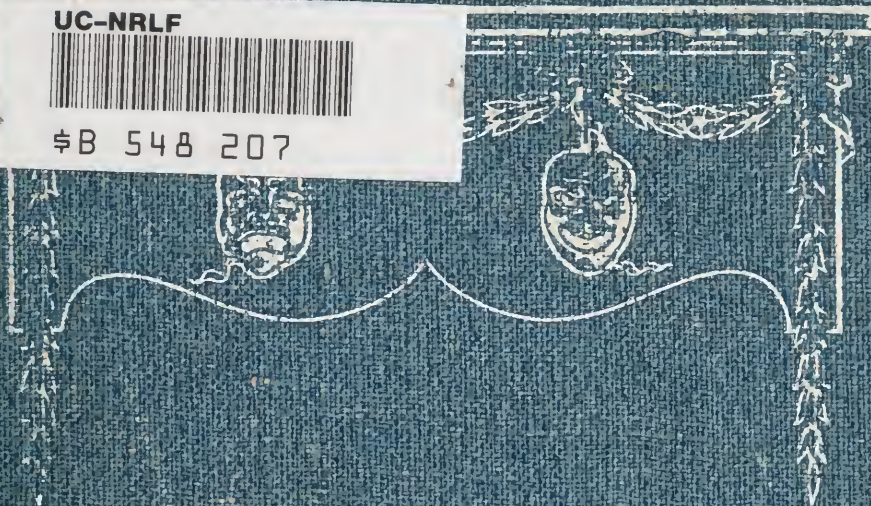


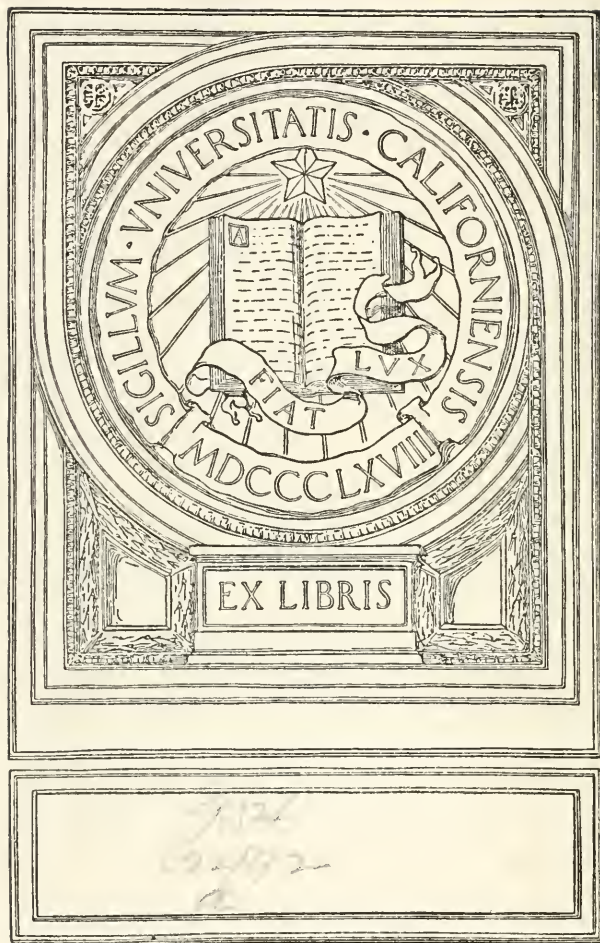
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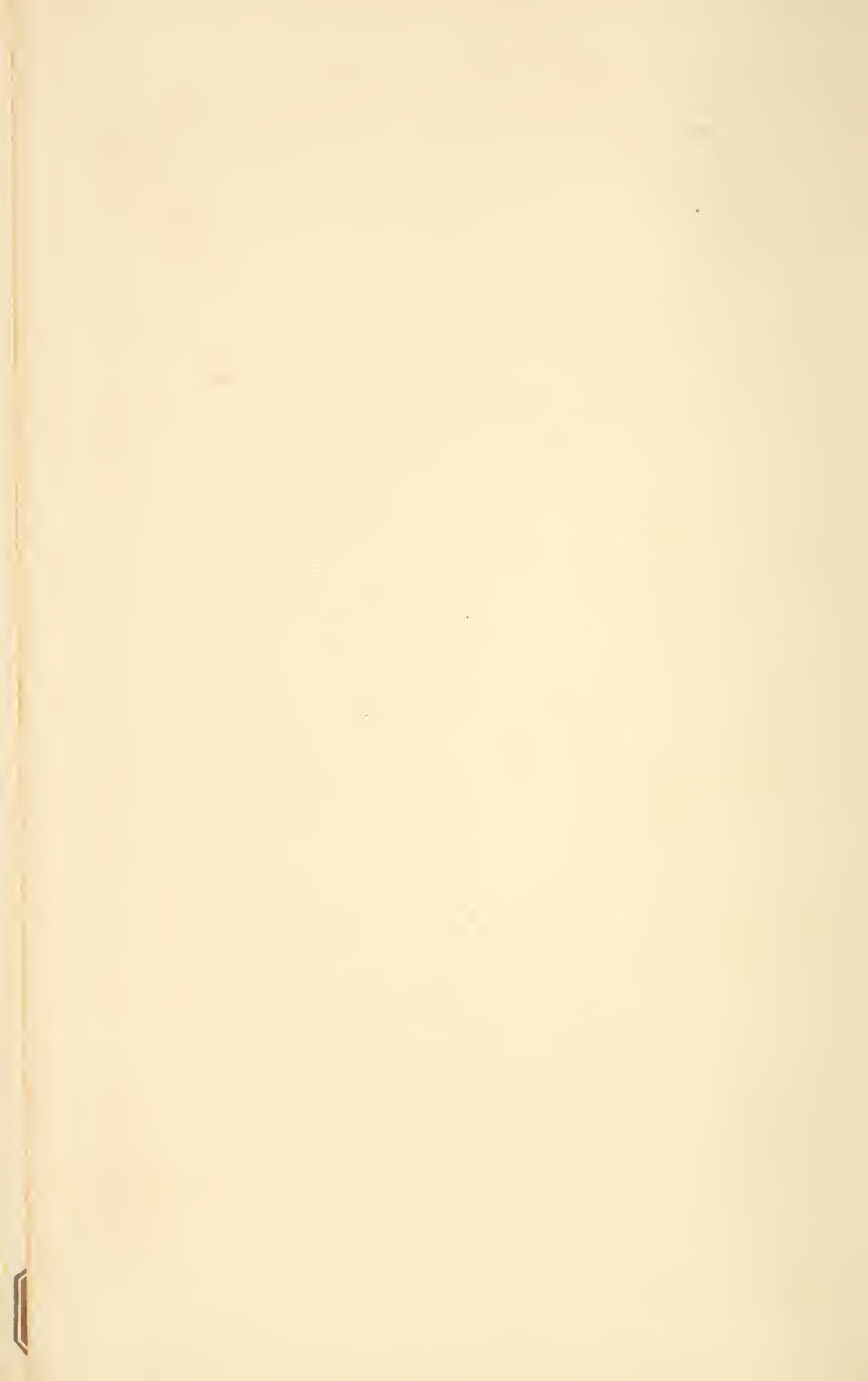
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ABELARD
AND
HELOISE
HÉLÈNE
GINGOLD



P. NOORDHOFF
BOEKH-DITGEVER
GRONINGEN



Abelard and Heloise

BY THE SAME AUTHOR.

THE CHILLINGFIELD CHRONICLES.

A CYCLE OF VERSE.

FLOWERS OF THE FIELD.

DENYSE.

HALF-A-DOZEN TRANSGRESSIONS.

SEVEN STORIES.

ETC., ETC.



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Mrs. E. J. Lytle

Abelard and Heloise

A Tragedy in Five Acts

By

Hélène Gingold

//



London

Greening & Co. Ltd.

1906

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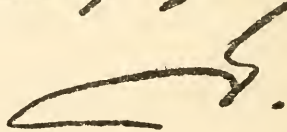
Dedicated
TO
HIS MAJESTY
KING GEORGE
OF THE
HELLENES

M24573

Dear Mr. H. Givings

I had the pleasure
to receive your letter
the other day and thank
you very much as well
as for your intention
to dedicate to me your
play, which I am much
pleased to accept.

Very sincerely yours



Adam Sedgwick 06

PREFATORY

MUSING one day in Père la Chaise, my wandering footsteps unconsciously strayed by the resting-place of Abelard and Heloise. There, in that hallowed spot, rendered beautiful by its eloquence in stone, Death has lost much of his aspect of sorrow and of darkness. There, where all is hushed in solemn silence, broken only by the music of the summer birds' voices, repose the ashes of some of the world's greatest and fairest lights; and, though centuries have passed, surely none were more famous and beautiful than the learned Abelard and the lovely Heloise.

Out in the busy life beyond the confines of this God's Acre, kings and kingdoms rise and fall, men and women struggle through their brief rôles and pass away unnoticed from the ranks of life; but the mutability of existence has no power here, for all remains unchanged through every vicissitude. It is governed by a tranquillity so profound, that even the thrush's gay song of Spring seems to have caught the infection of peace, and chants a gentler and a sadder note.

Dreaming over that past in which Abelard and Heloise were the principal figures, imagination conjured up to me their sufferings and their affliction, and, above all, their great love, which is itself synonymous with sorrow. Christ was "a Man of many sorrows," inasmuch as He loved mightily. "Love," Swedenborg says, "is the life of man." With all his renown as a scholar, the name of Abelard is handed down to posterity as a famous lover ; and Heloise, fair and learned above all women, is celebrated because of her passion.

As history relates it, the story of the pair strikes a fuller, deeper, and more tragic note than that of Romeo and Juliet. The latter were but boy and girl : the former a man and woman of ambitions and striking personality.

I am conscious that many abler hands than mine could have limned the lovers in a far nobler fashion, but I also know that, with all its varied errors and imperfections, none could have felt a more whole-hearted enthusiasm for this work than I.

HÉLÈNE GINGOLD.

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ

ABELARD, *Professor of Logic, Canon of Notre Dame, and Doyen of a Newer School of Thought.*

FULBERT, *Archbishop of Paris, guardian and uncle of Heloise.*

PHILINTUS, *Friend, student, and admirer of Abelard.*

BISHOP ANSELM (*afterwards Archbishop of Paris*), *Professor of antiquated Tenets and Schools.*

ALBERIC, } *Professors and satellites of Anselm ; opposed to the ad-*
LOTULF, } *vanced views of Abelard.*

PRINCE AMADEUS, *betrothed to Heloise.*

FRIAR BONHOMME, *a priest.*

KING OF FRANCE.

HELOISE, *an orphan, ward and niece of Fulbert.*

AGATON, *her waiting-woman.*

MYRTILA, *a friend.*

1st, 2nd, and 3rd Citizens ; 1st, 2nd, and 3rd Students.

Attendants, Priests, Citizens, Students, Musicians, a Singer, Nuns, Sisters, Courtiers, and Pages.

<i>Epoch</i>	.	.	.	12th Century.
<i>Place</i>	.	.	.	Paris.

Act I

Abelard and Heloise

ACT I

SCENE I

Evening. A street in Paris. ARCHBISHOP FULBERT'S house, an imposing building, stands at the corner of the street. Other smaller dwellings adjoin: these are gaily decorated with coloured lanterns, flags, and bunting.

(Enter THREE CITIZENS.)

First Cit. By'r Lady! it seems as though
All Paris hath run mad to-day.

Second Cit. Is it not her usual state?

First Cit. Ay. That be true enow, but, friend,
She does not always symbols hang
Out o' window her mania to proclaim,
For ev'ry stranger eye to ridicule.
Prythee, what mean these flags and lamps?

Third Cit. Hast not heard the news?

First Cit. What news ?

Second Cit. Where hast been
That thou know'st not the learned Abelard
Hath this day outmatched professors all
From the globe's four quarters hailing
To compete with him in logic ?

First Cit. Tell me then of Abelard, for I
But little know of Paris news,
Seeing but an hour since I came
From Marseilles ancient port. That Abelard
Is learned, I have heard ; but 'tis no reason
Why this potent city should be deck'd
As though a conquering hero it acclaimed.

Second Cit. Conquering ! He is more than
conqueror.
The warrior's path is that of ruin and death,
While Abelard's is one of life and hope,
For he the fruit of knowledge ripe hath pluck'd,
And offers it to thee and me to eat.

Third Cit. Learning sits upon his brow
As lightly and becomingly as rosy wreaths
On beauty's forehead borne.

Second Cit. Paris has occasion to be proud
to-day ;
Not ev'ry land doth mother such a son.
Faith ! 'twas rare to see the learned fight
Amongst the sons of wisdom. First came
England's hope, with long and heavy face,
As tho' much learning him had robbed of grace.

