë has escaped again
Her tower, and her Acrisius—where to seek?
I have been about the city.

Becket. Thou wilt find her
Back in her lodging. Go with her—at once—
'To-night—my men will guard you to the gates.
Be sweet to her, she has many enemies.
Send the Great Seal by daybreak. Both, good night!

SCENE II.—STREET IN NORTHAMPTON LEADING
TO THE CASTLE

ELEANOR'S RETAINERS and BECKET'S RETAINERS *fighting.*

Enter ELEANOR and BECKET from opposite streets.

Eleanor. Peace, fools!

Becket. Peace, friends! what idle brawl is this?

Retainer of Becket. They said—her Grace's people—
thou wast found—

Liar! I shame to quote 'em—caught, my lord,
With a wanton in thy lodging—Hell requite 'em!

Retainer of Eleanor. My liege, the Lord Fitzurse
reported this

In passing to the Castle even now.

Retainer of Becket. And then they mock'd us and we
fell upon 'em,

For we would live and die for thee, my lord,
However kings and queens may frown on thee.

Becket to his Retainers. Go, go—no more of this!

Eleanor to her Retainers. Away!—(*Exeunt Retainers*)
Fitzurse—

Becket. Nay, let him be.

Eleanor. No, no, my Lord Archbishop,
'Tis known you are midwinter to all women,
But often in your chancellorship you served
The follies of the King.

Becket. No, not these follies!

Eleanor. My lord, Fitzurse beheld her in your lodging.

Becket. Whom?

Eleanor. Well—you know—the minion, Rosa-
mund.

Becket. He had good eyes!

Eleanor. 'Then hidden in the street
He watch'd her pass with John of Salisbury
And heard her cry 'Where is this bower of mine?'

Becket. Good ears too!

Eleanor. You are going to the Castle,
Will you subscribe the customs?

Becket. I leave that,
Knowing how much you reverence Holy Church,
My liege, to your conjecture.

Eleanor. I and mine—
And many a baron holds along with me—
Are not so much at feud with Holy Church
But we might take your side against the customs—
So that you grant me one slight favour.

Becket. What?

Eleanor. A sight of that same chart which Henry gave
you.

With the red line—'her bower.'

Becket. And to what end?

Eleanor. That Church must scorn herself whose fearful
Priest

Sits winking at the license of a king,
Altho' we grant when kings are dangerous
The Church must play into the hands of kings ;
Look ! I would move this wanton from his sight
And take the Church's danger on myself.

Becket. For which she should be duly grateful.

Eleanor. True !

Tho' she that binds the bond, herself should see
That kings are faithful to their marriage vow.

Becket. Ay, Madam, and queens also.

Eleanor. And queens also !

What is your drift ?

Becket. My drift is to the Castle,

Where I shall meet the Barons and my King. [*Exit.*

DE BROC, DE TRACY, DE BRITO, DE MORVILLE

(*passing*).

Eleanor. To the Castle ?

De Broc. Ay !

Eleanor. Stir up the King, the Lords !

Set all on fire against him !

De Brito. Ay, good Madam ! [*Exeunt.*

Eleanor. Fool ! I will make thee hateful to thy
King.

Churl ! I will have thee frightened into France,
And I shall live to trample on thy grave.

SCENE III.—THE HALL IN NORTHAMPTON CASTLE

On one side of the stage the doors of an inner Council-Chamber, half-open. At the bottom, the great doors of the Hall.
 ROGER ARCHBISHOP OF YORK, FOLIOT BISHOP OF LONDON, HILARY OF CHICHESTER, BISHOP OF HEREFORD, RICHARD DE HASTINGS (*Grand Prior of Templars*), PHILIP DE ELEEMOSYNA (*the Pope's Almoner*), and others. DE BROC, FITZURSE, DE BRITO, DE MORVILLE, DE TRACY, and other BARONS assembled—a table before them. JOHN OF OXFORD, *President of the Council.*

Enter BECKET and HERBERT OF BOSHAM.

Becket. Where is the King?

Roger of York. Gone hawking on the Nene,
 His heart so gall'd with thine ingratitude,
 He will not see thy face till thou hast sign'd
 These ancient laws and customs of the realm.
 Thy sending back the Great Seal madden'd him,
 He all but pluck'd the bearer's eyes away.
 Take heed, lest he destroy thee utterly.

Becket. Then shalt thou step into my place and sign.

Roger of York. Didst thou not promise Henry to obey
 These ancient laws and customs of the realm?

Becket. Saving the honour of my order—ay.
 Customs, traditions,—clouds that come and go;
 The customs of the Church are Peter's rock.

Roger of York. Saving thine order! But King Henry
 sware

That, saving his King's kingship, he would grant thee
 The crown itself. Saving thine order, Thomas,
 Is black and white at once, and comes to nought.
 O bolster'd up with stubbornness and pride,
 Wilt thou destroy the Church in fighting for it,
 And bring us all to shame?

Becket.

Roger of York,

When I and thou were youths in Theobald's house,
 Twice did thy malice and thy calumnies
 Exile me from the face of Theobald.
 Now I am Canterbury and thou art York.

Roger of York. And is not York the peer of Canterbury?

Did not Great Gregory bid St. Austin here
 Found two archbishopricks, London and York?

Becket. What came of that? The first archbishop fled,

And York lay barren for a hundred years.
 Why, by this rule, Foliot may claim the pall
 For London too.

Foliot. And with good reason too,
 For London had a temple and a priest
 When Canterbury hardly bore a name.

Becket. The pagan temple of a pagan Rome!
 The heathen priesthood of a heathen creed!
 Thou goest beyond thyself in petulancy!
 Who made thee London? Who, but Canterbury?

John of Oxford. Peace, peace, my lords! these
 customs are no longer
 As Canterbury calls them, wandering clouds,
 But by the King's command are written down,
 And by the King's command I, John of Oxford,
 The President of this Council, read them.

Becket. Read!

John of Oxford (reads). 'All causes of advowsons and presentations, whether between laymen or clerics, shall be tried in the King's court.'

Becket. But that I cannot sign: for that would drag
 The cleric before the civil judgment-seat,
 And on a matter wholly spiritual.

John of Oxford. 'If any cleric be accused of felony, the Church shall not protect him; but he shall answer to the summons of the King's court to be tried therein.'

Becket. And that I cannot sign.
 Is not the Church the visible Lord on earth?

Shall hands that do create the Lord be bound
Behind the back like laymen-criminals?

The Lord be judged again by Pilate? No!

John of Oxford. 'When a bishoprick falls vacant, the King, till another be appointed, shall receive the revenues thereof.'

Becket. And that I cannot sign. Is the King's treasury A fit place for the monies of the Church,
That be the patrimony of the poor?

John of Oxford. 'And when the vacancy is to be filled up, the King shall summon the chapter of that church to court, and the election shall be made in the Chapel Royal, with the consent of our lord the King, and by the advice of his Government.'

Becket. And that I cannot sign: for that would make
Our island-Church a schism from Christendom,
And weight down all free choice beneath the throne.

Foliot. And was thine own election so canonical,
Good father?

Becket. If it were not, Gilbert Foliot,
I mean to cross the sea to France, and lay
My crozier in the Holy Father's hands,
And bid him re-create me, Gilbert Foliot.

Foliot. Nay; by another of these customs thou
Wilt not be suffer'd so to cross the seas
Without the license of our lord the King.

Becket. That, too, I cannot sign.

DE BROC, DE BRITO, DE TRACY, FITZURSE, DE
MORVILLE, *start up — a clash of swords.*

Sign and obey!

Becket. My lords, is this a combat or a council?
Are ye my masters, or my lord the King?
Ye make this clashing for no love o' the customs
Or constitutions, or whate'er ye call them,
But that there be among you those that hold
Lands reft from Canterbury.

De Broc. And mean to keep them,
In spite of thee!

Lords (shouting). Sign, and obey the crown!

Becket. The crown? Shall I do less for Canterbury
Than Henry for the crown? King Stephen gave
Many of the crown lands to those that helpt him;
So did Matilda, the King's mother. Mark,
When Henry came into his own again,
Then he took back not only Stephen's gifts,
But his own mother's, lest the crown should be
Shorn of ancestral splendour. This did Henry.
Shall I do less for mine own Canterbury?
And thou, De Broc, that holdest Saltwood Castle——

De Broc. And mean to hold it, or——

Becket. To have my life.

De Broc. The King is quick to anger; if thou anger
him,
We wait but the King's word to strike thee dead.

Becket. Strike, and I die the death of martyrdom;
Strike, and ye set these customs by my death
Ringing their own death-knell thro' all the realm.

Herbert. And I can tell you, lords, ye are all as like
To lodge a fear in Thomas Becket's heart
As find a hare's form in a lion's cave.

John of Oxford. Ay, sheathe your swords, ye will
displease the King.

De Broc. Why down then thou! but an he come to
Saltwood,
By God's death, thou shalt stick him like a calf!

[*Sheathing his sword.*]

Hilary. O my good lord, I do entreat thee—sign.
Save the King's honour here before his barons.
He hath sworn that thou shouldst sign, and now but
shuns

The semblance of defeat; I have heard him say
He means no more; so if thou sign, my lord,
That were but as the shadow of an assent.

Becket. 'Twould seem too like the substance, if I sign'd.

Philip de Eleemosyna. My lord, thine ear! I have
the ear of the Pope.

As thou hast honour for the Pope our master,
Have pity on him, sorely prest upon
By the fierce Emperor and his Antipope.
Thou knowest he was forced to fly to France;
He pray'd me to pray thee to pacify
Thy King; for if thou go against thy King,
Then must he likewise go against thy King,
And then thy King might join the Antipope,
And that would shake the Papacy as it stands.
Besides, thy King swore to our cardinals
He meant no harm nor damage to the Church.
Smooth thou his pride—thy signing is but form;
Nay, and should harm come of it, it is the Pope
Will be to blame—not thou. Over and over
He told me thou shouldst pacify the King,
Lest there be battle between Heaven and Earth,
And Earth should get the better—for the time.
Cannot the Pope absolve thee if thou sign?

Becket. Have I the orders of the Holy Father?

Philip de Eleemosyna. Orders, my lord—why, no; for
what am I?

The secret whisper of the Holy Father.

Thou, that hast been a statesman, couldst thou always
Blurt thy free mind to the air?

Becket. If Rome be feeble, then should I be firm.

Philip. Take it not that way—balk not the Pope's
will.

When he hath shaken off the Emperor,

He heads the Church against the King with thee.

Richard de Hastings (kneeling). Becket, I am the oldest
of the Templars;

I knew thy father; he would be mine age

Had he lived now; think of me as thy father!

Behold thy father kneeling to thee, Becket.

Submit; I promise thee on my salvation

That thou wilt hear no more o' the customs.

Becket.

What!

Hath Henry told thee? hast thou talk'd with him?

Another Templar (kneeling). Father, I am the youngest
of the Templars,

Look on me as I were thy bodily son,
For, like a son, I lift my hands to thee.

Philip. Wilt thou hold out for ever, Thomas Becket?
Dost thou not hear?

Becket (signs). Why—there then—there—I sign,
And swear to obey the customs.

Foliot. Is it thy will,
My lord Archbishop, that we too should sign?

Becket. O ay, by that canonical obedience
Thou still hast owed thy father, Gilbert Foliot.

Foliot. Loyally and with good faith, my lord Archbishop?

Becket. O ay, with all that loyalty and good faith
Thou still hast shown thy primate, Gilbert Foliot.

[*Becket draws apart with Herbert.*

Herbert, Herbert, have I betray'd the Church?

I'll have the paper back—blot out my name.

Herbert. Too late, my lord: you see they are signing
there.

Becket. False to myself—it is the will of God
To break me, prove me nothing of myself!
This Almoner hath tasted Henry's gold.
The cardinals have finger'd Henry's gold.
And Rome is venal ev'n to rottenness.
I see it, I see it.

I am no soldier, as he said—at least
No leader. Herbert, till I hear from the Pope
I will suspend myself from all my functions.
If fast and prayer, the lacerating scourge—

Foliot (from the table). My lord Archbishop, thou hast
yet to seal.

Becket. First, Foliot, let me see what I have sign'd.

[*Goes to the table.*

What, this! and this!—what! new and old together!
Seal? If a seraph shouted from the sun,

And bad me seal against the rights of the Church,
I would anathematise him. I will not seal.

[*Exit with Herbert.*]

Enter KING HENRY.

Henry. Where's Thomas? hath he sign'd? show me
the papers!

Sign'd and not seal'd! How's that?

John of Oxford.

He would not seal.

And when he sign'd, his face was stormy-red—

Shame, wrath, I know not what. He sat down there

And dropt it in his hands, and then a paleness,

Like the wan twilight after sunset, crept

Up even to the tonsure, and he groan'd,

'False to myself! It is the will of God!'

Henry. God's will be what it will, the man shall seal,

Or I will seal his doom. My burgher's son—

Nay, if I cannot break him as the prelate,

I'll crush him as the subject. Send for him back.

[*Sits on his throne.*]

Barons and bishops of our realm of England,

After the nineteen winters of King Stephen—

A reign which was no reign, when none could sit

By his own hearth in peace; when murder common

As nature's death, like Egypt's plague, had fill'd

All things with blood; when every doorway blush'd,

Dash'd red with that unhallow'd passover;

When every baron ground his blade in blood;

The household dough was kneaded up with blood;

The millwheel turn'd in blood; the wholesome plow

Lay rusting in the furrow's yellow weeds,

Till famine dwarf'd the race—I came, your King!

Nor dwelt alone, like a soft lord of the East,

In mine own hall, and sucking thro' fools' ears

The flatteries of corruption—went abroad

'Thro' all my counties, spied my people's ways;

Yea, heard the churl against the baron—yea,

And did him justice ; sat in mine own courts
 Judging my judges, that had found a King
 Who ranged confusions, made the twilight day,
 And struck a shape from out the vague, and law
 From madness. And the event—our fallows till'd,
 Much corn, re-peopled towns, a realm again.
 So far my course, albeit not glassy-smooth,
 Had prosper'd in the main, but suddenly
 Jarr'd on this rock. A cleric violated
 The daughter of his host, and murder'd him.
 Bishops—York, London, Chichester, Westminster—
 Ye haled this tonsured devil into your courts ;
 But since your canon will not let you take
 Life for a life, ye but degraded him
 Where I had hang'd him. What doth hard murder care
 For degradation ? and that made me muse,
 Being bounden by my coronation oath
 To do men justice. Look to it, your own selves !
 Say that a cleric murder'd an archbishop,
 What could ye do ? Degrade, imprison him—
 Not death for death.

John of Oxford. But I, my liege, could swear,
 To death for death.

Henry. And, looking thro' my reign,
 I found a hundred ghastly murders done
 By men, the scum and offal of the Church ;
 Then, glancing thro' the story of this realm,
 I came on certain wholesome usages,
 Lost in desuetude, of my grandsire's day,
 Good royal customs—had them written fair
 For John of Oxford here to read to you.

John of Oxford. And I can easily swear to these as
 being
 The King's will and God's will and justice ; yet
 I could but read a part to-day, because—

Fitzurse. Because my lord of Canterbury ——

De Tracy.

This lord of Canterbury——

Ay,

De Brito. As is his wont
Too much of late whene'er your royal rights
Are mooted in our councils——

Fitzurse. ——made an uproar.

Henry. And Becket had my bosom on all this ;
If ever man by bonds of gratefulness—
I raised him from the puddle of the gutter,
I made him porcelain from the clay of the city—
Thought that I knew him, err'd thro' love of him,
Hoped, were he chosen archbishop, Church and Crown,
Two sisters gliding in an equal dance,
Two rivers gently flowing side by side—
But no !
The bird that moults sings the same song again,
The snake that sloughs comes out a snake again.
Snake—ay, but he that lookt a fangless one,
Issues a venomous adder.
For he, when having dofft the Chancellor's robe—
Flung the Great Seal of England in my face—
Claim'd some of our crown lands for Canterbury—
My comrade, boon companion, my co-reveller,
The master of his master, the King's king.—
God's eyes ! I had meant to make him all but
king.

Chancellor-Archbishop, he might well have sway'd
All England under Henry, the young King,
When I was hence. What did the traitor say ?
False to himself, but ten-fold false to me !
The will of God—why, then it is my will—
Is he coming ?

Messenger (entering). With a crowd of worshippers,
And holds his cross before him thro' the crowd,
As one that puts himself in sanctuary.

Henry. His cross !

Roger of York. His cross ! I'll front him, cross to cross.
[Exit Roger of York.]

Henry. His cross ! it is the traitor that imputes
Treachery to his King !

It is not safe for me to look upon him.

Away—with me!

[*Goes in with his Barons to the Council-Chamber, the door of which is left open.*]

Enter BECKET, *holding his cross of silver before him. The BISHOPS come round him.*

Hereford. The King will not abide thee with thy cross.
Permit me, my good lord, to bear it for thee,
Being thy chaplain.

Becket. No: it must protect me.

Herbert. As once he bore the standard of the Angles,
So now he bears the standard of the angels.

Foliot. I am the Dean of the province: let me bear it.
Make not thy King a traitorous murderer.

Becket. Did not your barons draw their swords
against me?

Enter ROGER OF YORK, *with his cross, advancing to*
BECKET.

Becket. Wherefore dost thou presume to bear thy cross,
Against the solemn ordinance from Rome,
Out of thy province?

Roger of York. Why dost thou presume,
Arm'd with thy cross, to come before the King?
If Canterbury bring his cross to court,
Let York bear his to mate with Canterbury.

Foliot (seizing hold of Becket's cross). Nay, nay, my
lord, thou must not brave the King.
Nay, let me have it. I will have it!

Becket.

Away!

[*Flinging him off.*]

Foliot. He fasts, they say, this mitred Hercules!
He fast! is that an arm of fast? My lord,
Hadst thou not sign'd. I had gone along with thee;
But thou the shepherd hast betray'd the sheep,

And thou art perjured, and thou wilt not seal.
 As Chancellor thou wast against the Church,
 Now as Archbishop goest against the King ;
 For, like a fool, thou know'st no middle way.
 Ay, ay ! but art thou stronger than the King ?

Becket. Strong—not in mine own self, but Heaven ; true
 To either function, holding it ; and thou
 Fast, scourge thyself, and mortify thy flesh,
 Not spirit—thou remainest Gilbert Foliot,
 A worldly follower of the worldly strong.
 I, bearing this great ensign, make it clear
 Under what Prince I fight.

Foliot. My lord of York,
 Let us go in to the Council, where our bishops
 And our great lords will sit in judgment on him.

Becket. Sons sit in judgment on their father !—then
 The spire of Holy Church may prick the graves—
 Her crypt among the stars. Sign ? seal ? I promised
 The King to obey these customs, not yet written,
 Saving mine order ; true too, that when written
 I sign'd them—being a fool, as Foliot call'd me.
 I hold not by my signing. Get ye hence,
 Tell what I say to the King.

[*Exeunt Hereford, Foliot, and other Bishops.*

Roger of York. The Church will hate thee. [*Exit.*

Becket. Serve my best friend and make him my worst
 foe ;

Fight for the Church, and set the Church against me !

Herbert. To be honest is to set all knaves against thee.
 Ah ! Thomas, excommunicate them all !

Hereford (re-entering). I cannot brook the turmoil thou
 hast raised.

I would, my lord Thomas of Canterbury,
 Thou wert plain Thomas and not Canterbury,
 Or that thou wouldst deliver Canterbury
 To our King's hands again, and be at peace.

Hilary (re-entering). For hath not thine ambition set
 the Church

This day between the hammer and the anvil—
Fidelity to the King, obedience to thyself?

Herbert. What say the bishops?

Hilary. Some have pleaded for him,
But the King rages—most are with the King;
And some are reeds, that one time sway to the current,
And to the wind another. But we hold
Thou art forsworn; and no forsworn Archbishop
Shall helm the Church. We therefore place ourselves
Under the shield and safeguard of the Pope,
And cite thee to appear before the Pope,
And answer thine accusers. . . . Art thou deaf?

Becket. I hear you. [Clash of arms.]

Hilary. Dost thou hear those others?

Becket. Ay!

Roger of York (re-entering). The King's 'God's eyes!'
come now so thick and fast,
We fear that he may reave thee of thine own.
Come on, come on! it is not fit for us
To see the proud Archbishop mutilated.
Say that he blind thee and tear out thy tongue.

Becket. So be it. He begins at top with me:
They crucified St. Peter downward.

Roger of York. Nay,
But for their sake who stagger betwixt thine
Appeal, and Henry's anger, yield.

Becket. Hence, Satan!
[Exit Roger of York.]

Fitzurse (re-entering). My lord, the King demands three
hundred marks,
Due from his castles of Berkhamstead and Eye
When thou thereof wast warden.

Becket. Tell the King
I spent thrice that in fortifying his castles.

De Tracy (re-entering). My lord, the King demands
seven hundred marks,
Lent at the siege of Thoulouse by the King.

Becket. I led seven hundred knights and fought his wars.

De Brito (re-entering). My lord, the King demands five hundred marks,
Advanced thee at his instance by the Jews,
For which the King was bound security.

Becket. I thought it was a gift; I thought it was a gift.

Enter LORD LEICESTER (followed by BARONS and BISHOPS).

Leicester. My lord, I come unwillingly. The King Demands a strict account of all those revenues From all the vacant sees and abbacies,
Which came into thy hands when Chancellor.

Becket. How much might that amount to, my lord Leicester?

Leicester. Some thirty—forty thousand silver marks.

Becket. Are these your customs? O my good lord Leicester,

The King and I were brothers. All I had I lavish'd for the glory of the King;
I shone from him, for him, his glory, his Reflection: now the glory of the Church Hath swallow'd up the glory of the King;
I am his no more, but hers. Grant me one day To ponder these demands.

Leicester. Hear first thy sentence!

The King and all his lords——

Becket. Son, first hear *me!*

Leicester. Nay, nay, canst thou, that holdest thine estates

In fee and barony of the King, decline The judgment of the King?

Becket. The King! I hold Nothing in fee and barony of the King. Whatever the Church owns—she holds it in Free and perpetual alms, unsubject to One earthly sceptre.

Leicester. Nay, but hear thy judgment. The King and all his barons——

Becket.

Judgment! Barons!

Who but the bridegroom dares to judge the bride,
Or he the bridegroom may appoint? Not he
That is not of the house, but from the street
Stain'd with the mire thereof.

I had been so true
To Henry and mine office that the King
Would throne me in the great Archbishoprick:
And I, that knew mine own infirmity,
For the King's pleasure rather than God's cause
Took it upon me—err'd thro' love of him.
Now therefore God from me withdraws Himself,
And the King too.

What! forty thousand marks!
Why thou, the King, the Pope, the Saints, the world,
Know that when made Archbishop I was freed,
Before the Prince and chief Justiciary,
From every bond and debt and obligation
Incurr'd as Chancellor.

Hear me, son.

As gold

Outvalues dross, light darkness, Abel Cain,
The soul the body, and the Church the Throne,
I charge thee, upon pain of mine anathema,
That thou obey, not me, but God in me,
Rather than Henry. I refuse to stand
By the King's censure, make my cry to the Pope,
By whom I will be judged; refer myself,
The King, these customs, all the Church, to him,
And under his authority—I depart.

[*Going.*

[*Leicester looks at him doubtingly.*

Am I a prisoner?

Leicester.

By St. Lazarus, no!

I am confounded by thee. Go in peace.

De Broc. In peace now—but after. Take that for
earnest. [*Flings a bone at him from the rushes.*

De Brito, Fitzurse, De Tracy, and others (*flinging wisps
of rushes*). Ay, go in peace, caitiff, caitiff! And that too,

perjured prelate—and that, turncoat shaveling! There, there, there! traitor, traitor, traitor!

Becket. Mannerless wolves. [*Turning and facing them.*]

Herbert. Enough, my lord, enough!

Becket. Barons of England and of Normandy,
When what ye shake at doth but seem to fly,
True test of coward, ye follow with a yell.
But I that threw the mightiest knight of France,
Sir Engelram de Trie,——

Herbert. Enough, my lord.

Becket. More than enough. I play the fool again.

Enter HERALD.

Herald. The King commands you, upon pain of death,
That none should wrong or injure your Archbishop.

Foliot. Deal gently with the young man Absalom.

[*Great doors of the Hall at the back open, and discover
a crowd. They shout:*

Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord!

SCENE IV.—REFECTORY OF THE MONASTERY AT
NORTHAMPTON

A banquet on the Tables.

Enter BECKET. BECKET'S RETAINERS.

1st Retainer. Do thou speak first.

2nd Retainer. Nay, thou! Nay, thou! Hast not
thou drawn the short straw?

1st Retainer. My lord Archbishop, wilt thou permit
us——

Becket. To speak without stammering and like a free
man? Ay.

1st Retainer. My lord, permit us then to leave thy
service.

Becket. When?

1st Retainer. Now.

Becket. To-night?

1st Retainer. To-night, my lord.

Becket. And why?

1st Retainer. My lord, we leave thee not without tears.

Becket. Tears? Why not stay with me then?

1st Retainer. My lord, we cannot yield thee an answer altogether to thy satisfaction.

Becket. I warrant you, or your own either. Shall I find you one? The King hath frowned upon me.

1st Retainer. That is not altogether our answer, my lord.

Becket. No; yet all but all. Go, go! Ye have eaten of my dish and drunken of my cup for a dozen years.

1st Retainer. And so we have. We mean thee no wrong. Wilt thou not say, 'God bless you,' ere we go?

Becket. God bless you all! God redden your pale blood! But mine is human-red; and when ye shall hear it is poured out upon earth, and see it mounting to Heaven, my God bless you, that seems sweet to you now, will blast and blind you like a curse.

1st Retainer. We hope not, my lord. Our humblest thanks for your blessing. Farewell! [*Exeunt Retainers.*]

Becket. Farewell, friends! farewell, swallows! I wrong the bird; she leaves only the nest she built, they leave the builder. Why? Am I to be murdered to-night?

[*Knocking at the door.*]

Attendant. Here is a missive left at the gate by one from the castle.

Becket. Cornwall's hand or Leicester's: they write marvellously alike. [*Reading.*]

'Fly at once to France, to King Louis of France: there be those about our King who would have thy blood.'

Was not my lord of Leicester bidden to our supper?

Attendant. Ay, my lord, and divers other earls and barons. But the hour is past, and our brother, Master Cook, he makes moan that all be a-getting cold.

Becket. And I make my moan along with him. Cold after warm, winter after summer, and the golden leaves, these earls and barons, that clung to me, frosted off me by the first cold frown of the King. Cold, but look how the table steams, like a heathen altar; nay, like the altar at Jerusalem. Shall God's good gifts be wasted? None of them here! Call in the poor from the streets, and let them feast.

Herbert. That is the parable of our blessed Lord.

Becket. And why should not the parable of our blessed Lord be acted again? Call in the poor! The Church is ever at variance with the kings, and ever at one with the poor. I marked a group of lazars in the marketplace—half-rag, half-sore—beggars, poor rogues (Heaven bless 'em) who never saw nor dreamed of such a banquet. I will amaze them. Call them in, I say. They shall henceforward be my earls and barons—our lords and masters in Christ Jesus. [*Exit* Herbert.]

If the King hold his purpose, I am myself a beggar. Forty thousand marks! forty thousand devils—and these craven bishops!

A POOR MAN (entering) with his dog.

My lord Archbishop, may I come in with my poor friend, my dog? The King's verdurer caught him a-hunting in the forest, and cut off his paws. The dog followed his calling, my lord. I ha' carried him ever so many miles in my arms, and he licks my face and moans and cries out against the King.

Becket. Better thy dog than thee. The King's courts would use thee worse than thy dog—they are too bloody. Were the Church king, it would be otherwise. Poor beast! poor beast! set him down. I will bind up his wounds with my napkin. Give him a bone, give him a bone! Who misuses a dog would misuse a child—they cannot speak for themselves. Past help! his paws are past help. God help him!

Enter the BEGGARS (and seat themselves at the Tables).

BECKET and HERBERT wait upon them.

1st Beggar. Swine, sheep, ox—here's a French supper. When thieves fall out, honest men——

2nd Beggar. Is the Archbishop a thief who gives thee thy supper?

1st Beggar. Well, then, how does it go? When honest men fall out, thieves—no, it can't be that.

2nd Beggar. Who stole the widow's one sitting hen o' Sunday, when she was at mass?

1st Beggar. Come, come! thou hadst thy share on her. Sitting hen! Our Lord Becket's our great sitting-hen cock, and we shouldn't ha' been sitting here if the barons and bishops hadn't been a-sitting on the Archbishop.

Becket. Ay, the princes sat in judgment against me, and the Lord hath prepared your table—*Sederunt principes, ederunt pauperes.*

A Voice. Becket, beware of the knife!

Becket. Who spoke?

3rd Beggar. Nobody, my lord. What's that, my lord?

Becket. Venison.

3rd Beggar. Venison?

Becket. Buck; deer, as you call it.

3rd Beggar. King's meat! By the Lord, won't we pray for your lordship!

Becket. And, my children, your prayers will do more for me in the day of peril that dawns darkly and drearily over the house of God—yea, and in the day of judgment also, than the swords of the craven sycophants would have done had they remained true to me whose bread they have partaken. I must leave you to your banquet. Feed, feast, and be merry. Herbert, for the sake of the Church itself, if not for my own, I must fly to France to-night. Come with me. *[Exit with Herbert.]*

3rd Beggar. Here—all of you—my lord's health *(they drink)*. Well—if that isn't goodly wine——

1st Beggar. Then there isn't a goodly wench to serve him with it: they were fighting for her to-day in the street.

3rd Beggar. Peace!

1st Beggar. The black sheep baaed to the miller's
ewe lamb,
The miller's away for to-night.
Black sheep, quoth she, too black a sin
for me.

And what said the black sheep, my masters?

We can make a black sin white.

3rd Beggar. Peace!

1st Beggar. 'Ewe lamb, ewe lamb, I am here by the
dam.'

But the miller came home that night,
And so dusted his back with the meal in
his sack,

That he made the black sheep white.

3rd Beggar. Be we not of the family? be we not
a-supping with the head of the family? be we not in my
lord's own refractory? Out from among us; thou art our
black sheep.

Enter the four KNIGHTS.

Fitzurse. Sheep, said he? And sheep without the
shepherd, too. Where is my lord Archbishop? Thou
the lustiest and lousiest of this Cain's brotherhood, answer.

3rd Beggar. With Cain's answer, my lord. Am I his
keeper? Thou shouldst call him Cain, not me.

Fitzurse. So I do, for he would murder his brother the
State.

3rd Beggar (rising and advancing). No, my lord; but
because the Lord hath set his mark upon him that no man
should murder him.

Fitzurse. Where is he? where is he?

3rd Beggar. With Cain belike, in the land of Nod, or
in the land of France for aught I know.

Fitzurse. France! Ha! De Morville, Tracy, Brito—
fled is he? Cross swords all of you! swear to follow
him! Remember the Queen!

[*The four Knights cross their swords.*]

De Brito. They mock us ; he is here.

[*All the Beggars rise and advance upon them.*

Fitzurse. Come, you filthy knaves, let us pass.

3rd Beggar. Nay, my lord, let *us* pass. We be a-going home after our supper in all humbleness, my lord ; for the Archbishop loves humbleness, my lord ; and though we be fifty to four, we daren't fight you with our crutches, my lord. There now, if thou hast not laid hands upon me ! and my fellows know that I am all one scale like a fish. I pray God I haven't given thee my leprosy, my lord.

[*Fitzurse shrinks from him and another presses upon De Brito.*

De Brito. Away, dog !

4th Beggar. And I was bit by a mad dog o' Friday, an' I be half dog already by this token, that tho' I can drink wine I cannot bide water, my lord ; and I want to bite, I want to bite, and they do say the very breath catches.

De Brito. Insolent clown. Shall I smite him with the edge of the sword ?

De Morville. No, nor with the flat of it either. Smite the shepherd and the sheep are scattered. Smite the sheep and the shepherd will excommunicate thee.

De Brito. Yet my fingers itch to beat him into nothing.

5th Beggar. So do mine, my lord. I was born with it, and sulphur won't bring it out o' me. But for all that the Archbishop washed my feet o' Tuesday. He likes it, my lord.

6th Beggar. And see here, my lord, this rag fro' the gangrene i' my leg. It's humbling—it smells o' human natur'. Wilt thou smell it, my lord ? for the Archbishop likes the smell on it, my lord ; for I be his lord and master i' Christ, my lord.

De Morville. Faugh ! we shall all be poisoned. Let us go. [*They draw back, Beggars following.*

7th Beggar. My lord, I ha' three sisters a-dying at home o' the sweating sickness. They be dead while I be a-supping.

8th Beggar. And I ha' nine darters i' the spital that be

dead ten times o'er i' one day wi' the putrid fever; and I bring the taint on it along wi' me, for the Archbishop likes it, my lord.

[Pressing upon the Knights till they disappear thro' the door.]

3rd Beggar. Crutches, and itches, and leprosies, and ulcers, and gangrenes, and running sores, praise ye the Lord, for to-night ye have saved our Archbishop!

1st Beggar. I'll go back again. I hain't half done yet.

Herbert of Bosham (entering). My friends, the Archbishop bids you good-night. He hath retired to rest, and being in great jeopardy of his life, he hath made his bed between the altars, from whence he sends me to bid you this night pray for him who hath fed you in the wilderness.

3rd Beggar. So we will—so we will, I warrant thee. Becket shall be king, and the Holy Father shall be king, and the world shall live by the King's venison and the bread o' the Lord, and there shall be no more poor for ever. Hurrah! Vive le Roy! That's the English of it.

ACT II

SCENE I.—ROSAMUND'S BOWER

A Garden of Flowers. In the midst a bank of wild-flowers with a bench before it.

Voices heard singing among the trees

Duet

1. Is it the wind of the dawn that I hear in the pine overhead?
2. No; but the voice of the deep as it hollows the cliffs of the land.

1. Is there a voice coming up with the voice of the deep
from the strand,
One coming up with a song in the flush of the glimmering
red?
2. Love that is born of the deep coming up with the sun
from the sea.
1. Love that can shape or can shatter a life till the life
shall have fled?
2. Nay, let us welcome him, Love that can lift up a life
from the dead.
1. Keep him away from the lone little isle. Let us be, let
us be.
2. Nay, let him make it his own, let him reign in it—he,
it is he,
Love that is born of the deep coming up with the sun from
the sea.

Enter HENRY and ROSAMUND.

Rosamund. Be friends with him again—I do beseech
thee.

Henry. With Becket? I have but one hour with thee—
Sceptre and crozier clashing, and the mitre
Grappling the crown—and when I flee from this
For a gasp of freer air, a breathing-while
To rest upon thy bosom and forget him—
Why thou, my bird, thou pipest Becket, Becket—
Yea, thou my golden dream of Love's own bower,
Must be the nightmare breaking on my peace
With 'Becket.'

Rosamund. O my life's life, not to smile
Is all but death to me. My sun, no cloud!
Let there not be one frown in this one hour.
Out of the many thine, let this be mine!
Look rather thou all-royal as when first
I met thee.

Henry. Where was that?

Rosamund. Forgetting that
Forgets me too.

Henry. Nay, I remember it well.
There on the moors.

Rosamund. And in a narrow path.
A plover flew before thee. Then I saw
Thy high black steed among the flaming furze,
Like sudden night in the main glare of day.
And from that height something was said to me
I knew not what.

Henry. I ask'd the way.

Rosamund. I think so.
So I lost mine.

Henry. Thou wast too shamed to answer.

Rosamund. Too scared—so young!

Henry. The rosebud of my rose!—
Well, well, no more of *him*—I have sent his folk,
His kin, all his belongings, overseas;
Age, orphans, and babe-breasting mothers—all
By hundreds to him—there to beg, starve, die—
So that the fool King Louis feed them not.
The man shall feel that I can strike him yet.

Rosamund. Babes, orphans, mothers! is that royal,
Sire?

Henry. And I have been as royal with the Church.
He shelter'd in the Abbey of Pontigny.
There wore his time studying the canon law
To work it against me. But since he cursed
My friends at Veselay, I have let them know,
That if they keep him longer as their guest,
I scatter all their cowls to all the hells.

Rosamund. And is that altogether royal?

Henry. Traitress!

Rosamund. A faithful traitress to thy royal fame.

Henry. Fame! what care I for fame? Spite, ignorance,
envy,
Yea, honesty too, paint her what way they will.
Fame of to-day is infamy to-morrow;
Infamy of to-day is fame to-morrow;
And round and round again. What matters? Royal—

I mean to leave the royalty of my crown
Unlessen'd to mine heirs.

Rosamund. Still—thy fame too :

I say that should be royal.

Henry. And I say,

I care not for thy saying.

Rosamund. And I say,

I care not for *thy* saying. A greater King
Than thou art, Love, who cares not for the word,
Makes 'care not'—care. There have I spoken true?

Henry. Care dwell with me for ever, when I cease
To care for thee as ever !

Rosamund. No need ! no need ! . . .

There is a bench. Come, wilt thou sit? . . . My
bank

Of wild-flowers [*he sits*]. At thy feet !

[*She sits at his feet.*

Henry.

I had them clear

A royal pleasaunce for thee, in the wood,
Not leave these countryfolk at court.

Rosamund. I brought them

In from the wood, and set them here. I love them

More than the garden flowers, that seem at most
Sweet guests, or foreign cousins, not half speaking
The language of the land. I love *them* too,

Yes. But, my liege, I am sure, of all the roses—

Shame fall on those who gave it a dog's name—

This wild one (*picking a briar-rose*)—nay, I shall not prick
myself—

Is sweetest. Do but smell !

Henry. Thou rose of the world !

Thou rose of all the roses !

[*Muttering.*

I am not worthy of her—this beast-body

That God has plunged my soul in—I, that taking

The Fiend's advantage of a throne, so long

Have wander'd among women,—a foul stream

Thro' fever-breeding levels,—at her side,

Among these happy dales, run clearer, drop

The mud I carried, like yon brook, and glass
The faithful face of heaven—

[*Looking at her, and unconsciously aloud,*
—thine! thine!

Rosamund. I know it.

Henry (*muttering*). Not hers. We have but one bond,
her hate of Becket.

Rosamund (*half hearing*). Nay! nay! what art thou
muttering? I hate Becket?

Henry (*muttering*). A sane and natural loathing for a soul
Purer, and truer and nobler than herself;
And mine a bitterer illegitimate hate,
A bastard hate born of a former love.

Rosamund. My fault to name him! O let the hand of
one

To whom thy voice is all her music, stay it
But for a breath. [*Puts her hand before his lips.*

Speak only of thy love.

Why there—like some loud beggar at thy gate—

The happy boldness of this hand hath won it

Love's alms, thy kiss (*looking at her hand*)—Sacred! I'll
kiss it too. [*Kissing it.*

There! wherefore dost thou so peruse it? Nay,

There may be crosses in my line of life.

Henry. Not half *her* hand—no hand to mate with *her*.
If it should come to that.

Rosamund. With her? with whom?

Henry. Life on the hand is naked gipsy-stuff;

Life on the face, the brows—clear innocence!

Vein'd marble—not a furrow yet—and hers [*Muttering.*
Crost and recrost, a venomous spider's web—

Rosamund (*springing up*). Out of the cloud, my Sun
out of the eclipse

Narrowing my golden hour!

Henry. O Rosamund,

I would be true—would tell thee all—and something

I had to say—I love thee none the less—

Which will so vex thee.

Rosamund. Something against *me*?

Henry. No, no, against myself.

Rosamund. I will not hear it.

Come, come, mine hour! I bargain for mine hour.
I'll call thee little Geoffrey.

Henry. Call him!

Rosamund. Geoffrey!

Enter GEOFFREY.

Henry. How the boy grows!

Rosamund. Ay, and his brows are thine;

The mouth is only Clifford, my dear father.

Geoffrey. My liege, what hast thou brought me?

Henry. Venal imp!

What say'st thou to the Chancellorship of England?

Geoffrey. O yes, my liege.

Henry. 'O yes, my liege!' He speaks
As if it were a cake of gingerbread.

Dost thou know, my boy, what it is to be Chancellor of
England?

Geoffrey. Something good, or thou wouldst not give it
me.

Henry. It is, my boy, to side with the King when
Chancellor, and then to be made Archbishop and go
against the King who made him, and turn the world
upside down.

Geoffrey. I won't have it then. Nay, but give it me,
and I promise thee not to turn the world upside down.

Henry (giving him a ball). Here is a ball, my boy, thy
world, to turn anyway and play with as thou wilt—which
is more than I can do with mine. Go try it, play.

[*Exit Geoffrey.*

A pretty lusty boy.

Rosamund. So like to thee;

Like to be liker.

Henry. Not in my chin, I hope!

That threatens double.

Rosamund. Thou art manlike perfect.

Henry. Ay, ay, no doubt; and were I humpt behind,
Thou'dst say as much—the goodly way of women
Who love, for which I love them. May God grant
No ill befall or him or thee when I
Am gone.

Rosamund. Is *he* thy enemy?

Henry. He? who? ay!

Rosamund. Thine enemy knows the secret of my
bower.

Henry. And I could tear him asunder with wild horses
Before he would betray it. Nay—no fear!
More like is he to excommunicate me.

Rosamund. And I would creep, crawl over knife-edge
flint
Barefoot, a hundred leagues, to stay his hand
Before he flash'd the bolt.

Henry. And when he flash'd it
Shrink from me, like a daughter of the Church.

Rosamund. Ay, but he will not.

Henry. Ay! but if he did?

Rosamund. O then! O then! I almost fear to say
That my poor heretic heart would excommunicate
His excommunication, clinging to thee
Closer than ever.

Henry (*raising Rosamund and kissing her*). My brave-
hearted Rose!
Hath he ever been to see thee?

Rosamund. Here? not he.

And it is so lonely here—no confessor.

Henry. Thou shalt confess all thy sweet sins to me.

Rosamund. Besides, we came away in such a heat,
I brought not ev'n my crucifix.

Henry. Take this.

[*Giving her the Crucifix which Eleanor gave him.*]

Rosamund. O beautiful! May I have it as mine, till
mine
Be mine again?

Henry (*throwing it round her neck*). Thine—as I am—
till death!

Rosamund. Death? no! I'll have it with me in my
shroud,

And wake with it, and show it to all the Saints.

Henry. Nay—I must go; but when thou layest thy lip
To this, remembering One who died for thee,
Remember also one who lives for thee

Out there in France; for I must hence to brave
The Pope, King Louis, and this turbulent priest.

Rosamund (*kneeling*). O by thy love for me, all mine
for thee,

Fling not thy soul into the flames of hell:

I kneel to thee—be friends with him again.

Henry. Look, look! if little Geoffrey have not tost
His ball into the brook! makes after it too
To find it. Why, the child will drown himself.

Rosamund. Geoffrey! Geoffrey! [*Exeunt*.]

SCENE II.—MONTMIRAIL

'*The Meeting of the Kings.*' JOHN OF OXFORD and
HENRY. *Crowd in the distance.*

John of Oxford. You have not crown'd young Henry
yet, my liege?

Henry. Crown'd! by God's eyes, we will not have him
crown'd.

I spoke of late to the boy, he answer'd me,

As if he wore the crown already—No,

We will not have him crown'd.

'Tis true what Becket told me, that the mother
Would make him play his kingship against mine.

John of Oxford. Not have him crown'd?

Henry. Not now—not yet! and Becket—

Becket should crown him were he crown'd at all:

But, since we would be lord of our own manor,

This Canterbury, like a wounded deer,
Has fled our presence and our feeding-grounds.

John of Oxford. Cannot a smooth tongue lick him
whole again

To serve your will?

Henry. He hates my will, not me.

John of Oxford. There's York, my liege.

Henry. But England scarce would hold

Young Henry king, if only crown'd by York,
And that would stilt up York to twice himself.

There is a movement yonder in the crowd—
See if our pious—what shall I call him, John?—
Husband-in-law, our smooth-shorn suzerain,
Be yet within the field.

John of Oxford. I will.

[*Exit.*

Henry. Ay! Ay!

Mince and go back! his politic Holiness
Hath all but climb'd the Roman perch again,
And we shall hear him presently with clapt wing
Crow over Barbarossa—at last tongue-free
To blast my realms with excommunication
And interdict. I must patch up a peace—
A piece in this long-tugged-at, threadbare-worn
Quarrel of Crown and Church—to rend again.
His Holiness cannot steer straight thro' shoals,
Nor I. The citizen's heir hath conquer'd me
For the moment. So we make our peace with him.

Enter LOUIS.

Brother of France, what shall be done with Becket?

Louis. The holy Thomas! Brother, you have traffick'd
Between the Emperor and the Pope, between
The Pope and Antipope—a perilous game
For men to play with God.

Henry. Ay, ay, good brother,
They call you the Monk-King.

Louis. Who calls me? she
That was my wife, now yours? You have her Duchy,
The point you aim'd at, and pray God she prove
True wife to you. You have had the better of us
In secular matters.

Henry. Come, confess, good brother,
You did your best or worst to keep her Duchy.
Only the golden Leopard printed in it
Such hold-fast claws that you perforce again
Shrank into France. Tut, tut! did we convene
This conference but to babble of our wives?
They are plagues enough in-door.

Louis. We fought in the East,
And felt the sun of Antioch scald our mail,
And push'd our lances into Saracen hearts.
We never hounded on the State at home
To spoil the Church.

Henry. How should you see this rightly?

Louis. Well, well, no more! I am proud of my
'Monk-King,'

Whoever named me; and, brother, Holy Church
May rock, but will not wreck, nor our Archbishop
Stagger on the slope decks for any rough sea
Blown by the breath of kings. We do forgive you
For aught you wrought against us.