His bones were bigger than his wit ; for he
 In sound did much excel, but not in sense.
 Then the German, hairy as an ape,
 Rose heavy to his feet. If he wisdom spake,
 'Twas so disguised, that none did it recognise.
 Then sprang a hot Italian in the breach,
 And volley'd an artillery of sound
 Like unto Vesuvius in eruption—
 All fume and fury. The Greek philosopher
 Was eloquent indeed. Alas ! his words
 Pythagoras had said a thousand years ago.
 After these came Abelard, and like a star
 Of unmatch'd splendour 'midst a galaxy
 Of earthly lamps was he. His eloquence,
 All like a tide, did bear away
 His audience in its flowing course.
 He taught, without appearing that he taught,
 How fair'st life did dwell in highest thought.

First Cit. Come, let's to a tavern !
 'Tis meet we drink to such a health
 As Abelard's !

[*Exeunt* CITIZENS.]

(*Enter* ANSELM, ALBERIC, and LOTULF.)

*Anselm (with bitterness, pointing to the lanterns,
 flags, and bunting).* Look upon these trap-
 pings !

Are they not enow to make a man
 Rave against these empty fools that raise

New worships in the place of ancient gods ?
 The Idol of to-day doth e'er supplant
 The God of yesterday : and to-morrow yet
 Will see the sun of this one set.

Senseless gew-gaws ! Out on them say I !
 Paris in old age hath childish grown,
 Thus to deck herself in folly's rags.

Lotulf (wrathfully). And for what, forsooth !

Anselm. Since Abelard hath taken
 To conjuring with his tongue.

Alberic. 'Tis truly said, most wise Anselm,
 No better than a mountebank is he ;
 He conjures with his words, t'other
 With his hand-trickery.

Lotulf. The praise of fools has turn'd his brain
 And he is drunk with adulation.
 They call him learned ! History ne'er disclosed
 A learned man who fell far short o' fifty,
 So how can Abelard at thirty-eight be wise ?
 Here am I—the youngest of us all—
 Full forty-nine come Martinmas,
 And but late have gain'd a name.

Alberic. Abelard hath a biting tongue. If I
 dar'd,
 I'd tell thee, noble Anselm, what he said.

Anselm (with affected indifference). What said
 he ?

Alberic. When thou did'st controvert his
 heresies,

I heard him utter, with a light, bold laugh,
 Like some gallant, unlike a sober scholar,
 —And I hate him more for his spirit gay—
 “Methinks that Anselm is the more admired
 For wrinkl’d age than wit acquired.”

Anselm. What he now learns I’ve long forgot.

Lotulf. At our rules and doctrines he doth
 mock,

And we, the props and pillars of the schools,
 He dubs as trees of knowledge—barren of fruit.
 He calls us bigots, slaves to rust,
 Whose eyes are blind with ancient dust.

Anselm. His tongue outstrips a racer’s legs ;
 Let him look to it. His present high estate
 Will help make his fall more great.

Alberic. The stars will sooner drop,
 Than this misplaced idol of the hour.

Anselm (warningly). Wait !
 Evil thoughts to deeds are quickly hatch’d,
 And mischief unto fire spreads ; whilst worth—
 Like timid snail doth keep within her doors.
 (*Significantly*) When worldly idols fall and
 break,

The world doth haste to stamp upon the pieces.

Alberic (bitterly). Who can trap a man that
 has no vice,
 Who’s cold and hard in woman’s company,
 Who loves not wine nor sottish fellowship,
 And books prefers to feasting ?

Lotulf. A miracle alone can hurl him down,
And such are never wrought when most
desired.

Alberic. When I do think upon his crowd'd
lectures—

The very air being faint with scholars' breaths
Who come from every part—my hands
Do itch to strike the Canon Abelard.

Lotulf (whispering to ANSELM). Why not bid
The hired assassin do his work ?
Better men than he have gone that way.

Anselm. Tush ! fool !
No punishment 'tis for men like Abelard
To die a speedy death. Let him live
I say, but live in hell's own torments !

Lotulf (sarcastically). My lord, thou art a
preacher justly famed,
Whose pray'rs have, doubtless, weight in
heav'n ;
Mayhap, if thou dost now invoke all hell,
Its sovereign will, with amity, respond !

Anselm. Love is often quench'd by fate,
But nothing can extinguish hate :
Love doth come, and flies away,
But hatred ever comes to stay !

(*Enter THREE MUSICIANS with lutes. They
station themselves beneath one of the windows
of ARCHBISHOP FULBERT'S house.*)

Lotulf. What new madness is this ?

Anselm. There's naught new in madness.

Alberic. What want these fellows ?

Lotulf. It looks as though they want'd
To make music.

Anselm. On the old theme, belike—
In Abelard's honour. Curse Abelard !
His very name doth rouse my bile.

(*Goes to MUSICIANS and addresses them.*)

Knaves, tell me,
To whom would you address your songs ?

First Musician. To the Lady Heloise, an' it
please you, lord.

Anselm. Is it she whom people call
The beautiful and wise ?

First Musician. The same, my lord.

Anselm (sneeringly). The lion roars his love
upon the plains,
The jackass brays his passion to his dear,
The bear doth growl his fond affections' pains,
The crocodile lets fall a loving tear.
Man alone with nature discontent,
Flies to art to give his feelings vent.

Lotulf. There, fellows ! Begin !
And heav'n grant ye a quick labour
So we may have speedy delivery.

First Musician (to his companions). What
shall we sing ?

Second Musician. A dainty song of Abelard's,
That he has titled "Faded Garlands."

Anselm (to LOTULF and ALBERIC, with savage emphasis). Do ye hear them? Everything is Abelard!

The air we breathe is Abelard!
What matters it if Fate be hard?
We still are rich—in Abelard!
If our fortune should be marr'd,
No matter—there is Abelard!
The wisest man, most perfect bard,
Is no one else—save Abelard!

First Musician (sings to the accompaniment of the lute):—

I

O fad'd garlands once so glad,
That 'round your sweetness spread,
I mourn to see your beauty gone,
Your vari'd graces shed.

2

Sleep softly on, till vernal Spring
Shall wake the silent earth,
And rosy days and tender show'rs
Shall give your seedlings birth.

3

When love is fad'd like the rose,
And all its perfume shed,
O! would that Spring the charm possess'd
To wake it from the dead.

(At the finish of the song HELOISE appears at one of the casements. ANSELM, LOTULF, and ALBERIC watch her narrowly. ANSELM especially, who indulges in a gesture of triumph.)

Heloise (to the MUSICIANS). A melancholy air,
my friends, which yet
Doth meet my present mood. Something
In the words does haunt me.
Pray ye, who did author it?

Second Musician. 'Tis from the pen of Canon
Abelard, lady.

Heloise (musingly). Abelard! Abelard!
I'll not forget the name. Thanks, my friends,
Good-night, and thanks, and thanks again

[Closes the casement and retires.]

Third Musician (enthusiastically). That smile
was worth a gold piece.

Second Musician. Wert a married man,
 thou'dst find
 That Beauty's smiles do feed no hungry mouths.

(AGATON comes out of the house and gives the
 MUSICIANS money.)

Agaton. My mistress sends you this, good
 sirs,
 In recognition of your music sweet.

[*Re-enters house.*]

First Musician. My friends, it is not every-
 where
 One finds a lady kind as fair.

[*Exeunt MUSICIANS.*]

Anselm (exultantly). Did ye mark fair Heloise ?

Alberic. Did I mark the sun, the moon, the
 stars ?

Who could help but mark her ? Nay, she
 Does on others leave her mark, e'en
 Upon this toughen'd heart of mine.

Anselm. The instrument of our revenge I see
 in Heloise.

Old Fulbert prouder is of his fair niece's
 learning

Than of all her charms. To him
 Will I speak of Abelard's great wisdom,

And so dilate upon his rare attainments,
That—I know the fond old prelate well—
No peace will he enjoy till Heloise
By Abelard is school'd.

Alberic. In vain ye set a woman's trap for
Abelard ;
Eyes and hearts have wept and throb'd for him
in vain.

By'r Lady, he's the coldest man in France.

Anselm. So may we all be, until we meet—
A Heloise !

Lotulf. She is betrothed to Prince Amadeus.

Anselm. The better for our purpose. For he,
'Tis said, doth love her dearer than his soul.
From this small spark by me ignited
A mighty flame shall burst.

Alberic. Most excellent cunning ! I see the
drift of 't.

Anselm. The drift will prove an avalanche
to Abelard.

I know those icy scholars ; they are flames
When love at last attacks them. Unconcealed
wrath

Is the poniard of dull fools : did not Judas
With the semblance of true love, commit
The deadliest act of treachery ?

But come ! I would mature my plan,
To set my gin and snare my man.

[*Exeunt* ANSELM, ALBERIC, and LOTULF.]

(Enter ABELARD and PHILINTUS running.)

Abelard. Are we safe now ?
By my faith ! the people are exceeding kind ;
But such applause and zeal would sure entail
A new cloak every time we met.

(ABELARD *laughingly looks at his cloak, which has been torn in the frantic enthusiasm of the crowd for their favourite scholar.*)

Ambition is ne'er content until she lies
Gasping and half-stifled by the crowd's caresses ;
Then all ungrateful cries, as I do now,
" What, after all, are these whose praise
I so eagerly and long have laboured for ? "
Why, Philintus, there's not one among the
mob

Who fathers a thought beyond a tavern !
But tell me, are we safe ?

Philintus. For awhile
We have escaped thy friendly persecutors ;
But they'll be here anon, I warrant.
I'faith, that was a pretty maid who came
Foremost in the crowd to kiss thee.

Abelard. I did not mark her, neither did I wish
Her forward kisses.

Philintus. I would have had them willingly.

Abelard. Would that thou could'st be
My proxy in these matters !

Philintus. 'Tis passing strange that thou dost
write

Such tender verse on love and beauty
And yet hath ne'er a mistress.

Abelard (with enthusiasm). Oh ! I have a mis-
tress, but she lives in dreams ;
At night she comes when all the earth is
still,

And dewy freshness fills the moonlit air
With dim and mystic imagery.
When the wandering breezes sigh, I learn
The language of another world than ours ;
Then it is my mistress comes to me.

She is Goddess of the air, and Liberty
Hath father'd her. Her voice doth thrill my
soul,

And hand in hand we speed thro' space,
Her loveliness outshining all the stars,
Who pale with envy at the sight of her,
Unto those realms of fancy where we fly.
We leave behind the tyranny of power ;
The weakness and the wickedness of kings,
States corrupt, the sensual sloth of men
Who fear to rise against the law of servitude,
Because, forsooth, their sires suffer'd it. There,
temporal

Laws no power have to mar the progress of such
thought,

Nor turn the minds and frames of men

To be mere base machinery for the State's advantage,

And not the people's welfare !

Philintus. And her name ?

Abelard. Her name is Freedom !

Philintus. Give me a live woman, say I,
And the devil take the phantoms
Who destroy men's rest.

(Noise without of a clamouring crowd in the distance.)

Hear'st thou the noisy tongue of Fame ?

Abelard (wearily). Too well ;

My heart misgives me. I am overwrought
To-night.

Philintus. What ails thee ?

Abelard (with a shiver). Ugh ! Were I a gude
wife old

I would now tell thee that I stood
Upon a spot where evil bod'd me.

Philintus. A bumper of rich Burgundy
Will drive these student fits away.

I warn'd thee how it would be when
Thy books, 'fore all things, took precedence.

Abelard. A warning's like the plague,
We only feel it when we catch it !

(Hubbub of the crowd coming nearer and nearer.)

Abelard. The hunters are upon us,
Where shall we escape ?

(*Enter FULBERT and ANSELM.*)

Anselm. Abelard's the finest scholar of them
all !

(*Sees ABELARD.*)

Why, as I live, there stands the substance
Of my commendation ! There's fate in some
encounters !

(*To ABELARD*) Graciously met ! Two such learned
men

Must know each other. This, Archbishop Ful-
bert,

Is he of whom I've spoken, brilliant Abelard.

Fulbert. Your fame has long preced'd
The graces of your person, Canon Abelard.
I hear the voice of Paris echoing thy praise,
Like true echo, a thousand times again.

(*Clamour of crowd coming nearer.*)

Abelard. My lord,
I am beholden to your graciousness
For your kindly words. But, truth to tell,
I am somewhat weary, and fain would fly

From the crowd's embracement. As you came
 Upon us, my friend and I were planning
 An escape.

Anselm. There's fate, I know, there's fate in
 this ;

For the reverend Fulbert is alike renown'd
 For hospitality and for virtue.

Therefore, methinks, I read him right
 When I do say he fain would offer you
 The shelter of his friendly roof until
 The crowd is past.

Fulbert. Nay, good friend, surely this is wel-
 come scant

To offer this great scholar. Not alone
 Until the crowd is past, but longer far
 Do I entreat his goodly company.

Accept an old man's welcome, Abelard ;
 It lieth more at heart than voluble expression.