[*Henry holds up his hand.*

Nay, I pray you,
Do not defend yourself. You will do much
To rake out all old dying heats, if you,
At my requesting, will but look into
The wrongs you did him, and restore his kin,
Reseat him on his throne of Canterbury,
Be, both, the friends you were.

Henry. The friends we were!

Co-mates we were, and had our sport together,
Co-kings we were, and made the laws together.
The world had never seen the like before.
You are too cold to know the fashion of it.

Well, well, we will be gentle with him, gracious—
Most gracious.

Enter BECKET, *after him*, JOHN OF OXFORD, ROGER OF
YORK, GILBERT FOLIOT, DE BROU, FITZURSE, *etc.*

Only that the rift he made
May close between us, here I am wholly king,
The word should come from him.

Becket (kneeling). Then, my dear liege,
I here deliver all this controversy
Into your royal hands.

Henry. Ah, Thomas, Thomas,
Thou art thyself again, 'Thomas again.

Becket (rising). Saving God's honour!

Henry. Out upon thee, man!
Saving the Devil's honour, his yes and no.
Knights, bishops, earls, this London spawn—by Mahound,
I had sooner have been born a Mussulman—
Less clashing with their priests—
I am half-way down the slope—will no man stay me?
I dash myself to pieces—I stay myself—
Puff—it is gone. You, Master Becket, you
That owe to me your power over me—
Nay, nay—

Brother of France, you have taken, cherish'd him
Who thief-like fled from his own church by night,
No man pursuing. I would have had him back.
Take heed he do not turn and rend you too:
For whatsoever may displease him—that
Is clean against God's honour—a shift, a trick
Whereby to challenge, face me out of all
My regal rights. Yet, yet—that none may dream
I go against God's honour—ay, or himself
In any reason, choose
A hundred of the wisest heads from England,
A hundred, too, from Normandy and Anjou:
Let these decide on what was customary

In olden days, and all the Church of France
Decide on their decision, I am content.
More, what the mightiest and the holiest
Of all his predecessors may have done
Ev'n to the least and meanest of my own,
Let him do the same to me—I am content.

Louis. Ay, ay! the King humbles himself enough.

Becket. (*Aside*) Words! he will wriggle out of them
like an eel

When the time serves. (*Aloud.*) My lieges and my lords,
The thanks of Holy Church are due to those
That went before us for their work, which we
Inheriting reap an easier harvest. Yet——

Louis. My lord, will you be greater than the Saints,
More than St. Peter? whom——what is it you doubt?
Behold your peace at hand.

Becket. I say that those
Who went before us did not wholly clear
The deadly growths of earth, which Hell's own heat
So dwelt on that they rose and darken'd Heaven.
Yet they did much. Would God they had torn up all
By the hard root, which shoots again; our trial
Had so been less; but, seeing they were men
Defective or excessive, must we follow
All that they overdid or underdid?
Nay, if they were defective as St. Peter
Denying Christ, who yet defied the tyrant,
We hold by his defiance, not his defect.
O good son Louis, do not counsel me,
No, to suppress God's honour for the sake
Of any king that breathes. No, God forbid!

Henry. No! God forbid! and turn me Mussulman!
No God but one, and Mahound is his prophet.
But for your Christian, look you, you shall have
None other God but me—me, Thomas, son
Of Gilbert Becket, London merchant. Out!
I hear no more.

[*Exit.*

Louis. Our brother's anger puts him,

Poor man, beside himself—not wise. My lord,
 We have claspt your cause, believing that our brother
 Had wrong'd you ; but this day he proffer'd peace.
 You will have war ; and tho' we grant the Church
 King over this world's kings, yet, my good lord,
 We that are kings are something in this world,
 And so we pray you, draw yourself from under
 The wings of France. We shelter you no more. [*Exit.*]

John of Oxford. I am glad that France hath scouted
 him at last :

I told the Pope what manner of man he was. [*Exit.*]

Roger of York. Yea, since he flouts the will of either
 realm,

Let either cast him away like a dead dog ! [*Exit.*]

Foliot. Yea, let a stranger spoil his heritage,

And let another take his bishoprick ! [*Exit.*]

De Broc. Our castle, my lord, belongs to Canterbury.

I pray you come and take it. [*Exit.*]

Fitzurse. When you will. [*Exit.*]

Becket. Cursed be John of Oxford, Roger of York,

And Gilbert Foliot ! cursed those De Brocs

That hold our Saltwood Castle from our see !

Cursed Fitzurse, and all the rest of them

That sow this hate between my lord and me !

Voices from the Crowd. Blessed be the Lord Arch-
 bishop, who hath withstood two Kings to their faces for
 the honour of God.

Becket. Out of the mouths of babes and sucklings,
 praise !

I thank you, sons ; when kings but hold by crowns,

The crowd that hungers for a crown in Heaven

Is my true king.

Herbert. Thy true King bad thee be

A fisher of men ; thou hast them in thy net.

Becket. I am too like the King here ; both of us

Too headlong for our office. Better have been

A fisherman at Bosham, my good Herbert,

Thy birthplace—the sea-creek—the petty rill

'That falls into it—the green field—the gray church—
 The simple lobster-basket, and the mesh—
 The more or less of daily labour done—
 The pretty gaping bills in the home-nest
 Piping for bread—the daily want supplied—
 The daily pleasure to supply it.

Herbert. Ah, Thomas,

You had not borne it, no, not for a day.

Becket. Well, maybe, no.

Herbert. But bear with Walter Map,
 For here he comes to comment on the time.

Enter WALTER MAP.

Walter Map. Pity, my lord, that you have quenched
 the warmth of France toward you, tho' His Holiness, after
 much smouldering and smoking, be kindled again upon
 your quarter.

Becket. Ay, if he do not end in smoke again.

Walter Map. My lord, the fire, when first kindled,
 said to the smoke, 'Go up, my son, straight to Heaven.'
 And the smoke said, 'I go;' but anon the North-east took
 and turned him South-west, then the South-west turned
 him North-east, and so of the other winds; but it was in
 him to go up straight if the time had been quieter. Your
 lordship affects the unwavering perpendicular; but His
 Holiness, pushed one way by the Empire and another by
 England, if he move at all, Heaven stay him, is fain to
 diagonalise.

Herbert. Diagonalise! thou art a word-monger.
 Our Thomas never will diagonalise.
 Thou art a jester and a verse-maker.

Diagonalise!

Walter Map. Is the world any the worse for my verses
 if the Latin rhymes be rolled out from a full mouth? or
 any harm done to the people if my jest be in defence of
 the Truth?

Becket. Ay, if the jest be so done that the people

Delight to wallow in the grossness of it,
Till Truth herself be shamed of her defender.

Non defensoribus istis, Walter Map.

Walter Map. Is that my case? so if the city be sick, and I cannot call the kennel sweet, your lordship would suspend me from verse-writing, as you suspended yourself after sub-writing to the customs.

Becket. I pray God pardon mine infirmity.

Walter Map. Nay, my lord, take heart; for tho' you suspended yourself, the Pope let you down again; and tho' you suspend Foliet or another, the Pope will not leave them in suspense, for the Pope himself is always in suspense, like Mahound's coffin hung between heaven and earth—always in suspense, like the scales, till the weight of Germany or the gold of England brings one of them down to the dust—always in suspense, like the tail of the horologe—to and fro—tick-tack—we make the time, we keep the time, ay, and we serve the time; for I have heard say that if you boxed the Pope's ears with a purse, you might stagger him, but he would pocket the purse. No saying of mine—Jocelyn of Salisbury. But the King hath bought half the College of Redhats. He warmed to you to-day, and you have chilled him again. Yet you both love God. Agree with him quickly again, even for the sake of the Church. My one grain of good counsel which you will not swallow. I hate a split between old friendships as I hate the dirty gap in the face of a Cistercian monk, that will swallow anything. Farewell.

[*L.vit.*

Becket. Map scoffs at Rome. I all but hold with
Map.

Save for myself no Rome were left in England,
All had been his. Why should this Rome, this Rome,
Still choose Barabbas rather than the Christ,
Absolve the left hand thief and damn the right?
Take fees of tyranny, wink at sacrilege,
Which even Peter had not dared? condemn
The blameless exile?—

Herbert. Thee, thou holy Thomas!
I would that thou hadst been the Holy Father.

Becket. I would have done my most to keep Rome
holy,
I would have made Rome know she still is Rome—
Who stands aghast at her eternal self
And shakes at mortal kings—her vacillation,
Avarice, craft—O God, how many an innocent
Has left his bones upon the way to Rome
Unwept, uncared for. Yea—on mine own self
The King had had no power except for Rome.
'Tis not the King who is guilty of mine exile,
But Rome, Rome, Rome!

Herbert. My lord, I see this Louis
Returning, ah! to drive thee from his realm.

Becket. He said as much before. Thou art no prophet,
Nor yet a prophet's son.

Herbert. Whatever he say,
Deny not thou God's honour for a king.
The King looks troubled.

Re-enter KING LOUIS.

Louis. My dear lord Archbishop,
I learn but now that those poor Poitevins,
That in thy cause were stirr'd against King Henry,
Have been, despite his kingly promise given
To our own self of pardon, evilly used
And put to pain. I have lost all trust in him.
The Church alone hath eyes—and now I see
That I was blind—suffer the phrase—surrendering
God's honour to the pleasure of a man.
Forgive me and absolve me, holy father. [*Kneels.*

Becket. Son, I absolve thee in the name of God.

Louis (rising). Return to Sens, where we will care for
you.

The wine and wealth of all our France are yours;
Rest in our realm, and be at peace with all. [*Exeunt.*

Voices from the Crowd. Long live the good King Louis!
God bless the great Archbishop!

Re-enter HENRY and JOHN OF OXFORD.

Henry (looking after King Louis and Becket). Ay, there
they go—both backs are turn'd to me—
Why then I strike into my former path
For England, crown young Henry there, and make
Our waning Eleanor all but love me!

John,
Thou hast served me heretofore with Rome—and well.
They call thee John the Swearer.

John of Oxford. For this reason,
That, being ever duteous to the King,
I evermore have sworn upon his side,
And ever mean to do it.

Henry (claps him on the shoulder). Honest John!
To Rome again! the storm begins again.
Spare not thy tongue! be lavish with our coins,
Threaten our junction with the Emperor—flatter
And fright the Pope—bribe all the Cardinals—leave
Lateran and Vatican in one dust of gold—
Swear and unswear, state and misstate thy best!
I go to have young Henry crown'd by York.

ACT III

SCENE I.—THE BOWER

HENRY and ROSAMUND.

Henry. All that you say is just. I cannot answer it
Till better times, when I shall put away——

Rosamund. What will you put away?

Henry. That which you ask me
Till better times. Let it content you now
There is no woman that I love so well.

Rosamund. No woman but should be content with
that—

Henry. And one fair child to fondle !

Rosamund. O yes, the child
We waited for so long—heaven's gift at last—
And how you doated on him then ! To-day
I almost fear'd your kiss was colder—yes—
But then the child *is* such a child. What chance
That he should ever spread into the man
Here in our silence ? I have done my best
I am not learn'd.

Henry. I am the King, his father,
And I will look to it. Is our secret ours ?
Have you had any alarm ? no stranger ?

Rosamund. No.
The warder of the bower hath given himself
Of late to wine. I sometimes think he sleeps
When he should watch ; and yet what fear ? the people
Believe the wood enchanted. No one comes,
Nor foe nor friend ; his fond excess of wine
Springs from the loneliness of my poor bower,
Which weighs even on me.

Henry. Yet these tree-towers,
Their long bird-echoing minster-aisles,—the voice
Of the perpetual brook, these golden slopes
Of Solomon-shaming flowers—that was your saying,
All pleased you so at first.

Rosamund. Not now so much.
My Anjou bower was scarce as beautiful.
But you were oftener there. I have none but you.
The brook's voice is not yours, and no flower, not
The sun himself, should he be changed to one,
Could shine away the darkness of that gap
Left by the lack of love.

Henry. The lack of love !

Rosamund. Of one we love. Nay, I would not be bold,
Yet hoped ere this you might——

[*Looks earnestly at him.*

Henry. Anything further?

Rosamund. Only my best bower-maiden died of late,
And that old priest whom John of Salisbury trusted
Hath sent another.

Henry. Secret?

Rosamund. I but ask'd her
One question, and she prim'd her mouth and put
Her hands together—thus—and said, God help her,
That she was sworn to silence.

Henry. What did you ask her?

Rosamund. Some daily something-nothing.

Henry. Secret, then?

Rosamund. I do not love her. Must you go, my liege,
So suddenly?

Henry. I came to England suddenly,
And on a great occasion sure to wake
As great a wrath in Becket——

Rosamund. Always Becket!
He always comes between us.

Henry. —And to meet it
I needs must leave as suddenly. It is raining,
Put on your hood and see me to the bounds. [*Exeunt.*

Margery (singing behind scene).

Babble in bower
Under the rose!
Bee mustn't buzz,
Whoop—but he knows.

Kiss me, little one,
Nobody near!
Grasshopper, grasshopper,
Whoop—you can hear.

Kiss in the bower,
Tit on the tree!
Bird mustn't tell,
Whoop—he can see.

Enter MARGERY.

I ha' been but a week here and I ha' seen what I ha' seen, for to be sure it's no more than a week since our old Father Philip that has confessed our mother for twenty years, and she was hard put to it, and to speak truth, nigh at the end of our last crust, and that mouldy, and she cried out on him to put me forth in the world and to make me a woman of the world, and to win my own bread, whereupon he asked our mother if I could keep a quiet tongue i' my head, and not speak till I was spoke to, and I answered for myself that I never spoke more than was needed, and he told me he would advance me to the service of a great lady, and took me ever so far away, and gave me a great pat o' the cheek for a pretty wench, and said it was a pity to blindfold such eyes as mine, and such to be sure they be, but he blinded 'em for all that, and so brought me no-hows as I may say, and the more shame to him after his promise, into a garden and not into the world, and bad me whatever I saw not to speak one word, an' it 'ud be well for me in the end, for there were great ones who would look after me, and to be sure I ha' seen great ones to-day—and then not to speak one word, for that's the rule o' the garden, tho' to be sure if I had been Eve i' the garden I shouldn't ha' minded the apple, for what's an apple, you know, save to a child, and I'm no child, but more a woman o' the world than my lady here, and I ha' seen what I ha' seen—tho' to be sure if I hadn't minded it we should all on us ha' had to go, bless the Saints, wi' bare backs, but the backs 'ud ha' countenanced one another, and belike it 'ud ha' been always summer, and anyhow I am as well-shaped as my lady here, and I ha' seen what I ha' seen, and what's the good

of my talking to myself, for here comes my lady (*enter Rosamund*), and, my lady, tho' I shouldn't speak one word, I wish you joy o' the King's brother.

Rosamund. What is it you mean?

Margery. I mean your goodman, your husband, my lady, for I saw your ladyship a-parting wi' him even now i' the coppice, when I was a-getting o' bluebells for your ladyship's nose to smell on—and I ha' seen the King once at Oxford, and he's as like the King as fingernail to fingernail, and I thought at first it was the King, only you know the King's married, for King Louis——

Rosamund. Married!

Margery. Years and years, my lady, for her husband, King Louis——

Rosamund. Hush!

Margery. —And I thought if it were the King's brother he had a better bride than the King, for the people do say that his is bad beyond all reckoning, and——

Rosamund. The people lie.

Margery. Very like, my lady, but most on 'em know an honest woman and a lady when they see her, and besides they say, she makes songs, and that's against her, for I never knew an honest woman that could make songs, tho' to be sure our mother 'ill sing me old songs by the hour, but then, God help her, she had 'em from her mother, and her mother from her mother back and back for ever so long, but none on 'em ever made songs, and they were all honest.

Rosamund. Go, you shall tell me of her some other time.

Margery. There's none so much to tell on her, my lady, only she kept the seventh commandment better than some I know on, or I couldn't look your ladyship i' the face, and she brew'd the best ale in all Glo'ster, that is to say in her time when she had the 'Crown.'

Rosamund. The crown! who?

Margery. Mother.

Rosamund. I mean her whom you call—fancy—my husband's brother's wife.

Margery. Oh, Queen Eleanor. Yes, my lady; and tho' I be sworn not to speak a word, I can tell you all about her, if—

Rosamund. No word now. I am faint and sleepy. Leave me. Nay—go. What! will you anger me?

[*Exit Margery.*

He charged me not to question any of those
About me. Have I? no! she question'd *me*.
Did she not slander *him*? Should she stay here?
May she not tempt me, being at my side,
'To question *her*? Nay, can I send her hence
Without his kingly leave? I am in the dark.
I have lived, poor bird, from cage to cage, and known
Nothing but him—happy to know no more,
So that he loved me—and he loves me—yes,
And bound me by his love to secrecy
'Till his own time.

Eleanor, Eleanor, have I
Not heard ill things of her in France? Oh, she's
The Queen of France. I see it—some confusion,
Some strange mistake. I did not hear aright,
Myself confused with parting from the King.

Margery (behind scene). Bee mustn't buzz,
Whoop—but he knows.

Rosamund. Yet her—what her? he hinted of some
her—
When he was here before—
Something that would displease me. Hath he stray'd
From love's clear path into the common bush.
And, being scratch'd, returns to his true rose,
Who hath not thorn enough to prick him for it,
Ev'n with a word?

Margery (behind scene). Bird mustn't tell,
Whoop—he can see.

Rosamund. I would not hear him. Nay—there's
more—he frown'd

'No mate for her, if it should come to that'—
To that—to what?

Margery (behind scene). Whoop—but he knows,
Whoop—but he knows.

Rosamund. O God! some dreadful truth is breaking
on me—
Some dreadful thing is coming on me.

[*Enter Geoffrey.*
Geoffrey!

Geoffrey. What are you crying for, when the sun
shines?

Rosamund. Hath not thy father left us to ourselves?

Geoffrey. Ay, but he's taken the rain with him. I
hear Margery: I'll go play with her. [*Exit Geoffrey.*

Rosamund. Rainbow, stay,
Gleam upon gloom,
Bright as my dream,
Rainbow, stay!
But it passes away,
Gloom upon gleam,
Dark as my doom—
O rainbow stay.

SCENE II.—OUTSIDE THE WOODS NEAR ROSAMUND'S
BOWER

ELEANOR. FITZURSE.

Eleanor. Up from the salt lips of the land we two
Have track'd the King to this dark inland wood;
And somewhere hereabouts he vanish'd. Here
His turtle builds; his exit is our adit:
Watch! he will out again, and presently,
Seeing he must to Westminster and crown
Young Henry there to-morrow.

Fitzurse.

We have watch'd

So long in vain, he hath pass'd out again,
 And on the other side. [*A great horn winded.*
 Hark! Madam!

Eleanor. Ay,
 How ghostly sounds that horn in the black wood!
 [*A countryman flying.*
 Whither away, man? what are you flying from?

Countryman. The witch! the witch! she sits naked
 by a great heap of gold in the middle of the wood, and
 when the horn sounds she comes out as a wolf. Get
 you hence! a man passed in there to-day: I holla'd
 to him, but he didn't hear me: he'll never out again,
 the witch has got him. I daren't stay—I daren't
 stay!

Eleanor. Kind of the witch to give thee warning tho'.
 [*Man flies.*

Is not this wood-witch of the rustic's fear
 Our woodland Circe that hath witch'd the King?
 [*Horn sounded. Another flying.*

Fitzurse. Again! stay, fool, and tell me why thou
 fliest.

Countryman. Fly thou too. The King keeps his
 forest head of game here, and when that horn sounds, a
 score of wolf-dogs are let loose that will tear thee piece-
 meal. Linger not till the third horn. Fly! [*Exit.*

Eleanor. This is the likelier tale. We have hit the
 place.

Now let the King's fine game look to itself. [*Horn.*

Fitzurse. Again!—

And far on in the dark heart of the wood
 I hear the yelping of the hounds of hell.

Eleanor. I have my dagger here to still their throats.

Fitzurse. Nay, Madam, not to-night—the night is
 falling.

What can be done to-night?

Eleanor. Well—well—away.

SCENE III. — TRAITOR'S MEADOW AT FRÉTEVAL.
PAVILIONS AND TENTS OF THE ENGLISH AND
FRENCH BARONAGE.

BECKET *and* HERBERT OF BOSHAM.

Becket. See here!

Herbert. What's here?

Becket. A notice from the priest,
To whom our John of Salisbury committed
The secret of the bower, that our wolf-Queen
Is prowling round the fold. I should be back
In England ev'n for this.

Herbert. These are by-things
In the great cause.

Becket. The by-things of the Lord
Are the wrong'd innocences that will cry
From all the hidden by-ways of the world
In the great day against the wronger. I know
Thy meaning. Perish she, I, all, before
The Church should suffer wrong!

Herbert. Do you see, my lord,
There is the King talking with Walter Map?

Becket. He hath the Pope's last letters, and they
threaten
The immediate thunder-blast of interdict:
Yet he can scarce be touching upon those,
Or scarce would smile that fashion.

Herbert. Winter sunshine!
Beware of opening out thy bosom to it,
Lest thou, myself, and all thy flock should catch
An after ague-fit of trembling. Look!
He bows, he bares his head, he is coming hither.
Still with a smile.

Enter KING HENRY and WALTER MAP.

Henry. We have had so many hours together, Thomas,
So many happy hours alone together,
That I would speak with you once more alone.

Becket. My liege, your will and happiness are mine.

[*Exeunt* King and Becket.]

Herbert. The same smile still.

Walter Map. Do you see that great black cloud that
hath come over the sun and cast us all into shadow?

Herbert. And feel it too.

Walter Map. And see you yon side-beam that is
forced from under it, and sets the church-tower over there
all a-hell-fire as it were!

Herbert. Ay.

Walter Map. It is this black, bell-silencing, anti-
marrying, burial-hindering interdict that hath squeezed
out this side-smile upon Canterbury, whereof may come
conflagration. Were I Thomas, I wouldn't trust it.
Sudden change is a house on sand; and tho' I count
Henry honest enough, yet when fear creeps in at the
front, honesty steals out at the back, and the King at
last is fairly scared by this cloud—this interdict. I have
been more for the King than the Church in this matter—
yea, even for the sake of the Church: for, truly, as the
case stood, you had safelier have slain an archbishop than
a she-goat: but our recoverer and upholder of customs
hath in this crowning of young Henry by York and
London so violated the immemorial usage of the Church,
that, like the gravedigger's child I have heard of, trying
to ring the bell, he hath half-hanged himself in the rope
of the Church, or rather pulled all the Church with the
Holy Father astride of it down upon his own head.

Herbert. Were you there?

Walter Map. In the church rope?—no. I was at
the crowning, for I have pleasure in the pleasure of
crowds, and to read the faces of men at a great show.

Herbert. And how did Roger of York comport himself?

Walter Map. As magnificently and archiepiscopally as our Thomas would have done: only there was a dare-devil in his eye—I should say a dare-Becket. He thought less of two kings than of one Roger the king of the occasion. Foliot is the holier man, perhaps the better. Once or twice there ran a twitch across his face as who should say what's to follow? but Salisbury was a calf cowed by Mother Church, and every now and then glancing about him like a thief at night when he hears a door open in the house and thinks 'the master.'

Herbert. And the father-king?

Walter Map. The father's eye was so tender it would have called a goose off the green, and once he strove to hide his face, like the Greek king when his daughter was sacrificed, but he thought better of it: it was but the sacrifice of a kingdom to his son, a smaller matter; but as to the young crowning himself, he looked so malapert in the eyes, that had I fathered him I had given him more of the rod than the sceptre. Then followed the thunder of the captains and the shouting, and so we came on to the banquet, from whence there puffed out such an incense of unctuousness into the nostrils of our Gods of Church and State, that Lucullus or Apicius might have sniffed it in their Hades of heathenism, so that the smell of their own roast had not come across it——

Herbert. Map, tho' you make your butt too big, you overshoot it.

Walter Map. —For as to the fish, they de-miracled the miraculous draught, and might have sunk a navy——

Herbert. There again, Goliassing and Goliathising!

Walter Map. —And as for the flesh at table, a whole Peter's sheet, with all manner of game, and four-footed things, and fowls——

Herbert. And all manner of creeping things too?

Walter Map. —Well, there were Abbots—but they did not bring their women; and so we were dull enough at

first, but in the end we flourished out into a merriment ; for the old King would act servitor and hand a dish to his son ; whereupon my Lord of York—his fine-cut face bowing and beaming with all that courtesy which hath less loyalty in it than the backward scrape of the clown's heel—'great honour,' says he, 'from the King's self to the King's son.' Did you hear the young King's quip ?

Herbert. No, what was it ?

Walter Map. Glancing at the days when his father was only Earl of Anjou, he answered :—'Should not an earl's son wait on a king's son ?' And when the cold corners of the King's mouth began to thaw, there was a great motion of laughter among us, part real, part childlike, to be freed from the dulness—part royal, for King and kingling both laughed, and so we could not but laugh, as by a royal necessity—part childlike again—when we felt we had laughed too long and could not stay ourselves—many midriff-shaken even to tears, as springs gush out after earthquakes—but from those, as I said before, there may come a conflagration—tho', to keep the figure moist and make it hold water, I should say rather, the lacrymation of a lamentation ; but look if Thomas have not flung himself at the King's feet. They have made it up again—for the moment.

Herbert. Thanks to the blessed Magdalen, whose day it is.

Re-enter HENRY and BECKET. (*During their conference the BARONS and BISHOPS of FRANCE and ENGLAND come in at back of stage.*)

Becket. Ay, King ! for in thy kingdom, as thou knowest,
The spouse of the Great King, thy King, hath fallen—
The daughter of Zion lies beside the way—
The priests of Baal tread her underfoot—
The golden ornaments are stolen from her——

Henry. Have I not promised to restore her, Thomas,
And send thee back again to Canterbury ?

Becket. Send back again those exiles of my kin
Who wander famine-wasted thro' the world.

Henry. Have I not promised, man, to send them back?

Becket. Yet one thing more. Thou hast broken
thro' the pales

Of privilege, crowning thy young son by York,
London and Salisbury—not Canterbury.

Henry. York crown'd the Conqueror—not Canterbury.

Becket. There was no Canterbury in William's time.

Henry. But Hereford, you know, crown'd the first
Henry.

Becket. But Anselm crown'd this Henry o'er again.

Henry. And thou shalt crown my Henry o'er again.

Becket. And is it then with thy good-will that I
Proceed against thine evil councillors,
And hurl the dread ban of the Church on those
Who made the second mitre play the first,
And acted me?

Henry. Well, well, then—have thy way!
It may be they were evil councillors.
What more, my lord Archbishop? What more, Thomas?
I make thee full amends. Say all thy say,
But blaze not out before the Frenchmen here.

Becket. More? Nothing, so thy promise be thy deed.

Henry (holding out his hand). Give me thy hand. My
Lords of France and England,
My friend of Canterbury and myself
Are now once more at perfect amity.
Unkingly should I be, and most unknighly,
Not striving still, however much in vain,
To rival him in Christian charity.

Herbert. All praise to Heaven, and sweet St.
Magdalen!

Henry. And so farewell until we meet in England.

Becket. I fear, my liege, we may not meet in England.

Henry. How, do you make me a traitor?

Becket. No, indeed!

That be far from thee.

Henry. Come, stay with us, then,
Before you part for England.

Becket. I am bound
For that one hour to stay with good King Louis,
Who helpt me when none else.

Herbert. He said thy life
Was not one hour's worth in England save
King Henry gave thee first the kiss of peace.

Henry. He said so? Louis, did he? look you,
Herbert,
When I was in mine anger with King Louis,
I sware I would not give the kiss of peace,
Not on French ground, nor any ground but English,
Where his cathedral stands. Mine old friend, Thomas,
I would there were that perfect trust between us,
That health of heart, once ours, ere Pope or King
Had come between us! Even now—who knows?—
I might deliver all things to thy hand—
If . . . but I say no more . . . farewell, my lord.

Becket. Farewell, my liege!

[*Exit Henry, then the Barons and Bishops.*]

Walter Map. There again! when the full fruit of the
royal promise might have dropt into thy mouth hadst thou
but opened it to thank him.

Becket. He fenced his royal promise with an *if*.

Walter Map. And is the King's *if* too high a stile for
your lordship to overstep and come at all things in the next
field?

Becket. Ay, if this *if* be like the Devil's '*if*
'Thou wilt fall down and worship me.'

Herbert. Oh, Thomas,
I could fall down and worship thee, my Thomas,
For thou hast trodden this wine-press alone.

Becket. Nay, of the people there are many with
me.

Walter Map. I am not altogether with you, my lord,
tho' I am none of those that would raise a storm between
you, lest ye should draw together like two ships in a calm.

You wrong the King: he meant what he said to-day. Who shall vouch for his to-morrows? One word further. Doth not the *fearfulness* of anything make the fulness of it in estimation? Is not virtue prized mainly for its rarity and great baseness loathed as an exception: for were all, my lord, as noble as yourself, who would look up to you? and were all as base as—who shall I say—Fitzurse and his following—who would look down upon them? My lord, you have put so many of the King's household out of communion, that they begin to smile at it.

Becket. At their peril, at their peril——

Walter Map. —For tho' the drop may hollow out the dead stone, doth not the living skin thicken against perpetual whippings? This is the second grain of good counsel I ever proffered thee, and so cannot suffer by the rule of frequency. Have I sown it in salt? I trust not, for before God I promise you the King hath many more wolves than he can tame in his woods of England, and if it suit their purpose to howl for the King, and you still move against him, you may have no less than to die for it; but God and his free wind grant your lordship a happy home-return and the King's kiss of peace in Kent. Farewell! I must follow the King. [*Exit.*]

Herbert. Ay, and I warrant the customs. Did the King
Speak of the customs?

Becket. No!—'To die for it—
I live to die for it, I die to live for it.
The State will die, the Church can never die.
The King's not like to die for that which dies;
But I must die for that which never dies.
It will be so—my visions in the Lord:
It must be so, my friend! the wolves of England
Must murder her one shepherd, that the sheep
May feed in peace. False figure, Map would say.
Earth's falses are heaven's truths. And when my voice
Is martyr'd mute, and this man disappears,
That perfect trust may come again between us,

And there, there, there, not here I shall rejoice
 To find my stray sheep back within the fold.
 The crowd are scattering, let us move away!
 And thence to England.

[*Exeunt.*]

ACT IV

SCENE I.—THE OUTSKIRTS OF THE BOWER

Geoffrey (coming out of the wood). Light again! light again! Margery? no, that's a finer thing there. How it glitters!

Eleanor (entering). Come to me, little one. How camest thou hither?

Geoffrey. On my legs.

Eleanor. And mighty pretty legs too. Thou art the prettiest child I ever saw. Wilt thou love me?

Geoffrey. No; I only love mother.

Eleanor. Ay; and who is thy mother?

Geoffrey. They call her—— But she lives secret, you see.

Eleanor. Why?

Geoffrey. Don't know why.

Eleanor. Ay, but some one comes to see her now and then. Who is he?

Geoffrey. Can't tell.

Eleanor. What does she call him?

Geoffrey. My liege.

Eleanor. Pretty one, how camest thou?

Geoffrey. There was a bit of yellow silk here and there, and it looked pretty like a glowworm, and I thought if I followed it I should find the fairies.

Eleanor. I am the fairy, pretty one, a good fairy to thy mother. Take me to her.

Geoffrey. There are good fairies and bad fairies, and sometimes she cries, and can't sleep sound o' nights because of the bad fairies.

Eleanor. She shall cry no more ; she shall sleep sound enough if thou wilt take me to her. I am her good fairy.

Geoffrey. But you don't look like a good fairy. Mother does. You are not pretty, like mother.

Eleanor. We can't all of us be as pretty as thou art—*(aside)* little bastard. Come, here is a golden chain I will give thee if thou wilt lead me to thy mother.

Geoffrey. No—no gold. Mother says gold spoils all. Love is the only gold.

Eleanor. I love thy mother, my pretty boy. Show me where thou camest out of the wood.

Geoffrey. By this tree ; but I don't know if I can find the way back again.

Eleanor. Where's the warder ?

Geoffrey. Very bad. Somebody struck him.

Eleanor. Ay ? who was that ?

Geoffrey. Can't tell. But I heard say he had had a stroke, or you'd have heard his horn before now. Come along, then ? we shall see the silk here and there, and I want my supper. *[Exeunt.]*

SCENE II.—ROSAMUND'S BOWER

Rosamund. The boy so late ; pray God, he be not lost.
I sent this Margery, and she comes not back ;
I sent another, and she comes not back.
I go myself—so many alleys, crossings,
Paths, avenues—nay, if I lost him, now
The folds have fallen from the mystery,
And left all naked, I were lost indeed.

Enter GEOFFREY and ELEANOR.

Geoffrey, the pain thou hast put me to ! *[Seeing Eleanor.]*
Ha, you !

How came you hither ?

Eleanor. Your own child brought me hither!

Geoffrey. You said you couldn't trust Margery, and I watched her and followed her into the woods, and I lost her and went on and on till I found the light and the lady, and she says she can make you sleep o' nights.

Rosamund. How dared you? Know you not this bower is secret,
Of and belonging to the King of England,
More sacred than his forests for the chase?
Nay, nay, Heaven help you; get you hence in haste
Lest worse befall you.

Eleanor. Child, I am mine own self
Of and belonging to the King. The King
Hath divers ofs and ons, ofs and belongings,
Almost as many as your true Mussulman—
Belongings, paramours, whom it pleases him
To call his wives; but so it chances, child,
That I am his main paramour, his sultana.
But since the fondest pair of doves will jar,
Ev'n in a cage of gold, we had words of late,
And thereupon he call'd my children bastards.
Do you believe that you are married to him?

Rosamund. I *should* believe it.

Eleanor. You must not believe it,
Because I have a wholesome medicine here
Puts that belief asleep. Your answer, beauty!
Do you believe that you are married to him?

Rosamund. Geoffrey, my boy, I saw the ball you lost
in the fork of the great willow over the brook. Go. See
that you do not fall in. Go.

Geoffrey. And leave you alone with the good fairy.
She calls you beauty, but I don't like her looks. Well,
you bid me go, and I'll have my ball anyhow. Shall I
find you asleep when I come back?

Rosamund. Go. [Exit Geoffrey.]

Eleanor. He is easily found again. Do you believe it?
I pray you then to take my sleeping-draught;
But if you should not care to take it—see! [Draws a dagger.]

What! have I scared the red rose from your face
 Into your heart? But this will find it there,
 And dig it from the root for ever.

Rosamund.

Help! help!

Eleanor. They say that walls have ears; but these, it
 seems,

Have none! and I have none—to pity thee.

Rosamund. I do beseech you—my child is so young,
 So backward too; I cannot leave him yet.

I am not so happy I could not die myself,

But the child is so young. You have children—his;

And mine is the King's child; so, if you love him—

Nay, if you love him, there is great wrong done

Somehow; but if you do not—there are those

Who say you do not love him—let me go

With my young boy, and I will hide my face,

Blacken and gipsyfy it; none shall know me;

The King shall never hear of me again,

But I will beg my bread along the world

With my young boy, and God will be our guide.

I never meant you harm in any way.

See, I can say no more.

Eleanor. Will you not say you are not married to
 him?

Rosamund. Ay, Madam, I can say it, if you will.

Eleanor. Then is thy pretty boy a bastard?

Rosamund.

No.

Eleanor. And thou thyself a proven wanton?

Rosamund.

No.

I am none such. I never loved but one.

I have heard of such that range from love to love,

Like the wild beast—if you can call it love.

I have heard of such—yea, even among those

Who sit on thrones—I never saw any such,

Never knew any such, and howsoever

You do misname me, match'd with any such,

I am snow to mud.

Eleanor.

The more the pity then

That thy true home—the heavens—cry out for thee
Who art too pure for earth.

Enter FITZURSE.

Fitzurse. Give her to me.

Eleanor. The Judas-lover of our passion-play
Hath track'd us hither.

Fitzurse. Well, why not? I follow'd
You and the child: he babbled all the way.
Give her to me to make my honeymoon.

Eleanor. Ay, as the bears love honey. Could you
keep her
Indungeon'd from one whisper of the wind,
Dark even from a side glance of the moon,
And oublietted in the centre—No!
I follow out my hate and thy revenge.

Fitzurse. You had me take revenge another way—
To bring her to the dust. . . . Come with me, love,
And I will love thee. . . . Madam, let her live.
I have a far-off burrow where the King
Would miss her and for ever.

Eleanor. How sayst thou, sweetheart?
Wilt thou go with him? he will marry thee.

Rosamund. Give me the poison; set me free of him!
[*Eleanor offers the vial.*

No, no! I will not have it.

Eleanor. Then this other,
The wiser choice, because my sleeping-draught
May bloat thy beauty out of shape, and make
Thy body loathsome even to thy child;
While this but leaves thee with a broken heart,
A doll-face blanch'd and bloodless, over which
If pretty Geoffrey do not break his own,
It must be broken for him.

Rosamund. O I see now
Your purpose is to fright me—a troubadour
You play with words. You had never used so many,

Not if you meant it, I am sure. The child . . .

No . . . mercy! No! (*Kneels.*)

Eleanor. Play! . . . that bosom never
Heaved under the King's hand with such true passion
As at this loveless knife that stirs the riot,
Which it will quench in blood! Slave, if he love thee,
Thy life is worth the wrestle for it: arise,
And dash thyself against me that I may slay thee!
The worm! shall I let her go? But ha! what's here?
By very God, the cross I gave the King!
His village darling in some lewd caress
Has wheedled it off the King's neck to her own.
By thy leave, beauty. Ay, the same! I warrant
Thou hast sworn on this my cross a hundred times
Never to leave him—and that merits death,
False oath on holy cross—for thou must leave him
To-day, but not quite yet. My good Fitzurse,
The running down the chase is kindlier sport
Ev'n than the death. Who knows but that thy lover
May plead so pitifully, that I may spare thee?
Come hither, man; stand there. (*To Rosamund*) Take
thy one chance;
Catch at the last straw. Kneel to thy lord Fitzurse;
Crouch even because thou hatest him; fawn upon him
For thy life and thy son's.

Rosamund (rising). I am a Clifford,
My son a Clifford and Plantagenet.
I am to die then, tho' there stand beside thee
One who might grapple with thy dagger, if he
Had aught of man, or thou of woman; or I
Would bow to such a baseness as would make me
Most worthy of it: both of us will die,
And I will fly with my sweet boy to heaven,
And shriek to all the saints among the stars:
'Eleanor of Aquitaine, Eleanor of England!
Murder'd by that adulteress Eleanor,
Whose doings are a horror to the east,
A hissing in the west!' Have we not heard

Raymond of Poitou, thine own uncle—nay,
 Geoffrey Plantagenet, thine own husband's father—
 Nay, ev'n the accursed heathen Saladden——
 Strike!

I challenge thee to meet me before God.

Answer me there.

Eleanor (raising the dagger). This in thy bosom, fool,
 And after in thy bastard's!

Enter BECKET from behind. Catches hold of her arm.

Becket. Murderess!

[*The dagger falls; they stare at one another. After a pause.*]

Eleanor. My lord, we know you proud of your fine hand,

But having now admired it long enough,
 We find that it is mightier than it seems—
 At least mine own is frailer: you are laming it.

Becket. And lamed and maim'd to dislocation, better
 Than raised to take a life which Henry bad me
 Guard from the stroke that dooms thee after death
 To wail in deathless flame.

Eleanor. Nor you, nor I
 Have now to learn, my lord, that our good Henry
 Says many a thing in sudden heats, which he
 Gainsays by next sunrising—often ready
 To tear himself for having said as much.
 My lord, Fitzurse——

Becket. He too! what dost thou here?
 Dares the bear slouch into the lion's den?
 One downward plunge of his paw would rend away
 Eyesight and manhood, life itself, from thee.
 Go, lest I blast thee with anathema,
 And make thee a world's horror.

Fitzurse. My lord, I shall
 Remember this.

Becket. I do remember thee;

Lest I remember thee to the lion, go. [*Exit Fitzurse.*
Take up your dagger ; put it in the sheath.

Eleanor. Might not your courtesy stoop to hand it me ?
But crowns must bow when mitres sit so high.
Well—well—too costly to be left or lost.

[*Picks up the dagger.*

I had it from an Arab soldan, who,
When I was there in Antioch, marvell'd at
Our unfamiliar beauties of the west ;
But wonder'd more at my much constancy
To the monk-king, Louis, our former burthen,
From whom, as being too kin, you know, my lord,
God's grace and Holy Church deliver'd us.
I think, time given, I could have talk'd him out of
His ten wives into one. Look at the hilt.
What excellent workmanship. In our poor west
We cannot do it so well.

Becket. We can do worse.

Madam, I saw your dagger at her throat ;
I heard your savage cry.

Eleanor. Well acted, was it ?

A comedy meant to seem a tragedy—
A feint, a farce. My honest lord, you are known
Thro' all the courts of Christendom as one
That mars a cause with over-violence.
You have wrong'd Fitzurse. I speak not of myself.
We thought to scare this minion of the King
Back from her churchless commerce with the King
To the fond arms of her first love, Fitzurse,
Who swore to marry her. You have spoilt the farce.
My savage cry ? Why, she—she—when I strove
To work against her license for her good,
Bark'd out at me such monstrous charges, that
The King himself, for love of his own sons,
If hearing, would have spurn'd her ; whereupon
I menaced her with this, as when we threaten
A yelper with a stick. Nay, I deny not
That I was somewhat anger'd. Do you hear me ?

Believe or no, I care not. You have lost
The ear of the King. I have it. . . . My lord Paramount,
Our great High-priest, will not your Holiness
Vouchsafe a gracious answer to your Queen?

Becket. Rosamund hath not answer'd you one word ;
Madam, I will not answer you one word.
Daughter, the world hath trick'd thee. Leave it, daughter ;
Come thou with me to Godstow nunnery,
And live what may be left thee of a life
Saved as by miracle alone with Him
Who gave it.

Re-enter GEOFFREY.

Geoffrey. Mother, you told me a great fib: it wasn't
in the willow.

Becket. Follow us, my son, and we will find it for thee—
Or something manlier.

[*Exeunt* Becket, Rosamund, and Geoffrey.

Eleanor. The world hath trick'd her—that's the King ;
if so,

There was the farce, the feint—not mine. And yet
I am all but sure my dagger was a feint
Till the worm turn'd—not life shot up in blood,
But death drawn in ;—(*looking at the vial*) *this* was no
feint then? no.

But can I swear to that, had she but given
Plain answer to plain query? nay, methinks
Had she but bow'd herself to meet the wave
Of humiliation, worshipt whom she loathed,
I should have let her be, scorn'd her too much
To harm her. Henry—Becket tells him this—
To take my life might lose him Aquitaine.
Too politic for that. Imprison me?
No, for it came to nothing—only a feint.
Did she not tell me I was playing on her?
I'll swear to mine own self it was a feint.

Why should I swear, Eleanor, who am, or was,
A sovereign power? The King plucks out their eyes

Who anger him, and shall not I, the Queen,
 Tear out her heart—kill, kill with knife or venom
 One of his slanderous harlots? ‘None of such’?
 I love her none the more. Tut, the chance gone,
 She lives—but not for him; one point is gain’d.
 O I, that thro’ the Pope divorced King Louis,
 Scorning his monkery,—I that wedded Henry,
 Honouring his manhood—will he not mock at me
 The jealous fool balk’d of her will—with *him*?
 But he and he must never meet again.
 Reginald Fitzurse!

Re-enter FITZURSE.

Fitzurse. Here, Madam, at your pleasure.

Eleanor. My pleasure is to have a man about me.
 Why did you slink away so like a cur?

Fitzurse. Madam, I am as much man as the King.
 Madam, I fear Church-censures like your King.

Eleanor. He grovels to the Church when he’s black-
 blooded,

But kinglike fought the proud archbishop,—kinglike
 Defied the Pope, and, like his kingly sires,
 The Normans, striving still to break or bind
 The spiritual giant with our island laws
 And customs, made me for the moment proud
 Ev’n of that stale Church-bond which link’d me with
 him

To hear him kingly sons. I am not so sure
 But that I love him still. Thou as much man!
 No more of that; we will to France and be
 Beforehand with the King, and brew from out
 This Godstow-Becket interneddling such
 A strong hate-philtre as may madden him—madden
 Against his priest beyond all hellebore.

ACT V

SCENE I.—CASTLE IN NORMANDY. KING'S CHAMBER

HENRY, ROGER OF YORK, FOLIOT, JOCELYN
OF SALISBURY.

Roger of York. Nay, nay, my liege,
He rides abroad with armed followers,
Hath broken all his promises to thyself,
Cursed and anathematised us right and left,
Stirr'd up a party there against your son—

Henry. Roger of York, you always hated him,
Even when you both were boys at Theobald's.

Roger of York. I always hated boundless arrogance.
In mine own cause I strove against him there,
And in thy cause I strive against him now.

Henry. I cannot think he moves against my son,
Knowing right well with what a tenderness
He loved my son.

Roger of York. Before you made him king.
But Becket ever moves against a king.
The Church is all—the crime to be a king.
We trust your Royal Grace, lord of more land
Than any crown in Europe, will not yield
To lay your neck beneath your citizen's heel.

Henry. Not to a Gregory of my throning! No.

Foliot. My royal liege, in aiming at your love,
It may be sometimes I have overshot
My duties to our Holy Mother Church,
Tho' all the world allows I fall no inch
Behind this Becket, rather go beyond
In scourgings, macerations, mortifyings,
Fasts, disciplines that clear the spiritual eye,
And break the soul from earth. Let all that be.
I boast not: but you know thro' all this quarrel

I still have cleaved to the crown, in hope the crown
 Would cleave to me that but obey'd the crown,
 Crowning your son; for which our loyal service,
 And since we likewise swore to obey the customs,
 York and myself, and our good Salisbury here,
 Are push'd from out communion of the Church.