Anselm (aside). Men contrive, but chance
 determines all !

(FULBERT goes to the house door, and fumbles
 at the key in the door.)

Fulbert. Hands may tremble when we're old,
 But our hearts beat steadier for that.

(Opens the door.)

Enter, great scholar,
 And welcome from to-night be you for ever.

(All enter the house but PHILINTUS, who stands in the street watching with a whimsical expression the coming rush and roar of the crowd. Enter CITIZENS and STUDENTS shouting and clamouring.)

First Cit. Whither hath Abelard gone ?

Second Cit. I saw him pass this way. *(Points in one direction.)*

Third Cit. I saw him pass that way. *(Points in another direction.)*

Second Cit. Dog, you lie !

Third Cit. What ! To my face !

(They fight. The crowd interferes, and a mêlée ensues.)

Philintus. Fists fight ; throats shout ; tongues wag ;

Ye hunt the great, as ye would the stag !

[Exit into FULBERT'S house.]

SCENE 2

A room in FULBERT'S house.

(HELOISE and MYRTILA seated together. HELOISE is abstractedly turning over the leaves of a rich missal. MYRTILA is diligently sewing at an altar cloth.)

Myrtila. Here dost thou in meditation sit,
my Heloise,

As though a sepulchre had ope'd to enfold thee
 In lieu the arms of such a courtly gallant
 As Prince Amadeus. Full many a maid
 Would give her eyes for such a lover.

Heloise. I would give my eyes
 If I could not see him.

Myrtila. But thy uncle loves and favours him.

Heloise. If Heloise were her uncle, and her
 uncle Heloise,

Then this match would rejoice her.

Myrtila. Thou dost not surely hate him ?

Heloise. Hate ! Nay, I hate him not ;
 But then I do not love him.

Myrtila (*biting off a thread and shaking
 her head wisely*). One need not deeply
 love to wisely wed.

Heloise. What, Mignon ! dar'st prate of wed-
 ding lacking love,

When it alone should make one wed ?

Myrtila (*sewing with assumed assiduity, wisely
 as before*). Many men and women think
 they love, then wed,

And buy dear pleasure for a month
 At the price of life's discomfort.

Heloise. Those rules and methods sway thee
 In which thy gentle mother train'd thee.
 Alas ! I never knew such hallow'd love,
 For, when I came, my mother died ;
 Then kindly Fulbert foster'd me.

He trained me like a darling son ;
 For thou did'st sew when I read Greek,
 And thou did'st play when I was set
 To hold my own 'midst Latin scholars.
 When thou did'st gossip with fair friends,
 Sage men were my companions ;
 And in their weighty converse I forgot
 The levity of youth.

Myrtila. Leave wisdom to the aged !
 Why should'st thou so sweet and fair
 Be old before thy time ? I pray thee
 Wed the Prince who loves thee so.
 'Twill make thy Uncle Fulbert glad,
 And fill thy friend with proudest joy.

Heloise. I love not Amadeus. But affection
 strong
 Binds me to my kinsman Fulbert.

Myrtila. If thou lov'st no other man,
 Why not wed the Prince ? He's young,
 He's handsome, opulent, and noble.

Heloise. Come, sit beside, and I will tell thee.

(MYRTILA takes a stool and sits at the feet of
 HELOISE.)

Heloise. I have dream'd of a vision lov'r,
 Which makes me shun those temporal.
 He stands alone, and soars above the earth
 With high-erect'd thoughts beyond his time.
 His lofty truths, like heaven's thunder,

Seem to shake the world, and wake
 The drowsy sluggard from his idle rest
 To nobler aims. No line of ancestry he claims,
 For, like a god, he doth create,
 And not by chance of birth inherit.
 Yea ! I have dreamed of him, Myrtilla,
 Until my lips have called on him to come,
 And with a kiss he hath unseal'd my soul,
 Which, flutt'ring like a bird set free,
 Hath gone to him for ever.

Myrtilla. Let not a dream
 With false and flitting images
 Cloud thy life with melancholy.
 I beseech thee—cast dreams to shadowland
 From whence they came, and wed the Prince.

Heloise. I fain would please my good old
 guardian
 E'en against my own desires.

Myrtilla. I'll take thy half-consent, and make
 it whole.
 When a woman says "Mayhap," she meaneth
 "Aye."

Princess Heloise ! how fine it sounds !
 Here comes the Prince !

[*Exit.*

(*Enter* PRINCE AMADEUS.)

Amadeus. Would that I knew the pensive
 cloak of thought

That now enwraps thee was of a colour
Most harmonious to my wish ?

Heloise. After all that I have said against
it,

Think you I still can bring you happiness ?

Amadeus (passionately). Oh, Heloise ! I dream
of thee as shipwreck'd mariners
Do think upon a far-off golden shore !
Thou art my sole idea of happiness.
My highest hopes—ambitions—joys—
Do bear one corporeal form in thee.
There were none fair, till thou did'st come ;
None were gracious, till thou did'st smile ;
There was no music, till thy voice
Creat'd by its harmony another world for me.
Through sickness, sorrow, and misfortune,
Through wrinkl'd age, untoward circumstance,
Through every mood—so it be thine—
Will I cherish thee with constancy.
Nay, so deep my love will be,
Response at last must come from thee.

Heloise (giving her hand to AMADEUS). Not so
hard of soul am I, my Prince,
That I unmov'd can listen to your words.
Here is my hand. My heart, mayhap,
Will follow it in time. A woman's nature
Is a citadel that surrenders oft to kindness.

Amadeus. For so much graciousness,
Loving thee as I do, I thank thee.

(Tumult without of the crowd, who shout " Long live Abelard ! " " Long live Abelard ! ")

Heloise. Abelard ! Abelard ! Who is Abelard ?

To-night, when your musicians play'd,
They told me that the verse and melody
Both were writ by one Abelard !

Amadeus. Abelard hath the greatest name
For learning in all France. Hast never heard
Of him before ?

Heloise. You forget that I but lately come
From Rome. In convents, learned living men
Give place to the wiser dead.

Is Abelard an old and sour'd man ?
'Tis strange that wisdom's fairest gifts
Do fall upon the plainest laps !

Amadeus. Women call him handsome.
But what do women know of looks ?
They'll measure beauty by the yard,
And if a man is longer than a pole
" He's finely built," and if he's squat
And fat, they'll have it he is strong ;
A man need only have a face,
For women to accord him grace.

(Enter FULBERT, followed by ABELARD, ANSELM, and PHILINTUS. At the sight of ABELARD, HELOISE becomes transfixed, then starts, and cries.)

Heloise. My dream lover !

Fulbert (garrulously). This is my niece, most
learned Abelard ;

Our sudden coming in hath startl'd her.

All the treasures of my house I have shown
you

Save this, but for the last reserved

The greatest and the best.

Abelard (aside to PHILINTUS). Where is my
earthly logic now

Before this piece of heavenly work divine ?

She seems to throw a stream of light around,

Which makes us all but heavy clay com-
par'd.

(Aloud to HELOISE). Meseems

That I have look'd upon your face ere
now,

But not in life. In some great picture

Limm'd by master hand, when his art

Has sought a model fit in Paradise !

Fulbert (complacently). Abelard hath most
delicate civility.

Did ye hear the pretty compliment he made ?

Lord ! that I my manners should forget

In praising of another ! Monsignor Abelard !

Be pleased to know Prince Amadeus, betrothed

To Heloise. Methinks, it is but right

That learning great and high nobility

Should go hand-in-hand in amity.

(ABELARD *and* AMADEUS *shake hands*: ABELARD *with frank kindness of manner*, AMADEUS *with ill-concealed annoyance*.)

Fulbert. Nor must I neglect Messire Philintus,

The loyal friend of Canon Abelard.

Heloise. You are welcome, sir.

Anselm (*aside, watching ABELARD, who regards HELOISE with wonder and admiration*).

The victory is ours!

The iceberg melts already!

Fulbert. Silence seals thy lips to Abelard, sweet niece.

Speak to him; be not afraid, altho'

He is the noblest son of France.

Heloise (*to ABELARD, falteringly*). I bid you welcome, Monseigneur,

Not in words alone, but with my heart,

For it seems as if I too had seen

Your face and heard your voice before—in dreams.

Anselm (*aside*). Why need Lucifer set traps,
When mortals aye pursue his ways without?

Amadeus (*fumingly to FULBERT*). Heloise appears

Much taken with this scholar.

I like it not.

Fulbert (*warningly*). Prince! Prince!
Harbour not the serpent Jealousy. Her venom

Paints all actions black, and would
Befoul an angel's deeds with poison.

Amadeus. Too little jealousy
Fares as ill as too much !

Anselm (who has been listening, with a covert smile). I entreat your pardon,
But by chance I overheard the subject
Of your discourse. Prince, I swear to you
That Abelard to love is inaccessible :
He hates all womankind.

(Aside) To hate all women doth keep no
man
From loving one !

Fulbert (eagerly to ANSELM). Think'st thou,
my friend,
That Abelard would teach my Heloise ?
There's much of Greek and Latin that
I still would have her learn. Thou dost not
answer.

Anselm. 'Tis because I think for thee ;
Abelard's time is greatly taken up.

(Aside) I know the world. Men seek the more
To reach the thing that is withheld.

Fulbert. Shall I speak to him ?
If I ask, mayhap I'll court refusal.

Anselm. If he refuse thee, court him till he
yields.

Fulbert. I thank thee, Anselm, for thy counsel ;
'Twas a goodly thought from a pious man.

(Goes to ABELARD, who is conversing with
HELOISE.)

Monsieur Abelard !

I have one fond desire, which, if you
Accord, will make me glad indeed.

Abelard. Noble Fulbert, your request
Is granted ere 'tis utter'd.

Philintus. Is not that rashly spoken ?

Fulbert. Learned Abelard, I fain
Would have my niece instruct'd by you.
Wil't teach her ?

Abelard (hesitatingly). I teach but men.
(*Aside*) I must fight with this request.
Already she has taught me that
My heart is far too apt a pupil
In the school of love !

Anselm (tentatively). Methought it would
be so !

Abelard doth think that womenkind
Are wayward, pliable, and easy ; with no soul
And no stability to learn as men have.
Yet Socrates did say that females are
A sex no way inferior to ours
Save in strength corporal.

Abelard. Think me not so churlish ;
I have no thought of womenkind but
Would grace the heart of any man.

Heloise. Refuse not then, I pray,
To count me amongst the humblest
Of your happy scholars.

Abelard (aside). Vain to fly, when passion's
snares
Have seized upon us unawares.

Fulbert. Can you refuse the darling wish
Of an old man's heart ?

Abelard. The lips of revered age
Scarce ever ask in vain.

Amadeus (interposing with some heat). To
what doth all this learning tend,
And what needs Heloise with more of 't ?

Philintus (aside to ABELARD). There's some-
thing wrong in all this,
And, womanlike, I can no reason give,
But that I like it not for thee, my Abelard.
Forego this scholar, she's too fair. Say "Nay,"
And make an end on 't.

Abelard (aside). I'm torn between ye all.
How can I harsh refuse a simple boon
That kind old man and his fair niece
Have ask'd of me ?

Amadeus (angrily). Heloise shall learn no
more.
I will not brook it.

Heloise. Prince !
It is not your right, as yet,
To sway or rule my will.

Anselm (gleefully, aside). A quarrel already!
 And Abelard the subject! What news
 For Lotulf and for Alberic.
 Love and hate are plants that grow
 Beyond our power, ere we know.

(Hubbub of crowd outside the house shouting, "Long live Abelard, the elegant scholar!" A woman's voice is heard above the rest, screaming, "Love to the handsome Abelard!" which is followed by laughter and cheers from the mob.)

Amadeus (with suppressed fury, aside). Let
 me but hear one word
 Save that used in common courtesy,
 And I will slay this half-fledg'd priest.

Fulbert (rubbing his hands with delight, goes to the casement and opens it wide; the cries of the crowd are vociferous). This is balsam
 to my mind,
 To feel that men do justly value wisdom.

Philintus (to ABELARD). Thou should'st speak
 to them,
 For thou alone canst calm the storm
 Which thou hast call'd to life.

(Crowd without, "Long live great Abelard!"
"Abelard!" "Abelard!" FULBERT

approaches ABELARD and leads him to the casement, wherefrom his appearance is hailed with enthusiasm.)

Abelard (to the crowd). Friends ! for this, your
gracious welcome,
I would in truth a niggard be
To close my thanks within my breast
As misers do their gold. Yet, I would plead
That I am weary with the work
Of many days and nights unslept : and thus
Reminding ye there's no success without its
hitch,
Fain would I seek repose.

A Voice in the crowd. A mob is plaguey ; like
the plague,
'Twill stick until some antidote
Disperses it. We want no windy speech,
But something tunefully extemporised.

(The crowd shouts "Hurrah !" "Hurrah !"
and the speaker's suggestion is received with
every demonstration of approval.)

Philintus. Give them a verse or two
On knowledge.

Abelard. 'Tis a subject
Hard to assail and difficult to dismiss.

Amadeus (*contemptuously*). Then speak of
wars

And mighty deeds of prowess.

Abelard. What! I?

Who ne'er slew man yet

By word o' mouth or courtly point of sword!

Fulbert. A few, but chosen, words

On wisdom will suffice.

Abelard. A cataract, my lord,

Will not be dammed by hazel wood;

A noble theme requires a noble treatment,

Or else 'tis dammed by lukewarm handling.

Anselm (*with hypocritical unction*). Speak of
the Universal Mother!

Abelard. The Earth?

Anselm. Nay. The Church.

Abelard (*aside*). 'Tis all the same;

Both have a maw insatiable.

Heloise. Let your theme be

That which delights the heart of every man—

Love, and his Native Land.

(ABELARD, *inspired by HELOISE, stands before the open casement and declaims the following; and although his tones sometimes rise to a pitch of enthusiasm, the manner of his recital shows that it is extempore.*)

I

My Native Land, where Nature greets the eye
With mount and valley emerald green and fair ;
Where Beauty's charms live not to fade and die,
But reign supreme in lasting triumph there.

2

Bless'd clime ! far greater in thy aspect mild
Than all the warlike cities of the earth,
Thou teachest mankind as a simple child,
The calm, but great nobility of worth.

3

The alien hand shall never blight that land
Which Freedom claims entirely as her own ;
There Love and Gladness wander hand in hand,
There sway of sceptr'd tyrant is unknown.

4

Farewell awhile ! Now Duty bids me hence,
But aye this thought is cherish'd in my breast ;
That for my long, long labour's recompense,
My dust within my native earth shall rest !

*(The crowds shout and hurrah, and HELOISE
impulsively darts forward and kisses*

ABELARD'S *hand*. PRINCE AMADEUS, *with a gesture of anger, half-draws his sword and would rush at ABELARD, but is restrained by ANSELM, who cautiously withholds him.*)

Anselm (meaningly). Patience, patience,
Prince !

There is a time for everything,
And your time is—not yet !

Act II

ACT II

SCENE I

Hall in ANSELM'S house (window overlooking garden).

(ANSELM, LOTULF, and ALBERIC meeting.)

Anselm. Well met, good friends !
There's excellent sport afoot, e'en for us
Who do not hunting go.

Lotulf. Say'st thou
That the lion is already caught ?

Anselm. I do say it.

Alberic. But 'tis so quickly done—
It cannot be of a surety.

Anselm. Who ever lov'd with passion's fire
That lov'd not at first sight ? I tell thee
That he is so bound with love, his very silence
Speaks it. Oh ! Abelard is caught.

Alberic. How canst thou believe a sign ?
Who never loved, can never tell
The emblems of true passion.

Anselm. How dost thou know I never lov'd ?
 Think not because chill age imparts
 Dullness to eye and speech, time was not
 When youth did warm my blood
 With lover's ardour.

Lotulf. Silence is but an ashen proof
 Of a burning fire.

Anselm (contemptuously). There are other
 tokens.

He's quitted Aristotle, and doth sweetly talk
 On Ovid's art of Love. Sage Socrates
 Is banished for light Apollo. Nor is this all.
 Yon little casement looks into old Fulbert's
 garden ;

There, unseen, I watch the master and his pupil,
 The famous Abelard and the fair Heloise.
 I see his frame oft shake in sighs
 As though Vesuvius were in labour
 And troubl'd to be delivered of its lava.

Lotulf. Let us too watch and listen.
 Old Fulbert's garden is so begirt
 With shrubs and trees and flowered banks,
 'Twould no labour be to hide and hearken
 To their discourse. If it be learned,
 We can leave them ; be it amorous,
 Straightway let us to old Fulbert.

Alberic. Like the Archangel Gabriel. And
 tell him
 Drive this Adam from his Eve and Eden.

Then Amadeus
 Will rise in arms against the wolf,
 Who in lamb-like guise did come
 To steal away his dear !

Anselm. Come then and watch
 This fire I have light'd ; this love
 Shall bring us our revenge.

SCENE 2

A part of ARCHBISHOP FULBERT'S garden, houses on one side. At the bottom flows a stream of the Seine, on whose silvery breast is scattered water-lilies. The fruit blossoms deck the trees in rich profusion, and the very air seems redolent with the breath of early summer. ABELARD, holding a book, is seated on a rustic bench, and HELOISE, a few paces off, also has a volume in her hands. Their attitudes are those of master and pupil. During the opening lines FULBERT, ANSELM, LOTULF, and ALBERIC come out of the house and hide behind the trees.

Abelard (as though reading from his volume).
 My heart was like the deep unfathom'd sea
 Which thine eyes alone have sounded.

Heloise (also as though reading). My love was
 pent up like a pearl

Within a shell which none could ope.
 But lo ! the music of thy voice
 Did cause it to uncloze.

Abelard. Is that what Catullus says ?
 Methinks that you have read it wrongly.

Heloise (hastily). Not I, master.

Abelard (continuing). Suns may set and rise
 again,
 But once this too brief life is o'er,
 We sleep thro' one perpetual night.

*(Closes his book, and speaks as though from
 memory.)*

Therefore love me, for I love thee,
 And short is our time for joy
 On earth here below.

Heloise. Is that in the book ?
 Methinks—methinks—— *(Pauses confusedly.)*

Abelard. What think you, gentle scholar ?

*Heloise (seating herself on the trunk of a
 fallen tree).* No matter, Monseigneur,
 my thoughts are birds ;
 They flutter to my heart and fly away again.

*Abelard (reopens his book, and repeats as though
 reading therefrom).* Sweet maid ! thy pure
 and thoughtful eyes
 Have caught the colour from the skies.
 O surely in some other land
 Than this I must have touched that hand

And heard thy golden voice repeat
The light'st things to make them sweet.
Were I the flow'rs by thy side,
To die near thee would be my pride.

Heloise. Alas! You know the book so well,
I cannot follow you so fast. But show me
Where this verse is writ! My book
Doth hold it not.

(*Goes over to ABELARD.*)

Abelard (closing the book with vehemence). Here,
'tis written here, within my breast,
Upon that book which is my heart alone.
Now bid me hence, and quit your sight,
And change joy's day to woe of night.

Heloise. Were I to bid you hence,
I'd send myself as well. You hold
The better part of me, and what remains
Is but the husk and shell of Heloise.

Go from me,
And all that's me goes with you.

(*Drawn by a mutual and irresistible impulse,
they embrace. As this takes place, ANSELM
stealthily leads FULBERT from the em-
brasure of the trees. ALBERIC and LOTULF
follow them.*)

Fulbert (with tremulous indignation). Oh! that
mine eyes had borne false witness!

Oh! that my senses had, with madness'
 hues,
 Paint'd this scene 'fore my disorder'd brain,
 Taking all truth's colours, and yet been perjurd!
 Noble Anselm, bear with me, and ye, revered
 sirs,
 That I did first, with scornful disbelief,
 Deny your tale of shame. O Love! O Trust!
 Ye are but gods of clay—and dust.

Anselm (aside to FULBERT). Send him hence,
 but thy dignity uphold;
 'Tis only in affliction that characters of worth
 Can show they're finer dust than common potters'
 earth!

*Lotulf (with the object of working up FULBERT'S
 passion).* You are deeply injur'd, noble
 Fulbert;
 Therefore show no mercy. Pity would be weak-
 ness.

Alberic (with the same object in view). Would
 that we were younger spirits all,
 That one of us might challenge Abelard,
 And kill him for his foul deceit.

*(The lovers have hitherto been unaware of their
 intruders, enwrapped as they are by the
 communion of their first love. FULBERT,
 with stern and forbidding countenance, comes
 between them.)*

Fulbert. Oh! that deceit,
 Damnable, corrupt, and vile deceit, should
 hide

Beneath such seeming virtue! Where is chastity
 If Heloise be false? And where is truth
 When Abelard doth lie? How true it is
 That deadliest poisons hidden lurk
 Within the sweetest guise. O Virtue! I have
 followed

In thy footsteps throughout life
 To find thee but a shade! Bear with me,
 Good Anselm; I am an old man, and a weak,
 And things now wreck my soul that ne'er
 Before had roused my spirit.

(*To ABELARD*) Get thee from my sight, false
 Abelard!

I'll never hear thy name again but I
 Will curse it. When men shall praise thy
 learning,

I'll think of it as devil's wiles, with which
 He hath invest'd thee so thou
 Should'st better work in his black service.

(*To HELOISE*) Wanton maid!
 Get thee to thy chamber; I'll follow thee
 anon!

Abelard. Hold, old man!
 In all this hapless matter she is innocent.
 Mine alone the fault, if fault it be;
 Mine the guilt, if there be guilt in love.

And if you be not like those judges false,
 Who, sway'd by pow'r, fear, or thought of gain,
 Maim and mangle laws of God and man,
 Twisting even an angel's deed to crime
 For some foul purpose damn'd—reproach thy-
 self,

Or me, or Nature, but not sweet Heloise.
 Are scholars less than men, that they
 Should fail to love earth's best creat'd things ?
 Repress it, stunt it, as ye will,
 But Nature will be nature still.

Anselm (aside to FULBERT). How craftily he
 speaks !

His tongue would make thee out to be
 As full of guilt and guile as he.

Fulbert. But there is truth in what he says,
 For I besought him teach my niece.
 (To ABELARD) In leaving here, wilt promise
 me

To atone in part for thy transgression ?

Abelard (moodily). What would you have ?

Fulbert. Vow to me to see no more
 This maid, who is betroth'd unto another.

Abelard. Bid me to see the sun no more
 Waking from his nightly sleep
 To don his mantle gold of day.
 Bid me to close mine eyes unto the stars,
 Whose tender glances pity suffering earth
 Burning with sorrow's fever.

Bid me close mine eyes to all the world
And its so-call'd joys, but not
To her who hath aroused my heart
From its dull sleep. Old man ! thou know'st not
What thou hast ask'd of me ! E'en death
Will not close out the form of my belov'd.
My closing eyes would still behold her
As a dying Eastern pictures paradise ;
And in the sleep of death that follows,
My dream would still be—Heloise !

Heloise. Yesterday I dar'd not utter
The words that must be said to-day.
When thou wert here, an honour'd guest,
I fear'd to say how dear I held thee,
Lest thou should'st lightly prize
A love that quickly came. But now,
Since cruel circumstance hath changed her face
And frowns on us : go with these words
In thine ears and heart. I love thee, Abelard !
With all my soul's most deep, most true,
Most earnest tenderness, I love thee !

Fulbert (seizing HELOISE roughly). Out upon
thee !
Thou speak'st like a strumpet, not a maid ;
Begone to thy chamber ! Go !

Heloise. God be with thee, sweet Abelard !

[*Exit.*

Fulbert (furiously, to ABELARD). Will you
begone ?

Anselm. In all the annals of outrag'd hos-
pitality,
None can find so black a crime as this.
I grieve to see such villainy
'Neath the surface of such learning !

Lotulf. Alas ! To think a man so gifted
Should be so base !

Alberic. I mourn to see a man so high
Descend so low.

Abelard. Snarl, ye hounds ! Voice was given
ye
To use it as ye do. I know ye passing well.
Ye, whose tongues distil fine honey,
Gather venom in your hearts, like snakes,
And disgorge it when ye list !
I know your mock humility, your act'd lies,
Your vain hypocrisy. Ye wend your ways
In luxury and free indulgences,
Whilst from your pulpits preach to men
On Temperance. Your Church is like a palace,
The while pale Want without doth starve.
I know ye passing well ! And if the State
Be built upon such crumbling earth as ye,
Woe unto the land whose groundwork is so
rotten,
And woe unto the king that leans on ye !
Ye censure me for loving, but 'tis not that
Which hath arous'd the malice in your breasts.
Virtue's your pretext, but your cause is spite.

Many tongues rank envy speaks :
Winds howl around the highest peaks !

[*Exit.*

Alberic. A dangerous man !

Lotulf. A dangerous man !
Full to bursting of vague threat'nings
Like a rumbling thunder-cloud.

Alberic. Look to your niece, noble Fulbert ;
She'll not be safe while he's about.

Lotulf. She'll be safe
When she is wed.

Anselm. Tush ! fool ! 'Tis the captive bird
Most longs to fly. Prithee, good Fulbert,
Wilt tell the Prince of Canon Abelard's
misdeed ?

Fulbert. No word of it, I pray ye, friends,
An' ye do love me. Blood would come on 't,
And all the world would hear the tale,
And, outwardly deploring, relish the scandal.

Anselm. Lotulf, Alberic, ye hear what our
good bishop says ?
Wilt swear not to prate of this to any ?

Lotulf. }
Alberic. } We swear !