Jocelyn of Salisbury. Becket hath trodden on us like
 worms, my liege;
 Trodden one half dead; one half, but half-alive,
 Cries to the King.

Henry (aside). Take care o' thyself, O King.

Jocelyn of Salisbury. Being so crush'd and so humiliated
 We scarcely dare to bless the food we eat
 Because of Becket.

Henry. What would ye have me do?

Roger of York. Summon your barons; take their
 counsel: yet

I know—could swear—as long as Becket breathes,
 Your Grace will never have one quiet hour.

Henry. What? . . . Ay . . . but pray you do not
 work upon me.

I see your drift . . . it may be so . . . and yet

You know me easily anger'd. Will you hence?

He shall absolve you . . . you shall have redress.

I have a dizzying headache. Let me rest.

I'll call you by and by,

[*Exeunt* Roger of York, Foliot, and Jocelyn of
 Salisbury.]

Would he were dead! I have lost all love for him.

If God would take him in some sudden way—

Would he were dead.

[*Lies down.*]

Page (entering). My liege, the Queen of England.

Henry. God's eyes!

[*Starting up.*]

Enter ELEANOR.

Eleanor. Of England? Say of Aquitaine.

I am no Queen of England. I had dream'd

I was the bride of England, and a queen.

Henry. And,—while you dream'd you were the bride
of England,—
Stirring her baby-king against me? ha!

Eleanor. The brideless Becket is thy king and mine:
I will go live and die in Aquitaine.

Henry. Except I clap thee into prison here,
Lest thou shouldst play the wanton there again.
Ha, you of Aquitaine! O you of Aquitaine!
You were but Aquitaine to Louis—no wife;
You are only Aquitaine to me—no wife.

Eleanor. And why, my lord, should I be wife to
one
That only wedded me for Aquitaine?
Yet this no wife—her six and thirty sail
Of Provence blew you to your English throne;
And this no wife has born you four brave sons,
And one of them at least is like to prove
Bigger in our small world than thou art.

Henry. Ay—
Richard, if he *be* mine—I hope him mine.
But thou art like enough to make him thine.

Eleanor. Becket is like enough to make all his.

Henry. Methought I had recover'd of the Becket,
That all was planed and bevell'd smooth again,
Save from some hateful cantrip of thine own.

Eleanor. I will go live and die in Aquitaine.
I dream'd I was the consort of a king,
Not one whose back his priest has broken.

Henry. What!
Is the end come? You, will you crown my foe
My victor in mid-battle? I will be
Sole master of my house. The end is mine.
What game, what juggle, what devilry are you playing?
Why do you thrust this Becket on me again?

Eleanor. Why? for I *am* true wife, and have my fears
Lest Becket thrust you even from your throne.
Do you know this cross, my liege?

Henry (turning his head). Away! Not I.

Eleanor. Not ev'n the central diamond, worth, I think,
Half of the Antioch whence I had it.

Henry. That?

Eleanor. I gave it you, and you your paramour;
She sends it back, as being dead to earth,
So dead henceforth to you.

Henry. Dead! you have murder'd her,
Found out her secret bower and murder'd her.

Eleanor. Your Becket knew the secret of your bower.

Henry (calling out). Ho there! thy rest of life is hopeless
prison.

Eleanor. And what would my own Aquitaine say to that?
First, free thy captive from *her* hopeless prison.

Henry. O devil, can I free her from the grave?

Eleanor. You are too tragic: both of us are players
In such a comedy as our court of Provence
Had laugh'd at. That's a delicate Latin lay
Of Walter Map: the lady holds the cleric
Lovelier than any soldier, his poor tonsure
A crown of Empire. Will you have it again?

(Offering the cross. He dashes it down.)

St. Cupid, that is too irreverent.

Then mine once more. *(Puts it on.)*

Your cleric hath your lady.

Nay, what uncomely faces, could he see you!
Foam at the mouth because King Thomas, lord
Not only of your vassals but amours,
Thro' chastest honour of the Decalogue
Hath used the full authority of his Church
To put her into Godstow nunnery.

Henry. To put her into Godstow nunnery!
He dared not—liar! yet, yet I remember—
I do remember.

He bad me put her into a nunnery—
Into Godstow, into Hellstow, Devilstow!
The Church! the Church!

God's eyes! I would the Church were down in hell! [*Exit.*]

Eleanor. Aha!

Enter the four KNIGHTS.

Fitzurse. What made the King cry out so furiously?

Eleanor. Our Becket, who will not absolve the Bishops.

I think ye four have cause to love this Becket.

Fitzurse. I hate him for his insolence to all.

De Tracy. And I for all his insolence to thee.

De Brito. I hate him for I hate him is my reason,
And yet I hate him for a hypocrite.

De Morville. I do not love him, for he did his best

To break the barons, and now braves the King.

Eleanor. Strike, then, at once, the King would have him—See!

Re-enter HENRY.

Henry. No man to love me, honour me, obey me!
Sluggards and fools!

The slave that eat my bread has kick'd his King!

The dog I cramm'd with dainties worried me!

The fellow that on a lame jade came to court,

A ragged cloak for saddle—he, he, he,

To shake my throne, to push into my chamber—

My bed, where ev'n the slave is private—he—

I'll have her out again, he shall absolve

The bishops—they bnt did my will—not you—

Sluggards and fools, why do you stand and stare?

You are no King's men—you—you—you are Becket's men.

Down with King Henry! up with the Archbishop!

Will no man free me from this pestilent priest? [*Exit.*

[The Knights draw their swords.

Eleanor. Are ye king's men? I am king's woman, I.

The Knights. King's men! King's men!

SCENE II.—A ROOM IN CANTERBURY MONASTERY

BECKET *and* JOHN OF SALISBURY.*Becket.* York said so?*John of Salisbury.* Yes: a man may take good counsel
Ev'n from his foe.*Becket.* York will say anything.
What is he saying now? gone to the King
And taken our anathema with him. York!
Can the King de-anathematise this York?*John of Salisbury.* Thomas, I would thou hadst return'd
to England,
Like some wise prince of this world from his wars,
With more of olive-branch and amnesty
For foes at home—thou hast raised the world against thee.*Becket.* Why, John, my kingdom is not of this world.*John of Salisbury.* If it were more of this world it
might be
More of the next. A policy of wise pardon
Wins here as well as there. To bless thine enemies——*Becket.* Ay, mine, not Heaven's.*John of Salisbury.* And may there not be something
Of this world's leaven in thee too, when crying
On Holy Church to thunder out her rights
And thine own wrong so pitilessly? Ah, Thomas,
The lightnings that we think are only Heaven's
Flash sometimes out of earth against the heavens.
The soldier, when he lets his whole self go
Lost in the common good, the common wrong,
Strikes truest ev'n for his own self. I crave
Thy pardon—I have still thy leave to speak.
Thou hast waged God's war against the King; and yet
We are self-uncertain creatures, and we may,
Yea, even when we know not, mix our spite
And private hates with our defence of Heaven.

Enter EDWARD GRIM.

Becket. Thou art but yesterday from Cambridge, Grim;
What say ye there of Becket?

Grim. I believe him
The bravest in our roll of Primates down
From Austin—there are some—for there are men
Of canker'd judgment everywhere——

Becket. Who hold
With York, with York against me.

Grim. Well, my lord,
A stranger monk desires access to you.

Becket. York against Canterbury, York against God!
I am open to him. [*Exit Grim.*]

Enter ROSAMUND as a Monk.

Rosamund. Can I speak with you
Alone, my father?

Becket. Come you to confess?

Rosamund. Not now.

Becket. Then speak; this is my other self,
Who like my conscience never lets me be.

Rosamund (throwing back the cowl). I know him; our
good John of Salisbury.

Becket. Breaking already from thy noviciate
To plunge into this bitter world again—
These wells of Marah. I am grieved, my daughter.
I thought that I had made a peace for thee.

Rosamund. Small peace was mine in my noviciate,
father.

Thro' all closed doors a dreadful whisper crept
That thou wouldst excommunicate the King.
I could not eat, sleep, pray: I had with me
The monk's disguise thou gavest me for my bower:
I think our Abbess knew it and allow'd it.
I fled, and found thy name a charm to get me

Food, roof, and rest. I met a robber once,
 I told him I was bound to see the Archbishop:
 'Pass on,' he said, and in thy name I pass'd
 From house to house. In one a son stone-blind
 Sat by his mother's hearth: he had gone too far
 Into the King's own woods; and the poor mother,
 Soon as she learnt I was a friend of thine,
 Cried out against the cruelty of the King.
 I said it was the King's courts, not the King;
 But she would not believe me, and she wish'd
 The Church were king: she had seen the Archbishop
 once,

So mild, so kind. The people love thee, father.

Becket. Alas! when I was Chancellor to the King,
 I fear I was as cruel as the King.

Rosamund. Cruel? Oh, no—it is the law, not he;
 The customs of the realm.

Becket. The customs! customs!

Rosamund. My lord, you have not excommunicated
 him?

Oh, if you have, absolve him!

Becket. Daughter, daughter,

Deal not with things you know not.

Rosamund. I know *him*.

Then you have done it, and I call *you* cruel.

John of Salisbury. No, daughter, you mistake our good
 Archbishop;

For once in France the King had been so harsh,
 He thought to excommunicate him—Thomas,
 You could not—old affection master'd you,
 You falter'd into tears.

Rosamund. God bless him for it.

Becket. Nay, make me not a woman, John of Salisbury,
 Nor make me traitor to my holy office.

Did not a man's voice ring along the aisle,
 'The King is sick and almost unto death.'

How could I excommunicate him then?

Rosamund. And wilt thou excommunicate him now?

Becket. Daughter, my time is short, I shall not do it.
And were it longer—well—I should not do it.

Rosamund. Thanks in this life, and in the life to come.

Becket. Get thee back to thy nunnery with all haste ;
Let this be thy last trespass. But one question—
How fares thy pretty boy, the little Geoffrey ?
No fever, cough, croup, sickness ?

Rosamund. No, but saved
From all that by our solitude. The plagues
That smite the city spare the solitudes.

Becket. God save him from all sickness of the soul !
Thee too, thy solitude among thy nuns,
May that save thee ! Doth he remember me ?

Rosamund. I warrant him.

Becket. He is marvellously like thee.

Rosamund. Liker the King.

Becket. No, daughter.

Rosamund. Ay, but wait
Till his nose rises ; he will be very king.

Becket. Ev'n so : but think not of the King : farewell !

Rosamund. My lord, the city is full of armed men.

Becket. Ev'n so : farewell !

Rosamund. I will but pass to vespers,
And breathe one prayer for my liege-lord the King,
His child and mine own soul, and so return.

Becket. Pray for me too : much need of prayer have I.
[*Rosamund kneels and goes.*

Dan John, how much we lose, we celibates,
Lacking the love of woman and of child.

John of Salisbury. More gain than loss ; for of your
wives you shall
Find one a slut whose fairest linnen seems
Foul as her dust-cloth, if she used it— one
So charged with tongue, that every thread of thought
Is broken ere it joins—a shrew to boot,
Whose evil song far on into the night
Thrills to the topmost tile—no hope but death ;
One slow, fat, white, a burthen of the hearth ;

And one that being thwarted ever swoons
 And weeps herself into the place of power ;
 And one an *uxor pauperis Ibyci*.
 So rare the household honeymaking bee,
 Man's help ! but we, we have the Blessed Virgin
 For worship, and our Mother Church for bride ;
 And all the souls we saved and father'd here
 Will greet us as our babes in Paradise.
 What noise was that ? she told us of arm'd men
 Here in the city. Will you not withdraw ?

Becket. I once was out with Henry in the days
 When Henry loved me, and we came upon
 A wild-fowl sitting on her nest, so still
 I reach'd my hand and touch'd ; she did not stir ;
 The snow had frozen round her, and she sat
 Stone-dead upon a heap of ice-cold eggs.
 Look ! how this love, this mother, runs thro' all
 The world God made—even the beast—the bird !

John of Salisbury. Ay, still a lover of the beast and
 bird ?

But these arm'd men—will you not hide yourself ?
 Perchance the fierce De Broes from Saltwood Castle,
 To assail our Holy Mother lest she brood
 Too long o'er this hard egg, the world, and send
 Her whole heart's heat into it, till it break
 Into young angels. Pray you, hide yourself.

Becket. There was a little fair-hair'd Norman maid
 Lived in my mother's house : if Rosamund is
 The world's rose, as her name imports her—she
 Was the world's lily.

John of Salisbury. Ay, and what of her ?

Becket. She died of leprosy.

John of Salisbury. I know not why
 You call these old things back again, my lord.

Becket. The drowning man, they say, remembers all
 The chances of his life, just ere he dies.

John of Salisbury. Ay—but these arm'd men—will you
 drown yourself ?

He loses half the meed of martyrdom
Who will be martyr when he might escape.

Becket. What day of the week? Tuesday?

John of Salisbury. Tuesday, my lord.

Becket. On a Tuesday was I born, and on a Tuesday
Baptized; and on a Tuesday did I fly
Forth from Northampton; on a Tuesday pass'd
From England into bitter banishment;
On a Tuesday at Pontigny came to me
The ghostly warning of my martyrdom;
On a Tuesday from mine exile I return'd,
And on a Tuesday——

[*Tracy enters, then Fitzurse, De Brito, and De
Morville. Monks following.*

——on a Tuesday—— Tracy!

(*A long silence broken by Fitzurse saying, contemptuously*),
God help thee!

John of Salisbury (aside). How the good Archbishop
reddens!

He never yet could brook the note of scorn.

Fitzurse. My lord, we bring a message from the King
Beyond the water; will you have it alone,
Or with these listeners near you?

Becket. As you will.

Fitzurse. Nay, as *you* will.

Becket. Nay, as *you* will.

John of Salisbury. Why then
Better perhaps to speak with them apart.
Let us withdraw.

[*All go out except the four Knights and Becket.*

Fitzurse. We are all alone with him.

Shall I not smite him with his own cross-staff?

De Morville. No, look! the door is open: let him be.

Fitzurse. The King condemns your excommunicat-
ing——

Becket. This is no secret, but a public matter.
In here again! [John of Salisbury and Monks return.
Now, sirs, the King's commands!

Fitzurse. The King beyond the water, thro' our voices,
 Commands you to be dutiful and leal
 To your young King on this side of the water,
 Not scorn him for the foibles of his youth.
 What! you would make his coronation void
 By cursing those who crown'd him. Out upon you!

Becket. Reginald, all men know I loved the Prince.
 His father gave him to my care, and I
 Became his second father: he had his faults,
 For which I would have laid mine own life down
 To help him from them, since indeed I loved him,
 And love him next after my lord his father.
 Rather than dim the splendour of his crown
 I fain would treble and quadruple it
 With revenues, realms, and golden provinces
 So that were done in equity.

Fitzurse. You have broken
 Your bond of peace, your treaty with the King—
 Wakening such brawls and loud disturbances
 In England, that he calls you oversea
 To answer for it in his Norman courts.

Becket. Prate not of bonds, for never, oh, never again
 Shall the waste voice of the bond-breaking sea
 Divide me from the mother church of England,
 My Canterbury. Loud disturbances!
 Oh, ay—the bells rang out even to deafening,
 Organ and pipe, and dulcimer, chants and hymns
 In all the churches, trumpets in the halls,
 Sobs, laughter, cries: they spread their raiment down
 Before me—would have made my pathway flowers,
 Save that it was mid-winter in the street,
 But full mid-summer in those honest hearts.

Fitzurse. The King commands you to absolve the
 bishops
 Whom you have excommunicated.

Becket. I?
 Not I, the Pope. Ask *him* for absolution.

Fitzurse. But you advised the Pope.

Becket.

And so I did.

They have but to submit.

The four Knights.

The King commands you.

We are all King's men.

Becket.

King's men at least should know

That their own King closed with me last July

That I should pass the censures of the Church

On those that crown'd young Henry in this realm,

And trampled on the rights of Canterbury.

Fitzurse. What! dare you charge the King with
treachery?

He sanction thee to excommunicate

The prelates whom he chose to crown his son!

Becket. I spake no word of treachery, Reginald.

But for the truth of this I make appeal

To all the archbishops, bishops, prelates, barons,

Monks, knights, five hundred, that were there and heard.

Nay, you yourself were there: you heard yourself.

Fitzurse. I was not there.

Becket.

I saw you there.

Fitzurse.

I was not.

Becket. You were. I never forget anything.

Fitzurse. He makes the King a traitor, me a liar.

How long shall we forbear him?

John of Salisbury (drawing Becket aside). O my good
lord,

Speak with them privately on this hereafter.

You see they have been revelling, and I fear

Are braced and brazen'd up with Christmas wines

For any murderous brawl.

Becket.

And yet they prate

Of mine, my brawls, when those, that name themselves

Of the King's part, have broken down our barns,

Wasted our diocese, outraged our tenants,

Lifted our produce, driven our clerics out—

Why they, your friends, those ruffians, the De Brocs,

They stood on Dover beach to murder me,

They slew my stags in mine own manor here,

Mutilated, poor brute, my sumpter-mule,
 Plunder'd the vessel full of Gascon wine,
 The old King's present, carried off the casks,
 Kill'd half the crew, dungeon'd the other half
 In Pevensey Castle——

De Morville. Why not rather then,
 If this be so, complain to your young King,
 Not punish of your own authority?

Becket. Mine enemies barr'd all access to the boy.
 They knew he loved me.

Hugh, Hugh, how proudly you exalt your head!
 Nay, when they seek to overturn our rights,
 I ask no leave of king, or mortal man,
 To set them straight again. Alone I do it.
 Give to the King the things that are the King's,
 And those of God to God.

Fitzurse. Threats! threats! ye hear him.
 What! will he excommunicate all the world?

[*The Knights come round Becket.*

De Tracy. He shall not.

De Brito. Well, as yet—I should be grateful—
 He hath not excommunicated *me*.

Becket. Because thou wast *born* excommunicate.
 I never spied in thee one gleam of grace.

De Brito. Your Christian's Christian charity!

Becket. By St. Denis——

De Brito. Ay, by St. Denis, now will he flame
 out,

And lose his head as old St. Denis did.

Becket. Ye think to scare me from my loyalty
 To God and to the Holy Father. No!
 Tho' all the swords in England flash'd above me
 Ready to fall at Henry's word or yours—
 Tho' all the loud lung'd trumpets upon earth
 Blared from the heights of all the thrones of her kings,
 Blowing the world against me, I would stand
 Clothed with the full authority of Rome,
 Mail'd in the perfect panoply of faith,

First of the foremost of their files, who die
 For God, to people heaven in the great day
 When God makes up his jewels. Once I fled—
 Never again, and you—I marvel at you—
 Ye know what is between us. Ye have sworn
 Yourselves my men when I was Chancellor—
 My vassals—and yet threaten your Archbishop
 In his own house.

Knights. Nothing can be between us
 That goes against our fealty to the King.

Fitzurse. And in his name we charge you that ye
 keep
 This traitor from escaping.

Becket. Rest you easy,
 For I am easy to keep. I shall not fly.
 Here, here, here will you find me.

De Morville. Know you not
 You have spoken to the peril of your life?

Becket. As I shall speak again.

Fitzurse, De Tracy, and De Brito. To arms!

[*They rush out, De Morville lingers.*

Becket. De Morville,

I had thought so well of you; and even now
 You seem the least assassin of the four.
 Oh, do not damn yourself for company!
 Is it too late for me to save your soul?

I pray you for one moment stay and speak.

De Morville. Becket, it is too late. [*Exit.*

Becket. Is it too late?

Too late on earth may be too soon in hell.

Knights (in the distance). Close the great gate—ho,
 there—upon the town.

Becket's Retainers. Shut the hall-doors. [*A pause.*

Becket. You hear them, brother John;
 Why do you stand so silent, brother John?

John of Salisbury. For I was musing on an ancient saw,
Suaviter in modo, fortiter in re,
 Is strength less strong when hand-in-hand with grace?

Gratior in pulchro corpore virtus. Thomas,
Why should you heat yourself for such as these?

Becket. Methought I answer'd moderately enough.

John of Salisbury. As one that blows the coal to cool
the fire.

My lord, I marvel why you never lean
On any man's advising but your own.

Becket. Is it so, Dan John? well, what should I have
done?

John of Salisbury. You should have taken counsel with
your friends

Before these bandits brake into your presence.
They seek—you make—occasion for your death.

Becket. My counsel is already taken, John.

I am prepared to die.

John of Salisbury. We are sinners all,

The best of all not all-prepared to die.

Becket. God's will be done!

John of Salisbury. Ay, well. God's will be done!

Grim (re-entering). My lord, the knights are arming in
the garden

Beneath the sycamore.

Becket. Good! let them arm.

Grim. And one of the De Brocs is with them, Robert,
The apostate monk that was with Randulf here.

He knows the twists and turnings of the place.

Becket. No fear!

Grim. No fear, my lord.

[Crashes on the hall doors. The Monks flee.

Becket (rising). Our dovecote flown!

I cannot tell why monks should all be cowards.

John of Salisbury. Take refuge in your own cathedral,
Thomas.

Becket. Do they not fight the Great Fiend day by day?
Valour and holy life should go together.

Why should all monks be cowards?

John of Salisbury. Are they so?

I say, take refuge in your own cathedral.

Becket. Ay, but I told them I would wait them here.

Grim. May they not say you dared not show yourself
In your old place? and vespers are beginning.

[*Bell rings for vespers till end of scene.*

You should attend the office, give them heart.

They fear you slain: they dread they know not what.

Becket. Ay, monks, not men.

Grim. I am a monk, my lord.

Perhaps, my lord, you wrong us.

Some would stand by you to the death.

Becket. Your pardon.

John of Salisbury. He said, 'Attend the office.'

Becket. Attend the office?

Why then—The Cross!—who bears my Cross before me?

Methought they would have brain'd me with it, John.

[*Grim takes it.*

Grim. I! Would that I could bear thy cross indeed!

Becket. The Mitre!

John of Salisbury. Will you wear it?—there!

[*Becket puts on the mitre.*

Becket. The Pall!

I go to meet my King! [*Puts on the pall.*

Grim. To meet the King?

[*Crashes on the doors as they go out.*

John of Salisbury. Why do you move with such a
stateliness?

Can you not hear them yonder like a storm,

Battering the doors, and breaking thro' the walls?

Becket. Why do the heathen rage? My two good
friends,

What matters murder'd here, or murder'd there?

And yet my dream foretold my martyrdom

In mine own church. It is God's will. Go on.

Nay, drag me not. We must not seem to fly.

SCENE III.—NORTH TRANSEPT OF CANTERBURY
CATHEDRAL

On the right hand a flight of steps leading to the Choir, another flight on the left, leading to the North Aisle. Winter afternoon slowly darkening. Low thunder now and then of an approaching storm. MONKS heard chanting the service. ROSAMUND kneeling.

Rosamund. O blessed saint, O glorious Benedict,—
These arm'd men in the city, these fierce faces—
Thy holy follower founded Canterbury—
Save that dear head which now is Canterbury,
Save him, he saved my life, he saved my child,
Save him, his blood would darken Henry's name;
Save him till all as saintly as thyself
He miss the searching flame of purgatory,
And pass at once perfect to Paradise.

[Noise of steps and voices in the cloisters.

Hark! Is it they? Coming! He is not here—
Not yet, thank heaven. O save him!

[Goes up steps leading to choir.

Becket (entering, forced along by John of Salisbury and Grim). No, I tell you!

I cannot bear a hand upon my person,
Why do you force me thus against my will?

Grim. My lord, we force you from your enemies.

Becket. As you would force a king from being crown'd.

John of Salisbury. We must not force the crown of
martyrdom.

[Service stops. Monks come down from the stairs that lead to the choir.

Monks. Here is the great Archbishop! He lives! he
lives!

Die with him, and be glorified together.

Becket. Together? . . . get you back! go on with the
office.

Monks. Come, then, with us to vespers.

Becket.

How can I come

When you so block the entry? Back, I say!

Go on with the office. Shall not Heaven be served
Tho' earth's last earthquake clash'd the minster-bells,
And the great deeps were broken up again,
And hiss'd against the sun? [*Noise in the cloisters.*]

Monks.

The murderers, hark!

Let us hide! let us hide!

Becket.

What do these people fear?

Monks. 'Those arm'd men in the cloister.

Becket.

Be not such cravens!

I will go out and meet them.

Grim and others.

Shut the doors!

We will not have him slain before our face.

[*They close the doors of the transept. Knocking.*]

Fly, fly, my lord, before they burst the doors!

[*Knocking.*]

Becket. Why, these are our own monks who follow'd us!

And will you bolt them out, and have *them* slain?

Undo the doors: the church is not a castle:

Knock, and it shall be open'd. Are you deaf?

What, have I lost authority among you?

Stand by, make way!

[*Opens the doors. Enter Monks from cloister.*]

Come in, my friends, come in!

Nay, faster, faster!

Monks.

Oh, my lord Archbishop,

A score of knights all arm'd with swords and axes—

To the choir, to the choir!

[*Monks divide, part flying by the stairs on the right, part by those on the left. The rush of these last bears Becket along with them some way up the steps, where he is left standing alone.*]

Becket.

Shall I too pass to the choir,

And die upon the Patriarchal throne

Of all my predecessors?

John of Salisbury.

No, to the crypt!

Twenty steps down. Stumble not in the darkness,
Lest they should seize thee.

Grim. To the crypt? no—no,
To the chapel of St. Blaise beneath the roof!

John of Salisbury (*pointing upward and downward*).
That way, or this! Save thyself either way.

Becket. Oh, no, not either way, nor any way
Save by that way which leads thro' night to light.
Not twenty steps, but one.

And fear not I should stumble in the darkness,
Not tho' it be their hour, the power of darkness,
But my hour too, the power of light in darkness!
I am not in the darkness but the light,
Seen by the Church in Heaven, the Church on earth—
The power of life in death to make her free!

[*Enter the four Knights. John of Salisbury flies to
the altar of St. Benedict.*]

Fitzurse. Here, here, King's men!
[*Catches hold of the last flying Monk.*
Where is the traitor Becket?

Monk. I am not he! I am not he, my lord.
I am not he indeed!

Fitzurse. Hence to the fiend!
[*Pushes him away.*]

Where is this treble traitor to the King?

De Tracy. Where is the Archbishop, Thomas Becket?

Becket. Here.

No traitor to the King, but Priest of God,
Primate of England. [*Descending into the transept.*]

I am he ye seek.

What would ye have of me?

Fitzurse. Your life.

De Tracy. Your life.

De Morville. Save that you will absolve the bishops.

Becket. Never,—

Except they make submission to the Church.

You had my answer to that cry before.

De Morville. Why, then you are a dead man; flee!

Becket.

I will not.

I am readier to be slain, than thou to slay.
 Hugh, I know well thou hast but half a heart
 To bathe this sacred pavement with my blood.
 God pardon thee and these, but God's full curse
 Shatter you all to pieces if ye harm
 One of my flock!

Fitzurse. Was not the great gate shut?

They are thronging in to vespers—half the town.
 We shall be overwhelm'd. Seize him and carry him!
 Come with us—nay—thou art our prisoner—come!

De Morville. Ay, make him prisoner, do not harm
 the man.

[*Fitzurse lays hold of the Archbishop's pall.*

Becket. Touch me not!

De Brito. How the good priest gods himself!

He is not yet ascended to the Father.

Fitzurse. I will not only touch, but drag thee
 hence.

Becket. Thou art my man, thou art my vassal. Away!

[*Flings him off till he reels, almost to falling.*

De Tracy (lays hold of the pall). Come; as he said,
 thou art our prisoner.

Becket. Down! [*Throws him headlong.*

Fitzurse (advances with drawn sword). I told thee that
 I should remember thee!

Becket. Profligate pander!

Fitzurse. Do you hear that? strike, strike.

[*Strikes off the Archbishop's mitre, and wounds
 him in the forehead.*

Becket (covers his eyes with his hand). I do commend
 my cause to God, the Virgin,
 St. Denis of France and St. Alphege of England,
 And all the tutelar Saints of Canterbury.

[*Grim wraps his arms about the Archbishop.*
 Spare this defence, dear brother.

[*Tracy has arisen, and approaches, hesitatingly, with
 his sword raised.*

Fitzurse. Strike him, Tracy!

Rosamund (rushing dozen steps from the choir). No, No,
No, No!

Fitzurse. This wanton here. De Morville,
Hold her away.

De Morville. I hold her.

*Rosamund (held back by De Morville, and stretching out
her arms).* Mercy, mercy,

As you would hope for mercy.

Fitzurse. Strike, I say.

Grim. O God, O noble knights, O sacrilege!

Strike our Archbishop in his own cathedral!

The Pope, the King, will curse you—the whole world

Abhor you; ye will die the death of dogs!

Nay, nay, good Tracy. [*Lifts his arm.*]

Fitzurse. Answer not, but strike.

De Tracy. There is my answer then.

[*Sword falls on Grim's arm, and glances from it,
wounding Becket.*]

Grim. Mine arm is sever'd.

I can no more—fight out the good fight—die

Conqueror. [*Staggers into the chapel of St. Benedict.*]

Becket (falling on his knees). At the right hand of
Power—

Power and great glory—for thy Church, O Lord—

Into Thy hands, O Lord—into Thy hands!—

[*Sinks prone.*]

De Brito. This last to rid thee of a world of brawls!

(*Kills him.*)

The traitor's dead, and will arise no more.

Fitzurse. Nay, have we still'd him? What! the great
Archbishop!

Does he breathe? No?

De Tracy. No, Reginald, he is dead.

[*Storm bursts.*¹]

De Morville. Will the earth gape and swallow us?

¹ A tremendous thunderstorm actually broke over the Cathedral as the murderers were leaving it.

De Brito.

The deed's done—

Away!

[De Brito, De Tracy, Fitzurse, *rush out, crying*
'King's men!' De Morville *follows slowly.*
Flashes of lightning thro' the Cathedral. Rosamund *seen kneeling by the body of Becket.*

THE CUP

A TRAGEDY

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ

GALATIANS

SYNORIX, <i>an ex-Tetrarch.</i>	<i>Attendant.</i>
SINNATUS, <i>a Tetrarch.</i>	<i>Boy.</i>
PHOEBE.	<i>Maid.</i>
CAMMA, <i>wife of Sinnatus, afterwards Priestess in the Temple of Artemis.</i>	

ROMANS

ANTONIUS, <i>a Roman General.</i>	<i>Nobleman.</i>
PUBLIUS.	<i>Messenger.</i>

ACT I

SCENE I.—DISTANT VIEW OF A CITY OF GALATIA

As the curtain rises, Priestesses are heard singing in the Temple. Boy discovered on a pathway among Rocks, picking grapes. A party of Roman Soldiers, guarding a prisoner in chains, come down the pathway and exeunt.

Enter SYNORIX (looking round). Singing ceases.

Synorix. Pine, beech and plane, oak, walnut, apricot,
Vine, cypress, poplar, myrtle, bowing in
The city where she dwells. She past me here

Three years ago when I was flying from
 My Tetrarchy to Rome. I almost touch'd her—
 A maiden slowly moving on to music
 Among her maidens to this Temple—O Gods!
 She is my fate—else wherefore has my fate
 Brought me again to her own city?—married
 Since—married Sinnatus, the Tetrarch here—
 But if he be conspirator, Rome will chain,
 Or slay him. I may trust to gain her then
 When I shall have my tetrarchy restored
 By Rome, our mistress, grateful that I show'd her
 The weakness and the dissonance of our clans,
 And how to crush them easily. Wretched race!
 And once I wish'd to scourge them to the bones.
 But in this narrow breathing-time of life
 Is vengeance for its own sake worth the while,
 If once our ends are gain'd? and now this cup—
 I never felt such passion for a woman.

[*Brings out a cup and scroll from under his cloak.*

What have I written to her? . [Reading the scroll.]

'To the admired Camma, wife of Sinnatus, the Tetrarch,
 one who years ago, himself an adorer of our great goddess,
 Artemis, beheld you afar off worshipping in her Temple,
 and loved you for it, sends you this cup rescued from the
 burning of one of her shrines in a city thro' which he past
 with the Roman army: it is the cup we use in our
 marriages. Receive it from one who cannot at present
 write himself other than

'A GALATIAN SERVING BY FORCE IN THE
 ROMAN LEGION.'

[*Turns and looks up to Boy.*

Boy, dost thou know the house of Sinnatus?

Boy. These grapes are for the house of Sinnatus—
 Close to the Temple.

Synorix.

Yonder?

Boy.

Yes.

Well—I shall serve Galatia taking it,
 And save her from herself, and be to Rome
 More faithful than a Roman.

[*Turns and sees Camma coming.*
 Stand aside,

Stand aside ; here she comes !

[*Watching Camma as she enters with her Maid.*

Camma (*to Maid*). Where is he, girl ?

Maid. You know the waterfall

That in the summer keeps the mountain side,
 But after rain o'erleaps a jutting rock
 And shoots three hundred feet.

Camma. The stag is there ?

Maid. Seen in the thicket at the bottom there
 But yester-even.

Camma. Good then, we will climb
 The mountain opposite and watch the chase.

[*They descend the rocks and exeunt.*

Synorix (*watching her*). (*Aside.*) The bust of Juno
 and the brows and eyes

Of Venus ; face and form unmatchable !

Antonius. Why do you look at her so lingeringly ?

Synorix. To see if years have changed her.

Antonius (*sarcastically*). Love her, do you ?

Synorix. I envied Sinnatus when he married her.

Antonius. She knows it ? Ha !

Synorix. She—no, nor ev'n my face.

Antonius. Nor Sinnatus either ?

Synorix. No, nor Sinnatus.

Antonius. Hot-blooded ! I have heard them say in
 Rome,

That your own people cast you from their bounds,
 For some unprincely violence to a woman,
 As Rome did Tarquin.

Synorix. Well, if this were so

I here return like Tarquin—for a crown.

Antonius. And may be foil'd like Tarquin, if you
 follow

Not the dry light of Rome's straight-going policy,
 But the fool-fire of love or lust, which well
 May make you lose yourself, may even drown you
 In the good regard of Rome.

Synorix. Tut—fear me not;
 I ever had my victories among women.
 I am most true to Rome.

Antonius (aside). I hate the man!
 What filthy tools our Senate works with! Still
 I must obey them. (*Aloud.*) Fare you well. [*Going.*

Synorix. Farewell!

Antonius (stopping). A moment! If you track this
 Sinnatus

In any treason, I give you here an order
 . [*Produces a paper.*

To seize upon him. Let me sign it. (*Signs it.*) 'There
 'Antonius leader of the Roman Legion.'

[*Hands the paper to Synorix. Goes up pathway and
 exit.*

Synorix. Woman again!—but I am wiser now.
 No rushing on the game—the net,—the net.
 [*Shouts of 'Sinnatus! Sinnatus!' Then horn.
 Looking off stage.*] He comes, a rough, bluff, simple-
 looking fellow.

If we may judge the kernel by the husk,
 Not one to keep a woman's fealty when
 Assailed by Craft and Love. I'll join with him:
 I may reap something from him—come upon *her*
 Again, perhaps, to-day—*her*. Who are with him?
 I see no face that knows me. Shall I risk it?
 I am a Roman now, they dare not touch me.
 I will.

[*Enter Sinnatus, Huntsmen and hounds.*

Fair Sir, a happy day to you!
 You reckon but little of the Roman here,
 While you can take your pastime in the woods.

Sinnatus. Ay, ay, why not? What would you with
 me, man?

Synorix. I am a life-long lover of the chase,
And tho' a stranger fain would be allow'd
To join the hunt.

Sinnatus. Your name?

Synorix. Strato, my name.

Sinnatus. No Roman name?

Synorix. A Greek, my lord; you know
That we Galatians are both Greek and Gaul.

[*Shouts and horns in the distance.*]

Sinnatus. Hillo, the stag! (*To Synorix.*) What, you
are all unfurnish'd?

Give him a bow and arrows—follow—follow.

[*Exit, followed by Huntsmen.*]

Synorix. Slowly but surely—till I see my way.
It is the one step in the dark beyond
Our expectation, that amazes us.

[*Distant shouts and horns.*]

Hillo! Hillo! [*Exit Synorix. Shouts and horns.*]

SCENE II.—A ROOM IN THE TETRARCH'S HOUSE

*Frescoed figures on the walls. Evening. Moonlight outside.
A couch with cushions on it. A small table with a
flagon of wine, cups, plate of grapes, etc., also the cup
of Scene I. A chair with drapery on it.*

CAMMA enters, and opens curtains of window.

Camma. No Sinnatus yet—and there the rising moon.
[*Takes up a cithern and sits on couch. Plays and sings.*]

Moon on the field and the foam,
Moon on the waste and the wold,
Moon bring him home, bring him home
Safe from the dark and the cold,
Home, sweet moon, bring him home,
Home with the flock to the fold—
Safe from the wolf——

(*Listening.*) Is he coming? I thought I heard
 A footstep. No not yet. They say that Rome
 Sprang from a wolf. I fear my dear lord mixt
 With some conspiracy against the wolf.
 'This mountain shepherd never dream'd of Rome.

(*Sings.*) Safe from the wolf to the fold —

And that great break of precipice that runs
 'Thro' all the wood, where twenty years ago
 Huntsman, and hound, and deer were all neck-broken!
 Nay, here he comes.

Enter SINNATUS followed by SYNORIX.

Sinnatus (angrily). I tell thee, my good fellow,
 My arrow struck the stag.

Synorix. But was it so?
 Nay, you were further off: besides the wind
 Went with *my* arrow.

Sinnatus. I am sure *I* struck him.

Synorix. And I am just as sure, my lord, *I* struck him.
 (*Aside.*) And I may strike your game when you are gone.

Camma. Come, come, we will not quarrel about the
 stag.

I have had a weary day in watching you.
 Yours must have been a wearier. Sit and eat.
 And take a hunter's vengeance on the meats.

Sinnatus. No, no—we have eaten—we are heated.
 Wine!

Camma. Who is our guest?

Sinnatus. Strato he calls himself.

[*Camma offers wine to Synorix, while Sinnatus
 helps himself.*]

Sinnatus. I pledge you, Strato. [*Drinks.*]

Synorix. And I you, my lord. [*Drinks.*]

Sinnatus (seeing the cup sent to Cammia). What's here?

Camma. A strange gift sent to me to-day.

A sacred cup saved from a blazing shrine
Of our great Goddess, in some city where
Antonius past. I had believed that Rome
Made war upon the peoples not the Gods.

Synorix. Most like the city rose against Antonius,
Whereon he fired it, and the sacred shrine
By chance was burnt along with it.

Sinnatus. Had you then

No message with the cup?

Camma. Why, yes, see here. [*Gives him the scroll.*]

Sinnatus (reads). 'To the admired Camma,—beheld
you afar off—loved you—sends you this cup—the cup we
use in our marriages—cannot at present write himself
other than

'A GALATIAN SERVING BY FORCE IN THE
ROMAN LEGION.'

Serving by force! Were there no boughs to hang on,
Rivers to drown in? Serve by force? No force
Could make me serve by force.

Synorix. How then, my lord?

The Roman is encampt without your city—
The force of Rome a thousand-fold our own.
Must all Galatia hang or drown herself?
And you a Prince and Tetrarch in this province—

Sinnatus. Province!

Synorix. Well, well, they call it so in Rome.

Sinnatus (angrily). Province!

Synorix. A noble anger! but Antonius

To-morrow will demand your tribute—you,
Can you make war? Have you alliances?
Bithynia, Pontus, Paphlagonia?
We have had our leagues of old with Eastern kings.
There is my hand—if such a league there be.
What will you do?

Sinnatus. Not set myself abroad

And run my mind out to a random guest
Who join'd me in the hunt. You saw my hounds

True to the scent ; and we have two-legg'd dogs
Among us who can smell a true occasion,
And when to bark and how.

Synorix. My good Lord Sinnatus,
I once was at the hunting of a lion.
Roused by the clamour of the chase he woke,
Came to the front of the wood—his monarch mane
Bristled about his quick ears—he stood there
Staring upon the hunter. A score of dogs
Gnaw'd at his ankles : at the last he felt
The trouble of his feet, put forth one paw,
Slew four, and knew it not, and so remain'd
Staring upon the hunter : and this Rome
Will crush you if you wrestle with her ; then
Save for some slight report in her own Senate
Scarce know what she has done.

(*Aside.*) Would I could move him,
Provoke him any way ! (*Aloud.*) The Lady Camma,
Wise I am sure as she is beautiful,
Will close with me that to submit at once
Is better than a wholly-hopeless war,
Our gallant citizens murder'd all in vain,
Son, husband, brother gash'd to death in vain,
And the small state more cruelly trampled on
Than had she never moved.

Camma. Sir, I had once
A boy who died a babe ; but were he living
And grown to man and Sinnatus will'd it, I
Would set him in the front rank of the fight
With scarce a pang. (*Rises.*) Sir, if a state submit
At once, she may be blotted out at once
And swallow'd in the conqueror's chronicle.
Whereas in wars of freedom and defence
The glory and grief of battle won or lost
Solders a race together—yea—tho' they fail,
The names of those who fought and fell are like
A bank'd-up fire that flashes out again
From century to century, and at last

May lead them on to victory—I hope so—
Like phantoms of the Gods.

Sinnatus. Well spoken, wife.

Synorix (bowing). Madam, so well I yield.

Sinnatus. I should not wonder

If Synorix, who has dwelt three years in Rome
And wrought his worst against his native land,
Returns with this Antonius.

Synorix. What is Synorix?

Sinnatus. Galatian, and not know? This Synorix
Was Tetrarch here, and tyrant also—did
Dishonour to our wives.

Synorix. Perhaps you judge him
With feeble charity: being as you tell me
Tetrarch, there might be willing wives enough
To feel dishonour, honour.

Camma. Do not say so.
I know of no such wives in all Galatia.
There may be courtesans for aught I know
Whose life is one dishonour.

Enter ATTENDANT.

Attendant (aside). My lord, the men!

Sinnatus (aside). Our anti-Roman faction?

Attendant (aside). Ay, my lord.

Synorix (overhearing). (*Aside.*) I have enough—their
anti-Roman faction.

Sinnatus (aloud). Some friends of mine would speak
with me without.

You, Strato, make good cheer till I return. [*Exit.*

Synorix. I have much to say, no time to say it in.
First, lady, know myself am that Galatian
Who sent the cup.

Camma. I thank you from my heart.

Synorix. Then that I serve with Rome to serve Galatia.
That is my secret: keep it, or you sell me
To torment and to death. [*Coming closer.*

For your ear only—

I love you—for your love to the great Goddess.
The Romans sent me here a spy upon you,
To draw you and your husband to your doom.
I'd sooner die than do it.

[*Takes out paper given him by Antonius.*

This paper sign'd

Antonius—will you take it, read it? there!

Camma. (*Reads.*) 'You are to seize on Sinnatus,—
if——'

Synorix. (*Snatches paper.*) No more.

What follows is for no wife's eyes. O *Camma*,
Rome has a glimpse of this conspiracy;
Rome never yet hath spar'd conspirator.
Horrible! flaying, scourging, crucifying——

Camma. I am tender enough. Why do you practise
on me?

Synorix. Why should I practise on you? How you
wrong me!

I am sure of being every way malign'd.

And if you should betray me to your husband——

Camma. Will you betray him by this order?

Synorix.

See,

I tear it all to pieces, never dream'd
Of acting on it.

[*Tears the paper.*

Camma. I owe you thanks for ever.

Synorix. Hath Sinnatus never told you of this plot?

Camma. What plot?

Synorix. A child's sand-castle on the beach

For the next wave—all seen,—all calculated,

All known by Rome. No chance for Sinnatus.

Camma. Why said you not as much to my brave
Sinnatus?

Synorix. Brave—ay—too brave, too over-confident,
Too like to ruin himself, and you, and me!
Who else, with this black thunderbolt of Rome
Above him, would have chased the stag to-day
In the full face of all the Roman camp?

A miracle that they let him home again,
Not caught, maim'd, blinded him. [Camma *shudders*.

(*Aside*.) I have made her tremble.

(*Aloud*.) I know they mean to torture him to death.

I dare not tell him how I came to know it ;

I durst not trust him with—my serving Rome

To serve Galatia : you heard him on the letter.

Not say as much ? I all but said as much.

I am sure I told him that his plot was folly.

I say it to you—you are wiser—Rome knows all,

But you know not the savagery of Rome.

Camma. O—have you power with Rome ? use it for
him !

Synorix. Alas ! I have no such power with Rome.

All that

Lies with Antonius.

[*As if struck by a sudden thought*. Comes over to her.

He will pass to-morrow

In the gray dawn before the Temple doors.

You have beauty,—O great beauty,—and Antonius,

So gracious toward women, never yet

Flung back a woman's prayer. Plead to him,

I am sure you will prevail.

Camma. Still—I should tell

My husband.

Synorix. Will he let you plead for him

To a Roman ?

Camma. I fear not.

Synorix. Then do not tell him.

Or tell him, if you will, when you return,

When you have charm'd our general into mercy,

And all is safe again. O dearest lady,

[*Murmurs of 'Synorix ! Synorix !' heard outside*.

Think,—torture,—death,—and come.

Camma. I will, I will.

And I will not betray you.

Synorix (aside). (*As Sinnatus enters*.) Stand apart.

Enter SINNATUS and ATTENDANT.

Sinnatus. Thou art that Synorix! One whom thou
hast wrong'd
Without there, knew thee with Antonius.

They howl for thee, to rend thee head from limb.

Synorix. I am much malign'd. I thought to serve
Galatia.