Fulbert. I thank you heartily.
I do beseech ye dine with me this day,
For I would your counsel take
Of my niece's marriage. I am much distraught,
But, nathless, the cruel reason on 't

Will urge me to enforce obedience
To my behests.

Anselm. Enforc'd obedience never yet
Did teach a lover to forget.

[*Exit omnes.*]

SCENE 3

*A street. The exterior of FULBERT'S house as in
ACT I, SCENE I.*

(*Enter ABELARD and PHILINTUS.*)

Philintus. Prythee, Abelard,
Come here no more. 'Tis a spot
Thou should'st avoid like swift contagion ;
'Twas here thou first did'st catch love's fever.

Abelard. Hast thou not heard that criminals
Are ever drawn into the spot where first
Their hands with blood were dyed ?

Philintus. But thou—surely thou
Wert never as the common herd ?

Abelard. Good friend !
At one time or other in existence
All men pay tribute
At Love's high altar. When the sacrifice
Comes late in life, why, then, 'tis most severe.
Philosophy, wisdom, learning, all are targets
At which the little mocking god
Doth wing his most barb'd arrows.

Philintus (*significantly*). His darts are poison'd,
 like the Tarantella sting,
 And when they enter some men's blood
 It makes them mad indeed.

Abelard. He who hath found love
 Hath found he hath a soul.

Philintus. Wise Solomon and great David
 Must have been possess'd of many souls,
 For, by Jesu ! they had loves enow !
 Prythee, Abelard, break from these shackles fond !
 It grieves me much to see that men like Anselm,
 Alberic, and Lotulf scale scholastic heights
 Whilst thou sitt'st dreaming ! Nay, forgive me !
 My devotion is so strong,
 I cannot bear that others should usurp
 The rightful place which thou should'st grace.
 Thou art by nature great, they but Art's poor
 tools ;
 The Fates that gifted thee, made them but fools.

Abelard. All would I quick forego
 Had I but Heloise !

Philintus. Oh, this is love's delirium !

(*Enter AGATON, running.*)

Philintus (*barring her way*). Fair Heloise's
 woman !
 Love's messenger, Love's physician,
 Come with a healing balm, a cooling mixture,
 Which takes its form in billet shape.

Whither so fast, good girl ?

Agaton. I am in haste, Messire, to find—
No matter, I should not tell you—
Let me pass, else my sweet mistress
Will be undone.

Philintus. The news is sad, but 'twill not kill
me.

By “undone” methinks you mean
Her bodice is unlac'd. I pray you, girl,
Be calm ; these things will happen oft.
Now to her shoes, do they fit properly ?

Agaton. By “undone,” your lordship,
I do mean that they will kill her,
Archbishop Fulbert and the rest.
She weeps and weeps, and they talk and talk,
So that I fear she'll melt away
In sorrow's fiery smelting-pot
Which passion heats like furnace.
Where is the Canon Abelard ?

(*PHILINTUS continues to bar AGATON'S way,
and endeavours to prevent her from seeing
ABELARD, who wanders to and fro in a
reverie.*)

Philintus. Abelard ! Why ! Abelard is dead !
He died of love an hour since ;
So get thee gone, and tell them home.
Old Fulbert will rejoice !

Agaton. If thou speak true, and he be dead
indeed,
Oh, then, I'll lay her letter on his breast ;
So when he wakes in kinder lands than this—
In which fond lovers are divid'd oft—
'Twill comfort him until my lady follows.

Philintus. Give me the letter ;
I'll joyfully perform your solemn wish.

Agaton. Nay, I will not ;
'Twas given me to do, and I will do it.

(*PHILINTUS tries to snatch the letter from her. AGATON bravely defends herself. A struggle ensues, furious on the side of the woman, teasingly good-humoured on the side of the man. ABELARD becomes suddenly aware of the contention, and goes to them.*)

Abelard. What ! Agaton, what, thou ?

Agaton. God be praised that you do live !
Live, I mean, for my dear mistress' sake.
Here is a note she bade me give you,
Ere Messire Philintus told me of your death.

(*Gives ABELARD a letter.*)

Philintus. If Abelard had dead and buried
been
Beneath the mighty Pyramids, on this receipt
He would have risen from his sepulchre !

Thanks, wench, I bear the marks of thy attentions;
 Thy finger nails are like thy betters',
 Long and finely pointed.

*(Examines the scratches AGATON has given him
 in the struggle.)*

*(ABELARD tears open the missive AGATON has
 given him, and reads):—*

“ False Fortune in extremes is ever.
 She loads with fairest gifts, then heaps
 Calamities most dire upon her votaries.
 Nor hell itself hath tortures so refin'd !
 The mem'ries of dear pleasures past
 She changes to a spring of endless tears !
 Under pain of his displeasure, my uncle
 Doth command me wed the Prince.
 And this—before another week be o'er !
 From this abhorred marriage, save me, Abelard !
 In affliction, as she is in joy,
 Thy HELOISE.”

Abelard (to AGATON). How fares thy mistress ?

Agaton. But ill, an' it please you,
 For she doth naught but weep and think
 On thee, great Abelard, and the marriage
 They would force her to.

Abelard. Go ! take this message to her.

Agaton. That will I gladly.

(Prepares to run off.)

Abelard. Stay! Stay!
 Thou know'st not yet what I would say.
 Commend me to thy mistress, Lady Heloise,
 And to her private ear this message breathe,—
 That she should hie to-night with thee—
 Under plea of going to Confessional—
 Unto Notre Dame. Messire Philintus here
 Will be in waiting, and guide her to my study.
 There will I offer her the refuge
 Of a husband's name. I will contrive that
 A holy man shall marry us to-night.

Philintus (aside). Ah me! to see the light of
 Abelard
 Hidden 'neath a bushel. To be a genius
 And a married man are things incompatible.

Agaton. Now blessings on thy pathway wait;
 Not all are good who yet are great.

[*Exit, running.*]

Philintus (grumbling). Woman, woman!
 O fair! O sweet! O "something" woman!
 Heav'n hath not such pow'r of doing good
 As ye all have of doing grievous ill.
 O Love! not all the mischief done by Hate
 Can o'ertop thy work!

Abelard. Thou know'st not
 What it is to love!

Philintus. I am too wary of that same
affliction ;
I see its ill effects too well in others.

[*Exeunt.*

SCENE 4

A part of the interior of Notre Dame, showing a passage, also a recess that is screened off, fitted as a study. Shelves of volumes fill the walls, but otherwise it is meagrely furnished with a few chairs, and a desk at which ABELARD is sitting, writing by the light of a lamp. Beside him is an emblem of mortality in the shape of a skull. Vespers are being sung.

I

'Gainst earthly passions, Jesu, pray
Deliver us by night and day !
Unlink those fearful chains that hold
Men to lust and thirst of gold.
Miserere Domine !

2

When our eyes to Thee we raise
In mute appeal or thankful praise,
O teach us that our pray'r should be
Devoid of base hypocrisy.
Miserere Domine !

3

All worldly pleasures turn to pain,
 They fly and never come again ;
 But they who suffer here below,
 Hereafter endless joy shall know.

Miserere Domine !

4

'Gainst earthly passion, Jesu, pray
 Deliver us by night and day !
 Unlink those fearful chains that hold
 Men to lust and thirst of gold.

Miserere Domine !

(*The CHOIR ceases.*)

Abelard (musingly, as his pen falls from his hand). " 'Gainst earthly passions, . . .
 Deliver us by night and day ! " . . .
 What makes these words to dwell upon my mind ?
 Passion—we pray from passions to be free !
 But Passion is not Love, yet—where's the difference ?
 Methinks that Passion is ephemeral, gross, and
 carnal,
 An earthly flow'r grown in earth
 And fed on all that's earthly.
 But Love is Heaven's plant, and nurtur'd is
 By noble, pure, and selfless thoughts.

What is Fame unto sweet Love compar'd ?
 Love is peace ; Ambition but a struggle,
 A shadow that eludes the grasp of man
 And lures him to the grave with empty promises.
 How glittering is thy strife, O Glory !
 But thy victim's groans are drown'd
 By the shouts of thy few conquerors !

Pre-eminence once lost

Is like the gloom of Tartarus. Ambition's narrow
 way
 Lies block'd and strewn with bloodless forms,
 Scorch'd to nothingness by calumny and in-
 justice.
 Ambition's hand will oft lead men astray ;
 'Tis Love alone that truly points the way.

(Resumes his writing.)

*(PHILINTUS enters, leading HELOISE, in a mantle
 and hood, toward the recess in which
 ABELARD is writing.)*

Philintus (coldly). Here, Madam, here is the
 room of Abelard,
 Abelard who once was great,
 But shall soon be so no more.
 Fame must fly when Love goes in th' door.

Heloise. You are his friend ;
 Then stay you here and listen. His renown
 Is as dear to me as ever 'twas to you.

(HELOISE enters ABELARD'S room. PHILINTUS accepts her invitation, and waits outside to hear the interview.)

Abelard (to himself). I cannot think. I cannot even write

Aught but "Heloise" upon these pages white.
I close mine eyes, and see her picture rare.
Delightful dream! illusion fond and fair!
Alas! that when I open them again,
The mocking vision leaves but mem'ry's pain!

Heloise. Abelard!

Abelard (starting from his reverie). My Heloise!

Heloise. Here is my refuge and my haven
sure;

Here in thy arms all ills I could endure.

Abelard (embracing her). Dear heart,
E'en our undying love must
By the Church be bless'd.

A holy friar will shortly join us,
And sanction with all pious rite our union.

Philintus (who is listening outside, contemptuously). Here comes her chance to weep
and sigh,

To murmur, "Why dost thou love me—why?"
Oh, wedd'd bliss! what woman yet
Would miss that hap to make men fret?

Heloise. Hath not love more pow'r than
bonds

To keep our hearts united ? Why should I
 Arrest thy learning's great advancement ?
 A man of wisdom needs not wife
 To harass him with details daily,
 To weary him with trite and stale accounts—
 How Betty broke the milking-stool, or
 That Jacques' first teeth are coming hard
 With fits and fever, and a thousand facts
 Which wedd'd life is father to. O Abelard !
 Shun that iron contract men call marriage,
 Which, like a millstone round the neck of love,
 Crushes all the life therefrom !

Abelard. Impossible ! my love could never
 change.

Heloise. Others, too, have thought like thee,
 my Abelard ;
 Yet marriage aye hath prov'd the tomb of love,
 Which fact hath built o'er tenderness and truth.
 Tell me, will it make thy love more strong
 That a priest may say a well-learned
 Lesson o'er us ? Can he let and license
 That affection, which great God implant'd has
 Within our souls—a counterpart of that
 Which is on high ? Man's nature
 Rebelleth most when most 'tis forc'd.
 Thou wilt not love me more, nay, not so much,
 When thou hast sworn to be my husband.
 Ah ! many a dame knows to her cost
 That love in marriage oft is lost.

Abelard. I do entreat thee, Heloise,
Persist not in this strange fantasy.

Heloise. Marriage is a bond fatal to phil-
osophers.
The cries of children and many an unwrit family
care
Oft mean a great man's ruin.

Abelard. Great! I shall be great
When thou with me dost link thy fate.

Heloise. 'Tis not a woman's happiness quite
To be a great man's mate. I do bethink
That poor Xantippe not worse than others was.
History relateth not her griefs, but those of
Socrates.

He was much away from her—sat at Philip's
Regal table, and did love to see his dancers;
Also much affected fair Aspasia's company,
Who all the world in Pericles' name did rule.
'Twas not for faithful wives that men
Their mighty deeds accomplish'd, and
Undying fame and glory won.

Abelard. I begin to love Xantippe;
Sure ne'er shrew had such a lovely pleader
Ere thou becam'st her advocatus Diaboli.

Heloise (lightly). A wife's rebuke, or word in
haste,
Is never to a husband's taste;
And yet a low-born mistress may
What she lists full freely say,

And from her lover all the while
Gain a fond, approving smile.

Philintus (outside). Who would think that face
enshrin'd

Such a bright and fearless mind ?

Truly old Sophocles said,

“ Wisdom's in the youngest head.”

Abelard. Belov'd, there is but one escape
From a union with the hated Prince :
'Tis by our marriage.

Heloise. If there be no other way, why then,
adieu !

Too fondly, dearest Abelard, I love thee,

To see the eyes grow chill where once affection
shone !

The best of husbands alter : lovers are our own.

Abelard. Did not Orpheus to Hell descend
His wife to regain ?

Heloise. Widowers will not e'en to Paradise rise
To seek for theirs !

Philintus (outside). O most excellent wench !

Were all women of thy mould,

How many men would rush into the noose

That they now fain would 'scape !

Abelard. Love e'er distrustful is.

Wert thou mine with the Church's blessing

I would not apprehensive be.

Heloise. Thy very apprehension I would ever
keep.

Custom would make e'en Venus self
Grow stale and homely. Will the Church's
blessing

Ward off the curse of habit ?