Sinnatus. Serve thyself first, villain! They shall not
harm

My guest within my house. There! (*points to door*) there!
this door

Opens upon the forest! Out, begone!

Henceforth I am thy mortal enemy.

Synorix. However I thank thee (*draws his sword*);
thou hast saved my life. [*Exit.*

Sinnatus. (*To Attendant.*) Return and tell them
Synorix is not here. [*Exit Attendant.*

What did that villain Synorix say to you?

Camma. Is he—that—Synorix?

Sinnatus. Wherefore should you doubt it?

One of the men there knew him.

Camma. Only one,

And he perhaps mistaken in the face.

Sinnatus. Come, come, could he deny it? What did
he say?

Camma. What *should* he say?

Sinnatus. What *should* he say, my wife!

He should say this, that being Tetrarch once

His own true people cast him from their doors

Like a base coin.

Camma. Not kindly to them?

Sinnatus. Kindly?

O the most kindly Prince in all the world!

Would clap his honest citizens on the back,

Bandy their own rude jests with them, be curious

About the welfare of their babes, their wives,

O ay — their wives — their wives. What should he say?

He should say nothing to my wife if I
Were by to throttle him! He steep'd himself
In all the lust of Rome. How should *you* guess
What manner of beast it is?

Camma. Yet he seem'd kindly,
And said he loathed the cruelties that Rome
Wrought on her vassals.

Sinnatus. Did he, *honest* man?

Camma. And you, that seldom brook the stranger
here,
Have let him hunt the stag with you to-day.

Sinnatus. I warrant you now, he said *he* struck the
stag.

Camma. Why no, he never touch'd upon the stag.

Sinnatus. Why so I said, *my* arrow. Well, to sleep.

[*Goes to close door.*]

Camma. Nay, close not yet the door upon a night
That looks half day.

Sinnatus. True; and my friends may spy him
And slay him as he runs.

Camma. He is gone already.
O look,—yon grove upon the mountain,—white
In the sweet moon as with a lovelier snow!
But what a blotch of blackness underneath!
Sinnatus, you remember—yea, you must,
That there three years ago—the vast vine-bowers
Ran to the summit of the trees, and dropt
Their streamers earthward, which a breeze of May
Took ever and anon, and open'd out
The purple zone of hill and heaven; there
You told your love; and like the swaying vines—
Yea,—with our eyes,—our hearts, our prophet hopes
Let in the happy distance, and that all
But cloudless heaven which we have found together
In our three married years! You kiss'd me there
For the first time. *Sinnatus*, kiss me now.

Sinnatus. First kiss. (*Kisses her.*) There then. You talk almost as if it

Might be the last.

Camma. Will you not eat a little?

Sinnatus. No, no, we found a goat-herd's hut and shared

His fruits and milk. Liar! You will believe Now that he never struck the stag—a brave one Which you shall see to-morrow.

Camma. I rise to-morrow

In the gray dawn, and take this holy cup To lodge it in the shrine of Artemis.

Sinnatus. Good!

Camma. If I be not back in half an hour,

Come after me.

Sinnatus. What! is there danger?

Camma. Nay,

None that I know: 'tis but a step from here To the Temple.

Sinnatus. All my brain is full of sleep.

Wake me before you go, I'll after you—

After me now! [*Closes door and exit.*]

Camma (*drawing curtains*). Your shadow, Synorix—

His face was not malignant, and he said

'That men malign'd him. Shall I go? Shall I go?

Death, torture—

'He never yet flung back a woman's prayer'—

I go, but I will have my dagger with me. [*Exit.*]

SCENE III.—SAME AS SCENE I. DAWN

Music and Singing in the Temple.

Enter SYNORIX watchfully, after him PUBLIUS and SOLDIERS.

Synorix. Publius!

Publius. Here!

Synorix. Do you remember what I told you?

Publius. When you cry 'Rome, Rome,' to seize
On whomsoever may be talking with you,
Or man, or woman, as traitors unto Rome.

Synorix. Right. Back again. How many of you are
there?

Publius. Some half a score.

[*Exeunt Soldiers and Publius.*

Synorix. I have my guard about me.

I need not fear the crowd that hunted me
Across the woods, last night. I hardly gain'd
The camp at midnight. Will she come to me
Now that she knows me Synorix? Not if Sinnatus
Has told her all the truth about me. Well,
I cannot help the mould that I was cast in.
I fling all that upon my fate, my star.
I know that I am genial, I would be
Happy, and make all others happy so
They did not thwart me. Nay, she will not come.
Yet if she be a true and loving wife
She may, perchance, to save this husband. Ay!
See, see, my white bird stepping toward the snare.
Why now I count it all but miracle,
That this brave heart of mine should shake me so,
As helplessly as some unbearded boy's
When first he meets his maiden in a bower.

[*Enter Camma (with cup).*

The lark first takes the sunlight on his wing,
But you, twin sister of the morning star,
Forelead the sun.

Camma. Where is Antonius?

Synorix. Not here as yet. You are too early for him.

[*She crosses towards Temple.*

Synorix. Nay, whither go you now?

Camma. To lodge this cup

Within the holy shrine of Artemis,
And so return.

Synorix. To find Antonius here.

[*She goes into the Temple, he looks after her.*

The loveliest life that ever drew the light
 From heaven to brood upon her, and enrich
 Earth with her shadow! I trust she *will* return.
 These Romans dare not violate the Temple.
 No, I must lure my game into the camp.
 A woman I could live and die for. What!
 Die for a woman, what new faith is this?
 I am not mad, not sick, not old enough
 To doat on one alone. Yes, mad for her,
 Camma the stately, Camma the great-hearted,
 So mad, I fear some strange and evil chance
 Coming upon me, for by the Gods I seem
 Strange to myself.

Re-enter CAMMA.

Camma. Where is Antonius?

Synorix. Where? As I said before, you are still too
 early.

Camma. Too early to be here alone with thee;
 For whether men malign thy name, or no,
 It bears an evil savour among women.
 Where is Antonius? (*Loud.*)

Synorix. Madam, as you know
 The camp is half a league without the city;
 If you will walk with me we needs must meet
 Antonius coming, or at least shall find him
 There in the camp.

Camma. No, not one step with thee.
 Where is Antonius? (*Louder.*)

Synorix (advancing towards her). Then for your own
 sake,
 Lady, I say it with all gentleness,
 And for the sake of Sinnatus your husband,
 I must compel you.

Camma (drawing her dagger). Stay!—too near is death.

Synorix (disarming her). Is it not easy to disarm a
 woman?

Enter SINNATUS (seizes him from behind by the throat).

Synorix (throttled and scarce audible). Rome! Rome!

Sinnatus. Adulterous dog!

Synorix (stabbing him with Camma's dagger). What!
will you have it?

[Camma utters a cry and runs to Sinnatus.

Sinnatus (falls backward). I have it in my heart—to
the Temple—fly—

For my sake—or they seize on thee. Remember!

Away—farewell!

[Dies.

Camma (runs up the steps into the Temple, looking back).

Farewell!

Synorix (seeing her escape). The women of the Temple
drag her in.

Publius! Publius! No,

Antonius would not suffer me to break

Into the sanctuary. She hath escaped.

[Looking down at Sinnatus.

'Adulterous dog!' that red-faced rage at me!

Then with one quick short stab—eternal peace.

So end all passions. Then what use in passions?

To warm the cold bounds of our dying life

And, lest we freeze in mortal apathy,

Employ us, heat us, quicken us, help us, keep us

From seeing all too near that urn, those ashes

Which all must be. Well used, they serve us well.

I heard a saying in Egypt, that ambition

Is like the sea wave, which the more you drink,

The more you thirst—yea—drink too much, as men

Have done on rafts of wreck—it drives you mad.

I will be no such wreck, am no such gamester

As, having won the stake, would dare the chance

Of double, or losing all. The Roman Senate,

For I have always play'd into their hands,

Means me the crown. And Camma for my bride—

The people love her—if I win her love,

They too will cleave to me, as one with her.
There then I rest, Rome's tributary king.

[*Looking down on Sinnatus.*]

Why did I strike him?—having proof enough
Against the man, I surely should have left
That stroke to Rome. He saved my life too. Did he?
It seem'd so. I have play'd the sudden fool.
And that sets her against me—for the moment.
Camma—well, well, I never found the woman
I could not force or wheedle to my will.
She will be glad at last to wear my crown.
And I will make Galatia prosperous too,
And we will chirp among our vines, and smile
At bygone things till that (*pointing to Sinnatus*) eternal
peace.

Rome! Rome! [*Enter Publius and Soldiers.*]

'Twice I cried Rome. Why came ye not before?

Publius. Why come we now? Whom shall we seize
upon?

Synorix (*pointing to the body of Sinnatus*). The body of
that dead traitor Sinnatus.

Bear him away.

Music and Singing in Temple.

ACT II

SCENE.—INTERIOR OF THE TEMPLE OF ARTEMIS

Small gold gates on platform in front of the veil before the colossal statue of the Goddess, and in the centre of the Temple a tripod altar, on which is a lighted lamp. Lamps (lighted) suspended between each pillar. Tripods, vases, garlands of flowers, etc., about stage. Altar at back close to Goddess, with two cups. Solemn music. Priestesses decorating the Temple.

(The Chorus of PRIESTESSES sing as they enter.)

Artemis, Artemis, hear us, O Mother, hear us, and bless us!
Artemis, thou that art life to the wind, to the wave, to the
glebe, to the fire!

Hear thy people who praise thee! O help us from all that
oppress us!

Hear thy priestesses hymn thy glory! O yield them all
their desire!

Priestess. Phœbe, that man from Synorix, who has been
So oft to see the Priestess, waits once more
Before the Temple.

Phœbe. We will let her know.

[*Signs to one of the Priestesses, who goes out.*
Since Camma fled from Synorix to our Temple,
And for her beauty, stateliness, and power,
Was chosen Priestess here, have you not mark'd
Her eyes were ever on the marble floor?
To-day they are fixt and bright—they look straight out.
Hath she made up her mind to marry him?

Priestess. To marry him who stabb'd her Sinnatus.
You will not easily make me credit that.

Phœbe. Ask her.

Enter CAMMA as Priestess (in front of the curtains).

Priestess. You will not marry Synorix?

Camma. My girl, I am the bride of Death, and only
Marry the dead.

Priestess. Not Synorix then?

Camma. My girl,

At times this oracle of great Artemis
Has no more power than other oracles
To speak directly.

Phæbe. Will you speak to him,
The messenger from Synorix who waits
Before the Temple?

Camma. Why not? Let him enter.

[*Comes forward on to step by tripod.*]

Enter a MESSENGER.

Messenger (kneels). Greeting and health from Synorix!
More than once

You have refused his hand. When last I saw you,
You all but yielded. He entreats you now
For your last answer. When he struck at Sinnatus—
As I have many a time declared to you—
He knew not at the moment who had fasten'd
About his throat—he begs you to forget it
As scarce his act:—a random stroke: all else
Was love for you: he prays you to believe him.

Camma. I pray him to believe—that I believe him.

Messenger. Why that is well. You mean to marry
him?

Camma. I mean to marry him—if that be well.

Messenger. This very day the Romans crown him king
For all his faithful services to Rome.
He wills you then this day to marry him,
And so be throned together in the sight
Of all the people, that the world may know

You twain are reconciled, and no more feuds
Disturb our peaceful vassalage to Rome.

Camma. To-day? Too sudden. I will brood upon it.
When do they crown him?

Messenger. Even now.

Camma. And where?

Messenger. Here by your temple.

Camma. Come once more to me
Before the crowning,—I will answer you.

[*Exit Messenger.*]

Phæbe. Great Artemis! O Camma, can it be well,
Or good, or wise, that you should clasp a hand
Red with the sacred blood of Sinnatus?

Camma. Good! mine own dagger driven by Synorix
found

All good in the true heart of Sinnatus,
And quench'd it there for ever. Wise!
Life yields to death and wisdom bows to Fate,
Is wisest, doing so. Did not this man
Speak well? We cannot fight imperial Rome,
But he and I are both Galatian-born,
And tributary sovereigns, he and I
Might teach this Rome—from knowledge of our people—
Where to lay on her tribute—heavily here
And lightly there. Might I not live for that,
And drown all poor self-passion in the sense
Of public good?

Phæbe. I am sure you will not marry him.

Camma. Are you so sure? I pray you wait and see.

[*Shouts (from the distance), 'Synorix! Synorix!'*]

Camma. Synorix, Synorix! So they cried Sinnatus
Not so long since—they sicken me. The One
Who shifts his policy suffers something, must
Accuse himself, excuse himself; the Many
Will feel no shame to give themselves the lie.

Phæbe. Most like it was the Roman soldier shouted.

Camma. Their shield-borne patriot of the morning star
Hang'd at mid-day, their traitor of the dawn

The clamour'd darling of their afternoon !
 And that same head they would have play'd at ball with
 And kick'd it featureless—they now would crown.

[*Flourish of trumpets.*]

Enter a Galatian NOBLEMAN *with crown on a cushion.*

Noble (*kneels*). Greeting and health from Synorix.

He sends you

This diadem of the first Galatian Queen,
 That you may feed your fancy on the glory of it,
 And join your life this day with his, and wear it
 Beside him on his throne. He waits your answer.

Camma. Tell him there is one shadow among the
 shadows,

One ghost of all the ghosts—as yet so new,
 So strange among them—such an alien there,
 So much of husband in it still—that if
 The shout of Synorix and Camma sitting
 Upon one throne, should reach it, *it* would rise—
He! . . . He, with that red star between the ribs,
 And my knife there—and blast the king and me,
 And blanch the crowd with horror. I dare not, sir !
 Throne him—and then the marriage—ay and tell him
 That I accept the diadem of Galatia— [*All are amazed.*]
 Yea, that ye saw me crown myself withal. [*Puts on the crown.*]
 I wait him his crown'd queen.

Noble. So will I tell him. [*Exit.*]

Music. *Two Priestesses go up the steps before the shrine, draw the curtains on either side (discovering the Goddess), then open the gates and remain on steps, one on either side, and kneel. A priestess goes off and returns with a veil of marriage, then assists Phoebe to veil Camma. At the same time Priestesses enter and stand on either side of the Temple. Camma and all the Priestesses kneel, raise their hands to the Goddess, and bow down.*

[*Shouts, 'Synorix ! Synorix !'* *All rise.*]

Camma. Fling wide the doors and let the new-made children
Of our imperial mother see the show.

[*Sunlight pours through the doors.*
I have no heart to do it. (*To Phæbe*). Look for me!

[*Crouches.* Phæbe looks out.
[*Shouts, 'Synorix! Synorix!'*

Phæbe. He climbs the throne. Hot blood, ambition,
pride

So bloat and redden his face—O would it were
His third last apoplexy! O bestial!
O how unlike our goodly Sinnatus.

Camma (*on the ground*). You wrong him surely; far
as the face goes
A goodlier-looking man than Sinnatus.

Phæbe (*aside*). How dare she say it? I could hate
her for it

But that she is distracted. [*A flourish of trumpets.*

Camma. Is he crown'd?

Phæbe. Ay, there they crown him.

[*Crowd without shout, 'Synorix! Synorix!'*
[*A Priestess brings a box of spices to Camma, who
throws them on the altar-flame.*

Camma. Rouse the dead altar-flame, fling in the spices,
Nard, Cinnamon, amomum, benzoin.

Let all the air reel into a mist of odour,

As in the midmost heart of Paradise.

Lay down the Lydian carpets for the king.

The king should pace on purple to his bride,

And music there to greet my lord the king.

(*To Phæbe*). Dost thou remember when I wedded

Sinnatus?

Ay, thou wast there—whether from maiden fears

Or reverential love for him I loved,

Or some strange second-sight, the marriage cup

Wherefrom we make libation to the Goddess

So shook within my hand, that the red wine

Ran down the marble and lookt like blood, like blood.

Phæbe. I do remember your first-marriage fears.

Camma. I have no fears at this my second marriage.
See here—I stretch my hand out—hold it there.
How steady it is!

Phæbe. Steady enough to stab him!

Camma. O hush! O peace! This violence ill
becomes

The silence of our Temple. Gentleness,
Low words best chime with this solemnity.

*Enter a procession of Priestesses and Children bearing
garlands and golden goblets, and strewing flowers.*

*Enter SYNORIX (as King, with gold laurel-wreath crown
and purple robes), followed by ANTONIUS, PUBLIUS
Noblemen, Guards, and the Populace.*

Camma. Hail, King!

Synorix. Hail, Queen!

The wheel of Fate has roll'd me to the top.
I would that happiness were gold, that I
Might cast my largess of it to the crowd!
I would that every man made feast to-day
Beneath the shadow of our pines and planes!
For all my truer life begins to-day.
The past is like a travell'd land now sunk
Below the horizon—like a barren shore
That grew salt weeds, but now all drown'd in love
And glittering at full tide—the bounteous bays
And havens filling with a blissful sea.
Nor speak I now too mightily, being King
And happy! happiest, Lady, in my power
To make you happy.

Camma. Yes, sir.

Synorix. Our Antonius,
Our faithful friend of Rome, tho' Rome may set
A free foot where she will, yet of his courtesy
Entreats he may be present at our marriage.

Camma. Let him come—a legion with him, if he will.
(*To Antonius.*) Welcome, my lord Antonius, to our
Temple.

(*To Synorix.*) You on this side the altar. (*To Antonius.*)
You on that.

Call first upon the Goddess, Synorix.

[*All face the Goddess. Priestesses, Children, Populace,
and Guards kneel—the others remain standing.*]

Synorix. O Thou, that dost inspire the germ with life,
The child, a thread within the house of birth,
And give him limbs, then air, and send him forth
The glory of his father—Thou whose breath
Is balmy wind to robe our hills with grass,
And kindle all our vales with myrtle-blossom,
And roll the golden oceans of our grain,
And sway the long grape-bunches of our vines,
And fill all hearts with fatness and the lust
Of plenty—make me happy in my marriage!

Chorus (chanting). Artemis, Artemis, hear him, Ionian
Artemis!

Camma. O Thou that slayest the babe within the womb
Or in the being born, or after slayest him
As boy or man, great Goddess, whose storm-voice
Unsockets the strong oak, and rears his root
Beyond his head, and strows our fruits, and lays
Our golden grain, and runs to sea and makes it
Foam over all the fleeted wealth of kings
And peoples, hear.

Whose arrow is the plague—whose quick flash splits
The mid-sea mast, and rifts the tower to the rock,
And hurls the victor's column down with him
That crowns it, hear.

Who causeth the safe earth to shudder and gape,
And gulf and flatten in her closing chasm
Domed cities, hear.

Whose lava-torrents blast and blacken a province
To a cinder, hear.

Whose winter-cataracts find a realm and leave it

A waste of rock and ruin, hear. I call thee
To make my marriage prosper to my wish ! .

Chorus. Artemis, Artemis, hear her, Ephesian Artemis !

Camma. Artemis, Artemis, hear me, Galatian Artemis !
I call on our own Goddess in our own Temple.

Chorus. Artemis, Artemis, hear her, Galatian Artemis !
[*Thunder. All rise.*

Synorix (aside). Thunder ! Ay, ay, the storm was
drawing hither

Across the hills when I was being crown'd.

I wonder if I look as pale as she ?

Camma. Art thou—still bent—on marrying ?

Synorix. Surely—yet

These are strange words to speak to Artemis.

Camma. Words are not always what they seem, my King.
I will be faithful to thee till thou die.

Synorix. I thank thee, Camma,—I thank thee.

Camma (turning to Antonius). Antonius,
Much graced are we that our Queen Rome in you
Deigns to look in upon our barbarisms.

[*Turns, goes up steps to altar before the Goddess.
Takes a cup from off the altar. Holds it towards
Antonius. Antonius goes up to the foot of the
steps opposite to Synorix.*

You see this cup, my lord. [*Gives it to him.*

Antonius. Most curious !

The many-breasted mother Artemis
Emboss'd upon it.

Camma. It is old, I know not
How many hundred years. Give it me again.
It is the cup belonging our own Temple.

[*Puts it back on altar, and takes up the cup of Act I.
Showing it to Antonius.*

Here is another sacred to the Goddess,
The gift of Synorix ; and the Goddess, being
For this most grateful, wills, thro' me her Priestess,
In honour of his gift and of our marriage,
That Synorix should drink from his own cup.

Synorix. I thank thee, Camma,—I thank thee.

Camma.

For—my lord—

It is our ancient custom in Galatia
That ere two souls be knit for life and death,
They two should drink together from one cup,
In symbol of their married unity,
Making libation to the Goddess. Bring me
The costly wines we use in marriages.

[They bring in a large jar of wine. Camma pours wine into cup.]

(To Synorix.) See here, I fill it. *(To Antonius.)* Will you drink, my lord?

Antonius. I? Why should I? I am not to be married.

Camma. But that might bring a Roman blessing on us.

Antonius (refusing cup). Thy pardon, Priestess!

Camma.

Thou art in the right.

This blessing is for Synorix and for me.

See first I make libation to the Goddess, *[Makes libation.]*
And now I drink. *[Drinks and fills the cup again.]*

Thy turn, Galatian King.

Drink and drink deep—our marriage will be fruitful.

Drink and drink deep, and thou wilt make me happy.

[Synorix goes up to her. She hands him the cup. He drinks.]

Synorix. There, Camma! I have almost drain'd the cup—

A few drops left.

Camma. Libation to the Goddess.

[He throws the remaining drops on the altar and gives Camma the cup.]

Camma (placing the cup on the altar). Why then the Goddess hears.

[Comes down and forward to tripod. Antonius follows.]
Antonius,

Where wast thou on that morning when I came

To plead to thee for Sinnatus's life.

Beside this temple half a year ago?

Antonius. I never heard of this request of thine.

Synorix (coming forward hastily to foot of tripod steps). I sought him and I could not find him. Pray you, Go on with the marriage rites.

Camma. Antonius——

‘Camma!’ who spake?

Antonius. Not I.

Phœbe. Nor any here.

Camma. I am all but sure that some one spake.

Antonius,

If you had found him plotting against Rome,
Would you have tortured Sinnatus to death?

Antonius. No thought was mine of torture or of death,
But had I found him plotting, I had counsell’d him
To rest from vain resistance. Rome is fated
To rule the world. ‘Then, if he had not listen’d,
I might have sent him prisoner to Rome.

Synorix. Why do you palter with the ceremony?
Go on with the marriage rites.

Camma. They are finish’d.

Synorix. How!

Camma. Thou hast drunk deep enough to make me
happy.

Dost thou not feel the love I bear to thee
Glow thro’ thy veins?

Synorix. The love I bear to thee
Glow thro’ my veins since first I look’d on thee.
But wherefore slur the perfect ceremony?
The sovereign of Galatia weds his Queen.
Let all be done to the fullest in the sight
Of all the Gods.

Nay, rather than so clip
The flowery robe of Hymen, we would add
Some golden fringe of gorgeousness beyond
Old use, to make the day memorial, when
Synorix, first King, Camma, first Queen o’ the Realm,
Drew here the richest lot from Fate, to live
And die together.

‘This pain—what is it?—again?’

I had a touch of this last year—in—Rome.

Yes, yes. (*To Antonius.*) Your arm—a moment—It will pass.

I reel beneath the weight of utter joy—

This all too happy day, crown—queen at once. [*Staggers.*]

O all ye Gods—Jupiter!—Jupiter! [*Falls backward.*]

Camma. Dost thou cry out upon the Gods of Rome?

Thou art Galatian-born. Our Artemis

Has vanquish'd their Diana.

Synorix (*on the ground*). I am poison'd.

She—close the Temple door. Let her not fly.

Camma (*leaning on tripod*). Have I not drunk of the same cup with thee?

Synorix. Ay, by the Gods of Rome and all the world, She too—she too—the bride! the Queen! and I—Monstrous! I that loved her.

Camma. I loved *him*.

Synorix. O murderous mad-woman! I pray you lift me

And make me walk awhile. I have heard these poisons May be walk'd down. [*Antonius and Publius raise him up.*]
My feet are tons of lead,

They will break in the earth—I am sinking—hold me—
Let me alone. [*They leave him: he sinks down on ground.*]
Too late—thought myself wise—

A woman's dupe. Antonius, tell the Senate
I have been most true to Rome—would have been true
To *her*—if—if—— [*Falls as if dead.*]

Camma (*coming and leaning over him*). So falls the throne of an hour.

Synorix (*half rising*). Throne? is it thou? the Fates are throned, not we—

Not guilty of ourselves—thy doom and mine—
Thou—coming my way too—*Camma*—good-night. [*Dies.*]

Camma (*upheld by weeping Priestesses*). Thy way? poor worm, crawl down thine own black hole

To the lowest Hell. Antonius, is *he* there?

I meant thee to have follow'd—better thus.

Nay, if my people must be thralls of Rome,
He is gentle, tho' a Roman.

[*Sinks back into the arms of the Priestesses.*]

Antonius.

Thou art one

With thine own people, and though a Roman I
Forgive thee, Camma.

Camma (raising herself). 'CAMMA!'—why there again
I am most sure that some one call'd. O women,
Ye will have Roman masters. I am glad
I shall not see it. Did not some old Greek
Say death was the chief good? He had my fate for it,
Poison'd. (*Sinks back again.*) Have I the crown on?

I will go

To meet him, crown'd! crown'd victor of my will—
On my last voyage—but the wind has fail'd—
Growing dark too—but light enough to row.
Row to the blessed Isles! the blessed Isles!—
Sinnatus!

Why comes he not to meet me? It is the crown
Offends him—and my hands are too sleepy
To lift it off.

[*Phœbe takes the crown off.*]

Who touch'd me then? I thank you.

[*Rises with outspread arms.*]

There—league on league of ever-shining shore
Beneath an ever-rising sun—I see him—
'Camma, Camma!' Sinnatus, Sinnatus!

[*Dies.*]

THE FALCON

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ

THE COUNT FEDERIGO DEGLI ALBERIGHI.

FILIPPO, *Count's foster-brother.*

THE LADY GIOVANNA.

ELISABETTA, *the Count's nurse.*

SCENE.—AN ITALIAN COTTAGE. CASTLE AND
MOUNTAINS SEEN THROUGH WINDOW

ELISABETTA *discovered seated on stool in window darning.*
The Count with Falcon on his hand comes down through
the door at back. A withered wreath on the wall.

Elisabetta. So, my lord, the Lady Giovanna, who hath
been away so long, came back last night with her son to
the castle.

Count. Hear that, my bird! Art thou not jealous
of her?

My princess of the cloud, my plumed purveyor,
My far-eyed queen of the winds—thou that canst soar
Beyond the morning lark, and howsoe'er
Thy quarry wind and wheel, swoop down upon him
Eagle-like, lightning-like—strike, make his feathers
Glance in mid heaven. [*Crosses to chair.*]

I would thou hadst a mate!
Thy breed will die with thee, and mine with me:
I am as lone and loveless as thyself. [*Sits in chair.*]
Giovanna here! Ay, ruffle thyself—*be jealous!*

Thou should'st be jealous of her. Tho' I bred thee
 The full-train'd marvel of all falconry,
 And love thee and thou me, yet if Giovanna
 Be here again—No, no! Buss me, my bird!
 The stately widow has no heart for me.
 Thou art the last friend left me upon earth—
 No, no again to that.

[*Rises and turns.*]

My good old nurse,

I had forgotten thou wast sitting there.

Elisabetta. Ay, and forgotten thy foster-brother too.

Count. Bird-babble for my falcon! Let it pass.

What art thou doing there?

Elisabetta. Darning, your lordship.

We cannot flaunt it in new feathers now:

Nay, if we *will* buy diamond necklaces

To please our lady, we must darn, my lord.

This old thing here (*points to necklace round her neck*),
 they are but blue beads—my Piero,

God rest his honest soul, he bought 'em for me,

Ay, but he knew I meant to marry him.

How couldst thou do it, my son? How couldst thou do it?

Count. She saw it at a dance, upon a neck

Less lovely than her own, and long'd for it.

Elisabetta. She told thee as much?

Count. No, no—a friend of hers.

Elisabetta. Shame on her that she took it at thy hands,

She rich enough to have bought it for herself!

Count. She would have robb'd me then of a great pleasure.

Elisabetta. But hath she yet return'd thy love?

Count. Not yet!

Elisabetta. She should return thy necklace then.

Count. Ay, if

She knew the giver; but I bound the seller

To silence, and I left it privily

At Florence, in her palace.

Elisabetta. And sold thine own

To buy it for her. She not know? She knows

There's none such other——

Count. Madman anywhere.
 Speak freely, tho' to call a madman mad
 Will hardly help to make him sane again.

Enter FILIPPO.

Filippo. Ah, the women, the women! Ah, Monna Giovanna, you here again! you that have the face of an angel and the heart of a—that's too positive! You that have a score of lovers and have not a heart for any of them—that's positive-negative: you that have *not* the head of a toad, and *not* a heart like the jewel in it—that's too negative; you that have a cheek like a peach and a heart like the stone in it—that's positive again—that's better!

Elisabetta. Sh—sh—Filippo!

Filippo (turns half round). Here has our master been a-glorifying and a-velveting and a-silking himself, and a-peacocking and a-spreading to catch her eye for a dozen year, till he hasn't an eye left in his own tail to flourish among the peahens, and all along o' you, Monna Giovanna, all along o' you!

Elisabetta. Sh—sh—Filippo! Can't you hear that you are saying behind his back what you see you are saying afore his face?

Count. Let him—he never spares me to my face!

Filippo. No, my lord, I never spare your lordship to your lordship's face, nor behind your lordship's back, nor to right, nor to left, nor to round about and back to your lordship's face again, for I'm honest, your lordship.

Count. Come, come, Filippo, what is there in the larder? [*Elisabetta crosses to fireplace and puts on wood.*]

Filippo. Shelves and hooks, shelves and hooks, and when I see the shelves I am like to hang myself on the books.

Count. No bread?

Filippo. Half a breakfast for a rat!

Count. Milk?

Filippo. Three laps for a cat!

Count. Cheese?

Filippo. A supper for twelve mites.

Count. Eggs?

Filippo. One, but addled.

Count. No bird?

Filippo. Half a tit and a hern's bill.

Count. Let be thy jokes and thy jerks, man! Anything or nothing?

Filippo. Well, my lord, if all-but-nothing be anything, and one plate of dried prunes be all-but-nothing, then there is anything in your lordship's larder at your lordship's service, if your lordship care to call for it.

Count. Good mother, happy was the prodigal son,
For he return'd to the rich father; I

But add my poverty to thine. And all

Thro' following of my fancy. Pray thee make

Thy slender meal out of those scraps and shreds

Filippo spoke of. As for him and me,

There sprouts a salad in the garden still.

(To the Falcon.) Why didst thou miss thy quarry yester-
even?

To-day, my beauty, thou must dash us down

Our dinner from the skies. Away, Filippo!

[Exit, followed by Filippo.]

Elisabetta. I knew it would come to this. She has
beggared him. I always knew it would come to this!

*(Goes up to table as if to resume darning, and looks out of
window.)* Why, as I live, there is Monna Giovanna

coming down the hill from the castle. Stops and stares
at our cottage. Ay, ay! stare at it: it's all you have left

us. Shame on you! *She* beautiful: sleek as a miller's
mouse! Meal enough, meat enough, well fed; but

beautiful—bah! Nay, see, why she turns down the path
through our little vineyard, and I sneezed three times this

morning. Coming to visit my lord, for the first time in
her life too! Why, bless the saints! I'll be bound to

confess her love to him at last. I forgive her, I forgive her! I knew it would come to this—I always knew it must come to this! (*Going up to door during latter part of speech and opens it.*) Come in, Madonna, come in. (*Retires to front of table and curtseys as the Lady Giovanna enters, then moves chair towards the hearth.*) Nay, let me place this chair for your ladyship.

[*Lady Giovanna moves slowly down stage, then crosses to chair, looking about her, bows as she sees the Madonna over fireplace, then sits in chair.*

Lady Giovanna. Can I speak with the Count?

Elisabetta. Ay, my lady, but won't you speak with the old woman first, and tell her all about it and make her happy? for I've been on my knees every day for these half-dozen years in hope that the saints would send us this blessed morning; and he always took you so kindly, he always took the world so kindly. When he was a little one, and I put the bitters on my breast to wean him, he made a wry mouth at it, but he took it so kindly, and your ladyship has given him bitters enough in this world, and he never made a wry mouth at you, he always took you so kindly—which is more than I did, my lady, more than I did—and he so handsome—and bless your sweet face, you look as beautiful this morning as the very Madonna her own self—and better late than never—but come when they will—then or now—it's all for the best, come when they will—they are made by the blessed saints—these marriages. [*Raises her hands.*

Lady Giovanna. Marriages? I shall never marry again!

Elisabetta (*rises and turns*). Shame on her then!

Lady Giovanna. Where is the Count?

Elisabetta. Just gone

To fly his falcon.

Lady Giovanna. Call him back and say
I come to breakfast with him.

Elisabetta. Holy mother!

To breakfast! Oh sweet saints! one plate of prunes!

Well, Madam, I will give your message to him. [*Exit.*

Lady Giovanna. His falcon, and I come to ask for his falcon,

The pleasure of his eyes—boast of his hand—
Pride of his heart—the solace of his hours—
His one companion here—nay, I have heard
That, thro' his late magnificence of living
And this last costly gift to mine own self,

[*Shows diamond necklace.*

He hath become so beggar'd, that his falcon
Ev'n wins his dinner for him in the field.
That must be talk, not truth, but truth or talk,
How can I ask for his falcon?

[*Rises and moves as she speaks.*

O my sick boy!

My daily fading Florio, it is thou
Hath set me this hard task, for when I say
What can I do—what can I get for thee?
He answers, 'Get the Count to give me his falcon,
And that will make me well.' Yet if I ask,
He loves me, and he knows I know he loves me!
Will he not pray me to return his love—
To marry him?—(*pause*)—I can never marry him.
His grandsire struck my grandsire in a brawl
At Florence, and my grandsire stabb'd him there.
The feud between our houses is the bar
I cannot cross; I dare not brave my brother,
Break with my kin. My brother hates him, scorns
The noblest-natured man alive, and I—
Who have that reverence for him that I scarce
Dare beg him to receive his diamonds back—
How can I, dare I, ask him for his falcon?

[*Puts diamonds in her casket.*

Re-enter COUNT and FILIPPO. COUNT turns to FILIPPO.

Count. Do what I said; I cannot do it myself.

Filippo. Why then, my lord, we are pauper'd out and out.

Count. Do what I said! [*Advances and bows low.*
Welcome to this poor cottage, my dear lady.

Lady Giovanna. And welcome turns a cottage to a
palace.

Count. 'Tis long since we have met!

Lady Giovanna. To make amends
I come this day to break my fast with you.

Count. I am much honour'd—yes—

[*Turns to Filippo.*

Do what I told thee. Must I do it myself?

Filippo. I will, I will. (*Sighs.*) Poor fellow! [*Exit.*

Count. Lady, you bring your light into my cottage
Who never deign'd to shine into my palace.

My palace wanting you was but a cottage;

My cottage, while you grace it, is a palace.

Lady Giovanna. In cottage or in palace, being still
Beyond your fortunes, you are still the king
Of courtesy and liberality.

Count. I trust I still maintain my courtesy;
My liberality perforce is dead
Thro' lack of means of giving.

Lady Giovanna.

Yet I come

To ask a gift.

[*Moves toward him a little.*

Count. It will be hard, I fear,
To find one shock upon the field when all
The harvest has been carried.

Lady Giovanna.

But my boy—

(*Aside.*) No, no! not yet—I cannot!

Count.

Ay, how is he,

That bright inheritor of your eyes—your boy?

Lady Giovanna. Alas, my Lord Federigo, he hath
fallen

Into a sickness, and it troubles me.

Count. Sick! is it so? why, when he came last year
To see me hawking, he was well enough:
And then I taught him all our hawking-phrases.

Lady Giovanna. Oh yes, and once you let him fly
your falcon.

Count. How charm'd he was! what wonder?— A
gallant boy,

A noble bird, each perfect of the breed.

Lady Giovanna (*sinks in chair*). What do you rate her
at?

Count. My bird? a hundred

Gold pieces once were offer'd by the Duke.

I had no heart to part with her for money.

Lady Giovanna. No, not for money.

[*Count turns away and sighs.*

Wherefore do you sigh?

Count. I have lost a friend of late.

Lady Giovanna. I could sigh with you

For fear of losing more than friend, a son;

And if he leave me—all the rest of life—

That wither'd wreath were of more worth to me.

[*Looking at wreath on wall.*

Count. That wither'd wreath is of more worth to me

Than all the blossom, all the leaf of this

New-wakening year.

[*Goes and takes down wreath.*

Lady Giovanna. And yet I never saw

The land so rich in blossom as this year.

Count (*holding wreath toward her*). Was not the year
when this was gather'd richer?

Lady Giovanna. How long ago was that?

Count. Alas, ten summers!

A lady that was beautiful as day

Sat by me at a rustic festival

With other beauties on a mountain meadow,

And she was the most beautiful of all;

Then but fifteen, and still as beautiful.

The mountain flowers grew thickly round about.

I made a wreath with some of these; I ask'd

A ribbon from her hair to bind it with;

I whisper'd, Let me crown you Queen of Beauty,

And softly placed the chaplet on her head.

A colour, which has colour'd all my life,

Flush'd in her face; then I was call'd away;

And presently all rose, and so departed.

Ah! she had thrown my chaplet on the grass,
And there I found it.

[*Lets his hands fall, holding wreath despondingly.*

Lady Giovanna (after pause). How long since do you say?

Count. That was the very year before you married.

Lady Giovanna. When I was married you were at the wars.

Count. Had she not thrown my chaplet on the grass,
It may be I had never seen the wars.

[*Replaces wreath whence he had taken it.*

Lady Giovanna. Ah, but, my lord, there ran a rumour then

That you were kill'd in battle. I can tell you
True tears that year were shed for you in Florence.

Count. It might have been as well for me. Unhappily
I was but wounded by the enemy there
And then imprison'd.

Lady Giovanna. Happily, however,
I see you quite recover'd of your wound.

Count. No, no, not quite, Madonna, not yet, not yet.

Re-enter FILIPPO.

Filippo. My lord, a word with you.

Count. Pray, pardon me!

[*Lady Giovanna crosses, and passes behind chair and takes down wreath: then goes to chair by table.*

Count (to *Filippo*). What is it, *Filippo*?

Filippo. Spoons, your lordship.

Count. Spoons!

Filippo. Yes, my lord, for wasn't my lady born with a golden spoon in her ladyship's mouth, and we haven't never so much as a silver one for the golden lips of her ladyship.

Count. Have we not half a score of silver spoons?

Filippo. Half o' one, my lord!

Count. How half of one?

Filippo. I trod upon him even now, my lord, in my hurry, and broke him.

Count. And the other nine?

Filippo. Sold! but shall I not mount with your lordship's leave to her ladyship's castle, in your lordship's and her ladyship's name, and confer with her ladyship's seneschal, and so descend again with some of her ladyship's own appurtenances?

Count. Why—no, man. Only see your cloth be clean.
[*Exit Filippo.*]

Lady Giovanna. Ay, ay, this faded ribbon was the mode In Florence ten years back. What's here? a scroll Pinned to the wreath.

My lord, you have said so much
Of this poor wreath that I was bold enough
To take it down, if but to guess what flowers
Had made it; and I find a written scroll
That seems to run in rhymings. Might I read?

Count. Ay, if you will.

Lady Giovanna. It should be if you can.

(*Reads.*) 'Dead mountain.' Nay, for who could trace a hand
So wild and staggering?

Count. This was penn'd, Madonna,
Close to the grating on a winter morn
In the perpetual twilight of a prison,
When he that made it, having his right hand
Lamed in the battle, wrote it with his left.

Lady Giovanna. O heavens! the very letters seem to
shake
With cold, with pain perhaps, poor prisoner! Well,
Tell me the words—or better—for I see
There goes a musical score along with them,
Repeat them to their music.

Count. You can touch
No chord in me that would not answer you
In music.

Lady Giovanna. That is musically said.

[*Count takes guitar.* *Lady Giovanna sits listening with wreath in her hand, and quietly removes scroll and places it on table at the end of the song.*

Count (sings, playing guitar). ‘Dead mountain flowers,
 dead mountain-meadow flowers,
 Dearer than when you made your mountain gay,
 Sweeter than any violet of to-day,
 Richer than all the wide world-wealth of May,
 To me, tho’ all your bloom has died away,
 You bloom again, dead mountain-meadow flowers.’

Enter ELISABETTA with cloth.

Elisabetta. A word with you, my lord!

Count (singing). ‘O mountain flowers!’

Elisabetta. A word, my lord! (*Louder*).

Count (sings). ‘Dead flowers!’

Elisabetta. A word, my lord! (*Louder*).

Count. I pray you pardon me again!

[*Lady Giovanna looking at wreath.*

Count (to Elisabetta). What is it?

Elisabetta. My lord, we have but one piece of earthenware to serve the salad in to my lady, and that cracked!

Count. Why then, that flower’d bowl my ancestor Fetch’d from the farthest east—we never use it For fear of breakage—but this day has brought A great occasion. You can take it, nurse!

Elisabetta. I did take it, my lord, but what with my lady’s coming that had so flurried me, and what with the fear of breaking it, I did break it, my lord: it is broken!

Count. My one thing left of value in the world! No matter! see your cloth be white as snow!

Elisabetta (pointing thro’ window). White? I warrant thee, my son, as the snow yonder on the very tip-top o’ the mountain.

Count. And yet to speak white truth, my good old mother,

I have seen it like the snow on the moraine.

Elisabetta. How can your lordship say so? There my lord!
[*Lays cloth.*]

O my dear son, be not unkind to me.

And one word more. [Going—returns.]

Count (touching guitar). Good! let it be but one.

Elisabetta. Hath she return'd thy love?

Count. Not yet!

Elisabetta. And will she?

Count (looking at Lady Giovanna). I scarce believe it!

Elisabetta. Shame upon her then! [*Exit.*]

Count (sings). 'Dead mountain flowers'—

Ah well, my nurse has broken

The thread of my dead flowers, as she has broken

My china bowl. My memory is as dead.

[*Goes and replaces guitar.*]

Strange that the words at home with me so long
Should fly like bosom friends when needed most.

So by your leave if you would hear the rest,

The writing.

Lady Giovanna (holding wreath toward him). There!
my lord, you are a poet,

And can you not imagine that the wreath,

Set, as you say, so lightly on her head,

Fell with her motion as she rose, and she,

A girl, a child, then but fifteen, however

Flutter'd or flatter'd by your notice of her,

Was yet too bashful to return for it?

Count. Was it so indeed? was it so? was it so?

[*Leans forward to take wreath, and touches Lady Giovanna's hand, which she withdraws hastily, he places wreath on corner of chair.*]

Lady Giovanna (with dignity). I did not say, my lord,
that it was so;

I said you might imagine it was so.

Enter FILIPPO with bowl of salad, which he places on table.

Filippo. Here's a fine salad for my lady, for tho' we have been a soldier, and ridden by his lordship's side, and seen the red of the battle-field, yet are we now drill-sergeant to his lordship's lettuces, and profess to be great in green things and in garden-stuff.

Lady Giovanna. I thank thee, good Filippo.

[*Exit Filippo.*

Enter ELISABETTA with bird on a dish which she places on table.

Elisabetta (close to table). Here's a fine fowl for my lady; I had scant time to do him in. I hope he be not underdone, for we be undone in the doing of him.

Lady Giovanna. I thank you, my good nurse.

Filippo (re-entering with plate of prunes). And here are fine fruits for my lady—prunes, my lady, from the tree that my lord himself planted here in the blossom of his boyhood—and so I, Filippo, being, with your ladyship's pardon, and as your ladyship knows, his lordship's own foster-brother, would commend them to your ladyship's most peculiar appreciation.

[*Puts plate on table.*

Elisabetta. Filippo!

Lady Giovanna (Count leads her to table). Will you not eat with me, my lord?

Count.

I cannot,

Not a morsel, not one morsel. I have broken

My fast already. I will pledge you. Wine!

Filippo, wine!

[*Sits near table; Filippo brings flask, fills the Count's goblet, then Lady Giovanna's; Elisabetta stands at the back of Lady Giovanna's chair.*

Count.

It is but thin and cold,

Not like the vintage blowing round your castle.

We lie too deep down in the shadow here.
Your ladyship lives higher in the sun.

[*They pledge each other and drink.*]

Lady Giovanna. If I might send you down a flask or
two

Of that same vintage? There is iron in it.
It has been much commended as a medicine.
I give it my sick son, and if you be
Not quite recover'd of your wound, the wine
Might help you. None has ever told me yet
The story of your battle and your wound.

Filippo (coming forward). I can tell you, my lady, I
can tell you.

Elisabetta. Filippo! will you take the word out of your
master's own mouth?

Filippo. Was it there to take? Put it there, my lord.

Count. Giovanna, my dear lady, in this same battle
We had been beaten—they were ten to one.
'The trumpets of the fight had echo'd down,
I and Filippo here had done our best,
And, having passed unwounded from the field,
Were seated sadly at a fountain side,
Our horses grazing by us, when a troop,
Laden with booty and with a flag of ours
'Ta'en in the fight——

Filippo. Ay, but we fought for it back,
And kill'd——

Elisabetta. Filippo!

Count. A troop of horse——

Filippo. Five hundred!

Count. Say fifty!

Filippo. And we kill'd 'em by the score!

Elisabetta. Filippo!

Filippo. Well, well, well! I bite my tongue.

Count. We may have left their fifty less by five.

However, staying not to count how many,
But anger'd at their flaunting of our flag,
We mounted, and we dash'd into the heart of 'em.

I wore the lady's chaplet round my neck ;
 It served me for a blessed rosary.
 I am sure that more than one brave fellow owed
 His death to the charm in it.

Elisabetta.

Hear that, my lady !

Count. I cannot tell how long we strove before
 Our horses fell beneath us ; down we went
 Crush'd, hack'd at, trampled underfoot. The night,
 As some cold-manner'd friend may strangely do us
 The truest service, had a touch of frost
 That help'd to check the flowing of the blood.
 My last sight ere I swoon'd was one sweet face
 Crown'd with the wreath. *That seem'd to come and go.*
 They left us there for dead !

Elisabetta.

Hear that, my lady !

Filippo. Ay, and I left two fingers there for dead.
 See, my lady ! (*Showing his hand.*)

Lady Giovanna. I see, Filippo !

Filippo. And I have small hope of the gentleman gout
 in my great toe.

Lady Giovanna. And why, Filippo ?

[*Smiling absently.*]

Filippo. I left him there for dead too !

Elisabetta. She smiles at him—how hard the woman is !
 My lady, if your ladyship were not
 Too proud to look upon the garland, you
 Would find it stain'd——

Count (rising).

Silence, Elisabetta !

Elisabetta. Stain'd with the blood of the best heart
 that ever
 Beat for one woman.

[*Points to wreath on chair.*]

Lady Giovanna (rising slowly). I can eat no more !

Count. You have but trifled with our homely salad,
 But dallied with a single lettuce-leaf ;
 Not eaten anything.

Lady Giovanna. Nay, nay, I cannot.
 You know, my lord, I told you I was troubled
 My one child Florio lying still so sick,

I bound myself, and by a solemn vow,
That I would touch no flesh till he were well
Here, or else well in Heaven, where all is well.

[*Elisabetta clears table of bird and salad: Filippo snatches up the plate of prunes and holds them to Lady Giovanna.*

Filippo. But the prunes, my lady, from the tree that his lordship——

Lady Giovanna. Not now, Filippo. My lord Federigo, Can I not speak with you once more alone?

Count. You hear, Filippo? My good fellow, go!

Filippo. But the prunes that your lordship——

Elisabetta. Filippo!

Count. Ay, prune our company of thine own and go!

Elisabetta. Filippo!

Filippo (turning). Well, well! the women! [Exit.

Count. And thou too leave us, my dear nurse, alone.

Elisabetta (folding up cloth and going). And me too! Ay, the dear nurse will leave you alone; but, for all that, she that has eaten the yolk is scarce like to swallow the shell.

[*Turns and curtseys stiffly to Lady Giovanna, then exit. Lady Giovanna takes out diamond necklace from casket.*

Lady Giovanna. I have anger'd your good nurse; these old-world servants Are all but flesh and blood with those they serve. My lord, I have a present to return you, And afterwards a boon to crave of you.

Count. No, my most honour'd and long-worshipt lady, Poor Federigo degli Alberighi Takes nothing in return from you except Return of his affection—can deny Nothing to you that you require of him.

Lady Giovanna. Then I require you to take back your diamonds— [Offering necklace. I doubt not they are yours. No other heart Of such magnificence in courtesy

Beats—out of heaven. They seem'd too rich a prize
 To trust with any messenger. I came
 In person to return them. [*Count draws back.*]

If the phrase
 'Return' displease you, we will say—exchange them
 For your—for your——

Count (*takes a step toward her and then back*). For
 mine—and what of mine?

Lady Giovanna. Well, shall we say this wreath and
 your sweet rhymes?

Count. But have you ever worn my diamonds?

Lady Giovanna. No!

For that would seem accepting of your love.
 I cannot brave my brother—but be sure
 That I shall never marry again, my lord!

Count. Sure?

Lady Giovanna. Yes!

Count. Is this your brother's order?

Lady Giovanna. No!

For he would marry me to the richest man
 In Florence; but I think you know the saying—
 'Better a man without riches, than riches without a man.'

Count. A noble saying—and acted on would yield
 A nobler breed of men and women. Lady,
 I find you a shrewd bargainer. The wreath
 That once you wore outvalues twentyfold
 The diamonds that you never deign'd to wear.
 But lay them there for a moment!

[*Points to table.* *Lady Giovanna places necklace on
 table.*]

And be you

Gracious enough to let me know the boon
 By granting which, if aught be mine to grant,
 I should be made more happy than I hoped
 Ever to be again.

Lady Giovanna. Then keep your wreath,
 But you will find me a shrewd bargainer still.
 I cannot keep your diamonds, for the gift

I ask for, to *my* mind and at this present
Outvalues all the jewels upon earth.

Count. It should be love that thus outvalues all.
You speak like love, and yet you love me not.
I have nothing in this world but love for you.

Lady Giovanna. Love? it *is* love, love for my dying boy,
Moves me to ask it of you.

Count. What? my time?
Is it my time? Well, I can give my time
To him that is a part of you, your son.
Shall I return to the castle with you? Shall I
Sit by him, read to him, tell him my tales,
Sing him my songs? You know that I can touch
The glittern to some purpose.

Lady Giovanna. No, not that!
I thank you heartily for that—and you,
I doubt not from your nobleness of nature,
Will pardon me for asking what I ask.

Count. Giovanna, dear Giovanna, I that once
The wildest of the random youth of Florence
Before I saw you—all my nobleness
Of nature, as you deign to call it, draws
From you, and from my constancy to you.
No more, but speak.

Lady Giovanna. I will. You know sick people,
More specially sick children, have strange fancies,
Strange longings; and to thwart them in their mood
May work them grievous harm at times, may even
Hasten their end. I would you had a son!
It might be easier then for you to make
Allowance for a mother—her—who comes
To rob you of your one delight on earth.
How often has my sick boy yearn'd for this!
I have put him off as often; but to day
I dared not—so much weaker, so much worse
For last day's journey. I was weeping for him;
He gave me his hand: 'I should be well again
If the good Count would give me——'

Count. Give me.
Lady Giovanna. His falcon.

Count (starts back). My falcon!

Lady Giovanna. Yes, your falcon, Federigo!

Count. Alas, I cannot!

Lady Giovanna. Cannot? Even so!

I fear'd as much. O this unhappy world!
 How shall I break it to him? how shall I tell him?
 The boy may die: more blessed were the rags
 Of some pale beggar-woman seeking alms
 For her sick son, if he were like to live,
 Than all my childless wealth, if mine must die.
 I was to blame—the love you said you bore me—
 My lord, we thank you for your entertainment.

[*With a stately curtsey.*

And so return—Heaven help him!—to our son. [*Turns.*

Count (rushes forward). Stay, stay, I am most unlucky,
 most unhappy.

You never had look'd in on me before,
 And when you came and dipt your sovereign head
 Thro' these low doors, you ask'd to eat with me.
 I had but emptiness to set before you,
 No not a draught of milk, no not an egg,
 Nothing but my brave bird, my noble falcon,
 My comrade of the house, and of the field.
 She had to die for it—she died for you.
 Perhaps I thought with those of old, the nobler
 The victim was, the more acceptable
 Might be the sacrifice. I fear you scarce
 Will thank me for your entertainment now.

Lady Giovanna (returning). I bear with him no longer.

Count. No, Madonna!

And he will have to bear with it as he may.

Lady Giovanna. I break with him for ever!

Count. Yes, Giovanna,

But he will keep his love to you for ever!

Lady Giovanna. You? you? not you! My brother!
 my hard brother!

O Federigo, Federigo, I love you !
 Spite of ten thousand brothers, Federigo.

[*Falls at his feet.*

Count (impetuously). Why then the dying of my noble
 bird

Hath served me better than her living—then

[*Takes diamonds from table.*

These diamonds are both yours and mine—have won

Their value again—beyond all markets—there

I lay them for the first time round your neck.

[*Lays necklace round her neck.*

And then this chaplet—No more feuds, but peace,

Peace and conciliation ! I will make

Your brother love me. See, I tear away

The leaves were darken'd by the battle—

[*Pulls leaves off and throws them down.*

—crown you

Again with the same crown my Queen of Beauty.

[*Places wreath on her head.*

Rise—I could almost think that the dead garland

Will break once more into the living blossom.

Nay, nay, I pray you rise.

[*Raises her with both hands.*

We two together

Will help to heal your son—your son and mine—

We shall do it—we shall do it.

[*Embraces her.*

The purpose of my being is accomplish'd,

And I am happy !

Lady Giovanna. And I too, Federigo.

THE PROMISE OF MAY

'A surface man of theories, true to none.'

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ

FARMER DOBSON.

MR. PHILIP EDGAR (*afterwards* MR. HAROLD).

FARMER STEER (*DORA and EVA'S Father*).

MR. WILSON (*a Schoolmaster*).

HIGGINS

JAMES

DAN SMITH

JACKSON

ALLEN

DORA STEER.

EVA STEER.

SALLY ALLEN

MILLY

} *Farm Labourers.*

} *Farm Servants.*

Farm Servants, Labourers, etc.

ACT I

SCENE.—BEFORE FARMHOUSE.

Farming Men and Women. Farming Men carrying forms, etc., Women carrying baskets of knives and forks, etc.

1st Farming Man. Be thou a-gawin' to the long barn?

2nd Farming Man. Ay, to be sewer! Be thou?

1st Farming Man. Why, o' coorse, fur it be the owd man's birthdaäy. He be heightly this very daäy, and.'e

telled all on us to be i' the long barn by one o'clock, fur he'll gie us a big dinner, and haäfe th' parish 'll be theer, an' Miss Dora, an' Miss Eva, an' all!

2nd Farming Man. Miss Dora be coomed back, then?

1st Farming Man. Ay, haäfe an hour ago. She be in theer now. (*Pointing to house.*) Owd Steer wur afeärd she wouldn't be back i' time to keep his birthdaäy, and he wur in a tew about it all the murnin'; and he sent me wi' the gig to Littlechester to fetch 'er; and 'er an' the owd man they fell a-kissin' o' one another like two sweet'arts i' the poorch as soon as he clapt eyes of 'er.

2nd Farming Man. Foälks says he likes Miss Eva the best.

1st Farming Man. Naäy, I knaws nowt o' what foälks says, an' I caäres nowt neither. Foälks doesn't hallus knaw thessens; but sewer I be, they be two o' the purtiest gels ye can see of a summer murnin'.

2nd Farming Man. Beänt Miss Eva gone off a bit of 'er good looks o' laäte?

1st Farming Man. Noä, not a bit.

2nd Farming Man. Why coöm awaäy, then, to the long barn. [*Exeunt.*]

DORA *looks out of window.* Enter DOBSON.

Dora (singing).

The town lay still in the low sun-light,
 The hen cluckt late by the white farm gate,
 The maid to her dairy came in from the cow,
 The stock-dove coo'd at the fall of night,
 The blossom had open'd on every bough;
 O joy for the promise of May, of May,
 O joy for the promise of May.

(*Nodding at Dobson.*) I'm coming down, Mr. Dobson. I haven't seen Eva yet. Is she anywhere in the garden?

Dobson. Noä, Miss. I ha'n't seed 'er neither.

Dora (enters singing).

But a red fire woke in the heart of the town,
 And a fox from the glen ran away with the hen,
 And a cat to the cream, and a rat to the cheese ;
 And the stock-dove coo'd, till a kite dropt down,
 And a salt wind burnt the blossoming trees ;
 O grief for the promise of May, of May,
 O grief for the promise of May.

I don't know why I sing that song ; I don't love it.

Dobson. Blessings on your pretty voice, Miss Dora.
 Wheer did they larn ye that ?

Dora. In Cumberland, Mr. Dobson.

Dobson. An' how did ye leäve the owd uncle i'
 Coomberland ?

Dora. Getting better, Mr. Dobson. But he'll never
 be the same man again.

Dobson. An' how d'ye find the owd man 'ere ?

Dora. As well as ever. I came back to keep his
 birthday.

Dobson. Well, I be coomed to keep his birthdaäy an'
 all. The owd man be heichty to-daäy, beänt he ?

Dora. Yes, Mr. Dobson. And the day's bright like
 a friend, but the wind east like an enemy. Help me to
 move this bench for him into the sun. (*They move bench.*)
 No, not that way—here, under the apple tree. Thank
 you. Look how full of rosy blossom it is.

[*Pointing to apple tree.*

Dobson. Theer be redder blossoms nor them, Miss Dora.

Dora. Where do they blow, Mr. Dobson ?

Dobson. Under your eyes, Miss Dora.

Dora. Do they ?

Dobson. And your eyes be as blue as——

Dora. What, Mr. Dobson ? A butcher's frock ?

Dobson. Noä, Miss Dora ; as blue as——

Dora. Bluebell, harebell, speedwell, bluebottle, succory,
 forget-me-not ?

Dobson. Noä, Miss Dora; as blue as——

Dora. The sky? or the sea on a blue day?

Dobson. Naäy then. I meän'd they be as blue as violets.

Dora. Are they?

Dobson. Theer ye goäs ageän, Miss, niver believing owt I says to ye—hallus a-fobbing ma off, tho' ye knaws I love ye. I warrants ye'll think moor o' this young Squire Edgar as ha' coomed among us—the Lord knaws how—ye'll think more on 'is little finger than hall my hand at the haltar.

Dora. Perhaps, Master Dobson. I can't tell, for I have never seen him. But my sister wrote that he was mighty pleasant, and had no pride in him.

Dobson. He'll be arter you now, Miss Dora.

Dora. Will he? How can I tell?

Dobson. He's been arter Miss Eva, haän't he?

Dora. Not that I know.

Dobson. Didn't I spy 'em a-sitting i' the woodbine harbour together?

Dora. What of that? Eva told me that he was taking her likeness. He's an artist.

Dobson. What's a hartist? I doänt believe he's iver a 'cart under his waistcoat. And I tells ye what, Miss Dora: he's no respect for the Queen, or the parson, or the justice o' peace, or owt. I ha' heärd 'im a-gawin' on 'ud make your 'air—God bless it!—stan' on end. And wuss nor that. When theer wur a meeting o' farmers at Littlechester t'other daäy, and they was all a-crying out at the bad times, he cooms up, and he calls out among our oän men, 'The land belongs to the people!'

Dora. And what did *you* say to that?

Dobson. Well, I says, s'pose my pig's the land, and you says it belongs to the parish, and theer be a thousand i' the parish, taakin' in the women and childer; and s'pose I kills my pig, and gïes it among 'em, why there wudn't be a dinner for nawbody, and I should ha' lost the pig.

Dora. And what did he say to that?

Dobson. Nowt—what could he saäy? But I taakes 'im fur a bad lot and a burn fool, and I haätes the very sight on him.

Dora (*looking at Dobson*). Master Dobson, you are a comely man to look at.

Dobson. I thank you for that, Miss Dora, onyhow.

Dora. Ay, but you turn right ugly when you're in an ill temper; and I promise you that if you forget yourself in your behaviour to this gentleman, my father's friend, I will never change word with you again.

Enter FARMING MAN from barn.

Farming Man. Miss, the farming men 'ull hev their dinner i' the long barn, and the master 'ud be straänge an' pleased if you'd step in fust, and see that all be right and reg'lar fur 'em afoor he coöm. [*Exit.*]

Dora. I go. Master Dobson, did you hear what I said?

Dobson. Yeas, yeas! I'll not meddle wi' 'im if he doänt meddle wi' meä. (*Exit Dora.*) Coomly, says she. I niver thowt o' mysen i' that waäy; but if she'd taäke to ma i' that waäy, or ony waäy, I'd slaäve out my life fur 'er. 'Coomly to look at,' says she—but she said it spiteful-like. To look at—yeas, 'coomly'; and she mayn't be so fur out theer. But if that be nowt to she, then it be nowt to me. (*Looking off stage.*) Schoolmaster! Why if Steer han't haxed schoolmaster to dinner, thaw 'e knaws I was hallus ageän heving schoolmaster i' the parish! fur him as be handy wi' a book bean't but haäfe a hand at a pitchfork.

Enter WILSON.

Well, Wilson. I seed that one cow o' thine i' the pinfold ageän as I wur a-coomin' 'ere.

Wilson. Very likely, Mr. Dobson. She *will* break fence. I can't keep her in order.

Dobson. An' if tha can't keep thy one cow i' horder, how can tha keep all thy scholars i' horder? But let that goä by. What dost a know o' this Mr. Hedgar as be a-lodgin' wi' ye? I coom'd upon 'im t'other daäy lookin' at the coontry, then a-scrattin' upon a bit o' paäper, then a-lookin' ageän; and I taäked 'im fur soom sort of a land-surveyor—but a beänt.

Wilson. He's a Somersetshire man, and a very civil-spoken gentleman.

Dobson. Gentleman! What be he a-doing here ten mile an' moor fro' a raäil? We laäys out o' the waäy fur gentlefoälk altogether—leästwaäys they niver cooms 'ere but fur the trout i' our beck, fur they be know'd as far as Littlechester. But 'e doänt fish neither.

Wilson. Well, it's no sin in a gentleman not to fish.

Dobson. Noä, but I haätes 'im.

Wilson. Better step out of his road, then, for he's walking to us, and with a book in his hand.

Dobson. An' I haätes booöks an' all, fur they puts foälk off the owd waäys.

Enter EDGAR, reading—not seeing DOBSON and WILSON.

Edgar. This author, with his charm of simple style
And close dialectic, all but proving man
An automatic series of sensations,
Has often numb'd me into apathy
Against the unpleasant jolts of this rough road
That breaks off short into the abysses—made me
A Quietist taking all things easily.

Dobson. (Aside.) There mun be summut wrong theer, Wilson, fur I doänt understan' it.

Wilson. (Aside.) Nor I either, Mr. Dobson.

Dobson (scornfully). An' thou doänt understan' it neither—and thou schoolmaster an' all.

Edgar. What can a man, then, live for but sensations,
Pleasant ones? men of old would undergo
Unpleasant for the sake of pleasant ones

Hereafter, like the Moslem beauties waiting
 To clasp their lovers by the golden gates.
 For me, whose cheerless Houris after death
 Are Night and Silence, pleasant ones—the while—
 If possible, here! to crop the flower and pass.

Dobson. Well, I never 'eärd the likes o' that afoor.

Wilson. (*Aside.*) But I have, Mr. Dobson. It's the old Scripture text, 'Let us eat and drink, for to-morrow we die.' I'm sorry for it, for, tho' he never comes to church, I thought better of him.

Edgar. 'What are we,' says the blind old man in Lear?

'As flies to the Gods; they kill us for their sport.'

Dobson. (*Aside.*) Then the owd man i' Lear should be shaämed of hissen, but noän o' the parishes goäs by that naäme 'ereabouts.

Edgar. The Gods! but they, the shadows of ourselves,

Have past for ever. It is Nature kills,
 And not for *her* sport either. She knows nothing.
 Man only knows, the worse for him! for why
 Cannot *he* take his pastime like the flies?
 And if my pleasure breed another's pain,
 Well—is not that the course of Nature too,
 From the dim dawn of Being—her main law
 Whereby she grows in beauty—that her flies
 Must massacre each other? this poor Nature!

Dobson. Natur! Natur! Well, it be i' *my* natur to knock 'im o' the 'eäd now; but I weänt.

Edgar. A Quietist taking all things easily—why—
 Have I been dipping into this again
 To steel myself against the leaving her?

[*Closes book, seeing Wilson.*]

Good day!

Wilson. Good day, sir. [*Dobson looks hard at Edgar.*]

Edgar (*to Dobson*). Have I the pleasure, friend, of knowing you?

Dobson. Dobson.

Edgar. Good day, then, Dobson. [Exit.

Dobson. 'Good daäy then, Dobson!' Civil-spoken i'deed! Why, Wilson, tha 'eärd 'im thysen—the feller couldn't find a Mister in his mouth fur me, as farms five hoonderd haäcre.

Wilson. You never find one for me, Mr. Dobson.

Dobson. Noä, fur thou be nobbut schoolmaster; but I taäkes 'im for a Lunnun swindler, and a burn fool.

Wilson. He can hardly be both, and he pays me regular every Saturday.

Dobson. Yeas; but I haätes 'im.

Enter STEER, FARM MEN and WOMEN.

Steer (goes and sits under apple tree). Hev' ony o' ye seen Eva?

Dobson. Noä, Mr. Steer.

Steer. Well, I reckons they'll hev' a fine cider-crop to-year if the blossom 'owds. Good murnin', neighbours, and the saäme to you, my men. I taäkes it kindly of all o' you that you be coomed—what's the newspäiper word, Wilson?—celebrate—to celebrate my birthdaäy i' this fashion. Niver man 'ed better friends, and I will säiy niver master 'ed better men: fur thaw I may ha' fallen out wi' ye sometimes, the fault, mebbe, wur as much mine as yours; and, thaw I says it mysen, niver men 'ed a better master—and I knaws what men be, and what masters be, fur I wur nobbut a läibourer, and now I be a landlord—burn a plowman, and now, as far as money goäs, I be a gentleman, thaw I beant naw scholard, fur I 'ednt naw time to maäke mysen a scholard while I wur mäikin' mysen a gentleman, but I ha taäen good care to turn out boath my darters right down fine laadies.

Dobson. An' soä they be.

1st Farming Man. Soä they be! soä they be!

2nd Farming Man. The Lord bless boath on 'em!

3rd Farming Man. An' the saame to you, Master.

4th Farming Man. And long life to boäth on 'em. An' the saäme to you, Master Steer, likewise.

Steer. Thank ye!

Enter EVA.

Wheer 'asta been?

Eva (timidly). Many happy returns of the day, father.

Steer. They can't be many, my dear, but I 'oäpes they'll be 'appy.

Dobson. Why, tha looks haäle anew to last to a hoonderd.

Steer. An' why shouldn't I last to a hoonderd? Haäle! why shouldn't I be haäle? fur thaw I be heighty this very daäy, I niver 'es sa much as one pin's prick of paäin; an' I can taäke my glass along wi' the youngest, fur I niver touched a drop of owt till my oän wedding-daäy, an' then I wur turned huppads o' sixty. Why shouldn't I be haäle? I ha' plowed the ten-aäcre—it be mine now—afoor ony o' ye wur burn—ye all knaws the ten-aäcre—I mun ha' plowed it moor nor a hoonderd times; hallus hup at sunrise, and I'd drive the plow straäight as a line right i' the faäce o' the sun, then back ageän, a-follering my oän shadder—then hup ageän i' the faäce o' the sun. Eh! how the sun 'ud shine, and the larks 'ud sing i' them daäys, and the smell o' the mou'd an' all. Eh! if I could ha' gone on wi' the plowin' nobbut the smell o' the mou'd 'ud ha' maäde ma live as long as Jerusalem.

Eva. Methusalem, father.

Steer. Ay, lass, but when thou be as owd as me thou'll put one word fur another as I does.

Dobson. But, Steer, thaw thou be haäle anew I seed tha a-limpin' up just now wi' the roomatics i' the knee.

Steer. Roomatics! Noä; I laäme't my knee last night running arter a thief. Beänt there house-breäkers down i' Littlechester, Dobson—doänt ye hear of ony?

Dobson. Ay, that there be. Immanuel Goldsmiths was broke into o' Monday night, and ower a hoonderd pounds worth o' rings stolen.

Steer. So I thowt, and I heärd the winder—that's the winder at the end o' the passage, that goäs by thy chaumber. (*Turning to Eva.*) Why, lass, what maäkes tha sa red? Did 'e git into thy chaumber?

Eva. Father!

Steer. Well, I runned arter thief i' the dark, and fell ageän coalscuttle and my kneeä gev waäy or I'd ha' cotched 'im, but afoor I coomed up he got thruff the winder ageän.

Eva. Got thro' the window again?

Steer. Ay, but he left the mark of 'is foot i' the flower-bed: now theer be noän o' my men, thinks I to mysen, 'ud ha' done it 'cep' it were Dan Smith, fur I cotched 'im once a-steälin' coäls, an' I sent fur 'im, an' I meäsured his foot wi' the mark i' the bed, but it wouldn't fit—seeäms to me the mark wur maäde by a Lunnun boot. (*Looks at Eva.*) Why, now, what maäkes tha sa white?

Eva. Fright, father!

Steer. Maäke thysen eäsy. I'll hev the winder naäiled up, and put Towser under it.

Eva (*claspig her hands*). No, no, father! Towser'll tear him all to pieces.

Steer. Let him keep awaäy, then; but coom, coom! let's be gawin'. They ha' broached a barrel of aäle i' the long barn, and the fiddler be theer, and the lads and lasses 'ull hev a dance.

Eva. (*Aside.*) Dance! small heart have I to dance. I should seem to be dancing upon a grave.

Steer. Wheer be Mr. Edgar? about the premises?

Dobson. Hallus about the premises!

Steer. So much the better, so much the better. I likes 'im, and Eva likes 'im. Eva can do owt wi' 'im; look for 'im, Eva, and bring 'im to the barn. He 'ant naw pride in 'im, and we'll git 'im to speechify for us arter dinner.

Eva. Yes, father!

[*Exit.*

Steer. Coom along then, all the rest o' ye! Church-warden be a-coomin', thaw me and 'im we niver 'grees

about the tithé ; and Parson mebbe, thaw he niver mended that gap i' the glebe fence as I telled 'im ; and Blacksmith, thaw he niver shoes a herse to my likings ; and Bäåker, thaw I sticks to hoäm-maäde—but all on 'em welcome, all on 'em welcome ; and I've hed the long barn cleared out of all the machines, and the sacks, and the taäters, and the mangles, and theer'll be room anew for all o' ye. Foller me.

All. Yeas, yeas ! Three cheers for Mr. Steer !

[*All exeunt except Dobson into barn.*]

Enter EDGAR.

Dobson (who is going, turns). Squire !—if so be you be a squire.

Edgar. Dobbins, I think.

Dobson. Dobbins, you thinks ; and I think ye weärs a Lunnun boot.

Edgar. Well ?

Dobson. And I thinks I'd like to taäke the measure o' your foot.

Edgar. Ay, if you'd like to measure your own length upon the grass.

Dobson. Coom, coom, that's a good un. Why, I could throw four o' ye ; but I promised one of the Misses I wouldn't meddle wi' ye, and I weänt. [*Exit into barn.*]

Edgar. Jealous of me with Eva ! Is it so ? Well, tho' I grudge the pretty jewel, that I Have worn, to such a clod, yet that might be The best way out of it, if the child could keep Her counsel. I am sure I wish her happy. But I must free myself from this entanglement. I have all my life before me—so has she— Give her a month or two, and her affections Will flower toward the light in some new face. Still I am half-afraid to meet her now. She will urge marriage on me. I hate tears. Marriage is but an old tradition. I hate Traditions, ever since my narrow father,

After my frolic with his tenant's girl,
 Made younger elder son, violated the whole
 Tradition of our land, and left his heir,
 Born, happily, with some sense of art, to live
 By brush and pencil. By and by, when Thought
 Comes down among the crowd, and man perceives that
 The lost gleam of an after-life but leaves him
 A beast of prey in the dark, why then the crowd
 May wreak my wrongs upon my wrongers. Marriage!
 That fine, fat, hook-nosed uncle of mine, old Harold,
 Who leaves me all his land at Littlechester,
 He, too, would oust me from his will, if I
 Made such a marriage. And marriage in itself—
 The storm is hard at hand will sweep away
 Thrones, churches, ranks, traditions, customs, marriage
 One of the feeblest! Then the man, the woman,
 Following their best affinities, will each
 Bid their old bond farewell with smiles, not tears;
 Good wishes, not reproaches; with no fear
 Of the world's gossiping clamour, and no need
 Of veiling their desires.

Conventionalism,
 Who shrieks by day at what she does by night,
 Would call this vice; but one time's vice may be
 The virtue of another; and Vice and Virtue
 Are but two masks of self; and what hereafter
 Shall mark out Vice from Virtue in the gulf
 Of never-dawning darkness?

Enter EVA.

My sweet Eva,
 Where have you lain in ambush all the morning?
 They say your sister, Dora, has return'd,
 And that should make you happy, if you love her!
 But you look troubled.

Eva. Oh, I love her so,
 I was afraid of her, and I hid myself.

We never kept a secret from each other ;
 She would have seen at once into my trouble,
 And ask'd me what I could not answer. Oh, Philip,
 Father heard you last night. Our savage mastiff,
 That all but kill'd the beggar, will be placed
 Beneath the window, Philip.

Edgar. Savage, is he ?
 What matters ? Come, give me your hand and kiss me
 'This beautiful May-morning.

Eva. The most beautiful
 May we have had for many years !

Edgar. And here
 Is the most beautiful morning of this May.
 Nay, you must smile upon me ! There—you make
 The May and morning still more beautiful,
 You, the most beautiful blossom of the May.

Eva. Dear Philip, all the world is beautiful
 If we were happy, and could chime in with it.

Edgar. True ; for the senses, love, are for the world ;
 That for the senses.

Eva. Yes.

Edgar. And when the man,
 The child of evolution, flings aside
 His swaddling-bands, the morals of the tribe,
 He, following his own instincts as his God,
 Will enter on the larger golden age ;
 No pleasure then taboo'd : for when the tide
 Of full democracy has overwhelm'd
 'This Old world, from that flood will rise the New,
 Like the Love-goddess, with no bridal veil,
 Ring, trinket of the Church, but naked Nature
 In all her loveliness.

Eva. What are you saying ?

Edgar. That, if we did not strain to make ourselves
 Better and higher than Nature, we might be
 As happy as the bees there at their honey
 In these sweet blossoms.

Eva. Yes ; how sweet they smell !

Edgar. There! let me break some off for you.

[*Breaking branch off.*]

Eva. My thanks.

But, look, how wasteful of the blossom you are!

One, two, three, four, five, six—you have robb'd poor father

Of ten good apples. Oh, I forgot to tell you

He wishes you to dine along with us,

And speak for him after—you that are so clever!

Edgar. I grieve I cannot; but, indeed——

Eva. What is it?

Edgar. Well, business. I must leave you, love, to-day.

Eva. Leave me, to-day! And when will you return?

Edgar. I cannot tell precisely; but——

Eva. But what?

Edgar. I trust, my dear, we shall be always friends.

Eva. After all that has gone between us—friends!

What, only friends? [*Drops branch.*]

Edgar. All that has gone between us

Should surely make us friends.

Eva. But keep us lovers.

Edgar. Child, do you love me now?

Eva. Yes, now and ever.

Edgar. Then you should wish us both to love for ever.

But, if you *will* bind love to one for ever,

Altho' at first he take his bonds for flowers,

As years go on, he feels them press upon him,

Begins to flutter in them, and at last

Breaks thro' them, and so flies away for ever;

While, had you left him free use of his wings,

Who knows that he had ever dream'd of flying?

Eva. But all that sounds so wicked and so strange;

'Till death us part—those are the only words,

The true ones—nay, and those not true enough,

For they that love do not believe that death

Will part them. Why do you jest with me, and try

To fright me? Tho' you are a gentleman,

I but a farmer's daughter——

Edgar. Tut! you talk
Old feudalism. When the great Democracy
Makes a new world——

Eva. And if you be not jesting,
Neither the old world, nor the new, nor father,
Sister, nor you, shall ever see me more.

Edgar (moved). Then—(*aside*) Shall I say it?—(*aloud*)
fly with me to-day.

Eva. No! Philip, Philip, if you do not marry me,
I shall go mad for utter shame and die.

Edgar. Then, if we needs must be conventional,
When shall your parish-parson bawl our banns
Before your gaping clowns?

Eva. Not in our church—
I think I scarce could hold my head up there.
Is there no other way?

Edgar. Yes, if you cared
To see an over-opulent superstition,
Then they would grant you what they call a licence
To marry. Do you wish it?

Eva. Do I wish it?

Edgar. In London.

Eva. You will write to me?

Edgar. I will.

Eva. And I will fly to you thro' the night, the
storm——

Yes, tho' the fire should run along the ground,

As once it did in Egypt. Oh, you see,

I was just out of school, I had no mother——

My sister far away—and you, a gentleman,

Told me to trust you: yes, in everything——

That was the only *true* love; and I trusted——

Oh, yes, indeed, I would have died for you.

How could you——Oh, how could you?——nay, how
could I?

But now you will set all right again, and I
Shall not be made the laughter of the village,
And poor old father not die miserable.

Dora (singing in the distance).

O joy for the promise of May, of May,
O joy for the promise of May.

Edgar. Speak not so loudly ; that must be your sister.
You never told her, then, of what has past
Between us.

Eva. Never !

Edgar. Do not till I bid you.

Eva. No, Philip, no. [*Turns away.*]

Edgar (moved). How gracefully there she stands
Weeping—the little Niobe ! What ! we prize
The statue or the picture all the more
When we have made them ours ! Is she less loveable,
Less lovely, being wholly mine ? To stay—
Follow my art among these quiet fields,
Live with these honest folk——

And play the fool !

No ! she that gave herself to me so easily
Will yield herself as easily to another.

Eva. Did you speak, Philip ?

Edgar. Nothing more, farewell.
[*They embrace.*]

Dora (coming nearer).

O grief for the promise of May, of May,
O grief for the promise of May.

Edgar (still embracing her). Keep up your heart until
we meet again.

Eva. If that should break before we meet again ?

Edgar. Break ! nay, but call for Philip when you will,
And he returns.

Eva. Heaven hears you, Philip Edgar !

Edgar (moved). And *he* would hear you even from
the grave.

Heaven curse him if he come not at your call ! [*Exit.*]

Enter DORA.

Dora. Well, Eva!

Eva. Oh, Dora, Dora, how long you have been away from home! Oh, how often I have wished for you! It seemed to me that we were parted for ever.

Dora. For ever, you foolish child! What's come over you? We parted like the brook yonder about the alder island, to come together again in a moment and to go on together again, till one of us be married. But where is this Mr. Edgar whom you praised so in your first letters? You haven't even mentioned him in your last?

Eva. He has gone to London.

Dora. Ay, child; and you look thin and pale. Is it for his absence? Have you fancied yourself in love with him? That's all nonsense, you know, such a baby as you are. But you shall tell me all about it.

Eva. Not now—presently. Yes, I have been in trouble, but I am happy—I think, quite happy now.

Dora (*taking Eva's hand*). Come, then, and make them happy in the long barn, for father is in his glory, and there is a piece of beef like a house-side, and a plum-pudding as big as the round haystack. But see they are coming out for the dance already. Well, my child, let us join them.

[*Enter all from barn laughing. EVA sits reluctantly under apple tree. STEER enters smoking, sits by EVA.*

Dance.

ACT II

Five years have elapsed between Acts I. and II.

SCENE.—A MEADOW. ON ONE SIDE A PATHWAY GOING OVER A RUSTIC BRIDGE. AT BACK THE FARMHOUSE AMONG TREES. IN THE DISTANCE A CHURCH SPIRE.

DOBSON *and* DORA.

Dobson. So the owd uncle i' Coomberland be deäd, Miss Dora, beänt he?

Dora. Yes, Mr. Dobson, I've been attending on his deathbed and his burial.

Dobson. It be five year sin' ye went afoor to him, and it seems to me nobbut t'other day. Hesn't he left ye nowt?

Dora. No, Mr. Dobson.

Dobson. But he were mighty fond o' ye, warn't he?

Dora. Fonder of poor Eva—like everybody else.

Dobson (*handing Dora basket of roses*). Not like me, Miss Dora; and I ha' browt these roses to ye—I forgits what they calls 'em, but I hallus gi'ed soom on 'em to Miss Eva at this time o' year. Will ya taäke 'em? fur Miss Eva, she set the bush by my dairy winder afoor she went to school at Littlechester—so I allus browt soom on 'em to her; and now she be gone, will ye taäke 'em, Miss Dora?

Dora. I thank you. They tell me that yesterday you mentioned her name too suddenly before my father. See that you do not do so again!

Dobson. Noä; I knaws a deäl better now. I seed how the owd man wur vext.

Dora. I take them, then, for Eäva's sake.

[*Takes basket, places some in her dress.*

Dobson. Eva's sääke. Yeas. Poor gel, poor gel! I can't abeär to think on 'er now, fur I'd ha' done owt fur

'er mysen ; an' ony o' Steer's men, an' ony o' my men 'ud ha' done owt fur 'er, an' all the parish 'ud ha' done owt fur 'er, fur we was all on us proud on 'er, an' them theer be soom of her oän roses, an' she wur as sweet as ony on 'em—the Lord bless 'er—'er oän sen ; an' weänt ye taäke 'em now, Miss Dora, fur 'er saäke an' fur my saäke an' all ?

Dora. Do you want them back again ?

Dobson. Noä, noä ! Keep 'em. But I hed a word to saäy to ye.

Dora. Why, Farmer, you should be in the hayfield looking after your men ; you couldn't have more splendid weather.

Dobson. I be a-going theer ; but I thowt I'd bring tha them roses fust. The weather's well anew, but the glass be a bit shaäky. S'iver we've led moäst on it.

Dora. Ay ! but you must not be too sudden with it either, as you were last year, when you put it in green, and your stack caught fire.

Dobson. I were insured, Miss, an' I lost nowt by it. But I weänt be too sudden wi' it ; and I feel sewer, Miss Dora, that I ha' been noän too sudden wi' you, fur I ha' sarved for ye wellnigh as long as the man sarved for 'is sweet'art i' Scriptur'. Weänt ye gi'e me a kind answer at last ?

Dora. I have no thought of marriage, my friend. We have been in such grief these five years, not only on my sister's account, but the ill success of the farm, and the debts, and my father's breaking down, and his blindness. How could I think of leaving him ?

Dobson. Eh, but I be well to do ; and if ye would nobbut hev me, I would taäke the owd blind man to my oän fireside. You should hev him allus wi' ye.

Dora. You are generous, but it cannot be. I cannot love you ; nay, I think I never can be brought to love any man. It seems to me that I hate men, ever since my sister left us. Oh, see here. (*Pulls out a letter.*) I wear it next my heart. Poor sister, I had it five years ago. 'Dearest Dora,—I have lost myself, and am lost for ever

to you and my poor father. I thought Mr. Edgar the best of men, and he has proved himself the worst. Seek not for me, or you may find me at the bottom of the river.—*EVA.*'

Dobson. Be that my fault?

Dora. No; but how should I, with this grief still at my heart, take to the milking of your cows, the fattening of your calves, the making of your butter, and the managing of your poultry?

Dobson. Naäy, but I hev an owd woman as 'ud see to all that; and you should sit i' your oän parlour quite like a laädy, ye should!

Dora. It cannot be.

Dobson. And plaäy the pianner, if ye liked, all daäy long, like a laädy, ye should an' all.

Dora. It cannot be.

Dobson. And I would loove tha moor nor ony gentleman 'ud loove tha.

Dora. No, no; it cannot be.

Dobson. And p'raps ye hears 'at I soomtimes taäkes a drop too much; but that be all along o' you, Miss, because ye weänt hev me; but, if ye would, I could put all that o' one side eäsy anew.

Dora. Cannot you understand plain words, Mr. Dobson? I tell you, it cannot be.

Dobson. Eh, lass! Thy feyther eddicated his darters to marry gentlefoälk, and see what's coomed on it.

Dora. That is enough, Farmer Dobson. You have shown me that, though fortune had born *you* into the estate of a gentleman, you would still have been Farmer Dobson. You had better attend to your hayfield. Good afternoon. [*Exit.*]

Dobson. 'Farmer Dobson!' Well, I be Farmer Dobson; but I thinks Farmer Dobson's dog 'ud ha' know'd better nor to cast her sister's misfortin inter 'er teeth arter she'd been a-reädin' me the letter wi' 'er voice a-shaäkin', and the drop in 'er eye. Theer she goäs! Shall I foller 'er and ax 'er to maäke it up? Noä, not

yet. Let 'er cool upon it; I likes 'er all the better fur taäkin' me down, like a laädy, as she be. Farmer Dobson! I be Farmer Dobson, sewer anew; but if iver I cooms upo' Gentleman Hedgar ageän, and doänt laäy my cart-whip athurt 'is shou'ders, why then I beänt Farmer Dobson, but summun else—blaäme't if I beänt!

Enter HAYMAKERS with a load of hay.

The last on it, eh?

1st Haymaker. Yeas.

Dobson. Hoäm wi' it, then.

[*Exit surlily.*]

1st Haymaker. Well, it be the last loäd hoäm.

2nd Haymaker. Yeas, an' owd Dobson should be glad on it. What maäkes 'im allus sa glum?

Sally Allen. Glum! he be wuss nor glum. He coom'd up to me yisterdaäy i' the haäyfield, when meä and my sweet'art was a-workin' along o' one side wi' one another, and he sent 'im awaäy to t'other end o' the field; and when I axed 'im why, he telled me 'at sweet'arts niver worked well together; and I telled 'im 'at sweet'arts allus worked best together; and then he called me a rude naäme, and I can't abide 'im.

James. Why, lass, doänt tha know he be sweet upo' Dora Steer, and she weänt sa much as look at 'im? And wheniver 'e sees two sweet'arts together like thou and me, Sally, he be fit to bust hissen wi' spites and jealousies.

Sally. Let 'im bust hissen, then, for owt I cares.

1st Haymaker. Well but, as I said afoor, it be the last loäd hoäm; do thou and thy sweet'art sing us hoäm to supper—'The Last Loäd Hoäm.'

All. Ay! 'The Last Loäd Hoäm.'

Song.

What did ye do, and what did ye saäy,
 Wi' the wild white rose, an' the woodbine sa gaäy,
 An' the midders all mow'd, an' the sky sa blue—
 What did ye saäy, and what did ye do,

When ye thowt there were nawbody watchin' o' you,
 And you an' your Sally was forkin' the haäy,
 At the end of the daäy,
 For the last loäd hoäm ?

What did we do, and what did we saäy,
 Wi' the briar sa green, an' the willer sa graäy,
 An' the midders all mow'd, an' the sky sa blue—
 Do ye think I be gawin' to tell it to you,
 What we mowt saäy, and what we mowt do,
 When me an' my Sally was forkin' the haäy,
 At the end of the daäy,
 For the last loäd hoäm ?

But what did ye saäy, and what did ye do,
 Wi' the butterflies out, and the swallers at plaäy,
 An' the midders all mow'd, an' the sky sa blue ?
 Why, coom then, owd feller, I'll tell it to you ;
 For me an' my Sally we sweär'd to be true,
 To be true to each other, let 'appen what maäy,
 Till the end of the daäy
 And the last loäd hoäm.

All. Well sung !

James. Fanny be the naäme i' the song, but I swopt
 it fur *she*. [*Pointing to Sally.*]

Sally. Let ma aloän afoor foälk, wilt tha ?

1st Haymaker. Ye shall sing that ageän to-night, fur
 owd Dobson 'll gi'e us a bit o' supper.

Sally. I weänt goä to owd Dobson ; he wur rude to
 me i' tha haäyfield, and he'll be rude to me ageän to-night.
 Owd Steer's gotten all his grass down and wants a hand,
 and I'll goä to him.

1st Haymaker. Owd Steer gi'es nubbut cowd tea to 'is
 men, and owd Dobson gi'es beer.

Sally. But I'd like owd Steer's cowd tea better nor
 Dobson's beer. Good-bye. [*Going.*]

James. Gi'e us a buss fust, lass.

Sally. I tell'd tha to let ma aloän !

James. Why, wasn't thou and me a-bussin' o' one another t'other side o' the haäycock, when owd Dobson coom'd upo' us? I can't let tha aloän if I would, Sally.

[*Offering to kiss her.*

Sally. Git along wi' ye, do!

[*Exit.*

[*All laugh; exeunt singing.*

To be true to each other, let 'appen what maäy,
Till the end o' the daäy
An' the last loäd hoäm.

Enter HAROLD.

Harold. Not Harold! 'Philip Edgar, Philip Edgar!' Her phantom call'd me by the name she loved. I told her I should hear her from the grave. Ay! yonder is her casement. I remember Her bright face beaming starlike down upon me Thro' that rich cloud of blossom. Since I left her Here weeping, I have ranged the world, and sat Thro' every sensual course of that full feast That leaves but emptiness.

Song.

To be true to each other, let 'appen what maäy,
To the end o' the daäy
An' the last loäd hoäm.

Harold. Poor Eva! O my God, if man be only A willy-nilly current of sensations— Reaction needs must follow revel—yet— Why feel remorse, he, knowing that he *must* have Moved in the iron grooves of Destiny? Remorse then is a part of Destiny, Nature a liar, making us feel guilty Of her own faults.

My grandfather—of him
They say, that women—

O this mortal house,
Which we are born into, is haunted by
The ghosts of the dead passions of dead men ;
And these take flesh again with our own flesh,
And bring us to confusion.

He was only
A poor philosopher who call'd the mind
Of children a blank page, a *tabula rasa*.
There, there, is written in invisible inks
'Lust, Prodigality, Covetousness, Craft,
Cowardice, Murder'—and the heat and fire
Of life will bring them out, and black enough,
So the child grow to manhood : better death
With our first wail than life—

Song (further off).

'Till the end o' the daäy
An' the last loäd hoäm,
Loäd hoäm.

This bridge again ! (*Steps on the bridge.*)
How often have I stood
With Eva here ! The brook among its flowers !
Forget-me-not, meadowsweet, willow-herb.
I had some smattering of science then,
Taught her the learned names, anatomized
The flowers for her—and now I only wish
This pool were deep enough, that I might plunge
And lose myself for ever.

Enter DAN SMITH (singing).

Gee oop ! whoä ! Gee oop ! whoä !
Scizzars an' Pumpy was good uns to goä
Thruf slush an' squad
When roäds was bad,

But hallus 'ud stop at the Vine-an'-the-Hop,
 Fur boäth on 'em knawed as well as mysen
 That beer be as good fur 'erses as men.
 Gee oop! whoä! Gee oop! whoä!
 Scizzars an' Pumpy was good uns to goä.

The beer's gotten oop into my 'eäd. S'iver I mun git
 along back to the farm, fur she tell'd ma to taäke the cart
 to Littlechester.