Abelard. 'Tis strange thy conduct should be
right in all,

And yet thy arguments so wrong in this.

But come with me and look upon the stars,

And 'neath their holy glances will I strive

To turn thy thoughts toward mine own.

There is a turret yonder where thou'lt see

Heav'n gazing down with all her eyes on thee.

*(They pass out. The church bell rings loudly
for visitors to depart. AGATON comes on
the scene, and approaches PHILINTUS in
affright.)*

Agaton. What mean these bells ?

I know—and yet I fear to think it.

Oh, that my mistress would return,

So we might fly from here !

Philintus (philosophically). “Fly” is a good
word, wench.

I' faith, ye'll need some wings methinks,

To steer ye clear from hence.

I fear the gates are closing.

(Enter FRIAR BONHOMME.)

Bonhomme (*suspiciously*). Who is this woman ?

Philintus. My sister, good brother.

Bonhomme (*briefly*). The gates will close.

Deus vobiscum !

Prythee, know'st thou where they are

I am commanded here to marry ?

The learned Abelard hath bespoke

This night my service for his 'pousals.

Philintus. Ho ! That little matter ! To
think on 't !

Why, man ! know'st thou not what genius is,

How first it will, and then it will not ?

Since thou hast seen him last,

He's changed his mind and forsworn

All marriage in this life.

'Tis a little matter, as I have said,

And is not worth the thinking. Prythee,

Take my sister Marie here

And show her to the gates.

[*Exit.*

Bonhomme. Good lack ! Church and State
alike would starve

If they relied on genius ! Out on them,

Say I, the shiftless good-for-nothings !

[*Bells ring again.*

Agaton. Prythee, Father,
Lead me to the gates.

Bonhomme (insinuatingly). Sweet is the name
of Marie,
And matched well to thy pretty face.

Agaton. I am not Marie,
And I would be gone.

Bonhomme. Deus vobiscum, my fair maid ;
Wilt come with me unto my cell,
And there I'll show thee wonders many ?

(Tries to take her hand.)

Agaton. If thou dost not show me hence,
I'll call so loud that e'en the bells'
Brazen tongues will cease 'fore mine !

Bonhomme. Come on, come on, I'll show the
way ;
Anything but scandal, pray.

Agaton. Ay, and no pranks, good Friar, ere we
part,
For, see, I carry my stings ! *[Shows her nails.*

Bonhomme. Come away, I say ;
I want to love, and not to fight.

Deus vobiscum !

[Exeunt.

*(The third and last peal of the bells is heard, and
the clang of the iron gates being closed. The
vespers sound in the distance.)*

“ From earthly passions, Jesu, pray
Deliver us by night and day.”

(Enter ABELARD and HELOISE.)

Abelard. God! Hark! The final peal,
O Heloise!

The gates are bolted, and the friar
Is not here! 'Tis terrible!
'Tis terrible, my sweet, for thee!

(*The CHOIR sings in hushed cadence.*)

“All worldly pleasures turn to pain;
They fly and never come again.”

Abelard. Thy reputation and thy fair fame
Are closed with these gates. And I,
Who never thought to do thee harm,
Have wrong'd thee 'yond redemption!

(*Sinks despairingly into his chair.*)

Heloise. The mortal part of me is barr'd with-
out,
But here my soul and spirit kneel.

(*Kneels at ABELARD'S feet, who takes her in his
arms. The CHOIR in still more hushed
cadence sings.*)

“Break thou these fearful charms that hold
Men to lust and thirst of gold.

Miserere Domine!”

Act III

ACT III

SCENE I

An apartment in ARCHBISHOP'S FULBERT'S house.

FULBERT is seated in melancholy reverie, and ALBERIC and LOTULF stand near him, casting looks of hypocritical sympathy.

Fulbert (rousing himself). Good friends, your countenances,

On which deceit could ne'er be writ,
Too plainly tell me that ye bring no news
Of her I loved so well. Yet, 'tis kind
Of ye to come and bear an old man company.
How long is it since Heloise did leave
My heart and roof in loneliness ?

Alberic. 'Tis gone a month, my lord.

Fulbert. A month to all the world,
But oh ! an age to me.

Lotulf. Would that we had news to bring !
But in default, good lord, accept
Our tender sympathy.

Fulbert. Grief hath this one solace : 'tis only then
 We know the stuff of which our friends are made.
 But who had thought she would have gone ?
 Gone without a sign or single word !
 I cradl'd her within these wither'd arms,
 And croon'd in broken tones her baby songs.
 Yet still—this all is nothing.
 Our life is nothing, and our hopes are nothing,
 And nothing are we in the grave.

Alberic. I pray, now she has fled,
 That she hath truly wed her lover. }

Fulbert. If I find it be not so,
 'Twill be a day of sorrow for them both.

(*Enter ANSELM hurriedly.*)

Anselm. News ! news !
 But ere I paint my picture for thine eyes,
 Fulbert, thou must promise me,
 By our friendship and thy high dignity,
 To call in play an old man's calm,
 And patient be unto the end.

Fulbert (tremulously). Where is she ?
 And fares she well ?

Anselm. Too well, alas ! too well !
 Better dead than be as she now is.
 These nights and days full many a trusty spy
 Of mine has searched all Paris for thy niece.
 Alas ! that she should be akin to thee !
 Just an hour by the clock there came

A hasty messenger like Mercury for speed,
 And as tho' his feet were helped with wings,
 To tell me what he found. It seems
 That Abelard doth own a small secluded house
 Near the city wall, and within this cage
 The once pure dove, thy Heloise, doth reign,
 His mistress. She ne'er walks abroad—
 So the gossip told him—but at night,
 Stealthily, like criminals, they together roam,
 Their arms entwined, their voices—faces—all
 Bespeaking their delight.

Fulbert. God's curses rain upon them !
 Kind Anselm, good Anselm, it yet may be
 Not so ill as thou dost think it.
 Mayhap the Church hath wedd'd them !

Anselm. Alas, my friend !
 E'en that one consolation is denied
 Thee in thy affliction deep. They are not wed.

Fulbert. Oh, friends ! if such ye be in truth,
 Stand not here in parley vain ; but come !
 Give me some weapons, that I may
 Strike this villain Abelard to death.
 Bestir ye ! 'tis not because my years
 Are great, my soul is old. Volcano like
 Th' vitality of injur'd men bursts forth in flames
 When 'tis thought extinct. My weapons, I say.
 And those who love me, follow me !

Anselm. I pray thee
 Calm thy wrath unseemly.

Fulbert. Had thine own honour's stronghold
Thus assailed been, thy doting heart so stabb'd,
Thou hadst not talked of wrath unseemly
In measured tones. Were my case thine,
Thou would'st have sought for vengeance
E'en as I do now.

Anselm. Again, I pray thee, calm thyself, good
Fulbert,
For nought that's well done ever was
Accomplished in a fume. I have a plan
Of higher vengeance for thee, man.
Passion's weapons are for boys to use,
But men, whose blood is chilled by winters many,
Have cooler brains to work withal.

Alberic. I beseech you, noble Fulbert,
Be counsell'd by the Bishop Anselm,
Who has your good at heart.

Lotulf. I join my prayer to Alberic's ;
He who hastens slowly, hastens truly.

Fulbert. Alas ! ye all have noble hearts
Save him, the wolf who stole my lamb.
Bear with me !

Anselm. Listen to me ! My counsel's briefly
this,
That thou and I, and these two abbots worthy,
Should these heartless lovers surprise,
And arm'd with a guardian's right, thou canst
Remove the guilty girl from Abelard's reach,
While yet her sin is green.

Alberic. Abelard will not submit.

Anselm. Force must be used.

We'll rouse all Paris 'gainst him !

Fulbert. We can snatch her from the offender,
But not her soul from the offence.

When Vice once charms a nature fine,
The chalices of saints distasteful grow.

Anselm. I chanced, before I hither came, to
meet

The Prince Amadeus. He broods and raves,
Then raves and broods, on his elusive fair.
He swears to be avenged on Abelard.

Fulbert. Then he doth know the shameful
truth ?

Anselm. Evil news is quickly spread ; the
good

Oft needs twice telling to be known.

Fulbert. What says he ?

Anselm. Once avenged on the guilty Abelard,
He still would wed—such is his love—
Thy frail but lovely niece.

Fulbert. Noble-hearted youth, who follows in
the steps

Of his great Master, and the woman pardons
Taken in fell sin !

Anselm. I have bidden him come hither.
He shall go with us, if it please thee ;
But he must vow to put a bridle to his tongue,
Else he must stay behind.

Alberic (aside to LOTULF). What wants he with
the Prince

If he may not speak ?

Lotulf. Know'st thou not the cunning Anselm ?
He is a dainty feeder, and in his stews
He likes variety of spice to lend them flavour.

Fulbert. Come ! let's meet the Prince half-way ;
Then ho ! for vengeance on the traitor.

Anselm (suavely). Not vengeance, my good
brother ;

'Tis justice thou wouldst have—justice,
Nothing more ! Vengeance is profane.

Fulbert (impatiently). Call it what it pleases
thee,

But Vengeance still it is with me.

If I am stung, feel'st thou the pain ?

If thou art hurt, should I complain ?

To know thyself be aye thy boast ;

He best can judge who feels the most.

[*Exeunt.*]

SCENE 2

*A chamber in ABELARD'S house. ABELARD has
been reading aloud to HELOISE, who sits on
a stool at his feet.*

Heloise. Oh, my belov'd, close the book ;
Let us no more the words of others use
When we have still our own. I'd sooner list
Unto the meanest talk, so it be thine,
Than all the wisdom of great Solomon.

Abelard. Dost thou know what Ovid says,
my pearl ?

Heloise. A tender word of thine own com-
position

Is far more worth to me than all
His wit, pleasing tho' it be.

Abelard (still looking at the book, reads) " *Mori-
bus et forma conciliandus amor,*"

Love must attracted be by beauty,
Both of mind and body.

Heloise. That is love's dissection.
Men cease to love when they do analyse.

Abelard (reading). " *Ut ameris, amabilis este,*"
To be loved, one must be lovable.

Heloise. E'en so. Heat attracts heat, as fire
doth fire,
So love draws love.

Abelard (casting the book aside). 'Tis said
Ambition puts to flight the little god,
But he in turn doth drive Ambition hence,
For Fame reigns paramount. Since Love
Hath me a captive ta'en, my thirst for pow'r
Hath died away. Full many a gallant knight
Hath cast aside his helm and hauberk bright
In the battle lists of Life, to dream away
The peaceful years entwin'd by peaceful love.

Heloise. Speak not thus, my Abelard ! I am
thy faithful page,
To urge thee on to conquer in the strife,

And not to sleep in sluggard rest thy intellect
away.

*(A street crier in the streets is heard shouting,
"Who'll buy, who'll buy my verses on the
loves of Abelard and Heloise—the famous
Abelard and the fair Heloise? Who'll
buy my verses?" The street crier's voice
dies away in the distance. ABELARD, with
an expression at once pained and sorrowful,
looks pityingly at HELOISE.)*

Abelard. Oh, love! thou hast grown poor
indeed,

When such lips do call aloud
Thy fair pure name for public comment:
That name which I have stol'n from thee
Like a reckless thief who thinks of naught
But self-enrichment. Would that I
Had closed my eyes and heart to all thy charms,
And but remained thy friend! For friendship
never
Injures those we love; which love ne'er fails to
do.

Heloise. My love is like a refuge safe, and
harbours

No regrets in all these tempests petty
That human spite can scheme. My love
Is built upon a rock which no storm can shake
Or thunders cause to tremble.

Dost think a puff of wind can quake the Pyramids,
 Or hurricane loose Hesp'rus from on high ?
 Let all France, and not one poor weak voice,
 Cry out about our love, and I will stand
 Here by thy side, and say, " Well said, my
 country ! "

Or like fond echo, taking up their strain,
 Resound the words a thousand times again.

Abelard. How I do love thee !

Witness, ye hours, and ye nights and days,
 That flitt'd have like shadows of a dream,
 That all my work it is to count thy looks ;
 My seasons are thy smiles, thy tears and words ;
 The days change to weeks, and flutter hence like
 birds

Of Paradise upon the western breeze.
 The sun doth watch me loving, then the moon
 Relieves his weary looking on. But ev'ry day
 To me is though I saw thee first—belov'd !

(HELOISE and ABELARD embrace tenderly. *During this episode PHILINTUS steps in the apartment softly, unseen by the lovers.*)

Philintus (aside). Faith ! I could outswear
 Satan at my folly
 That I did stay the friar from their marrying.
 Had this been done, these amorousities had ceased
 By now. A man could only thus embrace

Uncertainty, or a mistress fair. Marriage
Is a game of chance, which, were women wise,
None would play at.

(Aloud) Abelard, I beg
A moment with thy private ear.

*Abelard (turning towards him, not without some
confusion).* Dear Philintus, is it thou ?

Philintus. 'Tis a brave likeness of Philintus,
If I be not he.