Enter DORA.

Half an hour late! why are you loitering here? Away
 with you at once. [*Exit Dan Smith.*]

(Seeing Harold on bridge.)

Some madman, is it,
 Gesticulating there upon the bridge?
 I am half afraid to pass.

Harold. Sometimes I wonder,
 When man has surely learnt at last that all
 His old-world faith, the blossom of his youth,
 Has faded, falling fruitless—whether then
 All of us, all at once, may not be seized
 With some fierce passion, not so much for Death
 As against Life! all, all, into the dark—
 No more!—and science now could drug and balm us
 Back into nescience with as little pain
 As it is to fall asleep.

This beggarly life,
 This poor, flat, hedged-in field—no distance—this
 Hollow Pandora-box,
 With all the pleasures flown, not even Hope
 Left at the bottom!

Superstitious fool,
 What brought me here? To see her grave? her ghost?
 Her ghost is everyway about me here.

Dora (coming forward). Allow me, sir, to pass you.

Harold.

Eva!

Dora.

Eva!

Harold. What are you? Where do you come from?

Dora. From the farm

Here, close at hand.

Harold. Are you—you are—that Dora,
The sister. I have heard of you. The likeness
Is very striking.

Dora. You knew Eva, then?

Harold. Yes—I was thinking of her when—O yes,
Many years back, and never since have met
Her equal for pure innocence of nature,
And loveliness of feature.

Dora. No, nor I.

Harold. Except, indeed, I have found it once again
In your own self.

Dora. You flatter me. Dear Eva
Was always thought the prettier.

Harold. And *her* charm
Of voice is also yours; and I was brooding
Upon a great unhappiness when you spoke.

Dora. Indeed, you seem'd in trouble, sir.

Harold. And you
Seem my good angel who may help me from it.

Dora (aside). How worn he looks, poor man! who is
it, I wonder.
How can I help him? (*Aloud.*) Might I ask your name?

Harold. Harold.

Dora. I never heard her mention you.

Harold. I met her first at a farm in Cumberland—
Her uncle's.

Dora. She was there six years ago.

Harold. And if she never mention'd me, perhaps
The painful circumstances which I heard—
I will not vex you by repeating them—
Only last week at Littlechester, drove me
From out her memory. She has disappear'd,
They told me, from the farm—and darker news.

Dora. She has disappear'd, poor darling, from the
world—

Left but one dreadful line to say, that we
 Should find her in the river ; and we dragg'd
 The Littlechester river all in vain :
 Have sorrow'd for her all these years in vain.
 And my poor father, utterly broken down
 By losing her—she was his favourite child—
 Has let his farm, all his affairs, I fear,
 But for the slender help that I can give,
 Fall into ruin. Ah ! that villain, Edgar,
 If he should ever show his face among us,
 Our men and boys would hoot him, stone him, hunt him
 With pitchforks off the farm, for all of them
 Loved her, and she was worthy of all love.

Harold. They say, we should forgive our enemies.

Dora. Ay, if the wretch were dead I might forgive
 him ;

We know not whether he be dead or living.

Harold. What Edgar ?

Dora. Philip Edgar of Toft Hall
 In Somerset. Perhaps you know him ?

Harold. Slightly.

(*Aside.*) Ay, for how slightly have I known myself.

Dora. This Edgar, then, is living ?

Harold. Living ? well—

One Philip Edgar of Toft Hall in Somerset
 Is lately dead.

Dora. Dead !—is there more than one ?

Harold. Nay—now—not one, (*aside*) for I am Philip
 Harold.

Dora. That one, is he then—dead !

Harold. (*Aside.*) My father's death,

Let her believe it mine ; this, for the moment,
 Will leave me a free field.

Dora. Dead ! and this world

Is brighter for his absence as that other

Is darker for his presence.

Harold. Is not this

To speak too pitilessly of the dead ?

Dora. My five-years' anger cannot die at once,
 Not all at once with death and him. I trust
 I shall forgive him—by-and-by—not now
 O sir, you seem to have a heart; if you
 Had seen us that wild morning when we found
 Her bed unslept in, storm and shower lashing
 Her casement, her poor spaniel wailing for her,
 That desolate letter, blotted with her tears,
 Which told us we should never see her more—
 Our old nurse crying as if for her own child,
 My father stricken with his first paralysis,
 And then with blindness—had you been one of us
 And seen all this, then you would know it is not
 So easy to forgive—even the dead.

Harold. But sure am I that of your gentleness
 You will forgive him. She, you mourn for, seem'd
 A miracle of gentleness—would not blur
 A moth's wing by the touching; would not crush
 The fly that drew her blood; and, were she living,
 Would not—if penitent—have denied him *her*
 Forgiveness. And perhaps the man himself,
 When hearing of that piteous death, has suffer'd
 More than we know. But wherefore waste your heart
 In looking on a chill and changeless Past?
 Iron will fuse, and marble melt; the Past
 Remains the Past. But you are young, and—pardon
 me—

As lovely as your sister. Who can tell
 What golden hours, with what full hands, may be
 Waiting you in the distance? Might I call
 Upon your father—I have seen the world—
 And cheer his blindness with a traveller's tales?

Dora. Call if you will, and when you will. I cannot
 Well answer for my father; but if you
 Can tell me anything of our sweet Eva
 When in her brighter girlhood, I at least
 Will bid you welcome, and will listen to you.
 Now I must go.

Harold. But give me first your hand :
I do not dare, like an old friend, to shake it.
I kiss it as a prelude to that privilege
When you shall know me better.

Dora. (*Aside.*) How beautiful
His manners are, and how unlike the farmer's !
You are staying here ?

Harold. Yes, at the wayside inn
Close by that alder-island in your brook,
'The Angler's Home.'

Dora. Are *you* one ?

Harold. No, but I
Take some delight in sketching, and the country
Has many charms, altho' the inhabitants
Seem semi-barbarous.

Dora. I am glad it pleases you ;
Yet I, born here, not only love the country,
But its inhabitants too ; and you, I doubt not,
Would take to them as kindly, if you cared
To live some time among them.

Harold. If I did,
Then one at least of its inhabitants
Might have more charm for me than all the country.

Dora. That one, then, should be grateful for your
preference.

Harold. I cannot tell, tho' standing in her presence.
(*Aside.*) She colours !

Dora. Sir !

Harold. Be not afraid of me,
For these are no conventional flourishes.
I do most earnestly assure you that
Your likeness—— [*Shouts and cries without.*]

Dora. What was that ? my poor blind father—

Enter FARMING MAN.

Farming Man. Miss Dora, Dan Smith's cart hes
runned ower a laädy i' the holler laäne, and they ha' ta'en

the body up inter your chaumber, and they be all a-callin' for ye.

Dora. The body!—Heavens! I come!

Harold. But you are trembling.
Allow me to go with you to the farm. [Exeunt.

Enter DOBSON.

Dobson. What feller wur it as 'a been a-talkin' fur haäfe an hour wi' my Dora? (*Looking after him.*) Seeäms I ommost knaws the back on 'im—drest like a gentleman, too. Damn all gentlemen, says I! I should ha' thowt they'd hed anew o' gentlefoälk, as I telled 'er to-daäy when she fell foul upo' me.

Minds ma o' summun. I could sweär to that; but that be all one, fur I haätes 'im afoor I knaws what 'e be. Theer! he turns round. Philip Hedgar o' Soomerset! Philip Hedgar o' Soomerset!—Noä—yeas—thaw the feller's gone and maäde such a litter of his faäce.

Eh lad, if it be thou, I'll Philip tha! a-plaäyin' the saäme gaäme wi' my Dora—I'll Soomerset tha.

I'd like to drag 'im thruff the herse-pond, and she to be a-lookin' at it. I'd like to leather 'im black and blue, and she to be a-laughin' at it. I'd like to fell 'im as deäd as a bullock! (*Clenching his fist.*)

But what 'ud she saäy to that? She telled me once not to meddle wi' 'im, and now she be fallen out wi' ma, and I can't coom at 'er.

It mun be *him*. Noä! Fur she'd niver 'a been talkin' haäfe an hour wi' the divil 'at killed her oän sister, or she beänt Dora Steer.

Y eas! Fur she niver knawed 'is faäce when 'e wur 'ere afoor: but I'll maäke 'er know! I'll maäke 'er know!

Enter HAROLD.

Naäy, but I mun git out on 'is waäy now, or I shall be the death on 'im. [Exit.

Harold. How the clown glared at me! that Dobbins, is it,

With whom I used to jar? but can he trace me
Thro' five years' absence, and my change of name,
The tan of southern summers and the beard?
I may as well avoid him.

Ladylike!

Lilylike in her stateliness and sweetness!
How came she by it?—a daughter of the fields,
This Dora!
She gave her hand, unask'd, at the farm-gate;
I almost think she half return'd the pressure
Of mine. What, I that held the orange blossom
Dark as the yew? but may not those, who march
Before their age, turn back at times, and make
Courtesy to custom? and now the stronger motive,
Misnamed free-will—the crowd would call it conscience—
Moves me—to what? I am dreaming; for the past
Look'd thro' the present, Eva's eyes thro' hers—
A spell upon me! Surely I loved Eva
More than I knew! or is it but the past
That brightens in retiring? Oh, last night,
Tired, pacing my new lands at Littlechester,
I dozed upon the bridge, and the black river
Flow'd thro' my dreams—if dreams they were. She rose
From the foul flood and pointed toward the farm,
And her cry rang to me across the years,
'I call you, Philip Edgar, Philip Edgar!
Come, you will set all right again, and father
Will not die miserable.' I could make his age
A comfort to him—so be more at peace
With mine own self. Some of my former friends
Would find my logic faulty; let them. Colour
Flows thro' my life again, and I have lighted
On a new pleasure. Anyhow we must
Move in the line of least resistance when
The stronger motive rules.

But she hates Edgar.

May not this Dobbins, or some other, spy
Edgar in Harold? Well then, I must make her

Love Harold first, and then she will forgive
 Edgar for Harold's sake. She said herself
 She would forgive him, by-and-by, not now—
 For her own sake *then*, if not for mine—not now—
 But by-and-by.

Enter DOBSON behind.

Dobson. By-and-by—eh, lad, dosta know this paäper?
 Ye dropt it upo' the road. 'Philip Edgar, Esq.' Ay,
 you be a pretty squire. I ha' fun' ye out, I hev. Eh,
 lad, dosta know what tha meäns wi' by-and-by? Fur if
 ye be goin' to sarve our Dora as ye sarved our Eva—then,
 by-and-by, if she weänt listen to me when I be a-tryin' to
 sääve 'er—if she weänt—look to thysen, for, by the Lord,
 I'd think na moor o' maäkin' an end o' tha nor a carrion
 crow—noä—thaw they hanged ma at 'Size fur it.

Harold. Dobbins, I think!

Dobson. I beänt Dobbins.

Harold. Nor am I Edgar, my good fellow.

Dobson. Tha lies! What hasta been sääyin' to *my*
 Dora?

Harold. I have been telling her of the death of one
 Philip Edgar of Toft Hall, Somerset.

Dobson. Tha lies!

Harold (*pulling out a newspaper*). Well, my man, it
 seems that you can read. Look there—under the deaths.

Dobson. 'O' the 17th, Philip Edgar, o' Toft Hall,
 Soomerset.' How coom thou to be sa like 'im, then?

Harold. Naturally enough; for I am closely related
 to the dead man's family.

Dobson. An' 'ow coom thou by the letter to 'im?

Harold. Naturally again; for as I used to transact all
 his business for him, I had to look over his letters. Now
 then, see these (*takes out letters*). Half a score of them,
 all directed to me—Harold.

Dobson. 'Arold! 'Arold! 'Arold, so they be.

Harold. My name is Harold! Good-day, Dobbins!

[*Exit.*

Dobson. 'Arold! The feller's cleän daäzed, an' maäzed, an' maäted, an' muddled ma. Deäd! It mun be true, fur it wur i' print as black as owt. Naäy, but 'Good daäy, Dobbins.' Why, that wur the very twang on 'im. Eh, lad, but whether thou be Hedgar, or Hedgar's business man, thou hesn't naw business 'ere wi' *my* Dora, as I knaws on, an' whether thou calls thysen Hedgar or Harold, if thou stick to she I'll stick to thee—stick to tha like a weasel to a rabbit, I will. Ay! and I'd like to shoot tha like a rabbit an' all. 'Good daäy, Dobbins.' Dang tha!

ACT III

SCENE.—A ROOM IN STEER'S HOUSE. DOOR LEADING INTO BEDROOM AT THE BACK

Dora (ringing a handbell). Milly!

Enter MILLY.

Milly. 'The little 'ymn? Yeas, Miss; but I wur so ta'en up wi' leädin' the owd man about all the blessed murnin' 'at I ha' nobbut larned mysen haäfe on it.

O man, forgive thy mortal foe,
 Nor ever strike him blow for blow;
 For all the souls on earth that live
 To be forgiven must forgive.
 Forgive him seventy times and seven;
 For all the blessed souls in Heaven
 Are both forgivers and forgiven.

But I'll git the book ageän, and larn mysen the rest, and saäy it to ye afoor dark; ye ringed fur that, Miss, didn't ye?

Dora. No, Milly; but if the farming men be come for their wages, to send them up to me.

Milly. Yeas, Miss.

[*Exit.*

Dora (*sitting at desk counting money*). Enough at any rate for the present. (*Enter Farming Men.*) Good afternoon, my friends. I am sorry Mr. Steer still continues too unwell to attend to you, but the schoolmaster looked to the paying you your wages when I was away, didn't he?

Men. Yeas; and thanks to ye.

Dora. Some of our workmen have left us, but he sent me an alphabetical list of those that remain, so, Allen, I may as well begin with you.

Allen (*with his hand to his ear*). Halfabitical! Taäke one o' the young 'uns fust, Miss, fur I be a bit deaf, and I wur hallus scaäred by a big word; leästwaäys, I should be wi' a lawyer.

Dora. I spoke of your names, Allen, as they are arranged here (*shows book*)—according to their first letters.

Allen. Letters! Yeas, I sees now. Them be what they larns the childer' at school, but I were burn afoor schoolin-time.

Dora. But, Allen, tho' you can't read, you could white-wash that cottage of yours where your grandson had the fever.

Allen. I'll hev it done o' Monday.

Dora. Else if the fever spread, the parish will have to thank you for it.

Allen. Meä? why, it be the Lord's doin', noän o' mine; d'ye think *I'd* gi'e 'em the fever? But I thanks ye all the saäme, Miss. (*Takes money.*)

Dora (*calling out names*). Higgins, Jackson, Luscombe, Nokes, Oldham, Skipworth! (*All take money.*) Did you find that you worked at all the worse upon the cold tea than you would have done upon the beer?

Higgins. Noä, Miss; we worked naw wuss upo' the cowl tea; but we'd ha' worked better upo' the beer.

Dora. Come, come, you worked well enough, and I am much obliged to all of you. There's for you, and you, and you. Count the money and see if it's all right.

Men. All right, Miss; and thank ye kindly.

[*Exeunt* Luscombe, Nokes, Oldham, Skipworth.]

Dora. Dan Smith, my father and I forgave you stealing our coals. [Dan Smith *advances to Dora.*

Dan Smith (bellowing). Whoy, O lor, Miss! that wur sa long back, and the walls sa thin, and the winders brokken, and the weather sa cowl, and my missus a-gittin' ower 'er lyin'-in.

Dora. Didn't I say that we had forgiven you? But, Dan Smith, they tell me that you—and you have six children—spent all your last Saturday's wages at the ale-house; that you were stupid drunk all Sunday, and so ill in consequence all Monday, that you did not come into the hayfield. Why should I pay you your full wages?

Dan Smith. I be ready to taäke the pledge.

Dora. And as ready to break it again. Besides it was you that were driving the cart—and I fear you were tipsy then, too—when you lamed the lady in the hollow lane.

Dan Smith (bellowing). O lor, Miss! noä, noä, noä! Ye sees the holler laäne be hallus sa dark i' the arternoon, and where the big eshtree cuts athurt it, it gi'es a turn like, and 'ow should I see to laäme the laädy, and meä coomin' along pretty sharp an' all?

Dora. Well, there are your wages; the next time you waste them at a pot-house you get no more from me. (*Exit Dan Smith.*) Sally Allen, you worked for Mr. Dobson, didn't you?

Sally (advancing). Yeas, Miss; but he wur so rough wi' ma, I couldn't abide 'im.

Dora. Why should he be rough with you? You are as good as a man in the hayfield. What's become of your brother?

Sally. 'Listed for a soädger, Miss, i' the Queen's Real Hard Tillery.

Dora. And your sweetheart—when are you and he to be married?

Sally. At Michaelmas, Miss, please God.

Dora. You are an honest pair. I will come to your wedding.

Sally. An' I thanks ye fur that, Miss, moor nor fur the waäge.

(*Going—returns.*) 'A cotched ma about the waäist, Miss, when 'e wur 'ere afoor, an' axed ma to be 'is little sweet-'art, an soä I knaw'd 'im when I seed 'im ageän an I telled feyther on 'im.

Dora. What is all this, Allen?

Allen. Why, Miss Dora, meä and my maätes, us three, we wants to hev three words wi' ye.

Higgins. That be 'im, and meä, Miss.

Jackson. An' meä, Miss.

Allen. An' we weänt mention naw naämes, we'd as lief talk o' the Divil afoor ye as 'im, fur they says the master goäs cleän off his 'eäd when he 'eärs the naäme on 'im; but us three, arter Sally 'd telled us on 'im, we fun' 'im out a-walkin' i' West Field wi' a white 'at, nine o'clock, upo' 'Tuesday murnin', and all on us, wi' your leave, we wants to leather 'im.

Dora. Who?

Allen. Him as did the mischief here, five year' sin'.

Dora. Mr. Edgar?

Allen. Theer, Miss! You ha' naämed 'im—not me.

Dora. He's dead, man—dead; gone to his account—dead and buried.

Allen. I beänt sa sewer o' that, fur Sally knaw'd 'im; Now then?

Dora. Yes; it was in the Somersetshire papers.

Allen. Then yon mun be his brother, an' we'll leather 'im.

Dora. I never heard that he had a brother. Some foolish mistake of Sally's; but what! would you beat a man for his brother's fault? That were a wild justice indeed. Let bygones be bygones. Go home! Good-night! (*All exeunt.*) I have once more paid them all. The work of the farm will go on still, but for how long? We are almost at the bottom of the well: little more to be drawn from it—and what then? Encumbered as we are, who would lend us anything? We shall have to

sell all the land, which Father, for a whole life, has been getting together, again, and that, I am sure, would be the death of him. What am I to do? Farmer Dobson, were I to marry him, has promised to keep our heads above water; and the man has doubtless a good heart, and a true and lasting love for me: yet—though I can be sorry for him—as the good Sally says, ‘I can’t abide him’—almost brutal, and matched with my Harold is like a hedge thistle by a garden rose. But then, he, too—will he ever be of one faith with his wife? which is my dream of a true marriage. Can I fancy him kneeling with me, and uttering the same prayer; standing up side by side with me, and singing the same hymn? I fear not. Have I done wisely, then, in accepting him? But may not a girl’s love-dream have too much romance in it to be realised all at once, or altogether, or anywhere but in Heaven? And yet I had once a vision of a pure and perfect marriage, where the man and the woman, only differing as the stronger and the weaker, should walk hand in hand together down this valley of tears, as they call it so truly, to the grave at the bottom, and lie down there together in the darkness which would seem but for a moment, to be wakened again together by the light of the resurrection, and no more partings for ever and for ever. (*Walks up and down. She sings.*)

O happy lark, that warblest high
 Above thy lowly nest,
 O brook, that brawlest merrily by
 Thro’ fields that once were blest,
 O tower spiring to the sky,
 O graves in daisies drest,
 O Love and Life, how weary am I,
 And how I long for rest.

There, there, I am a fool! Tears! I have sometimes been moved to tears by a chapter of fine writing in a novel; but what have I to do with tears now? All depends on me—Father, this poor girl, the farm, every-

thing; and they both love me—I am all in all to both; and he loves me too, I am quite sure of that. Courage, courage! and all will go well. (*Goes to bedroom door; opens it.*) How dark your room is! Let me bring you in here where there is still full daylight. (*Brings Eva forward.*) Why, you look better.

Eva. And I feel so much better, that I trust I may be able by-and-by to help you in the business of the farm; but I must not be known yet. Has anyone found me out, Dora?

Dora. Oh, no; you kept your veil too close for that when they carried you in; since then, no one has seen you but myself.

Eva. Yes—this Milly.

Dora. Poor blind Father's little guide, Milly, who came to us three years after you were gone, how should she know you? But now that you have been brought to us as it were from the grave, dearest Eva, and have been here so long, will you not speak with Father to-day?

Eva. Do you think that I may? No, not yet. I am not equal to it yet.

Dora. Why? Do you still suffer from your fall in the hollow lane?

Eva. Bruised; but no bones broken.

Dora. I have always told Father that the huge old ashtree there would cause an accident some day; but he would never cut it down, because one of the Steers had planted it there in former times.

Eva. If it had killed one of the Steers there the other day, it might have been better for her, for him, and for you.

Dora. Come, come, keep a good heart! Better for me! That's good. How better for me?

Eva. You tell me you have a lover. Will he not fly from you if he learn the story of my shame and that I am still living?

Dora. No; I am sure that when we are married he will be willing that you and Father should live with us; for, indeed, he tells me that he met you once in the old times, and was much taken with you, my dear.

Eva. Taken with me; who was he? Have you told him I am here?

Dora. No; do you wish it?

Eva. See, Dora; you yourself are ashamed of me (*weeps*), and I do not wonder at it.

Dora. But I should wonder at myself if it were so. Have we not been all in all to one another from the time when we first peeped into the bird's nest, waded in the brook, ran after the butterflies, and prattled to each other that we would marry fine gentlemen, and played at being fine ladies?

Eva. That last was my Father's fault, poor man. And this lover of yours—this Mr. Harold—is a gentleman?

Dora. That he is, from head to foot. I do believe I lost my heart to him the very first time we met, and I love him so much—

Eva. Poor Dora!

Dora. That I dare not tell him how much I love him.

Eva. Better not. Has he offered you marriage, this gentleman?

Dora. Could I love him else?

Eva. And are you quite sure that after marriage this gentleman will not be shamed of his poor farmer's daughter among the ladies in his drawing-room?

Dora. Shamed of me in a drawing-room! Wasn't Miss Vavasour, our schoolmistress at Littlechester, a lady born? Were not our fellow-pupils all ladies? Wasn't dear mother herself at least by one side a lady? Can't I speak like a lady; pen a letter like a lady; talk a little French like a lady; play a little like a lady? Can't a girl when she loves her husband, and he her, make herself anything he wishes her to be? Shamed of me in a drawing-room, indeed! See here! 'I hope your Lordship is quite recovered of your gout?' (*Curtsies.*) 'Will your Ladyship ride to cover to-day?' (*Curtsies.*) 'I can recommend our Voltigeur.' 'I am sorry that we could not attend your Grace's party on the 10th!' (*Curtsies.*) There, I am glad my nonsense has made you smile!

Eva. I have heard that 'your Lordship,' and 'your Ladyship,' and 'your Grace' are all growing old-fashioned!

Dora. But the love of sister for sister can never be old-fashioned. I have been unwilling to trouble you with questions, but you seem somewhat better to-day. We found a letter in your bedroom torn into bits. I couldn't make it out. What was it?

Eva. From him! from him! He said we had been most happy together, and he trusted that some time we should meet again, for he had not forgotten his promise to come when I called him. But that was a mockery, you know, for he gave me no address, and there was no word of marriage; and, O Dora, he signed himself 'Yours gratefully'—fancy, Dora, 'gratefully'! 'Yours gratefully'!

Dora. Infamous wretch! (*Aside.*) Shall I tell her he is dead? No; she is still too feeble.

Eva. Hark! Dora, some one is coming. I cannot and I will not see anybody.

Dora. It is only Milly.

Enter MILLY, with basket of roses.

Dora. Well, Milly, why do you come in so roughly? The sick lady here might have been asleep.

Milly. Please, Miss, Mr. Dobson telled me to saäy he's browt some of Miss Eva's roses for the sick laädy to smell on.

Dora. Take them, dear. Say that the sick lady thanks him! Is he here?

Milly. Yeas, Miss; and he wants to speak to ye partic'lar.

Dora. Tell him I cannot leave the sick lady just yet.

Milly. Yeas, Miss; but he says he wants to tell ye summut very partic'lar.

Dora. Not to-day. What are you staying for?

Milly. Why, Miss, I be afeard I shall set him a-sweäring like onythink.

Dora. And what harm will that do you, so that you

do not copy his bad manners? Go, child. (*Exit Milly.*) But, Eva, why did you write 'Seek me at the bottom of the river'?

Eva. Why? because I meant it!—that dreadful night! that lonely walk to Littlechester, the rain beating in my face all the way, dead midnight when I came upon the bridge; the river, black, slimy, swirling under me in the lamplight, by the rotten wharfs—but I was so mad, that I mounted upon the parapet——

Dora. You make me shudder!

Eva. To fling myself over, when I heard a voice, 'Girl, what are you doing there?' It was a Sister of Mercy, come from the death-bed of a pauper, who had died in his misery blessing God, and the Sister took me to her house, and bit by bit—for she promised secrecy—I told her all.

Dora. And what then?

Eva. She would have persuaded me to come back here, but I couldn't. Then she got me a place as nursery governess, and when the children grew too old for me, and I asked her once more to help me, once more she said, 'Go home;' but I hadn't the heart or face to do it. And then—what would Father say? I sank so low that I went into service—the drudge of a lodging-house—and when the mistress died, and I appealed to the Sister again, her answer—I think I have it about me—yes, there it is!

Dora (reads). 'My dear Child,—I can do no more for you. I have done wrong in keeping your secret; your Father must be now in extreme old age. Go back to him and ask his forgiveness before he dies.—SISTER AGATHA.' Sister Agatha is right. Don't you long for Father's forgiveness!

Eva. I would almost die to have it!

Dora. And he may die before he gives it; may drop off any day, any hour. You must see him at once. (*Rings bell. Enter Milly.*) Milly, my dear, how did you leave Mr. Steer?

Milly. He's been a-moänin' and a-groänin' in 'is sleep, but I thinks he be wakkenin' oop.

Dora. Tell him that I and the lady here wish to see him. You see she is lamed, and cannot go down to him.

Milly. Yeas, Miss, I will. [*Exit Milly.*]

Dora. I ought to prepare you. You must not expect to find our Father as he was five years ago. He is much altered; but I trust that your return—for you know, my dear, you were always his favourite—will give him, as they say, a new lease of life.

Eva (clinging to Dora). Oh, Dora, Dora!

Enter STEER led by MILLY.

Steer. Hes the cow cawved?

Dora. No, Father.

Steer. Be the colt deäd?

Dora. No, Father.

Steer. He wur sa bellows'd out wi' the wind this murnin', 'at I tell'd 'em to gallop 'im. Be he deäd?

Dora. Not that I know.

Steer. What hasta sent fur me, then, fur?

Dora (taking Steer's arm). Well, Father, I have a surprise for you.

Steer. I ha' niver been surprised but once i' my life, and I went blind upon it.

Dora. Eva has come home.

Steer. Hoäm? fro' the bottom o' the river?

Dora. No, Father, that was a mistake. She's here again.

Steer. The Steers was all gentlefoälks i' the owd times, an' I worked early an' laäte to maäke 'em all gentlefoälks agein. The land belonged to the Steers i' the owd times, an' it belongs to the Steers agein: I bowt it back agein; but I couldn't buy my darter back agein when she lost hersen, could I? I eddicated boäth on 'em to marry gentlemen, an' one on 'em went an' lost hersen i' the river.

Dora. No, Father, she's here.

Steer. Here! she moänt coom here. What would her mother saäy? If it be her ghoäst, we mun abide it. We can't keep a ghoäst out.

Eva (falling at his feet). O forgive me! forgive me!

Steer. Who said that? 'Taäke me awaäy, little gell. It be one o' my bad daäys. [*Exit Steer led by Milly.*]

Dora (smoothing Eva's forehead). Be not so east down, my sweet Eva. You heard him say it was one of his bad days. He will be sure to know you to-morrow.

Eva. It is almost the last of my bad days, I think. I am very faint. I must lie down. Give me your arm. Lead me back again. [*Dora takes Eva into inner room.*]

Enter MILLY.

Milly. Miss Dora! Miss Dora!

Dora (returning and leaving the bedroom door ajar). Quiet! quiet! What is it?

Milly. Mr. 'Arold, Miss.

Dora. Below?

Milly. Yeas, Miss. He be saäyin' a word to the owd man, but he'll coom up if ye lets 'im.

Dora. Tell him, then, that I'm waiting for him.

Milly. Yeas, Miss. [*Exit. Dora sits pensively and waits.*]

Enter HAROLD.

Harold. You are pale, my Dora! but the ruddiest cheek

That ever charm'd the plowman of your wolds
Might wish its rose a lily, could it look
But half as lovely. I was speaking with
Your father, asking his consent—you wish'd me—
That we should marry: he would answer nothing,
I could make nothing of him; but, my flower,
You look so weary and so worn! What is it
Has put you out of heart?

Dora. It puts me in heart
Again to see you ; but indeed the state
Of my poor father puts me out of heart.
Is yours yet living ?

Harold. No—I told you.

Dora. When ?

Harold. Confusion !—Ah well, well ! the state we all
Must come to in our spring-and-winter world
If we live long enough ! and poor Steer looks
The very type of Age in a picture, bow'd
To the earth he came from, to the grave he goes to,
Beneath the burthen of years.

Dora. More like the picture
Of Christian in my ' Pilgrim's Progress ' here,
Bow'd to the dust beneath the burthen of sin.

Harold. Sin ! What sin ?

Dora. Not his own.

Harold. That nursery-tale
Still read, then ?

Dora. Yes ; our carters and our shepherds
Still find a comfort there.

Harold. Carters and shepherds !

Dora. Scorn ! I hate scorn. A soul with no religion—
My mother used to say that such a one
Was without rudder, anchor, compass—might be
Blown everyway with every gust and wreck
On any rock : and tho' you are good and gentle,
Yet if thro' any want—

Harold. Of this religion ?
Child, read a little history, you will find
The common brotherhood of man has been
Wrong'd by the cruelties of his religions
More than could ever have happen'd thro' the want
Of any or all of them.

Dora. —But, O dear friend,
If thro' the want of any—I mean the true one—
And pardon me for saying it—you should ever
Be tempted into doing what might seem

Not altogether worthy of you, I think
That I should break my heart, for you have taught me
To love you.

Harold. What is this? some one been stirring
Against me? he, your rustic amourist,
The polish'd Damon of your pastoral here,
This Dobson of your idyll?

Dora. No, Sir, no!
Did you not tell me he was crazed with jealousy,
Had threaten'd ev'n your life, and would say anything?
Did I not promise not to listen to him,
Nor ev'n to see the man?

Harold. Good; then what is it
That makes you talk so dolefully?

Dora. I told you—
My father. Well, indeed, a friend just now,
One that has been much wrong'd, whose griefs are mine,
Was warning me that if a gentleman
Should wed a farmer's daughter, he would be
Sooner or later shamed of her among
The ladies, born his equals.

Harold. More fool he!
What I that have been call'd a Socialist,
A Communist, a Nihilist—what you will!—

Dora. What are all these?

Harold. Utopian idiotcies.
They did not last three Junes. Such rampant weeds
Strangle each other, die, and make the soil
For Cæsars, Cromwells, and Napoleons
To root their power in. I have freed myself
From all such dreams, and some will say because
I have inherited my Uncle. Let them.
But—shamed of you, my Empress! I should prize
The pearl of Beauty, even if I found it
Dark with the soot of slums.

Dora. But I can tell you,
We Steers are of old blood, tho' we be fallen.
See there our shield. (*Pointing to arms on mantelpiece.*)

For I have heard the Steers
Had land in Saxon times ; and your own name
Of Harold sounds so English and so old
I am sure you must be proud of it.

Harold. Not I !

As yet I scarcely feel it mine. I took it
For some three thousand acres. I have land now
And wealth, and lay both at your feet.

Dora. And *what* was
Your name before ?

Harold. Come, come, my girl, enough
Of this strange talk. I love you and you me.
True, I have held opinions, hold some still,
Which you would scarce approve of : for all that,
I am a man not prone to jealousies,
Caprices, humours, moods ; but very ready
To make allowances, and mighty slow
To feel offences. Nay, I do believe
I could forgive—well, almost anything—
And that more freely than your formal priest,
Because I know more fully than *he* can
What poor earthworms are all and each of us,
Here crawling in this boundless Nature. *Dora,*
If marriage ever brought a woman happiness
I doubt not I can make you happy.

Dora. You make me
Happy already.

Harold. And I never said
As much before to any woman living.

Dora. No ?

Harold. No ! by this true kiss, *you* are the first
I ever have loved truly. [*They kiss each other.*]

Eva (with a wild cry). Philip Edgar !

Harold. The phantom cry ! *You*—did *you* hear a
cry ?

Dora. She must be crying out 'Edgar' in her sleep.

Harold. Who must be crying out 'Edgar' in her sleep ?

Dora. Your pardon for a minute. She must be waked.

Harold. Who must be waked?

Dora. I am not deaf: you fright me.

What ails you?

Harold. Speak.

Dora. You know her, Eva.

Harold. Eva!

[*Eva opens the door and stands in the entry.*]

She!

Eva. Make her happy, then, and I forgive you.

[*Falls dead.*]

Dora. Happy! What? Edgar? Is it so? Can it be?
They told me so. Yes, yes! I see it all now.

O she has fainted. Sister, Eva, sister!

He is yours again—he will love *you* again;

I give him back to you again. Look up!

One word, or do but smile! Sweet, do you hear me?

[*Puts her hand on Eva's heart.*]

'There, there—the heart, O God!—the poor young heart

Broken at last—all still—and nothing left

To live for.

[*Falls on body of her sister.*]

Harold. Living . . . dead . . . She said 'all still.

Nothing to live for.'

She—she knows me—now . . .

(*A pause.*)

She knew me from the first, she juggled with me,

She hid this sister, told me she was dead—

I have wasted pity on her—not dead now—

No! acting, playing on me, both of them.

They drag the river for her! no, not they!

Playing on me—not dead now—a swoon—a scene—

Yet—how she made her wail as for the dead!

Enter MILLY.

Milly. Pleäse, Mister 'Arold.

Harold (roughly). Well?

Milly. The owd man's coom'd ageän to 'issen, an' wants
'To hev a word wi' ye about the marriage.

Harold. The what?

Milly. The marriage.

Harold. The marriage?

Milly. Yeas, the marriage.

Granny says marriages be maäde i' 'eaven.

Harold. She lies! They are made in Hell. Child,
can't you see?

Tell them to fly for a doctor.

Milly. O law—yeäs, Sir!

I'll run fur 'im mysen.

[*Exit.*

Harold. All silent there,

Yes, deathlike! Dead? I dare not look: if dead,

Were it best to steal away, to spare myself,

And her too, pain, pain, pain?

My curse on all

This world of mud, on all its idiot gleams

Of pleasure, all the foul fatalities

That blast our natural passions into pains!

Enter DOBSON.

Dobson. You, Master Hedgar, Harold, or whatever

They calls ye, for I warrants that ye goäs

By haäfe a scor o' näimes—out o' the chaumber.

[*Dragging him past the body.*

Harold. Not that way, man! Curse on your brutal
strength!

I cannot pass that way.

Dobson. Out o' the chaumber!

I'll mash tha into nowt.

Harold. The mere wild-beast!

Dobson. Out o' the chaumber, dang tha!

Harold. Lout, churl, clown!

[*While they are shouting and struggling Dora rises
and comes between them.*

Dora (to Dobson). Peace, let him be: it is the
chamber of Death!

Sir, you are tenfold more a gentleman,
 A hundred times more worth a woman's love,
 Than this, this—but I waste no words upon him :
 His wickedness is like my wretchedness—
 Beyond all language.

(*To Harold.*)

You—you see her there !

Only fifteen when first you came on her,
 And then the sweetest flower of all the wolds,
 So lovely in the promise of her May,
 So winsome in her grace and gaiety,
 So loved by all the village people here,
 So happy in herself and in her home——

Dobson (agitated). Theer, theer ! ha' done. I can't
 abear to see her. [*Exit.*]

Dora. A child, and all as trustful as a child !
 Five years of shame and suffering broke the heart
 That only beat for you ; and he, the father,
 Thro' that dishonour which you brought upon us,
 Has lost his health, his eyesight, even his mind.

Harold (covering his face). Enough !

Dora. It seem'd so : only there was left
 A second daughter, and to her you came
 Veiling one sin to act another.

Harold. No !

You wrong me there ! hear, hear me ! I wish'd, if
 you—— [*Pauses.*]

Dora. If I——

Harold. Could love me, could be brought
 to love me

As I loved you——

Dora. What then ?

Harold. I wish'd, I hoped

To make, to make——

Dora. What did you hope to make ?

Harold. 'Twere best to make an end of my lost life.

O Dora, Dora !

Dora. What did you hope to make ?

Harold. Make, make! I cannot find the word—
forgive it—

Amends.

Dora. For what? to whom?

Harold.

To him, to you!

[*Falling at her feet.*

Dora. To *him!* to *me!*

No, not with all your wealth,
Your land, your life! Out in the fiercest storm
That ever made earth tremble—he, nor I—
The shelter of *your* roof—not for one moment—
Nothing from *you!*
Sunk in the deepest pit of pauperism,
Push'd from all doors as if we bore the plague,
Smitten with fever in the open field,
Laid famine-stricken at the gates of Death—
Nothing from you!

But she there—her last word
Forgave—and I forgive you. If you ever
Forgive yourself, you are even lower and baser
Than even I can well believe you. Go!

[*He lies at her feet. Curtain falls.*

THE FORESTERS

ROBIN HOOD AND MAID MARIAN

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ

ROBIN HOOD, *Earl of Huntingdon.*

KING RICHARD, *Cœur de Lion.*

PRINCE JOHN.

LITTLE JOHN

WILL SCARLET

FRIAR TUCK

MUCH

} *Followers of Robin Hood.*

A JUSTICIARY.

SHERIFF OF NOTTINGHAM.

ABBOT OF ST. MARY'S.

SIR RICHARD LEA.

WALTER LEA, *son of Sir Richard Lea.*

MAID MARIAN, *daughter of Sir Richard Lea.*

KATE, *attendant on Marian.*

OLD WOMAN.

*Retainers, Messengers, Merry Men, Mercenaries, Friars, Beggars,
Sailors, Peasants (men and women), etc.*

ACT I

SCENE I.—THE BOND

SCENES II. III.—THE OUTLAWRY

SCENE I.—THE GARDEN BEFORE SIR RICHARD
LEA'S CASTLE

Kate (gathering flowers). These roses for my Lady Marian ; these lilies to lighten Sir Richard's black room, where he sits and eats his heart for want of money to pay the Abbot. [Sings.

The warrior Earl of Allendale,
He loved the Lady Anne ;
The lady loved the master well,
The maid she loved the man.

All in the castle garden,
Or ever the day began,
The lady gave a rose to the Earl,
The maid a rose to the man.

'I go to fight in Scotland
With many a savage clan ;'
The lady gave her hand to the Earl,
The maid her hand to the man.

'Farewell, farewell, my warrior Earl !'
And ever a tear down ran.
She gave a weeping kiss to the Earl,
And the maid a kiss to the man.

Enter four ragged RETAINERS.

First Retainer. You do well, Mistress Kate, to sing and to gather roses. You be fed with tit-bits, you, and we be dogs that have only the bones, till we be only bones our own selves.

Kate. I am fed with tit-bits no more than you are, but I keep a good heart and make the most of it, and, truth to say, Sir Richard and my Lady Marian fare wellnigh as sparely as their people.

Second Retainer. And look at our suits, out at knee, out at elbow. We be more like scarecrows in a field than decent serving-men; and then, I pray you, look at Robin Earl of Huntingdon's men.

First Retainer. She hath looked well at one of 'em, Little John.

Third Retainer. Ay, how fine they be in their liveries, and each of 'em as full of meat as an egg, and as sleek and as round-about as a mellow codlin.

Fourth Retainer. But I be worse off than any of you, for I be lean by nature, and if you cram me crop-full I be little better than Famine in the picture, but if you starve me I be Gaffer Death himself. I would like to show you, Mistress Kate, how bare and spare I be on the rib: I be lanker than an old horse turned out to die on the common.

Kate. Spare me thy spare ribs, I pray thee; but now I ask you all, did none of you love young Walter Lea?

First Retainer. Ay, if he had not gone to fight the king's battles, we should have better battels at home.

Kate. Right as an Oxford scholar, but the boy was taken prisoner by the Moors.

First Retainer. Ay.

Kate. And Sir Richard was told he might be ransomed for two thousand marks in gold.

First Retainer. Ay.

Kate. Then he borrowed the monies from the Abbot of York, the Sheriff's brother. And if they be not paid back at the end of the year, the land goes to the Abbot.

First Retainer. No news of young Walter?

Kate. None, nor of the gold, nor the man who took out the gold: but now ye know why we live so stintedly, and why ye have so few grains to peck at. Sir Richard must scrape and scrape till he get to the land again.

Come, come, why do ye loiter here? Carry fresh rushes into the dining-hall, for those that are there, they be so greasy, and smell so vilely that my Lady Marian holds her nose when she steps across it.

Fourth Retainer. Why there, now! that very word 'greasy' hath a kind of unction in it, a smack of relish about it. The rats have gnawed 'em already. I pray Heaven we may not have to take to the rushes. [*Exeunt.*

Kate. Poor fellows!

The lady gave her hand to the Earl,
The maid her hand to the man.

Enter LITTLE JOHN.

Little John. My master, Robin the Earl, is always a-telling us that every man, for the sake of the great blessed Mother in heaven, and for the love of his own little mother on earth, should handle all womankind gently, and hold them in all honour, and speak small to 'em, and not scare 'em, but go about to come at their love with all manner of homages, and observances, and circum-bendibuses.

Kate. The lady gave a rose to the Earl,
The maid a rose to the man.

Little John (seeing her). O the sacred little thing! What a shape! what lovely arms! A rose to the man! Ay, the man had given her a rose and she gave him another.

Kate. Shall I keep one little rose for Little John? No.

Little John. There, there! You see I was right. She hath a tenderness toward me, but is too shy to show it. It is in her, in the woman, and the man must bring it out of her.

Kate. She gave a weeping kiss to the Earl,
The maid a kiss to the man.

Little John. Did she? But there I am sure the ballad

is at fault. It should have told us how the man first kissed the maid. She doesn't see me. Shall I be bold? shall I touch her? shall I give her the first kiss? O sweet Kate, my first love, the first kiss, the first kiss!

Kate (turns and kisses him). Why lookest thou so amazed?

Little John. I cannot tell; but I came to give thee the first kiss, and thou hast given it me.

Kate. But if a man and a maid care for one another, does it matter so much if the maid give the first kiss?

Little John. I cannot tell, but I had sooner have given thee the first kiss. I was dreaming of it all the way hither.

Kate. Dream of it, then, all the way back, for now I will have none of it.

Little John. Nay, now thou hast given me the man's kiss, let me give thee the maid's.

Kate. If thou draw one inch nearer, I will give thee a buffet on the face.

Little John. Wilt thou not give me rather the little rose for Little John?

Kate (throws it down and tramples on it). There!
[*Kate, seeing Marian, exit hurriedly.*]

Enter MARIAN (singing).

Love flew in at the window

As Wealth walk'd in at the door.

'You have come for you saw Wealth coming,' said I,
But he flutter'd his wings with a sweet little cry,

I'll cleave to you rich or poor.

Wealth dropt out of the window,

Poverty crept thro' the door.

'Well now you would fain follow Wealth,' said I,
But he flutter'd his wings as he gave me the lie,

I cling to you all the more.

Little John. Thanks, my lady—inasmuch as I am a

true believer in true love myself, and your Ladyship hath sung the old proverb out of fashion.

Marian. Ay but thou hast ruffled my woman, Little John. She hath the fire in her face and the dew in her eyes. I believed thee to be too solemn and formal to be a ruffler. Out upon thee!

Little John. I am no ruffler, my lady; but I pray you, my lady, if a man and a maid love one another, may the maid give the first kiss?

Marian. It will be all the more gracious of her if she do.

Little John. I cannot tell. Manners be so corrupt, and these are the days of Prince John. [Exit.

Enter SIR RICHARD LEA (reading a bond).

Sir Richard. Marian!

Marian. Father!

Sir Richard. Who parted from thee even now?

Marian. That strange starched stiff creature, Little John, the Earl's man. He would grapple with a lion like the King, and is flustered by a girl's kiss.

Sir Richard. There never was an Earl so true a friend of the people as Lord Robin of Huntingdon.

Marian. A gallant Earl. I love him as I hate John.

Sir Richard. I fear me he hath wasted his revenues in the service of our good king Richard against the party of John, as I have done, as I have done; and where is Richard?

Marian. Cleave to him, father! he will come home at last.

Sir Richard. I trust he will, but if he do not I and thou are but beggars.

Marian. We will be beggar'd then and be true to the King.

Sir Richard. Thou speakest like a fool or a woman. Canst thou endure to be a beggar whose whole life hath been folded like a blossom in the sheath, like a careless

sleeper in the down; who never last felt a want, to whom all things, up to this present, have come as freely as heaven's air and mother's milk?

Marian. Tut, father! I am none of your delicate Norman maidens who can only broider and mayhap ride a-hawking with the help of the men. I can bake and I can brew, and by all the saints I can shoot almost as closely with the bow as the great Earl himself. I have played at the foils too with Kate: but is not to-day his birthday?

Sir Richard. Dost thou love him indeed, that thou keepest a record of his birthdays? Thou knowest that the Sheriff of Nottingham loves thee.

Marian. The Sheriff dare to love me? me who worship Robin the great Earl of Huntingdon? I love him as a damsel of his day might have loved Harold the Saxon, or Hereward the Wake. They both fought against the tyranny of the kings, the Normans. But then your Sheriff, your little man, if he dare to fight at all, would fight for his rents, his leases, his houses, his monies, his oxen, his dinners, himself. Now your great man, your Robin, all England's Robin, fights not for himself but for the people of England. This John—this Norman tyranny—the stream is bearing us all down, and our little Sheriff will ever swim with the stream! but our great man, our Robin, against it. And how often in old histories have the great men striven against the stream, and how often in the long sweep of years to come must the great man strive against it again to save his country, and the liberties of his people! God bless our well-beloved Robin, Earl of Huntingdon.

Sir Richard. Ay, ay. He wore thy colours once at a tourney. I am old and forget. Was Prince John there?

Marian. The Sheriff of Nottingham was there—not John.

Sir Richard. Beware of John and the Sheriff of Nottingham. They hunt in couples, and when they look at a maid they blast her.

Marian. Then the maid is not high-hearted enough.

Sir Richard. There—there—be not a fool again. Their aim is ever at that which flies highest—but O girl, girl, I am almost in despair. Those two thousand marks lent me by the Abbot for the ransom of my son Walter—I believed this Abbot of the party of King Richard, and he hath sold himself to that beast John—they must be paid in a year and a month, or I lose the land. There is one that should be grateful to me overseas, a Count in Brittany—he lives near Quimper. I saved his life once in battle. He has monies. I will go to him. I saved him. I will try him. I am all but sure of him. I will go to him.

Marian. And I will follow thee, and God help us both.

Sir Richard. Child, thou shouldst marry one who will pay the mortgage. This Robin, this Earl of Huntingdon—he is a friend of Richard—I know not, but he may save the land, he may save the land.

Marian (*showing a cross hung round her neck*). Father, you see this cross?

Sir Richard. Ay the King, thy godfather, gave it thee when a baby.

Marian. And he said that whenever I married he would give me away, and on this cross I have sworn [*kisses it*] that till I myself pass away, there is no other man that shall give me away.

Sir Richard. Lo there—thou art fool again—I am all as loyal as thyself, but what a vow! what a vow!

Re-enter LITTLE JOHN.

Little John. My Lady Marian, your woman so flustered me that I forgot my message from the Earl. Today he hath accomplished his thirtieth birthday, and he prays your ladyship and your ladyship's father to be present at his banquet to-night.

Marian. Say, we will come.

Little John. And I pray you, my lady, to stand between me and your woman, Kate.

Marian. I will speak with her.

Little John. I thank you, my lady, and I wish you and your ladyship's father a most exceedingly good morning.

[*Exit.*

Sir Richard. Thou hast answered for me, but I know not if I will let thee go.

Marian. I mean to go.

Sir Richard. Not if I barred thee up in thy chamber, like a bird in a cage.

Marian. Then I would drop from the casement, like a spider.

Sir Richard. But I would hoist the drawbridge, like thy master.

Marian. And I would swim the moat, like an otter.

Sir Richard. But I would set my men-at-arms to oppose thee, like the Lord of the Castle.

Marian. And I would break through them all, like the King of England.

Sir Richard. Well, thou shalt go, but O the land! the land! my great great great grandfather, my great great grandfather, my great grandfather, my grandfather and my own father—they were born and bred on it—it was their mother—they have trodden it for half a thousand years, and whenever I set my own foot on it I say to it, 'Thou art mine, and it answers, I am thine to the very heart of the earth—but now I have lost my gold, I have lost my son, and I shall lose my land also. Down to the devil with this bond that beggars me! [*Flings down the bond.*

Marian. Take it again, dear father, be not wroth at the dumb parchment. Suffieient for the day, dear father! let us be merry to-night at the banquet.

SCENE II.—A HALL IN THE HOUSE OF ROBIN HOOD THE EARL OF HUNTINGDON. DOORS OPEN INTO A BANQUETING-HALL WHERE HE IS AT FEAST WITH HIS FRIENDS.

DRINKING SONG.

Long live Richard,
 Robin and Richard!
 Long live Richard!
 Down with John!
 Drink to the Lion-heart
 Every one!
 Pledge the Plantagenet,
 Him that is gone.
 Who knows whither?
 God's good Angel
 Help him back hither,
 And down with John!
 Long live Robin,
 Robin and Richard!
 Long live Robin,
 And down with John!

Enter PRINCE JOHN *disguised as a monk* and the SHERIFF OF NOTTINGHAM. *Cries of 'Down with John,' 'Long live King Richard,' 'Down with John.'*

Prince John. Down with John! ha. Shall I be known? is my disguise perfect?

Sheriff. Perfect—who should know you for Prince John, so that you keep the cowl down and speak not?

[*Shouts from the banquet-room.*

Prince John. Thou and I will still these revelries presently. [*Shouts, 'Long live King Richard!'*

I come here to see this daughter of Sir Richard of the Lea and if her beauties answer their report. If so—

Sheriff. If so— [Shouts, 'Down with John!']

Prince John. You hear!

Sheriff. Yes, my lord, fear not. I will answer for you.

Enter LITTLE JOHN, SCARLET, MUCH, *etc.*, *from the banquet singing a snatch of the Drinking Song.*

Little John. I am a silent man myself, and all the more wonder at our Earl. What a wealth of words—O Lord, I will live and die for King Richard—not so much for the cause as for the Earl. O Lord, I am easily led by words, but I think the Earl hath right. Scarlet, hath not the Earl right? What makes thee so down in the mouth?

Scarlet. I doubt not, I doubt not, and though I be down in the mouth, I will swear by the head of the Earl.

Little John. Thou Much, miller's son, hath not the Earl right?

Much. More water goes by the mill than the miller wots of, and more goes to make right than I know of, but for all that I will swear the Earl hath right. But they are coming hither for the dance—

Enter FRIAR TUCK.

be they not, Friar Tuck? Thou art the Earl's confessor and shouldst know.

Tuck. Ay, ay, and but that I am a man of weight, and the weight of the church to boot on my shoulders, I would dance too. Fa, la, la, fa, la, la. [Capering.]

Much. But doth not the weight of the flesh at odd times overbalance the weight of the church, ha friar?

Tuck. Homo sum. I love my dinner—but I can fast, I can fast; and as to other frailties of the flesh—out upon thee! Homo sum, sed virgo sum, I am a virgin, my masters, I am a virgin.

Much. And a virgin, my masters, three yards about the waist is like to remain a virgin, for who could embrace such an armful of joy?

Tuck. Knave, there is a lot of wild fellows in Sherwood Forest who hold by King Richard. If ever I meet thee there, I will break thy sconce with my quarterstaff.

Enter from the banqueting-hall SIR RICHARD LEA,
ROBIN HOOD, *etc.*

Robin. My guests and friends, Sir Richard, all of you Who deign to honour this my thirtieth year,
And some of you were prophets that I might be
Now that the sun our King is gone, the light
Of these dark hours ; but this new moon, I fear,
Is darkness. Nay, this may be the last time
When I shall hold my birthday in this hall :
I may be outlaw'd, I have heard a rumour.

All. God forbid !

Robin. Nay, but we have no news of Richard yet,
And ye did wrong in crying 'Down with John ;'
For be he dead, then John may be our King.

All. God forbid !

Robin. Ay God forbid,
But if it be so we must bear with John.
The man is able enough—no lack of wit,
And apt at arms and shrewd in policy.
Courteous enough too when he wills ; and yet
I hate him for his want of chivalry.
He that can pluck the flower of maidenhood
From off the stalk and trample it in the mire,
And boast that he hath trampled it. I hate him,
I hate the man. I may not hate the King
For aught I know,
So that our Barons bring his baseness under.
I think they will be mightier than the king. [*Dance music.*]

MARIAN *enters with other damsels.*

Robin. The high Heaven guard thee from his
wantonness,

Who art the fairest flower of maidenhood
That ever blossom'd on this English isle.

Marian. Cloud not thy birthday with one fear for me.
My lord, myself and my good father pray
Thy thirtieth summer may be thirty-fold
As happy as any of those that went before.

Robin. My Lady Marian you can make it so
If you will deign to tread a measure with me.

Marian. Full willingly, my lord. [*They dance.*

Robin (after dance). My Lady, will you answer me a
question?

Marian. Any that you may ask.

Robin. A question that every true man asks of a
woman once in his life.

Marian. I will not answer it, my lord, till King
Richard come home again.

Prince John (to Sheriff). How she looks up at him,
how she holds her face!

Now if she kiss him, I will have his head.

Sheriff. Peace, my lord; the Earl and Sir Richard
come this way.

Robin. Must you have these monies before the year
and the month end?

Sir Richard. Or I forfeit my land to the Abbot. I
must pass overseas to one that I trust will help me.

Robin. Leaving your fair Marian alone here.

Sir Richard. Ay, for she hath somewhat of the lioness
in her, and there be men-at-arms to guard her.

[*Robin, Sir Richard, and Marian pass on.*

Prince John (to Sheriff). Why that will be our
opportunity

When I and thou will rob the nest of her.

Sheriff. Good Prince, art thou in need of any gold?

Prince John. Gold? why? not now.

Sheriff. I would give thee any gold
So that myself alone might rob the nest.

Prince John. Well, well then, thou shalt rob the nest
alone.

Sheriff. Swear to me by that relic on thy neck.

Prince John. I swear then by this relic on my neck—
No, no, I will not swear by this; I keep it
For holy vows made to the blessed Saints
Not pleasures, women's matters.
Dost thou mistrust me? Am I not thy friend?
Beware, man, lest thou lose thy faith in me.
I love thee much; and as I *am* thy friend,
I promise thee to make this Marian thine.
Go now and ask the maid to dance with thee,
And learn from her if she do love this Earl.

Sheriff (*advancing toward Marian and Robin*). Pretty mistress!

Robin. What art thou, man? Sheriff of Nottingham?

Sheriff. Ay, my lord. I and my friend, this monk, were here belated, and seeing the hospitable lights in your castle, and knowing the fame of your hospitality, we ventured in uninvited.

Robin. You are welcome, though I fear you be of those who hold more by John than Richard.

Sheriff. True, for through John I had my sheriffship. I am John's till Richard come back again, and then I am Richard's. Pretty mistress, will you dance? [*They dance.*]

Robin (*talking to Prince John*). What monk of what convent art thou? Why wearest thou thy cowl to hide thy face?
[*Prince John shakes his head.*]
Is he deaf, or dumb, or daft, or drunk belike?

[*Prince John shakes his head.*]
Why comest thou like a death's head at my feast?

[*Prince John points to the Sheriff, who is dancing with Marian.*]

Is he thy mouthpiece, thine interpreter?

[*Prince John nods.*]

Sheriff (*to Marian as they pass*). Beware of John!

Marian.

I hate him.

Sheriff.

Would you cast

An eye of favour on me, I would pay
My brother all his debt and save the land.

Marian. I cannot answer thee till Richard come.

Sheriff. And when he comes?

Marian. Well, you must wait till then.

Little John (dancing with Kate). Is it made up? Will you kiss me?

Kate. You shall give me the first kiss.

Little John. There (*kisses her*). Now then.

Kate. You shall wait for mine till Sir Richard has paid the Abbot.

[*They pass on.*]

[*The Sheriff leaves Marian with her father and comes toward Robin.*]

Robin (to Sheriff, Prince John standing by). Sheriff, thy friend, this monk, is but a statue.

Sheriff. Pardon him, my lord: he is a holy Palmer, bounden by a vow not to show his face, nor to speak word to anyone, till he join King Richard in the Holy Land.

Robin. Going to the Holy Land to Richard! Give me thy hand and tell him—— Why, what a cold grasp is thine—as if thou didst repent thy courtesy even in the doing it. That is no true man's hand. I hate hidden faces.

Sheriff. Pardon him again, I pray you: but the twilight of the coming day already glimmers in the east. We thank you, and farewell.

Robin. Farewell, farewell. I hate hidden faces.

[*Exeunt Prince John and Sheriff.*]

Sir Richard (coming forward with Maid Marian). How close the Sheriff peer'd into thine eyes!

What did he say to thee?

Marian. Bade me beware
Of John: what maid but would beware of John?

Sir Richard. What else?

Marian. I care not what he said.

Sir Richard. What else?

Marian. That if I cast an eye of favour on him,
Himself would pay this mortgage to his brother,
And save the land.

Sir Richard. Did he say so, the Sheriff?

Robin. I fear this Abbot is a heart of flint,
 Hard as the stones of his abbey.
 O good Sir Richard,
 I am sorry my exchequer runs so low
 I cannot help you in this exigency ;
 For though my men and I flash out at times
 Of festival like burnish'd summer-flies,
 We make but one hour's buzz, are only like
 The rainbow of a momentary sun.
 I am mortgaged as thyself.

Sir Richard. Ay! I warrant thee—thou canst not be
 sorrier than I am. Come away, daughter.

Robin. Farewell, Sir Richard ; farewell, sweet Marian.

Marian. Till better times.

Robin. But if the better times should never come ?

Marian. Then I shall be no worse.

Robin. And if the worst time come ?

Marian. Why then I will be better than the time.

Robin. This ring my mother gave me : it was her
 own

Betrothal ring. She pray'd me when I loved
 A maid with all my heart to pass it down
 A finger of that hand which should be mine
 Thereafter. Will you have it ? Will you wear it ?

Marian. Ay, noble Earl, and never part with it.

Sir Richard Lea (coming up). Not till she clean forget
 thee, noble Earl.

Marian. Forget *him*—never—by this Holy Cross
 Which good King Richard gave me when a child—
 Never !

Not while the swallow skims along the ground,
 And while the lark flies up and touches heaven !
 Not while the smoke floats from the cottage roof,
 And the white cloud is roll'd along the sky !
 Not while the rivulet babbles by the door,
 And the great breaker beats upon the beach !
 Never—

Till Nature, high and low, and great and small

Forgets herself, and all her loves and hates
Sink again into chaos.

Sir Richard Lea. Away! away! [*Exeunt to music.*]

SCENE III.—SAME AS SCENE II

ROBIN *and his men.*

Robin. All gone!—my ring—I am happy—should be
happy.

She took my ring. I trust she loves me—yet
I heard this Sheriff tell her he would pay
The mortgage if she favour'd him. I fear
Not her, the father's power upon her.

Friends, (*to his men*)

I am only merry for an hour or two
Upon a birthday: if this life of ours
Be a good glad thing, why should we make us merry
Because a year of it is gone? but Hope
Smiles from the threshold of the year to come
Whispering 'it will be happier,' and old faces
Press round us, and warm hands close with warm hands,
And thro' the blood the wine leaps to the brain
Like April sap to the topmost tree, that shoots
New buds to heaven, whereon the throstle rock'd
Sings a new song to the new year—and you
Strike up a song, my friends, and then to bed.

Little John. What will you have, my lord?

Robin. 'To sleep! to sleep!'

Little John. There is a touch of sadness in it, my lord,
But ill befitting such a festal day.

Robin. I have a touch of sadness in myself.
Sing.

SONG.

To sleep! to sleep! The long bright day is done,
And darkness rises from the fallen sun.
To sleep! to sleep!

Whate'er thy joys, they vanish with the day ;
 Whate'er thy griefs, in sleep they fade away.
 To sleep ! to sleep !
 Sleep, mournful heart, and let the past be past !
 Sleep, happy soul ! all life will sleep at last.
 To sleep ! to sleep !

[*A trumpet blown at the gates.*

Robin. Who breaks the stillness of the morning thus ?

Little John (*going out and returning*). It is a royal messenger, my lord :

I trust he brings us news of the King's coming.

Enter a PURSUIVANT who reads.

O yes, O yes, O yes ! In the name of the Regent. Thou, Robin Hood Earl of Huntingdon, art attainted and hast lost thine earldom of Huntingdon. Moreover thou art dispossessed of all thy lands, goods, and chattels ; and by virtue of this writ, whereas Robin Hood Earl of Huntingdon by force and arms hath trespassed against the king in divers manners, therefore by the judgment of the officers of the said lord king, according to the law and custom of the kingdom of England Robin Hood Earl of Huntingdon is outlawed and banished.

Robin. I have shelter'd some that broke the forest laws. This is irregular and the work of John.

[*'Irregular, irregular ! (tumult).* Down with him, tear his coat from his back.'

Messenger. Ho there ! ho there, the Sheriff's men without !

Robin. Nay, let them be, man, let them be. We yield. How should we cope with John ? The London folkmote Has made him all but king, and he hath seized On half the royal castles. Let him alone ! (*to his men*) A worthy messenger ! how should he help it ? Shall *we* too work injustice ? what, thou shakest ! Here, here—a cup of wine—drink and begone !

[*Exit Messenger.*

We will away in four-and-twenty hours,
 But shall we leave our England ?

Tuck. Robin, Earl—

Robin. Let be the Earl. Henceforth I am no more
Than plain man to plain man.

Tuck. Well, then, plain man,
There be good fellows there in merry Sherwood
That hold by Richard, tho' they kill his deer.

Robin. In Sherwood Forest. I have heard of them.
Have they no leader?

Tuck. Each man for his own.
Be thou their leader and they will all of them
Swarm to thy voice like bees to the brass pan.

Robin. They hold by Richard—the wild wood! to cast
All threadbare household habit, mix with all
The lusty life of wood and underwood,
Hawk, buzzard, jay, the mavis and the merle,
The tawny squirrel vaulting thro' the boughs,
The deer, the highback'd polecat, the wild boar,
The burrowing badger—By St. Nicholas
I have a sudden passion for the wild wood—
We should be free as air in the wild wood—
What say you? shall we go? Your hands, your hands!
[Gives his hand to each.]

You, Scarlet, you are always moody here.

Scarlet. 'Tis for no lack of love to you, my lord,
But lack of happiness in a blatant wife.
She broke my head on Tuesday with a dish.
I would have thwack'd the woman, but I did not,
Because thou sayest such fine things of women,
But I shall have to thwack her if I stay.

Robin. Would it be better for thee in the wood?

Scarlet. Ay, so she did not follow me to the wood.

Robin. Then, Scarlet, thou at least wilt go with me.
Thou, Much, the miller's son, I knew thy father:
He was a manly man, as thou art, Much,
And gray before his time as thou art, Much.

Much. It is the trick of the family, my lord.
There was a song he made to the turning wheel—

Robin. 'Turn! turn!' but I forget it.

Much.

I can sing it.

Robin. Not now, good Much! And thou, dear Little John,

Who hast that worship for me which Heaven knows
I ill deserve—you love me, all of you,
But I am outlaw'd, and if caught, I die.
Your hands again. All thanks for all your service;
But if you follow me, you may die with me.

All. We will live and die with thee, we will live and die with thee.

ACT II

THE FLIGHT OF MARIAN

SCENE I.—A BROAD FOREST GLADE, WOODMAN'S HUT AT ONE SIDE WITH HALF-DOOR. FORESTERS ARE LOOKING TO THEIR BOWS AND ARROWS, OR POLISHING THEIR SWORDS.

FORESTERS *sing* (as they disperse to their work).

There is no land like England
Where'er the light of day be;
There are no hearts like English hearts
Such hearts of oak as they be.
There is no land like England
Where'er the light of day be;
There are no men like Englishmen
So tall and bold as they be.

(Full chorus.) And these will strike for England
And man and maid be free
To foil and spoil the tyrant
Beneath the greenwood tree.

There is no land like England
 Where'er the light of day be ;
 There are no wives like English wives
 So fair and chaste as they be.
 There is no land like England
 Where'er the light of day be ;
 There are no maids like English maids
 So beautiful as they be.

(Full chorus.) And these shall wed with freemen,
 And all their sons be free,
 To sing the songs of England
 Beneath the greenwood tree.

Robin (alone). My lonely hour !
 The king of day hath stept from off his throne,
 Flung by the golden mantle of the cloud,
 And sets, a naked fire. The King of England
 Perchance this day may sink as gloriously,
 Red with his own and enemy's blood—but no !
 We hear he is in prison. It is my birthday.
 I have reign'd one year in the wild wood. My mother,
 For whose sake, and the blessed Queen of Heaven,
 I reverence all women, bad me, dying,
 Whene'er this day should come about, to carve
 One lone hour from it, so to meditate
 Upon my greater nearness to the birthday
 Of the after-life, when all the sheeted dead
 Are shaken from their stillness in the grave
 By the last trumpet.

Am I worse or better ?
 I am outlaw'd. I am none the worse for that.
 I held for Richard, and I hated John.
 I am a thief, ay, and a king of thieves.
 Ay ! but we rob the robber, wrong the wronger,
 And what we wring from them we give the poor.
 I am none the worse for that, and all the better
 For this free forest-life, for while I sat
 Among my thralls in my baronial hall

The groining hid the heavens ; but since I breathed,
 A houseless head beneath the sun and stars,
 The soul of the woods hath stricken thro' my blood,
 The love of freedom, the desire of God,
 The hope of larger life hereafter, more
 Tenfold than under roof. [*Horn blown.*

True, were I taken
 They would prick out my sight. A price is set
 On this poor head ; but I believe there lives
 No man who truly loves and truly rules
 His following, but can keep his followers true.
 I am one with mine. Traitors are rarely bred
 Save under traitor kings. Our vice-king John,
 True king of vice—true play on words—our John
 By his Norman arrogance and dissoluteness,
 Hath made *me* king of all the discontent
 Of England up thro' all the forest land
 North to the Tyne : being outlaw'd in a land
 Where law lies dead, we make ourselves the law.
 Why break you thus upon my lonely hour ?

Enter LITTLE JOHN *and* KATE.

Little John. I found this white doe wandering thro'
 the wood,

Not thine, but mine. I have shot her thro' the heart.

Kate. He lies, my lord. I have shot *him* thro' the
 heart.

Robin. My God, thou art the very woman who waits
 On my dear Marian. Tell me, tell me of her.

Thou comest a very angel out of heaven.

Where is she ? and how fares she ?

Kate. O my good lord.

I am but an angel by reflected light.

Your heaven is vacant of your angel. John—

Shame on him !—

Stole on her, she was walking in the garden,

And after some slight speech about the Sheriff

He caught her round the waist, whereon she struck him,
 And fled into the castle. She and Sir Richard
 Have past away, I know not where; and I
 Was left alone, and knowing as I did
 That I had shot him thro' the heart, I came
 To eat him up and make an end of him.

Little John. In kisses?

Kate. You, how dare you mention kisses?
 But I am weary pacing thro' the wood.
 Show me some cave or cabin where I may rest.

Robin. Go with him. I will talk with thee anon.

[*Exeunt Little John and Kate.*]

She struck him, my brave Marian, struck the Prince,
 The serpent that had crept into the garden
 And coil'd himself about her sacred waist.
 I think I should have stricken him to the death.
 He never will forgive her.

O the Sheriff

Would pay this cursed mortgage to his brother

If Marian would marry him; and the son

Is most like dead—if so the land may come

To Marian, and they rate the land fivefold

The worth of the mortgage, and who marries her

Marries the land. Most honourable Sheriff!

(*Passionately*) Gone, and it may be gone for evermore!

O would that I could see her for a moment

Glide like a light across these woodland ways!

'Tho' in one moment she should glance away,

I should be happier for it all the year.

O would she moved beside me like my shadow!

O would she stood before me as my queen,

To make this Sherwood Eden o'er again,

And these rough oaks the palms of Paradise!

Ah! but who be those three yonder with bows?—not
 of my band—the Sheriff, and by heaven, Prince John
 himself and one of those mercenaries that suck the blood
 of England. My people are all scattered I know not
 where. Have they come for me? Here is the witch's

hut. The fool-people call her a witch—a good witch to me! I will shelter here. [*Knocks at the door of the hut.*]

OLD WOMAN *comes out.*

Old Woman (kisses his hand). Ah dear Robin! ah noble captain, friend of the poor!

Robin. I am chased by my foes. I have forgotten my horn that calls my men together. Disguise me—thy gown and thy coif.

Old Woman. Come in, come in; I would give my life for thee, for when the Sheriff had taken all our goods for the King without paying, our horse and our little cart——

Robin. Quick, good mother, quick!

Old Woman. Ay, ay, gown, coif, and petticoat, and the old woman's blessing with them to the last fringe.

[*They go in.*]

Enter PRINCE JOHN, SHERIFF OF NOTTINGHAM, *and*
MERCENARY.

Prince John. Did we not hear the two would pass this way?

They must have past. Here is a woodman's hut.

Mercenary. Take heed, take heed! in Nottingham they say

There hides a foul witch somewhere hereabout.

Sheriff. Not in this hut I take it.

Prince John. Why not here?

Sheriff. I saw a man go in, my lord.

Prince John. Not two?

Sheriff. No, my lord, one.

Prince John. Make for the cottage then!

Interior of the hut.

ROBIN *disguised as old woman.*

Prince John (without). Knock again! knock again!

Robin (to Old Woman). Get thee into the closet there, and make a ghostly wail ever and anon to scare 'em.

Old Woman. I will, I will, good Robin.

[*Goes into closet.*]

Prince John (without). Open, open, or I will drive the door from the door-post.

Robin (*opens door*). Come in, come in.

Prince John. Why did ye keep us at the door so long?

Robin (*curtseying*). I was afear'd it was the ghost, your worship.

Prince John. Ghost! did one in white pass?

Robin (*curtseying*). No, your worship.

Prince John. Did two knights pass?

Robin (*curtseying*). No, your worship.

Sheriff. I fear me we have lost our labour, then.

Prince John. Except this old hag have been bribed to lie.

Robin. We old hags should be bribed to speak truth, for, God help us, we lie by nature.

Prince John. There was a man just now that enter'd here?

Robin. There is but one old woman in the hut.

[*Old Woman yells.*]

Robin. I crave your worship's pardon. There is yet another old woman. She was murdered here a hundred year ago, and whenever a murder is to be done again she yells out i' this way—so they say, your worship.

Mercenary. Now, if I hadn't a sprig o' wickentree sewn into my dress, I should run.

Prince John. Tut! tut! the scream of some wild wood-land thing.

How came we to be parted from our men?
We shouted, and *they* shouted, as I thought,
But shout and echo play'd into each other
So hollowly we knew not which was which.

Robin. The wood is full of echoes, owls, elfs, ouphes, oafs, ghosts o' the mist, wills-o'-the-wisp; only they that be bred in it can find their way a-nights in it.

Prince John. I am footsore and famish'd therewithal.
Is there aught there? [*Pointing to cupboard.*]

Robin. Naught for the likes o' you.

Prince John. Speak straight out, crookback.

Robin. Sour milk and black bread.

Prince John. Well, set them forth. I could eat anything. [*He sets out a table with black bread.*]

This is mere marble. Old hag, how should thy one tooth drill thro' this?

Robin. Nay, by St. Gemini, I ha' two; and since the Sheriff left me naught but an empty belly, they can meet upon anything thro' a millstone. You gentles that live upo' manchet-bread and marchpane, what should you know o' the food o' the poor? Look you here, before you can eat it you must hack it with a hatchet, break it all to pieces, as you break the poor, as you would hack at Robin Hood if you could light upon him (*hacks it and flings two pieces*). There's for you, and there's for you—and the old woman's welcome.

Prince John. The old wretch is mad, and her bread is beyond me: and the milk—faugh! Hast thou anything to sweeten this?

Robin. Here's a pot o' wild honey from an old oak, saving your sweet reverences.

Sheriff. 'Thou hast a cow then, hast thou?

Robin. Ay, for when the Sheriff took my little horse for the King without paying for it——

Sheriff. How hadst thou then the means to buy a cow?

Robin. Eh, I would ha' given my whole body to the King had *he* asked for it, like the woman at Acre when the Turk shot her as she was helping to build the mound against the city. I ha' served the King living, says she, and let me serve him dead, says she; let me go to make the mound: bury me in the mound, says the woman.

Sheriff. Ay, but the cow?

Robin. She was given me.

Sheriff. By whom?

Robin. By a thief.

Sheriff. Who, woman, who?

Robin (sings). He was a forester good ;
He was the cock o' the walk ;
He was the king o' the wood.

Your worship may find another rhyme if you care to drag your brains for such a minnow.

Sheriff. That cow was mine. I have lost a cow from my meadow. Robin Hood was it? I thought as much. He will come to the gibbet at last. [Old Woman yells.

Mercenary. O sweet sir, talk not of cows. You anger the spirit.

Prince John. Anger the scritch-owl.

Mercenary. But, my lord, the scritch-owl bodes death, my lord.

Robin. I beseech you all to speak lower. Robin may be hard by wi' three-score of his men. He often looks in here by the moonshine. Beware of Robin.

[Old Woman yells.

Mercenary. Ay, do you hear? There may be murder done.

Sheriff. Have you not finished, my lord?

Robin. Thou hast crost him in love, and I have heard him swear he will be even wi' thee. [Old Woman yells.

Mercenary. Now is my heart so down in my heels that if I stay, I can't run.

Sheriff. Shall we not go?

Robin. And, old hag tho' I be, I can spell the hand. Give me thine. Ay, ay, the line o' life is marked enow; but look, there is a cross line o' sudden death. I pray thee go, go, for tho' thou wouldst bar me fro' the milk o' my cow, I wouldn't have thy blood on my hearth.

Prince John. Why do you listen, man, to the old fool?

Sheriff. I will give thee a silver penny if thou wilt show us the way back to Nottingham.

Robin (with a very low curtsey). All the sweet saints

bless your worship for your alms to the old woman!
but make haste then, and be silent in the wood. Follow
me. [Takes his bow.

(They come out of the hut and close the door carefully.)

Outside hut.

Robin. Softly! softly! there may be a thief in every bush.

Prince John. How should this old lamester guide us?
Where is thy goodman?

Robin. The saints were so kind to both on us that he
was dead before he was born.

Prince John. Half-witted and a witch to boot! Mislead
us, and I will have thy life! and what doest thou with that
who art more bow-bent than the very bow thou carriest?

Robin. I keep it to kill nightingales.

Prince John. Nightingales!

Robin. You see, they are so fond o' their own voices
that I cannot sleep o' nights by cause on 'em.

Prince John. True soul of the Saxon churl for whom
song has no charm.

Robin. Then I roast 'em, for I have nought else to
live on (*whines*). O your honour, I pray you too to give
me an alms. (*To Prince John.*)

Sheriff. This is no bow to hit nightingales; this is a
true woodman's bow of the best yew-wood to slay the deer.
Look, my lord, there goes one in the moonlight. Shoot!

Prince John (shoots). Missed! There goes another.
Shoot, Sheriff!

Sheriff (shoots). Missed!

Robin. And here comes another. Why, an old woman
can shoot closer than you two.

Prince John. Shoot then, and if thou miss I will fasten
thee to thine own door-post and make thine old carcase a
target for us three.

Robin (raises himself upright, shoots, and hits). Hit!
Did I not tell you an old woman could shoot better?

Prince John. Thou standest straight. Thou speakest

manlike. Thou art no old woman—thou art disguised—thou art one of the thieves.

[Makes a clutch at the gown, which comes in pieces and falls, showing Robin in his forester's dress.]

Sheriff. It is the very captain of the thieves!

Prince John. We have him at last; we have him at advantage. Strike, Sheriff! Strike, mercenary!

[They draw swords and attack him; he defends himself with his.]

Enter LITTLE JOHN.

Little John. I have lodged my pretty Katekin in her bower.

How now? Clashing of swords—three upon one, and that one our Robin! Rogues, have you no manhood?

[Draws and defends Robin.]

Enter SIR RICHARD LEA *(draws his sword).*

Sir Richard Lea. Old as I am, I will not brook to see Three upon two.

[Maid Marian in the armour of a Red-cross Knight follows, half unsheathing her sword and half-seen.]

Back! back! I charge thee, back!

Is this a game for thee to play at? Away.

[She retires to the fringe of the copse. He fights on Robin's side. The other three are beaten off and exeunt.]

Enter FRIAR TUCK.

Friar Tuck. I am too late then with my quarterstaff!

Robin. Quick, friar, follow them:

See whether there be more of 'em in the wood.

Friar Tuck. On the gallop, on the gallop, Robin, like a deer from a dog, or a colt from a gad-fly, or a stump-tailed ox in May-time, or the cow that jumped over the moon.

[Exit.]

Robin. Nay, nay, but softly, lest they spy thee, friar!

[*To Sir Richard Lea who reels.*

Take thou mine arm. Who art thou, gallant knight?

Sir Richard. Robin, I am Sir Richard of the Lea.

Who be those three that I have fought withal?

Robin. Prince John, the Sheriff, and a mercenary.

Sir Richard. Prince John again. We are flying from
this John.

The Sheriff—I am grieved it was the Sheriff;

For, Robin, he must be my son-in-law.

Thou art an outlaw, and couldst never pay

The mortgage on my land. Thou wilt not see

My Marian more. So—so—I have presumed

Beyond my strength. Give me a draught of wine.

[*Marian comes forward.*

This is my son but late escaped from prison,

For whom I ran into my debt to the Abbot,

Two thousand marks in gold. I have paid him half.

That other thousand—shall I ever pay it?

A draught of wine.

Robin. Our cellar is hard by.

Take him, good Little John, and give him wine.

[*Exit Sir Richard leaning on Little John.*

A brave old fellow but he angers me.

[*To Maid Marian who is following her father.*

Young Walter, nay, I pray thee, stay a moment.

Marian. A moment for some matter of no moment!

Well—take and use your moment, while you may.

Robin. Thou art her brother, and her voice is thine,

Her face is thine, and if thou be as gentle

Give me some news of my sweet Marian.

Where is she?

Marian. Thy sweet Marian? I believe

She came with me into the forest here.

Robin. She follow'd thee into the forest here?

Marian. Nay—that, my friend, I am sure I did not say.

Robin. Thou blowest hot and cold. Where is she then?

Marian. Is she not here with thee?

Robin. Would God she were !

Marian. If not with thee I know not where she is.
She may have lighted on your fairies here,
And now be skipping in their fairy-rings,
And capering hand in hand with Oberon.

Robin. Peace !

Marian. Or learning witchcraft of your woodland witch,
And how to charm and waste the hearts of men.

Robin. That is not brother-like.

Marian (*pointing to the sky*). Or there perchance
Up yonder with the man i' the moon.

Robin. No more !

Marian. Or haply fallen a victim to the wolf.

Robin. Tut ! be there wolves in Sherwood ?

Marian. The wolf, John !

Robin. Curse him ! but thou art mocking me. Thou
art

Her brother—I forgive thee. Come be thou
My brother too. She loves me.

Marian. Doth she so ?

Robin. Do you doubt me when I say she loves me,
man ?

Marian. No, but my father will not lose his land,
Rather than that would wed her with the Sheriff.

Robin. Thou hold'st with him ?

Marian. Yes, in some sort I do.
He is old and almost mad to keep the land.

Robin. Thou hold'st with him ?

Marian. I tell thee, in some sort.

Robin (*angrily*). Sort ! sort ! what sort ? what sort of
man art thou

For land, not love ? Thou wilt inherit the land,
And so wouldst sell thy sister to the Sheriff,
O thou unworthy brother of my dear Marian !
And now, I do bethink me, thou wast by
And never drewest sword to help the old man
When he was fighting.

Marian. There were three to three.

Robin. Thou shouldst have ta'en his place, and fought
for him.

Marian. He did it so well there was no call for me.

Robin. My God!

That such a brother—*she* marry the Sheriff!
Come now, I fain would have a bout with thee.
It is but pastime—nay, I will not harm thee.

Draw!

Marian. Earl, I would fight with any man but thee.

Robin. Ay, ay, because I have a name for prowess.

Marian. It is not that.

Robin. That! I believe thou fell'st into the hands
Of these same Moors thro' nature's baseness, criedst
'I yield' almost before the thing was ask'd,
And thro' thy lack of manhood hast betray'd
Thy father to the losing of his land.

Come, boy! 'tis but to see if thou canst fence.

Draw!

[*Draws.*]

Marian. No, Sir Earl, I will not fight to-day.

Robin. To-morrow then?

Marian. Well, I will fight to-morrow.

Robin. Give me thy glove upon it.

Marian (*pulls off her glove and gives it to him*). There!

Robin. O God!

What sparkles in the moonlight on thy hand?

[*Takes her hand.*]

In that great heat to wed her to the Sheriff
Thou hast robb'd my girl of her betrothal ring.

Marian. No, no!

Robin. What! do I not know mine own ring?

Marian. I keep it for her.

Robin. Nay, she swore it never
Should leave her finger. Give it me, by heaven,
Or I will force it from thee.

Marian. O Robin, Robin!

Robin. O my dear Marian,
Is it thou? is it thou? I fall before thee, clasp
Thy knees. I am ashamed. Thou shalt not marry

The Sheriff, but abide with me who love thee.

[*She moves from him, the moonlight falls upon her.*]

O look! before the shadow of these dark oaks
Thou seem'st a saintly splendour out from heaven,
Clothed with the mystic silver of her moon.
Speak but one word not only of forgiveness,
But to show thou art mortal.

Marian.

Mortal enough,

If love for thee be mortal. Lovers hold
True love immortal. Robin, tho' I love thee,
We cannot come together in this world.
Not mortal! after death, if after death——

Robin (springing up). Life, life. I know not death.

Why do you vex me

With raven-croaks of death and after death?

Marian. And I and he are passing overseas:

He has a friend there will advance the monies,
So now the forest lawns are all as bright
As ways to heaven, I pray thee give us guides
To lead us thro' the windings of the wood.

Robin. Must it be so? If it were so, myself
Would guide you thro' the forest to the sea.
But go not yet, stay with us, and when thy brother——

Marian. Robin, I ever held that saying false
That Love is blind, but thou hast proven it true.
Why—even your woodland squirrel sees the nut
Behind the shell, and thee however mask'd
I should have known. But thou—to dream that he
My brother, my dear Walter—now, perhaps,
Fetter'd and lash'd, a galley-slave, or closed
For ever in a Moorish tower, or wreckt
And dead beneath the midland ocean, he
As gentle as he's brave—that such as he
Would wrest from me the precious ring I promised
Never to part with—No, not he, nor any.
I would have battled for it to the death.

[*In her excitement she draws her sword.*]

See, thou hast wrong'd my brother and myself.

Robin (kneeling). See then, I kneel once more to be forgiven.

Enter SCARLET, MUCH, several of the FORESTERS, rushing on.

Scarlet. Look! look! he kneels! he has anger'd the foul witch,
Who melts a waxen image by the fire,
And drains the heart and marrow from a man.

Much. Our Robin beaten, pleading for his life!
Seize on the knight! wrench his sword from him!

[*They all rush on* Marian.

Robin (springing up and waving his hand). Back!
Back all of you! this is Maid Marian
Flying from John—disguised.

Men. Maid Marian? she?

Scarlet. Captain, we saw thee cowering to a knight
And thought thou wert bewitch'd.

Marian. You dared to dream

That our great Earl, the bravest English heart
Since Hereward the Wake, would cower to any
Of mortal build. Weak natures that impute
Themselves to their unlikes, and their own want
Of manhood to their leader! he would break,
Far as he might, the power of John—but you—
What rightful cause could grow to such a heat
As burns a wrong to ashes, if the followers
Of him, who heads the movement, held him craven?
Robin—I know not, can I trust myself
With your brave band? in some of these may lodge
That baseness which for fear or monies, might
Betray me to the wild Prince.

Robin. No, love, no!

Not any of these, I swear.

Men. No, no, we swear.

SCENE II.—ANOTHER GLADE IN THE FOREST

ROBIN *and* MARIAN *passing.**Enter* FORESTER.

Forester. Knight, your good father had his draught of
wine

And then he swoon'd away. He had been hurt,
And bled beneath his armour. Now he cries
'The land! the land!' Come to him.

Marian. O my poor father!

Robin. Stay with us in this wood, till he recover.
We know all balms and simples of the field
To help a wound. Stay with us here, sweet love,
Maid Marian, till thou wed what man thou wilt.
All here will prize thee, honour, worship thee,
Crown thee with flowers; and he will soon be well:
All will be well.

Marian. O lead me to my father!

[*As they are going out enter Little John and Kate
who falls on the neck of Marian.*]

Kate. No, no, false knight, thou canst not hide thyself
From her who loves thee.

Little John. What!

By all the devils in and out of Hell!
Wilt thou embrace thy sweetheart 'fore my face?
Quick with thy sword! the yeoman braves the knight.
'There! (*strikes her with the flat of his sword*).

Marian (*laying about her*). Are the men all mad?
there then, and there!

Kate. O hold thy hand! this is our Marian.

Little John. What! with this skill of fence! let go
mine arm.

Robin. Down with thy sword! She is my queen and
thine,
The mistress of the band.

Marian (*sheathing her sword*). A maiden now

Were ill-bested in these dark days of John,
Except she could defend her innocence.

O lead me to my father. [*Exeunt Robin and Marian.*]

Little John. Speak to me,
I am like a boy now going to be whipt ;
I know I have done amiss, have been a fool.
Speak to me, Kate, and say you pardon me !

Kate. I never will speak word to thee again.
What ? to mistrust the girl you say you love
Is to mistrust your own love for your girl !
How should you love if you mistrust your love ?

Little John. O Kate, true love and jealousy are twins,
And love is joyful, innocent, beautiful,
And jealousy is wither'd, sour and ugly :
Yet are they twins and always go together.

Kate. Well, well, until they cease to go together,
I am but a stone and a dead stock to thee.

Little John. I thought I saw thee clasp and kiss a man
And it was but a woman. Pardon me.

Kate. Ay, for I much disdain thee, but if ever
Thou see me clasp and kiss a man indeed,
I will again be thine, and not till then. [*Exit.*]

Little John. I have been a fool and I have lost my
Kate. [*Exit.*]

Re-enter ROBIN.

Robin. He dozes. I have left her watching him.
She will not marry till her father yield.
The old man dotes.

Nay—and she will not marry till Richard come,
And that's at latter Lammas—never perhaps.
Besides, tho' Friar Tuck might make us one,
An outlaw's bride may not be wife in law.

I am weary. [*Lying down on a bank.*]
What's here ? a dead bat in the fairy ring—
Yes, I remember, Scarlet hacking down
A hollow ash, a bat flew out at him

In the clear noon, and hook'd him by the hair,
 And he was scared and slew it. My men say
 The fairies haunt this glade;—if one could catch
 A glimpse of them and of their fairy Queen—
 Have our loud pastimes driven them all away?
 I never saw them: yet I could believe
 There came some evil fairy at my birth
 And cursed me, as the last heir of my race:
 'This boy will never wed the maid he loves,
 Nor leave a child behind him' (*yawns*). Weary—wary
 As tho' a spell were on me (*he dreams*).

[*The whole stage lights up, and fairies are seen swinging on boughs and nestling in hollow trunks.*]

TITANIA *on a hill*, FAIRIES *on either side of her, the moon above the hill.*

First Fairy.

Evil fairy! do you hear?
 So he said who lieth here.

Second Fairy.

We be fairies of the wood,
 We be neither bad nor good.

First Fairy.

Back and side and hip and rib,
 Nip, nip him for his fib.

Titania.

Nip him not, but let him snore.
 We must flit for evermore.

First Fairy.

'Tis, my queen, must it be so?
 Wherefore, wherefore should we go?

Titania.

I Titania bid you flit,
And you dare to call me Tit.

First Fairy.

Tit, for love and brevity,
Not for love of levity.

Titania.

Pertest of our flickering mob,
Wouldst thou call my Oberon Ob?

First Fairy.

Nay, an please your Elfin Grace,
Never Ob before his face.

Titania.

Fairy realm is breaking down
When the fairy slights the crown.

First Fairy.

No, by wisp and glowworm, no.
Only wherefore should we go?

Titania.

We must fly from Robin Hood
And this new queen of the wood.

First Fairy.

True, she is a goodly thing.
Jealousy, jealousy of the king.

Titania.

Nay, for Oberon fled away
Twenty thousand leagues to-day.

Chorus.

Look, there comes a deputation
From our finikin fairy nation.

*Enter several FAIRIES.**Third Fairy.*

Crush'd my bat whereon I flew!
Found him dead and drench'd in dew,
Queen.

Fourth Fairy.

Quash'd my frog that used to quack
When I vaulted on his back,
Queen.

Fifth Fairy.

Kill'd the sward where'er they sat,
Queen.

Sixth Fairy.

Lusty bracken beaten flat,
Queen.

Seventh Fairy.

Honest daisy deadly bruised,
Queen.

Eighth Fairy.

Modest maiden lily abused,
Queen.

Ninth Fairy.

Beetle's jewel armour crack'd,
Queen.

Tenth Fairy.

Reed I rock'd upon broken-back'd,
Queen.

Fairies (in chorus).

We be scared with song and shout.
Arrows whistle all about.
All our games be put to rout.
All our rings be trampled out.
Lead us thou to some deep glen,
Far from solid foot of men,
Never to return again,
Queen.

Titania (to First Fairy).

Elf, with spiteful heart and eye,
Talk of jealousy? You see why
We must leave the wood and fly.

(To all the Fairies, who sing at intervals with Titania.)

Up with you, out of the forest and over the hills and away,
And over this Robin Hood's bay!
Up thro' the light of the seas by the moon's long-silvering
ray!
To a land where the fay,
Not an eye to survey,
In the night, in the day,
Can have frolic and play.
Up with you, all of you, out of it! hear and obey.
Man, lying here alone,
Moody creature,
Of a nature
Stronger, sadder than my own,
Were I human, were I human,
I could love you like a woman.