Abelard. Any news astir ?

Philintus. I've come to tell it thee,
If fair Heloise will but grant me leave.

Heloise. We have a common cause to serve :
You with friendship, and I with love. *[Exit.*

*(ABELARD seats himself in an armchair ; PHIL-
INTUS stands behind him and rests his elbow
on the back.)*

Abelard. Well, out with thy news !
Could it not have bided, or didst fear
It had in an hour grown stale ?

Philintus. Hear me first,
And keep thy jests till afterwards.

Abelard. How grave thou art, Philintus !
Perchance thou hast not supp'd ?
A hungry man is always mad or melancholy.

Philintus. Heigho ! I have no list to eat.

Abelard. 'Tis a bad sign.
Perchance thou art in love ?

Philintus. I never fall so deep
But I can eat and sleep my fill.

Abelard. Certes! Thou art as grave as a
 churchyard ;

What ails thee, man ?

Philintus (aside). Oh, that I could wake the
 ambition of thy soul,

Which thou art killing in love's lethargy !

Man yearns for that which is denied him,

And I love that which I did ne'er possess—

Much learning. I see it dying in thy heart,

And feel as though a darling child of mine

Was being slain by murderous hands !

Abelard (yawning). I wait.

Philintus (aloud). Thou know'st that I keep
 watch for thee.

I just have learnt that what ye do, all
 know ;

All Paris sings about thy love.

Abelard. A street hawker did cry the song

Beneath our very window even now.

Is this thy wondrous news ?

Philintus (aside). He shows no more amaze
 than I had said,

“ I hear the snowy Alps are passing cold,”

Or that “ fire is hot,” that “ winds do blow,”

Or “ water's wet,” or any of those thousand
 platitudes

That daily life is charged with.

(*Aloud*) 'Tis not all. Dost remember thy
Great work on "Man's Equality" ?

Abelard (warming to the subject as he speaks of it). The one I took five years to write ?
Which was my labour night and day,
In which I strove all men to teach
That newer thought doth wisdom bring.
I tried to show that musty rules
That dogmas of the schools worn out
Should be foregone ; and from the dust
Of bigot and pedantic lore
Phoenix-like there should arise,
Clear and bright as light of day,
This highest of all earthly creeds—
That truest pray'rs are noble deeds.

Philintus (bending over the back of the chair, and speaking with deliberate emphasis). Thy
enemies in thy absence here
Have all attacked thee. With damning im-
putations,
As false as they are cunning, with truth
And lying strangely wedd'd, they do place
A purport on thy book thou didst ne'er intend.
Thy favourite work so dear to thee,
Which cost three years of labour and of thought,
Has been condemned and by the Council spurned—
It hath been sentenc'd to be burned.

Abelard (with despairing wildness). O Sorrow !
what are all thy other shafts

Compar'd with this arrow from thy bow ?
 My brain child burn'd ! That offspring fair
 With which I travail'd in joy and pain,
 Like a mother with her first-born son !
 My book, in whose two covers beat my heart
 And throb'd my brain—not, O Philintus, for
 a selfish end,
 But for enlightenment—darken'd minds !

Philintus (aside). Had I known how he would
 take it,

I had not told him. To gain our ends
 We call a whirlwind to our aid
 When a puff of air would answer.

(Aloud) Hast forgotten Heloise ?

Dost thou not love her more than thy cold book ?

Abelard (with a certain irritation of manner).

Certes ! I love her, but that love is
 different ;

My human love is mine ; but my other love
 Is taken from me, and is mine no more.
 Not only is it taken from me, but
 It is outraged and violated. I'd rather had
 My hand burn'd off than they should
 Thus have robb'd my book of virtue !

Philintus. Abelard ! take heed, I pray, the
 angry Fates

Do give thee not more potent cause for wrath
 Than thou now hast. I have ever seen
 That they who rave o'er little losses

Soon punished are with heavier crosses.

(*Aside*) To reproach I came ; I stay to preach.

Abelard. My book is burn'd ! Freedom's
spirit

And much other good for man was shown
Between its covers ! War was wag'd
Against hypocrisy and rich men's tyranny,
For justice and the right of intellectual man
Against patrician brain and worthlessness
Proud not of achievement, but of ancestry.
Thou speak'st as tho' I had no cause to
grieve,

As though my work were a tale about a rat.

Heloise (from within). Abelard !

Abelard (starting). Speak on, O my beloved !
Thy voice charms hence my evil thoughts,
As David sang away Saul's spirit black.

Philintus. Love her, for she is worthy,
But forget not thy book burners !

Heloise (from within). It groweth late, so let us
wander

In the garden yet awhile, for Luna soon
Will close her lamp and dim the stars
Like thrifty housewife cautious of her candles.

Abelard. Let moon and stars both cease to
shine

When light glows from thine eyes divine.

Heloise (within). Nay ; their light must too
grow sere,

When thou, their rival, dost appear.

Philintus (aside). His book is burnt ; and his
love is flaming !

He breathes an air of fire like a salamander.

*(Loud knocking without, mingled with the sound of
tumult, and many voices in altercation.)*

Abelard. Who is there ?

Philintus. Ask rather who is not there ?

By the noise, methinks, all Hell hath gotten a
holiday,

And fain would spend it jollily with us.

(Opens the window, and calls down.)

What would ye ? Who are ye all ?

Belike ye are mistaken in locality, my friends.

This is not a madhouse, where fools

Can enter without reasonable permit. Begone !

*A Voice outside speaking in tones of dignity and
command.* I am Fulbert, Archbishop of
Paris.

I seek admittance, and to see my niece

Who lives within these walls.

Philintus. Thou may'st be Archbishop of
Paradise, i' faith !

But no man shall claim an entrance here

Without due right. This house pertains to
one

Monsieur Pierre Abelard.

Abelard. Fulbert ! Alas ! I've wronged him.
Grant him admittance.

Philintus. If thou hast wronged him, thou
shouldst shun him,
Not invite him hither. There are other mad-
men.

Abelard. Oh ! pleasure's tide
Hath e'er an ebb of sorrow. The golden sands
Of happiness are mark'd with whiten'd bones of
woe.

There never were two loving in this life
But someone grieved to see them so.
Let them all enter, good my friend ;
Thus ills must come and joys will end.

Philintus (*great tumult — calling out of the
window*). By'r Lady ! if ye all assault'd
thus

The gates of heav'n with your virtues
As ye do our doors with kicks and blows,
We had not need to have so many
Priestly comforters and soul physicians.
I come, ye wolves, to let ye in the fold !

[*Exit.*

(HELOISE *enters in haste and some alarm.*)

Heloise. Come what may, they shall not part
us,
For here will I cling despite their rage.

Piecemeal they may tear me from thee,
 But I will never go until thou
 Bidd'st me hence.

Abelard. They shall not hurt thee whilst I
 live,

Nor touch thee with their impious hands
 Whilst I am near. I shall thy buckler be and
 shield.

I—alas!—who have wronged thee most—
 Shall now thy saviour be. Would that thou
 Hadst given me wedded right to call thee mine
 So none should dare to wrest thee from me!

*(Enter FULBERT, ANSELM, LOTULF, ALBERIC,
 AMADEUS, PHILINTUS, and CITIZENS. ABE-
 LARD stands protectingly before HELOISE.)*

Fulbert (in tones of suppressed rage). Abelard!
 like a thief thou cam'st at night
 And stole my one ewe lamb. I'll not
 Descant on thy ingratitude, base tho' it be,
 But ask this simple thing of thee;—
 Is Heloise thy leman wretched, or as an honour'd
 wife
 Do I behold her? If the Church hath sanctified
 Thy union, I at once will hie me hence,
 And ere I leave, beg grace for this intrusion.

Abelard (after a pause). Heloise is my spouse
 In heav'n's eyes alone.

Fulbert. Oh, vile seducer of the innocent !
 Hearken unto him, ye friends and citizens !
 He gloats o'er the wreck of virtue fair,
 Which, like a tempest foul and all-destroying,
 He alone hath compass'd. Accursed libertine !
 Who revels in the ruin he has caused,
 And then would gloze it o'er with canting piety.
 " His spouse before the eyes of heaven ! "
 He means his wife through devil's tricks.
 Too well I know the meaning of this treachery.
 She was not highly placed enow to be his spouse !
 The stock she sprang from was too little known
 To add a lustre to the Canon's fame,
 And thus he 'spouses her in " heaven's eyes,"
 forsooth,
 For fear that man's should be too piercing !

*Heloise (tearing away from the restraining arms
 of ABELARD, who endeavours to withhold
 her).* Mine must be the blame ! And
 shall I fear
 To own the laws that love, not priests, have made ?
 Love free as air, when bound by earthly ties,
 Doth lose its charm, and like a rainbow fades.
 If it were not thus, tame Hymen would not
 show
 That love's by fetters slain and never fostered.
 Were Heav'n's King Himself to offer me His throne,
 For all that's Heaven's I would not change my
 love.

Fulbert. He hath bewitched her,
 And much love hath made her mad!
 Oh, that those lips should foul blaspheme
 Which once ne'er moved except in pray'r
 Or gentle words of wisdom! Doubly accursed
 Abelard,
 To blast both soul and body!

Abelard. I pray thee, Fulbert, list to me!
 I do love thy ward tenderly, deeply,
 Devotedly, passionately, and to espouse her
 Is my ambition's dream.

Fulbert. Coward! Add that to thy other sins!
 Thou speak'st thus for thou'rt afraid,
 Because I come to wrest her from thee!

Abelard. Thou dar'st not do it! Not Death
 himself
 Shall steal her from my arms!

(HELOISE cowers for protection, and ABELARD stands by her menacing those around. PHILINTUS, with a half-drawn weapon, seems disposed to attack any of FULBERT'S people who should make a move in the direction of the lovers.)

Anselm. Peace, my friends! tho' I own 'tis hard
 To stay your virtuous hands from doing hurt
 To him whose crime so greatly merits punishment
 condign.

Abelard. These soul-hounds of the Church !
How loftily they deal with others' morals,
How lax and easy with their own !

Amadeus. Give up this woman to her kins-
man,
Thou thief that stole her from her rightful lover !

Abelard. Thou prince of liars, she lov'd thee not !

Heloise. Hold, Prince ! From me you had an
empty word,
A loveless promise ; a shell without a kernel.

Anselm. I have heard it said that purest minds,
When once o'ercast, have uglier bent
Than basest criminals. Abelard hath
Bewitched her crystal thoughts into
A stream of turgid foulness.

First Cit. (in the crowd). 'Tis certain that this
Abelard's
None other than a wizard.

Second Cit. We must look to our own wives
and daughters.

Third Cit. Mark you not that hellish fire
Blazing from his eyes ?

First Cit. He's too handsome for a proper man.
I've heard tell the Evil One can garb
Himself in beauty's form, as we would
Clothe ourselves in Sunday habit.

Fulbert (to HELOISE). I order thee to come with
me
Unto my house, which thou hast dishonoured.

If thy spirit still rebels against my wish,
 I'll have thee dragg'd like drink-sod drab
 Thro' the streets of Paris. Thy paramour
 Shall taste the staves of all our honest citizens,
 An' if they but do their duty he shall die thereof.

Abelard. Old man! thy threats fall idly on my
 heart

Like snow-flakes on the ground already hoar.
 I fear not thee, nor all enraged France
 Were she to rise like Hecate with the Fates
 And fire-belching Furies in her wake
 To seize and rend me in such puny atomies
 That the ocean's grains of sand were great
 compared.

Hath not Nature sentenced thee to death
 E'en as thou wouldst me? Am I dreaming fool
 That I in death should see aught save
 Eternity's birthday? My life's sin is that I love,
 And with that crime upon my soul, old man,
 I'll speed unto those gracious regions where
 That dear Lord who lov'd so well on earth
 Shall judge me better than ye do.

Anselm. Thou prat'st of love and piety
 But actest like a fiend.

Alberic. Shame upon thee, Abelard!
 Thou hast the Church disgraced.

Lotulf. Fie upon thee!

Abelard. Ye but a pretext make of Fulbert's
 grievance

To vent your coward spite on me.
 The fame that I have gain'd hath rous'd
 Inexorable malice in your breasts,
 And snake-like Envy with poison'd tongue doth
 spit
 Beneath this show of Fulbert's cause espousing.
 Your falseness makes of Virtue's self a vicious
 thing,
 And Vice by ye despis'd, turns virtuous.

Fulbert. Enough! Enough is said. Come!

(HELOISE *clings to ABELARD, but, surrounded and overwhelmed by numbers, and despite ABELARD'S strenuous efforts, she is dragged away from him. PHILINTUS vainly tries to succour the lovers, but is himself overborne.*)

Abelard (who is withheld by citizens). Old man,
 for myself I would not plead
 For life, from e'en the cruellest death
 That hatred could devise; but for her I love,
 I would abase my manhood's strength
 Till saintly meekness were but pride compar'd.
 She is the hapless victim of my guilt.
 I alone have caused her heart to stray
 From the narrow path of worldly rectitude.
 Mine is all the sin, and mine should be the blame,
 If Justice be no myth, and Mercy but a name.