Man, man,
 You shall wed your Marian.
 She is true, and you are true,
 And you love her and she loves you ;
 Both be happy, and adieu for ever and for evermore—
 adieu.

Robin (half waking). Shall I be happy? Happy
 vision, stay.

Titania.

Up with you, all of you, off with you, out of it, over the
 wood and away!

Note.—In the stage copy of my play I have had this Fairy Scene transferred to the end of the Third Act, for the sake of modern dramatic effect.

ACT III

THE CROWNING OF MARIAN

SCENE.—HEART OF THE FOREST

MARIAN and KATE (*in Foresters' green*)

Kate. What makes you seem so cold to Robin, lady?

Marian. What makes thee think I seem so cold to
 Robin?

Kate. You never whisper close as lovers do,
 Nor care to leap into each other's arms.

Marian. There is a fence I cannot overleap,
 My father's will.

Kate. Then you will wed the Sheriff?

Marian. When heaven falls, I may light on such
 a lark!

But who art thou to catechize me—thou
 That hast not made it up with Little John!

Kate. I wait till Little John makes up to *me*.

Marian. Why, my good Robin fancied me a man,
And drew his sword upon me, and Little John
Fancied he saw thee clasp and kiss a man.

Kate. Well, if *he* fancied that *I* fancy a man
Other than *him*, he is *not* the man for me.

Marian. And that would quite *unman* him, heart and
soul.

For both are thine.

(*Looking up.*)

But listen—overhead—

Fluting, and piping and luting ‘Love, love, love’—
Those sweet tree-Cupids half-way up in heaven,
The birds—would I were one of ‘em! O good Kate—
If my man-Robin were but a bird-Robin,
How happily would we lilt among the leaves
‘Love, love, love, love’—what merry madness—listen!
And let them warm thy heart to Little John.
Look where he comes!

Kate. I will not meet him yet,
I’ll watch him from behind the trees, but call
Kate when you will, for I am close at hand.

KATE *stands aside and enter* ROBIN, *and after him at a little
distance* LITTLE JOHN, MUCH *the Miller’s son*, and
SCARLET *with an oaken chaplet*, and other FORESTERS.

Little John. My lord—Robin—I crave pardon—you
always seem to me my lord—I Little John, he Much the
miller’s son, and he Scarlet, honouring all womankind,
and more especially my lady Marian, do here, in the name
of all our woodmen, present her with this oaken chaplet as
Queen of the wood, I Little John, he, young Scarlet, and
he, old Much, and all the rest of us.

Much. And I, old Much, say as much, for being every
inch a man I honour every inch of a woman.

Robin. Friend Scarlet, art thou less a man than Much?
Why art thou mute? Dost thou not honour woman?

Scarlet. Robin, I do, but I have a bad wife.

Robin. Then let her pass as an exception, Scarlet.

Scarlet. So I would, Robin, if any man would accept her.

Marian (puts on the chaplet). Had I a bulrush now in this right hand

For sceptre, I were like a queen indeed.

Comrades, I thank you for your loyalty,

And take and wear this symbol of your love ;

And were my kindly father sound again,

Could live as happy as the larks in heaven,

And join your feasts and all your forest games

As far as maiden might. Farewell, good fellows !

[*Exeunt several Foresters, the others withdraw to the back.*]

Robin. Sit here by me, where the most beaten track
Runs thro' the forest, hundreds of huge oaks,
Gnarl'd—older than the thrones of Europe—look,
What breadth, height, strength—torrents of eddying
bark !

Some hollow-hearted from exceeding age—
That never be thy lot or mine!—and some
Pillaring a leaf-sky on their monstrous boles,
Sound at the core as we are. Fifty leagues
Of woodland hear and know my horn, that scares
The Baron at the torture of his churls,
The pillage of his vassals.

O maiden-wife,
The oppression of our people moves me so,
That when I think of it hotly, Love himself
Seems but a ghost, but when thou feel'st with me
The ghost returns to Marian, clothes itself
In maiden flesh and blood, and looks at once
Maid Marian, and that maiden freedom which
Would never brook the tyrant. Live thou maiden !
Thou art more my wife so feeling, than if my wife
And siding with these proud priests, and these Barons,
Devils, that make this blessed England hell.

Marian. Earl——

Robin. Nay, no Earl am I. I am English yeoman.

Marian. Then *I* am yeo-woman. O the clumsy word!

Robin. Take thou this light kiss for thy clumsy word.
Kiss me again.

Marian. Robin, I will not kiss thee,
For that belongs to marriage; but I hold thee
The husband of my heart, the noblest light
That ever flash'd across my life, and I
Embrace thee with the kisses of the soul.

Robin. I thank thee.

Marian. Scarlet told me—is it true?—
That John last week return'd to Nottingham,
And all the foolish world is pressing thither.

Robin. Sit here, my queen, and judge the world with me.
Doubtless, like judges of another bench,
However wise, we must at times have wrought
Some great injustice, yet, far as we knew,
We never robb'd one friend of the true King.
We robb'd the traitors that are leagued with John;
We robb'd the lawyer who went against the law;
We spared the craftsman, chapman, all that live
By their own hands, the labourer, the poor priest;
We spoil'd the prior, friar, abbot, monk,
For playing upside down with Holy Writ.
'Sell all thou hast and give it to the poor;'
'Take all they have and give it to thyself!'
Then after we have eased them of their coins
It is our forest custom they should revel
Along with Robin.

Marian. And if a woman pass——

Robin. Dear, in these days of Norman license, when
Our English maidens are their prey, if ever
A Norman damsel fell into our hands,
In this dark wood when all was in our power
We never wrong'd a woman.

Marian. Noble Robin.

Little John (coming forward). Here come three beggars.

Enter the three BEGGARS.

Little John. Toll!

First Beggar. Eh! we be beggars, we come to ask o' you. We ha' nothing.

Second Beggar. Rags, nothing but our rags.

Third Beggar. I have but one penny in pouch, and so you would make it two I should be grateful.

Marian. Beggars, you are sturdy rogues that should be set to work. You are those that tramp the country, filch the linen from the hawthorn, poison the house-dog, and scare lonely maidens at the farmstead. Search them, Little John.

Little John. These two have forty gold marks between them, Robin.

Robin. Cast them into our treasury, the beggars' mites. Part shall go to the almshouses at Nottingham, part to the shrine of our Lady. Search this other.

Little John. He hath, as he said, but one penny.

Robin. Leave it with him and add a gold mark thereto. He hath spoken truth in a world of lies.

Third Beggar. I thank you, my lord.

Little John. A fine, a fine! he hath called plain Robin a lord. How much for a beggar?

Robin. Take his penny and leave him his gold mark.

Little John. Sit there, knaves, till the captain call for you. [*They pass behind the trunk of an oak on the right.*]

Marian. Art thou not hard upon them, my good Robin?

Robin. They might be harder upon thee, if met in a black lane at midnight: the throat might gape before the tongue could cry who?

Little John. Here comes a citizen, and I think his wife.

Enter CITIZEN and WIFE.

Citizen. That business which we have in Nottingham—

Little John. Halt!

Citizen. O dear wife, we have fallen into the hands
Of Robin Hood.

Marian. And Robin Hood hath sworn—
Shame on thee, Little John, thou hast forgotten—
'That by the blessed Mother no man, so
His own true wife came with him, should be stay'd
From passing onward. Fare you well, fair lady!

[*Bowing to her.*]

Robin. And may your business thrive in Nottingham!

Citizen. I thank you, noble sir, the very blossom
Of bandits. Curtsey to him, wife, and thank him.

Wife. I thank you, noble sir, and will pray for you
That *you* may thrive, but in some kindlier trade.

Citizen. Away, away, wife, wilt thou anger him?

[*Exeunt Citizen and his Wife.*]

Little John. Here come three friars.

Robin. Marian, thou and thy woman (*looking round*),
Why, where is Kate?

Marian (calling). Kate!

Kate. Here!

Robin. Thou and thy woman are a match for three
friars. Take thou my bow and arrow and compel them
to pay toll.

Marian. Toll!

Enter three FRIARS.

First Friar (advancing). Behold a pretty Dian of the
wood,
Prettier than that same widow which you wot of.
Ha, brother. Toll, my dear? the toll of love.

Marian (drawing bow). Back! how much money hast
thou in thy purse?

First Friar. Thou art playing with us. How should
poor friars have money?

Marian. How much? how much? Speak, or the
arrow flies.

First Friar. How much? well, now I bethink me, I

have one mark in gold which a pious son of the Church gave me this morning on my setting forth.

Marian (bending bow at the second). And thou?

Second Friar. Well, as he said, one mark in gold.

Marian (bending bow at the third). And thou?

Third Friar. One mark in gold.

Marian. Search them, Kate, and see if they have spoken truth.

Kate. They are all mark'd men. They have told but a tenth of the truth: they have each ten marks in gold.

Marian. Leave them each what they say is theirs, and take the twenty-seven marks to the captain's treasury. Sit there till you be called for.

First Friar. We have fall'n into the hands of Robin Hood.

[*Marian and Kate return to Robin.*

[*The Friars pass behind an oak on the left.*

Robin. Honour to thee, brave Marian, and thy Kate.

I know them arrant knaves in Nottingham.

One half of this shall go to those they have wrong'd,

One half shall pass into our treasury.

Where lies that cask of wine whereof we plunder'd

The Norman prelate?

Little John. In that oak, where twelve
Can stand upright, nor touch each other.

Robin.

Good!

Roll it in here. These friars, thieves, and liars,
Shall drink the health of our new woodland Queen.

And they shall pledge thee, Marian, loud enough

To fright the wild hawk passing overhead,

The mouldwarp underfoot.

Marian.

They pledge me, Robin?

The silent blessing of one honest man

Is heard in heaven—the wassail yells of thief

And rogue and liar echo down in Hell,

And wake the Devil, and I may sicken by 'em.

Well, well, be it so, thou strongest thief of all,

For thou hast stolen my will, and made it thine.

FRIAR TUCK, LITTLE JOHN, MUCH, and SCARLET roll
in cask.

Friar Tuck. I marvel is it sack or Malvoisie?

Robin. Do me the service to tap it, and thou wilt know.

Friar Tuck. I would tap myself in thy service, Robin.

Robin. And thou wouldst run more wine than blood.

Friar Tuck. And both at thy service, Robin.

Robin. I believe thee, thou art a good fellow, though a friar.

[*They pour the wine into cups.*]

Friar Tuck. Fill to the brim. Our Robin, King o' the woods,

Wherever the horn sound, and the buck bound,
Robin, the people's friend, the King o' the woods!

[*They drink.*]

Robin. To the brim and over till the green earth
drink

Her health along with us in this rich draught,
And answer it in flowers. The Queen o' the woods,

Wherever the buck bound, and the horn sound,

Maid Marian, Queen o' the woods!

[*They drink.*]

Here, you three rogues,

[*To the Beggars. They come out.*]

You caught a lonely woodman of our band,

And bruised him almost to the death, and took

His monies.

Third Beggar. Captain, nay, it wasn't me.

Robin. You ought to dangle up there among the
crows.

Drink to the health of our new Queen o' the woods,
Or else be bound and beaten.

First Beggar. Sir, sir—well,

We drink the health of thy new Queen o' the woods.

Robin. Louder! louder! Maid Marian, Queen o' the
woods!

Beggars (shouting). Maid Marian, Queen o' the woods:
Queen o' the woods!

First and Second Beggars (aside). The black fiend grip
her! [*They drink.*

Robin (to the Friars). And you three holy men,
[*They come out.*

You worshippers of the Virgin, one of you
Shamed a too trustful widow whom you heard
In her confession; and another—worse!—
An innocent maid. Drink to the Queen o' the woods,
Or else be bound and beaten.

First Friar. Robin Hood,
These be the lies the people tell of us,
Because we seek to curb their viciousness.
However—to this maid, this Queen o' the woods.

Robin. Louder, louder, ye knaves. Maid Marian!
Queen o' the woods.

Friars (shouting). Maid Marian, Queen o' the woods.

First Friar (aside). Maid?

Second Friar (aside). Paramour!

Third Friar (aside). Hell take her! [*They drink.*

Friar Tuck. Robin, will you not hear one of these
beggars' catches? They can do it. I have heard 'em in
the market at Mansfield.

Little John. No, my lord, hear ours—Robin—I crave
pardon, I always think of you as my lord, but I may still
say my lady; and, my lady, Kate and I have fallen out
again, and I pray you to come between us again, for, my
lady, we have made a song in your honour, so your lady-
ship care to listen.

Robin. Sing, and by St. Mary these beggars and these
friars shall join you. Play the air, Little John.

Little John. Air and word, my lady, are maid and man.
Join them and they are a true marriage; and so, I pray
you, my lady, come between me and my Kate and make
us one again. Scarlet, begin.

[*Playing the air on his viol.*

Scarlet.

By all the deer that spring
Thro' wood and lawn and ling,
When all the leaves are green ;
By arrow and gray goosewing,
When horn and echo ring,
We care so much for a King ;
We care not much for a Queen—
For a Queen, for a Queen o' the woods.

Marian. Do you call that in my honour ?

Scarlet. Bitters before dinner, my lady, to give you a relish. The first part—made before you came among us—they put it upon me because I have a bad wife. I love you all the same. Proceed. [*All the rest sing.*]

By all the leaves of spring,
And all the birds that sing
When all the leaves are green ;
By arrow and by bowstring,
We care so much for a King
That we would die for a Queen—
For a Queen, for a Queen o' the woods.

Enter FORESTER.

Forester. Black news, black news from Nottingham ! I
grieve

I am the Raven who croaks it. My lord John,
In wrath because you drove him from the forest,
Is coming with a swarm of mercenaries
To break our band and scatter us to the winds.

Marian. O Robin, Robin ! See that men be set
Along the glades and passes of the wood
To warn us of his coming ! then each man
That owns a wife or daughter, let him bury her
Even in the bowels of the earth to 'scape
The glance of John——

Robin. You hear your Queen, obey !

ACT IV

THE CONCLUSION

SCENE.—A FOREST BOWER, CAVERN IN
BACKGROUND. SUNRISE

Marian (rising to meet Robin). Robin, the sweet light
of a mother's eye,
That beam of dawn upon the opening flower,
Has never glanced upon me when a child.
He was my father, mother, both in one.
The love that children owe to both I give
To him alone.

(Robin offers to caress her.)

Marian. Quiet, good Robin, quiet!
You lovers are such clumsy summer-flies
For ever buzzing at your lady's face.

Robin. Bees rather, flying to the flower for honey.

Marian (sings).

The bee buzz'd up in the heat.
'I am faint for your honey, my sweet.'
The flower said 'Take it, my dear,
For now is the spring of the year.

So come, come!

'Hum!'

And the bee buzz'd down from the heat.

And the bee buzz'd up in the cold
When the flower was wither'd and old.
'Have you still any honey, my dear?'
She said 'It's the fall of the year,

But come, come!'

'Hum!'

And the bee buzz'd off in the cold.

Robin. Out on thy song!

Marian. Did I not sing it in tune?

Robin. No, sweetheart! out of tune with Love and me.

Marian. And yet in tune with Nature and the bees.

Robin. Out on it, I say, as out of tune and time!

Marian. Till thou thyself shalt come to sing it—in time.

Robin (taking a tress of her hair in his hand). Time! if
his backward-working alchemy

Should change this gold to silver, why, the silver

Were dear as gold, the wrinkle as the dimple.

'Thy bee should buzz about the Court of John.

No ribald John is Love, no wanton Prince,

The ruler of an hour, but lawful King,

Whose writ will run thro' all the range of life.

Out upon all hard-hearted maidenhood!

Marian. And out upon all simple batchelors!

Ah, well! thou seest the land has come between us,

And my sick father here has come between us,

And this rich Sheriff too has come between us;

So, is it not all over now between us?

Gone, like a deer that hath escaped thine arrow!

Robin. What deer when I have mark'd him ever yet

Escaped mine arrow? over is it? wilt thou

Give me thy hand on that?

Marian. Take it.

Robin (kisses her hand). The Sheriff!

'This ring cries out against thee. Say it again,

And by this ring the lips that never breathed

Love's falsehood to true maid will seal Love's truth

On those sweet lips that dare to dally with it.

Marian. Quiet, quiet! or I will to my father.

Robin. So, then, thy father will not grace our feast

With his white beard to-day.

Marian. Being so sick

How should he, Robin?

Robin. Then that bond he hath

Of the Abbot—wilt thou ask him for it?

Marian. Why?

Robin. I have sent to the Abbot and judiciary
To bring their counter-bond into the forest.

Marian. But will they come?

Robin. If not I have let them know
Their lives unsafe in any of these our woods,
And in the winter I will fire their farms.
But I have sworn by our Lady if they come
I will not tear the bond, but see fair play
Betwixt them and Sir Richard—promised too,
So that they deal with us like honest men,
They shall be handled with all courteousness.

Marian. What wilt thou do with the bond then?

Robin. Wait and see.
What wilt thou do with the Sheriff?

Marian. Wait and see.
I bring the bond. [*Exit Marian.*]

Enter LITTLE JOHN, FRIAR TUCK, and MUCH, and
FORESTERS and PEASANTS laughing and talking.

Robin. Have ye glanced down through all the forest
ways

And mark'd if those two knaves from York be coming?

Little John. Not yet, but here comes one of bigger
mould, [*Enter King Richard.*]

Art thou a knight?

King Richard. I am.

Robin. And walkest here
Unarmour'd? all these walks are Robin Hood's
And sometimes perilous.

King Richard. Good! but having lived
For twenty days and nights in mail, at last
I crawl'd like a sick crab from my old shell,
That I might breathe for a moment free of shield
And cuirass in this forest where I dream'd
That all was peace—not even a Robin Hood—
(*Aside*) What if these knaves should know me for their
King?

Robin. Art thou for Richard, or allied to John?

King Richard. I am allied to John.

Robin. The worse for thee.

King Richard. Art thou that banish'd lord of
Huntingdon,

The chief of these outlaws who break the law?

Robin. I am the yeoman, plain Robin Hood, and being out of the law how should we break the law? if we broke into it again we should break the law, and then we were no longer outlaws.

King Richard. But, Earl, if thou be he——

Friar Tuck. Fine him! fine him! he hath called plain Robin an earl. How much is it, Robin, for a knight?

Robin. A mark.

King Richard (gives it). There.

Robin. Thou payest easily, like a good fellow,
But being o' John's side we must have thy gold.

King Richard. But I am more for Richard than for
John.

Robin. What, what, a truckler! a word-eating coward!
Nay, search him then. How much hast thou about thee?

King Richard. I had one mark.

Robin. What more.

King Richard. No more, I think.
But how then if I will not bide to be search'd?

Robin. We are four to one.

King Richard. And I might deal with four.

Robin. Good, good, I love thee for that! but if I wind
This forest-horn of mine I can bring down
Fourscore tall fellows on thee.

King Richard. Search me then.
I should be hard beset with thy fourscore.

Little John (searching King Richard). Robin, he hath
no more. He hath spoken truth.

Robin. I am glad of it. Give him back his gold again.

King Richard. But I had liefer than this gold again—
Not having broken fast the livelong day
Something to eat.

Robin. And thou shalt have it, man.
Our feast is yonder, spread beneath an oak,
Venison, and wild boar, hare, geese, besides
Hedge-pigs, a savoury viand, so thou be
Squeamish at eating the King's venison.

King Richard. Nay, Robin, I am like thyself in that
I look on the King's venison as my own.

Friar Tuck. Ay, ay, Robin, but let him know our
forest laws: he that pays not for his dinner must fight for
it. In the sweat of thy brow, says Holy Writ, shalt thou
eat bread, but in the sweat of thy brow and thy breast,
and thine arms, and thy legs, and thy heart, and thy liver,
and in the fear of thy life shalt thou eat the King's venison
—ay, and so thou fight at quarterstaff for thy dinner with
our Robin, that will give thee a new zest for it, though
thou wert like a bottle full up to the cork, or as hollow as
a kex, or the shambles-oak, or a weasel-sucked egg, or the
head of a fool, or the heart of Prince John, or any other
symbol of vacuity.

[*They bring out the quarterstuffs, and the Foresters
and Peasants crowd round to see the games,
and applaud at intervals.*]

King Richard. Great woodland king, I know not
quarterstaff.

Little John. A fine! a fine! He hath called plain
Robin a king.

Robin. A shadow, a poetical fiction—did ye not call
me king in your song?—a mere figure. Let it go by.

Friar Tuck. No figure, no fiction, Robin. What, is
not man a hunting animal? And look you now, if we
kill a stag, our dogs have their paws cut off, and the
hunters, if caught, are blinded, or worse than blinded. Is
that to be a king? If the king and the law work injustice,
is not he that goes against the king and the law the true
king in the sight of the King of kings? Thou art the king
of the forest, and I would thou wert the king of the land.

King Richard. This friar is of much boldness, noble
captain.

Robin. He hath got it from the bottle, noble knight.

Friar Tuck. Boldness out of the bottle! I defy thee.
Boldness is in the blood, Truth in the bottle.

She lay so long at the bottom of her well
In the cold water that she lost her voice,
And so she glided up into the heart
O' the bottle, the warm wine, and found it again.

In vino veritas. Shall I undertake
The knight at quarterstaff, or thou?

Robin. Peace, magpie!

Give him the quarterstaff. Nay, but thyself
Shalt play a bout with me, that he may see
The fashion of it. [*Plays with Friar Tuck at quarterstaff.*]

King Richard. Well, then, let me try. [*They play.*]
I yield, I yield. I know no quarterstaff.

Robin. Then thou shalt play the game of buffets
with us.

King Richard. What's that?

Robin. I stand up here, thou there. I give thee
A buffet, and thou me. The Holy Virgin
Stand by the strongest. I am over-breathed,
Friar, by my two bouts at quarterstaff.
Take him and try him, friar.

Friar Tuck. There! [*Strikes.*]

King Richard (strikes). There! [*Friar falls.*]

Friar Tuck. There!

Thou hast roll'd over the Church militant
Like a tod of wool from wagon into warehouse.
Nay, I defy thee still. Try me an hour hence.
I am misty with my thimbleful of ale.

Robin. Thou seest, Sir Knight, our friar is so holy
That he's a miracle-monger, and can make
Five quarts pass into a thimble. Up, good Much.

Friar Tuck. And show thyself more of a man
than me.

Much. Well, no man yet has ever bowl'd me down.

Scarlet. Ay, for old Much is every inch a man.

Robin. We should be all the more beholden to him

Much. Much and more! much and more! I am the oldest of thy men, and thou and thy youngsters are always muching and moreing me.

Robin. Because thou art always so much more of a man than my youngsters, old Much.

Much. Well, we Muches be old.

Robin. Old as the hills.

Much. Old as the mill. We had it i' the Red King's time, and so I *may* be more of a man than to be bowled over like a ninepin. There! [*Strikes.*

King Richard. There! [*Much falls.*

Robin. 'Much would have more,' says the proverb; but Much hath had more than enough. Give me thy hand, Much; I love thee (*lifts him up*). At him, Scarlet!

Scarlet. I cannot cope with him: my wrist is strain'd.

King Richard. Try, thyself, valorous Robin!

Robin. I am mortally afear'd o' thee, thou big man, But seeing valour is one against all odds, There!

King Richard. There!

[*Robin falls back, and is caught in the arms of Little John.*

Robin. Good, now I love thee mightily, thou tall fellow.

Break thine alliance with this faithless John,
And live with us and the birds in the green wood.

King Richard. I cannot break it, Robin, if I wish'd. Still I am more for Richard than for John.

Little John. Look, Robin, at the far end of the glade I see two figures crawling up the hill.

[*Distant sound of trumpets.*

Robin. The Abbot of York and his justiciary.

King Richard (aside). They know me. I must not as yet be known.

Friends, your free sports have swallow'd my free hour.
Farewell at once, for I must hence upon
The King's affair.

Robin. Not taste his venison first?

Friar Tuck. Hast thou not fought for it, and earn'd it? Stay,

Dine with my brethren here, and on thine own.

King Richard. And which be they?

Friar Tuck. Geese, man! for how canst thou be thus allied

With John, and serve King Richard save thou be
A traitor or a goose? but stay with Robin;
For Robin is no scatterbrains like Richard,
Robin's a wise man, Richard a wiseacre,
Robin's an outlaw, but he helps the poor.
While Richard hath outlaw'd himself, and helps
Nor rich, nor poor. Richard's the king of courtesy,
For if he did me the good grace to kick me
I could but sneak and smile and call it courtesy,
For he's a king.

And that is only courtesy *by* courtesy—

But Robin is a thief of courtesy

Whom they that suffer by him call the blossom
Of bandits. There—to be a thief of courtesy—

There is a trade of genius, there's glory!

Again, this Richard sacks and wastes a town

With random pillage, but our Robin takes
From whom he knows are hypocrites and liars.

Again this Richard risks his life for a straw,

So lies in prison—while our Robin's life

Hangs by a thread, but he is a free man.

Richard, again, is king over a realm

He hardly knows, and Robin king of Sherwood,

And loves and dotes on every dingle of it.

Again this Richard is the lion of Cyprus,

Robin, the lion of Sherwood—may this mouth

Never suck grape again, if our true Robin

Be not the nobler lion of the twain.

King Richard. Gramercy for thy preachment! if the land
Were ruleable by tongue, thou shouldst be king.

And yet thou know'st how little of thy king!

What was this realm of England, all the crowns

Of all this world, to Richard when he flung
 His life, heart, soul into those holy wars
 That sought to free the tomb-place of the King
 Of all the world? thou, that art churchman too
 In a fashion, and shouldst feel with him. Farewell!
 I left mine horse and armour with a Squire,
 And I must see to 'em.

Robin. When wilt thou return?

King Richard. Return, I? when? when Richard will
 return.

Robin. No sooner? when will that be? canst thou tell?
 But I have ta'en a sudden fancy to thee.
 Accept this horn! if e'er thou be assail'd
 In any of our forests, blow upon it
 Three mots, this fashion—listen! (*blows*). Canst thou
 do it! [*King Richard blows.*
 Blown like a true son of the woods. Farewell!
 [*Exit King Richard.*

Enter ABBOT and JUSTICIARY.

Friar Tuck. Church and Law, halt and pay toll!

Justiciary. Rogue, we have thy captain's safe-conduct;
 though he be the chief of rogues, he hath never broken
 his word.

Abbot. There is our bond. [*Gives it to Robin.*

Robin. I thank thee.

Justiciary. Ay, but where,
 Where is this old Sir Richard of the Lea?
 Thou told'st us we should meet him in the forest,
 Where he would pay us down his thousand marks.

Robin. Give him another month, and he will pay it.

Justiciary. We cannot give a month.

Robin. Why then a week.

Justiciary. No, not an hour: the debt is due to-day.

Abbot. Where is this laggard Richard of the Lea?

Robin. He hath been hurt, was growing whole again,
 Only this morning in his agony

Lest he should fail to pay these thousand marks
He is stricken with a slight paralysis.

Have you no pity? must you see the man?

Justiciary. Ay, ay, what else? how else can this be settled?

Robin. Go men, and fetch him hither on the litter.

[*Sir Richard Lea is brought in. Marian comes with him.*]

Marian. Here is my father's bond.

[*Gives it to Robin Hood.*]

Robin. I thank thee, dear.

Justiciary. Sir Richard, it was agreed when you borrowed these monies from the Abbot that if they were not repaid within a limited time your land should be forfeit.

Sir Richard. The land! the land.

Marian. You see he is past himself.

What would you more?

Abbot. What more? one thousand marks,
Or else the land.

You hide this damsel in your forest here,

[*Pointing to Marian.*]

You hope to hold and keep her for yourself,
You heed not how you soil her maiden fame,
You scheme against her father's weal and hers,
For so this maid would wed our brother, he
Would pay us all the debt at once, and thus
This old Sir Richard might redeem his land.
He is all for love, he cares not for the land.

Sir Richard. The land, the land!

Robin (giving two bags to the Abbot). Here be one
thousand marks

Out of our treasury to redeem the land.

[*Pointing to each of the bags.*]

Half here, half there.

[*Plaudits from his band.*]

Justiciary. Ay, ay, but there is use, four hundred
marks.

Robin (giving a bag to Justiciary). There then, four
hundred marks.

[*Plaudits.*]

Justiciary. What did I say?

Nay, my tongue tript—five hundred marks for use.

Robin (*giving another bag to him*). A hundred more?

There then, a hundred more. [*Plaudits.*]

Justiciary. Ay, ay, but you see the bond and the letter of the law. It is stated there that these monies should be paid in to the Abbot at York, at the end of the month at noon, and they are delivered here in the wild wood an hour after noon.

Marian. The letter—O how often justice drowns
Between the law and letter of the law!

O God, I would the letter of the law

Were some strong fellow here in the wild wood,

That thou mightst beat him down at quarterstaff!

Have you no pity?

Justiciary. You run down your game,
We ours. What pity have you for your game?

Robin. We needs must live. Our bowmen are so true
They strike the deer at once to death—he falls
And knows no more.

Marian. Pity, pity!—There was a man of ours

Up in the north, a goodly fellow too,

He met a stag there on so narrow a ledge—

A precipice above, and one below—

There was no room to advance or to retire.

The man lay down—the delicate-footed creature

Came stepping o'er him, so as not to harm him—

The hunter's passion flash'd into the man,

He drove his knife into the heart of the deer,

The deer fell dead to the bottom, and the man

Fell with him, and was crippled ever after.

I fear I had small pity for that man.—

You have the monies and the use of them.

What would you more?

Justiciary. What? must we dance attendance all the
day?

Robin. Dance! ay, by all the saints and all the devils
ye shall dance. When the Church and the law have

forgotten God's music, they shall dance to the music of the wild wood. Let the birds sing, and do you dance to their song. What, you will not? Strike up our music, Little John. (*He plays.*) They will not! Prick 'em in the calves with the arrow-points—prick 'em in the calves.

Abbot. Rogue, I am full of gout. I cannot dance.

Robin. And Sir Richard cannot redeem his land. Sweat out your gout, friend, for by my life, you shall dance till he can. Prick him in the calves!

Justiciary. Rogue, I have a swollen vein in my right leg, and if thou prick me there I shall die.

Robin. Prick him where thou wilt, so that he dance.

Abbot. Rogue, we come not alone.

Justiciary. Not the right.

Abbot. We told the Prince and the Sheriff of our coming.

Justiciary. Take the left leg for the love of God.

Abbot. They follow us.

Justiciary. You will all of you hang.

Robin. Let us hang, so thou dance meanwhile; or by that same love of God we will hang *thee*, prince or no prince, sheriff or no sheriff.

Justiciary. Take care, take care! I dance—I will dance—I dance.

[*Abbot and Justiciary dance to music, each holding a bag in each hand.*]

Enter SCARLET.

Scarlet. The Sheriff! the Sheriff, follow'd by Prince John

And all his mercenaries! We sighted 'em

Only this moment. By St. Nicholas

They must have sprung like Ghosts from underground,

Or, like the Devils they are, straight up from Hell.

Robin. Crouch all into the bush!

[*The Foresters and Peasants hide behind the bushes.*]

Marian.

Take up the litter!

Sir Richard. Move me no more! I am sick and faint
with pain!

Marian. But, Sir, the Sheriff——

Sir Richard. Let me be, I say!

The Sheriff will be welcome! let me be!

Marian. Give me my bow and arrows. I remain
Beside my Father's litter.

Robin. And fear not thou!

Each of us has an arrow on the cord;

We all keep watch.

Enter SHERIFF OF NOTTINGHAM.

Sheriff. Marian!

Marian. Speak not. I wait upon a dying father.

Sheriff. The debt hath not been paid. She will be
mine.

What are you capering for? By old St. Vitus

Have you gone mad? Has it been paid?

Abbot (dancing).

O yes.

Sheriff. Have I lost her then?

Justiciary (dancing). Lost her? O no, we took
Advantage of the letter—O Lord, the vein!

Not paid at York—the wood—prick me no more!

Sheriff. What pricks thee save it be thy conscience,
man?

Justiciary. By my halidome I felt him at my leg still.
Where be they gone to?

Sheriff. Thou art alone in the silence of the forest
Save for this maiden and thy brother Abbot,
And this old crazeling in the litter there.

Enter on one side FRIAR TUCK *from the bush, and on the*
other PRINCE JOHN *and his* SPEARMEN, *with banners*
and trumpets, etc.

Justiciary (examining his leg). They have missed the
vein.

Abbot. And we shall keep the land.

Sheriff. Sweet Marian, by the letter of the law
It seems thy father's land is forfeited.

Sir Richard. No! let me out of the litter. He shall
wed thee:

The land shall still be mine. Child, thou shalt wed him,
Or thine old father will go mad—he will,
He will—he feels it in his head.

Marian. O peace!
Father, I cannot marry till Richard comes.

Sir Richard. And then the Sheriff!

Marian. Ay, the Sheriff, father,
Would buy me for a thousand marks in gold—
Sell me again perchance for twice as much.
A woman's heart is but a little thing,
Much lighter than a thousand marks in gold;
But pity for a father, it may be,
Is weightier than a thousand marks in gold.
I cannot love the Sheriff.

Sir Richard. But thou wilt wed him?

Marian. Ay, save King Richard, when he comes,
forbid me.

Sweet heavens, I could wish that all the land
Were plunged beneath the waters of the sea,
Tho' all the world should go about in boats.

Friar Tuck. Why, so should all the love-sick be sea-
sick.

Marian. Better than heart-sick, friar.

Prince John (to Sheriff). See you not
They are jesting at us yonder, mocking us?
Carry her off, and let the old man die.

[*Advancing to Marian.*
Come, girl, thou shalt along with us on the instant.

Friar Tuck (brandishing his staff). Then on the instant
I will break thy head.

Sheriff. Back, thou fool-friar! Knowest thou not the
Prince?

Friar Tuck (muttering). He may be prince; he is not
gentleman.

Prince John. Look! I will take the rope from off thy waist

And twist it round thy neck and hang thee by it.
Seize him and truss him up, and carry her off.

[*Friar Tuck slips into the bush.*

Marian (drawing the bow). No nearer to me! back!
My hand is firm,

Mine eye most true to one hair's-breadth of aim.
You, Prince, our king to come—you that dishonour
The daughters and the wives of your own faction—
Who hunger for the body, not the soul—
This gallant Prince would have me of his—what?
Household? or shall I call it by that new term
Brought from the sacred East, his harem? Never,
'Tho' you should queen me over all the realms
Held by King Richard, could I stoop so low
As mate with one that holds no love is pure,
No friendship sacred, values neither man
Nor woman save as tools—God help the mark—
To his own unprincely ends. And you, Sheriff,

[*Turning to the Sheriff.*

Who thought to buy your marrying me with gold.
Marriage is of the soul, not of the body.
Win me you cannot, murder me you may,
And all I love, Robin, and all his men,
For I am one with him and his; but while
I breathe Heaven's air, and Heaven looks down on
me,

And smiles at my best meanings, I remain
Mistress of mine own self and mine own soul.

[*Retreating, with bow drawn, to the bush.*

Robin!

Robin. I am here, my arrow on the cord.
He dies who dares to touch thee.

Prince John.

Advance, advance!

What, daunted by a garrulous, arrogant girl!
Seize her and carry her off into my castle.

Sheriff. Thy castle!

Prince John. Said I not, I loved thee, man?
Risk not the love I bear thee for a girl.

Sheriff. Thy castle!

Prince John. See thou thwart me not, thou fool!
When Richard comes he is soft enough to pardon
His brother; but all those that held with him,
Except I plead for them, will hang as high
As Haman.

Sheriff. She is mine. I have thy promise.

Prince John. O ay, she shall be thine—first mine, then
thine.

For she shall spend her honeymoon with me.

Sheriff. Woe to that land shall own thee for her
king!

Prince John. Advance, advance!

[*They advance shouting. The King in armour re-
appears from the wood.*]

King Richard. What shouts are these that ring along
the wood?

Friar Tuck (coming forward). Hail, knight, and help
us. Here is one would clutch

Our pretty Marian for his paramour,
This other, willy-nilly, for his bride.

King Richard. Damsel, is this the truth?

Marian. Ay, noble knight.

Friar Tuck. Ay, and she will not marry till Richard
come.

King Richard (raising his vizor). I am here, and I am he.

Prince John (lowering his, and whispering to his men).

It is not he—his face—tho' very like—

No, no! we have certain news he died in prison.

Make at him, all of you, a traitor coming

In Richard's name—it is not he—not he.

[*The men stand amazed.*]

Friar Tuck (going back to the bush). Robin, shall we
not move?

Robin. It is the King

Who bears all down. Let him alone awhile.

He loves the chivalry of his single arm.

Wait till he blow the horn.

Friar Tuck (coming back). If thou be king,
Be not a fool! Why blowest thou not the horn?

King Richard. I that have turn'd their Moslem crescent
pale—

I blow the horn against this rascal rout!

[*Friar Tuck plucks the horn from him and blows.
Richard dashes alone against the Sheriff and
John's men, and is almost borne down, when
Robin and his men rush in and rescue him.*

King Richard (to Robin Hood). Thou hast saved my
head at the peril of thine own.

Prince John. A horse! a horse! I must away at
once;

I cannot meet his eyes. I go to Nottingham.

Sheriff, thou wilt find me at Nottingham.

[*Exit.*

Sheriff. If anywhere, I shall find thee in hell.

What! go to slay his brother, and make *me*

The monkey that should roast his chestnuts for him!

King Richard. I fear to ask who left us even now.

Robin. I grieve to say it was thy father's son.

Shall I not after him and bring him back?

King Richard. No, let him be. Sheriff of Nottingham,
[*Sheriff kneels.*

I have been away from England all these years,

Heading the holy war against the Moslem,

While thou and others in our kingless realms

Were fighting underhand unholy wars

Against your lawful king.

Sheriff. My liege, Prince John—

King Richard. Say thou no word against my brother
John.

Sheriff. Why then, my liege, I have no word to say.

King Richard (to Robin). My good friend Robin, Earl
of Huntingdon,

For Earl thou art again, hast thou no fetters

For those of thine own band who would betray thee?

Robin. I have ; but these were never worn as yet.
I never found one traitor in my band.

King Richard. Thou art happier than thy king. Put
him in chains. [*They fetter the Sheriff.*

Robin. Look o'er these bonds, my liege.
[*Shows the King the bonds. They talk together.*

King Richard. You, my lord Abbot, you Justiciary,
[*The Abbot and Justiciary kneel.*

I made you Abbot, you Justiciary :

You both are utter traitors to your king.

Justiciary. O my good liege, we did believe you dead.

Robin. Was justice dead because the King was dead ?
Sir Richard paid his monies to the Abbot.

You crost him with a quibble of your law.

King Richard. But on the faith and honour of a king
The land is his again.

Sir Richard. The land ! the land !
I am crazed no longer, so I have the land.

[*Comes out of the litter and kneels.*

God save the King !

King Richard (raising Sir Richard). I thank thee, good
Sir Richard.

Maid Marian.

Marian. Yes, King Richard.

King Richard. Thou wouldst marry
This Sheriff when King Richard came again
Except—

Marian. The King forbad it. True, my liege.

King Richard. How if the King command it ?

Marian. Then, my liege,

If you would marry me with a traitor sheriff,

I fear I might prove traitor with the sheriff.

King Richard. But if the King forbid thy marrying
With Robin, our good Earl of Huntingdon.

Marian. Then will I live for ever in the wild wood.

Robin (coming forward). And I with thee.

King Richard. On nuts and acorns, ha !
Or the King's deer ? Earl, thou when we were hence

Hast broken all our Norman forest laws,
 And scruplest not to flaunt it to our face
 That thou wilt break our forest laws again
 When we are here. Thou art overbold.

Robin.

My king,

I am but the echo of the lips of love.

King Richard. Thou hast risk'd thy life for mine:
 bind these two men.

[*They take the bags from the Abbot and Justiciary,
 and proceed to fetter them.*]

Justiciary. But will the King, then, judge us all
 unheard?

I can defend my cause against the traitors
 Who fain would make me traitor. If the King
 Condemn us without trial, men will call him
 An Eastern tyrant, not an English king.

Abbot. Besides, my liege, these men are outlaws,
 thieves,

They break thy forest laws—nay, by the rood
 They have done far worse—they plunder—yea, ev'n
 bishops,

Yea, ev'n archbishops—if thou side with these,
 Beware, O King, the vengeance of the Church.

Friar Tuck (brandishing his staff). I pray you, my liege,
 let me execute the vengeance of the Church upon them.
 I have a stout crabstick here, which longs to break itself
 across their backs.

Robin. Keep silence, bully friar, before the King.

Friar Tuck. If a cat may look at a king, may not a
 friar speak to one?

King Richard. I have had a year of prison-silence,
 Robin,

And heed him not—the vengeance of the Church!
 Thou shalt pronounce the blessing of the Church
 On those two here, Robin and Marian.

Marian. He is but hedge-priest, Sir King.

King Richard. And thou their Queen.
 Our rebel Abbot then shall join your hands,

Or lose all hope of pardon from us—yet
 Not now, not now—with after-dinner grace.
 Nay, by the dragon of St. George, we shall
 Do some injustice, if you hold us here
 Longer from our own venison. Where is it?
 I scent it in the green leaves of the wood.

Marian. First, king, a boon!

King Richard. Why surely ye are pardon'd.
 Even this brawler of harsh truths—I trust
 Half truths, good friar: ye shall with us to court.
 Then, if ye cannot breathe but woodland air,
 Thou Robin shalt be ranger of this forest,
 And have thy fees, and break the law no more.

Marian. It is not that, my lord.

King Richard. Then what, my lady?

Marian. This is the gala-day of thy return.
 I pray thee, for the moment strike the bonds
 From these three men, and let them dine with us,
 And lie with us among the flowers, and drink—
 Ay, whether it be gall or honey to 'em—
 The king's good health in ale and Malvoisie.

King Richard. By Mahound I could dine with
 Beelzebub!

So now which way to the dinner?

Marian. Past the bank

Of foxglove, then to left by that one yew.
 You see the darkness thro' the lighter leaf.
 But look, who comes?

Enter SAILOR.

Sailor. We heard Sir Richard Lea was here with
 Robin.

O good Sir Richard, I am like the man
 In Holy Writ, who brought his talent back;
 For tho' we touch'd at many pirate ports,
 We ever fail'd to light upon thy son.
 Here is thy gold again. I am sorry for it.

Sir Richard. The gold—my son—my gold, my son,
the land,

Here Abbot, Sheriff—no—no, Robin Hood.

Robin. Sir Richard, let that wait till we have dined.
Are all our guests here?

King Richard. No—there's yet one other:
I will not dine without him. Come from out

[*Enter WALTER LEA.*

'That oak-tree! This young warrior broke his prison
And join'd my banner in the Holy Land,
And cleft the Moslem turban at my side.
My masters, welcome gallant Walter Lea.
Kiss him, Sir Richard—kiss him, my sweet Marian.

Marian. O Walter, Walter, is it thou indeed
Whose ransom was our ruin, whose return
Builds up our house again? I fear I dream.
Here—give me one sharp pinch upon the cheek
'That I may feel thou art no phantom—yet
'Thou art tann'd almost beyond my knowing, brother.

[*They embrace.*

Walter Lea. But thou art fair as ever, my sweet sister.

Sir Richard. Art thou my son?

Walter Lea. I am, good father, I am.

Sir Richard. I had despair'd of thee—that sent me
crazed.

'Thou art worth thy weight in all those marks of gold,
Yea, and the weight of the very land itself,
Down to the inmost centre.

Robin. Walter Lea,

Give me that hand which fought for Richard there.
Embrace me, Marian, and thou, good Kate,

[*To Kate entering.*

Kiss and congratulate me, my good Kate. [*She kisses him.*

Little John. Lo now! lo now!

I have seen thee clasp and kiss a man indeed,
For our brave Robin is a man indeed.

'Then by thine own account thou shouldst be mine.

Kate. Well then, who kisses first?

Little John.

Kiss both together.

[*They kiss each other.*]

Robin. Then all is well. In this full tide of love,
Wave heralds wave: thy match shall follow mine (*to Little John*).

Would there were more—a hundred lovers more
To celebrate this advent of our King!
Our forest games are ended, our free life,
And we must hence to the King's court. I trust
We shall return to the wood. Meanwhile, farewell
Old friends, old patriarch oaks. A thousand winters
Will strip you bare as death, a thousand summers
Robe you life-green again. *You* seem, as it were,
Immortal, and we mortal. How few Junes
Will heat our pulses quicker! How few frosts
Will chill the hearts that beat for Robin Hood!

Marian. And yet I think these oaks at dawn and even,
Or in the balmy breathings of the night,
Will whisper evermore of Robin Hood.
We leave but happy memories to the forest.
We dealt in the wild justice of the woods.
All those poor serfs whom we have served will bless us,
All those pale mouths which we have fed will praise us—
All widows we have holpen pray for us,
Our Lady's blessed shrines throughout the land
Be all the richer for us. You, good friar,
You Much, you Scarlet, you dear Little John,
Your names will cling like ivy to the wood.
And here perhaps a hundred years away
Some hunter in day-dreams or half asleep
Will hear our arrows whizzing overhead,
And catch the winding of a phantom horn.

Robin. And surely these old oaks will murmur thee
Marian along with Robin. I am most happy—
Art thou not mine?—and happy that our King
Is here again, never I trust to roam
So far again, but dwell among his own.
Strike up a stave, my masters, all is well.

SONG WHILE THEY DANCE A COUNTRY DANCE.

Now the King is home again, and nevermore to roam
again,
Now the King is home again, the King will have his own
again,
Home again, home again, and each will have his own
again,
All the birds in merry Sherwood sing and sing him home
again.

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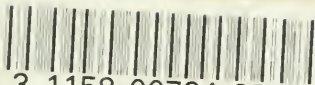
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