Heloise. Not all cold truths to heav'n fly ;
E'en angels love a selfless lie.

(HELOISE is by force compelled to leave ABELARD
with FULBERT and ANSELM ; LOTULF, AL-
BERIC, and some attendants following.)

Abelard (who is still withheld by citizens).

Loose me, ye fools and knaves unmannerly !
Do ye think that I would be so mad
To run out in the streets and chase
The Lady Heloise as tho' she were a trull
And I a braggart lover ? Unloose, I say !

Amadeus. If they unloose thee, thou wilt
meet

With less delicate handling from me.
Thou'lt fly from Scylla to Charybdis.

Abelard. What, whelp ! hast thou not gone
With thy companion wolves ?

Amadeus. Nay, nor like to, with such carrion
As thou left for me to feast on.

Abelard. Pah ! shall I heed the sting of a gnat
When my heart is gnawed by the monster Grief ?
Go thy ways, good youth !

Amadeus. I'll give thee a lesson first !

(Draws.)

Abelard. What ! with that rod wouldst teach
thy master ?

Philintus. Here is mine ! Defend thyself !

(Gives his weapon to ABELARD. They fight.)

First Cit. Prince Amadeus is a master of the rapier ;

My son who worketh at his armourer's
Did tell me so. He hath twenty-five Toledo blades,
An' a score or so of true Damascus steel.

Second Cit. And mayhap not master be o' one !

Philintus. Dost remember, Abelard, that pretty
trick

The Austrian fencing-master taught thee in
Vienna ?

Abelard. Is this the one thou mean'st ?

*(By a skilful thrust he sends AMADEUS' rapier
spinning out of the latter's hands.)*

First Cit. He has him now at his weapon's
point.

Second Cit. Like a beetle at the mercy of a
schoolboy's pin.

Third Cit. Will he despatch him ?

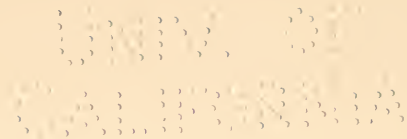
Amadeus. I ask no mercy at thy hands.

Despatch ! strike home ! as I would do
In thy victorious place.

Abelard. My love hath taught me to be
merciful.

Take thy life, I'll none of it !

[Exit ABELARD.]



Act IV

ACT IV

(*After three months.*)

SCENE I

*Lecture-room in the University of Paris. ABE-
LARD is sitting in his lecturer's chair with his
face buried in his hands dejectedly. Near him
stands PHILINTUS.*

Philintus. Rouse thy spirit, Abelard! This
inanition

Is a moral decay, and thou art like fair fruit
With canker at its core. Soon the Council
And the students will attend. Surely thou
Wilt not deposed be without a word
In refute of their baseless charges ?

Abelard. There are some calumnies, my friend,
'Gainst which e'en Innocence herself
Would courage lose.

Philintus. I pray thee, rouse thyself !

Abelard. Grant me peace, I do beseech thee.

Philintus. Peace is gain'd by war.

Abelard. I thirst to be at peace. I yearn to
leave

The world and all its troublous ways alone.
Let the Council come, I've naught to say.
Oh, Philintus! when heavy sorrows fall,
They cover, like a pall, our best endeavours.
We still may strive, but the freshness,
The bloom of all our brightest hopes, is gone.
Gone—never to return! With heavy hearts
And jad'd souls we plod and plod,
And yet each step doth only bring us
Near to that goal of all mortality—the grave.

Philintus. All this grieving for a woman!
Which one of them is weeping worth?
Too well I know their changing moods!
When you will, they will not;
When you will not, then of course—they will!

Abelard. Three months have pass'd,
And ne'er a word from Heloise.

Philintus. The letters thou hast given me,
Faithful have I delivered to Agaton,
Her woman; who in turn did vow
To give them to her mistress.

Abelard. Is it possible that she could be so
fair
And yet so false?

Philintus. Were she not fair, she'd not be
false.

To be beautiful, and therewith to live in virtue,
Savours more of gods than of frail humanity.

Abelard. Thou hast deliver'd all my notes,
And I have answer to not one of them.
What countless pages I have written
With passion so devouring, that methought
The words themselves had been consumed in
flames,

So burning did they pour from out
My pierc'd and anxious heart.

Philintus. So thou who hast so oft derisively
describ'd

The wiles of woman, art now their slave,
Caught in the self-same snare as any dolt
Who thinks there's truth in any of their smiles.
Their sex are only great when they work ill.
Who was it lost Paradise for us? A woman.
Who caused the downfall of fair Troy? A
woman.

What made wise Solomon to fail? Woman.
Damnable! heartless! subtle woman,
With paint'd face and mind corrupt,
Innocence feigning, whilst her scheming mind
Outstrips the devil's!

Abelard. O Friendship! upon what dost thou
presume?

'Tis well thou art Philintus; none else
Had dar'd to speak against the noblest heart
That ever beat on earth.

Philintus. Thus reason'd Antony, and that
reason

Lost him all the world. Thus reasons Abelard,
And that reason, or the lack of it,
Will lose him all his world as well.
Suppose that I were Abelard, and Abelard
Philintus,
Then Abelard would say to me, "Thy love hath
fled.

Thou writ'st to her, she answers not ;
Ergo, pray, what love hath she for thee,
Who heeds thee not e'en tho' thy soul
Writhes in hellish torture ?" Thy love's fickle.
All things yield beneath Time's sickle.
Lovers' vows, hopes—beauty—all,
Ripe and unripe, bow and fall ;
All things go from whence they came,
And Death claims all but shining Fame.

Abelard (meditatively, with bitterness). Fame !
'tis gone from me ;
They stole it when they burned my book.

Philintus. Build thyself another shrine of
glory.

Abelard. Life is short, the world's injustice
long.

Philintus. The Council and the students will
shortly come.

Abelard. Let them ; I will hence.

Philintus. I pray thee, speak to them ;

Show them that thy spirit
Is not quench'd as they would have it be.

Abelard. Her silence and my book's destruction

Do make me mad.

Philintus. Thy madness is a silent one.

Abelard. It sometimes takes that fit.

Philintus. Never have I heard of it.

Abelard. The ashes grey of love's neglect'd
passion chill

As water thrown on fire. Heloise hath grown
cold.

Philintus. But thy book did ne'er hurt thee!
Love and friendship often sever:
Books remain true friends for ever.

Abelard. My dead book bids me speak,
But fain would I be dumb.

(Noise without.)

Philintus. They come!

*(Enter ANSELM, taking the lead of the Council,
followed by STUDENTS and CITIZENS.)*

Anselm. Pierre Abelard! thou art the author
of a work heretical,
In which thou hast expound'd views
Contrary to the law and order of things ordain'd
These hundred years. Thy spirit revolutionary

Hath fill'd the learned Council with alarm,
And they, the nation's guides, and I, their un-
worthy chief,

Do take this opportunity to expel thee
From this great University. It is decreed
That thou no more our sons shall teach
To wander from the beaten paths
Their ancestors did tread before them.
That which hath suffic'd for sire
Is surely good enough for son.

We charge thee, therefore, leave this place
For ever ! Hast aught to say in thy defence ?

Abelard. Ye condemn me as a heretic, and
burn my book.

Reversing law, ye sentence first, then call for my
defence.

If I absolve your act, I blame myself ;
And if I blame ye, I absolve myself.
One way I must offend. Yet, if I speak,
I must truly, or not at all.

My heart is too deject'd far to deal in quibbles.
Suffering and sorrow press the truth from men
E'en as some flow'rs, that more perfume yield
The longer they are crush'd : and pale adversity
Doth teach us more than all the wisdom
Of great Socrates. If I have sinn'd, as ye have
said,

It is unpardonable ; and unpardonably have ye
punish'd me.

When a malefactor is arraign'd for treason,
He first is heard, and sentenc'd afterward.
Is there a crime in Guilt's long calendar
That places man beyond the pale of lawful
Justice? If there be, I am the basest wretch
That e'er disgrac'd the bar of judgment:
And if the learned Council thus decree,
What weight has one man's word against a
Council's?

When I did meet the wisest man of every
land

That came to France to fight in learning's
Tournament, you did not then condemn the
heretic

Who fought and won the palm for France's
glory;

Yet taught he then the self-same thoughts that
stand

Reviled now.

First Cit. Abelard speaks truly. My eldest
son,

Who once brought naught but sorrow home
Unto his dam and me, hath chang'd since
He hath attend'd Abelard's school.

Second Cit. Ay! My Jean, that wild third
lad o' mine,

Was once a very fiend for stubbornness;
But since this Abelard hath taught him,
He is as mild as butter-milk.

Anselm. Didst thou not say in thy condemned
book—

How well do I recall those words seditious!—
That people, by a monarch governed,
Were naught but slaves, coerced to labour
In body and mind. Thou didst vituperate
Inheritance and lordly birth, and held
That these were naught compar'd to man's
Own attainments and natural gifts?

Abelard. My lord, I said that labour, be it
what it may,
Is nobler than dull sloth, though that
Did flaunt a crown, and strut in purple.

Anselm. Further, thou didst write that
neither
King nor noble could inherit worth.
These be traitor's thoughts in treason's words.
If a monarch be not great—who is?
And if our nobles be not high—who are?

Abelard. My lord, my words were these: not
ancestry,
Or wealth, or combination of birth's circum-
stances
Can ever make men great; but work
And strenuous conduct alone entitle man
To fame and glory.

Anselm. Thou utter'st treason 'gainst thy
King,
Thy Church, and Constitution.

Abelard. Better that, than I should traitor be
unto humanity.

Better rot in silence 'neath the earth,
Than serve the god Hypocrisy.

Anselm. A self-convict'd heretic and atheist
art thou !

Abelard. I stand condemn'd a heretic, and ye
burn my book !

How can a book so injure that ye burn it ?
'Tis a thing inanimate, and did not write itself.
If aught should have been burnt, 'twas my
hand,
Or the conceiving brain that bade the hand to
write.

Why mutilate the noblest part of me—
My thought—and let the worst go free ?
Nay ! not in my work the potent evil lies,
But in the prejudice of cruel, jaundic'd eyes.
Unjust judges the jury lead astray ;
Humble virtue falls, and evil holdeth sway.

First Stu. 'Tis my belief, and that belief is
strong,
The prisoner is right, and all his judges wrong.

Second Stu. The Council all are jealous !
Envious old drones ;
Half of them are stings, the other half are bones.

Third Stu. Small wonder that he looks so pale
and sad,
With such grief as he has had ;

Envy snatches hence his fame,
Spite assails his once great name.

First Stu. Let the Council go hang! We'll
none of them.

Abelard hath nobly instruct'd us, and Abelard
Must bide with us!

Second Stu. If Abelard be forc'd to leave,
Let us all follow him!

Third Stu. Bravely said! Where Abelard
doth go,
There we shall have our University,
E'en tho' the green grass be our floor,
And heav'n's blue skies our vault'd domes!

Abelard. Patience, dear students all! I can
but leave;
My death is not resolv'd upon.

First Stu. If thou dost leave, great Abelard, I
swear,
By God's own might, to enter ne'er
This University again! And ye, my brothers,
What say ye?

Students. We'll follow Abelard!

First Cit. If Abelard's expell'd, I will with-
draw my son.

Second Cit. And I mine!

Third Cit. And I!

Abelard. But, friends, there are other pro-
fessors!

First Stu. But none like thee! If thou do go,

A University of wise professors will exist,
Without a student to be taught !

Citizens. }
Students. } Ha ! Ha ! Ha !

Second Cit. Out upon this Council of evil !
Give 'em a taste of the tail o' th' Devil.

*(Students raise ABELARD on their shoulders.
Some Citizens and Students shout and
hurrah around him. Others chase and beat
ANSELM and the rest of the Council with
sticks and cudgels.)*

SCENE 2

An ante-room in ARCHBISHOP FULBERT'S house.

*ANSELM, as though by accident, meets AGATON,
who endeavours to pass him hurriedly.*

Anselm. Whither so fast, wench ?

Agaton. Oh, my lord, I know not how to answer
you ;

Full of fears am I, with what I have perform'd,
In obedience to your stern behests.

Heav'n you have promised me, and yet Hell
Reigns in my throbbing breast.

Anselm (menacingly). Wench, thou hast more
letters !

As thou valu'st thy immortal soul,
Deliver them at once to me, else
E'erlasting flames shall be thy lot hereafter.

Agaton. My lord, I do beseech you give me
 leave
 To render but this one to Lady Heloise ;

(Shows letter.)

The only one, of all the many I have had
 To give her. Messire Philintus told me
 That Monseigneur is like to die with grief,
 That ne'er one of all his thousand letters
 Hath had answer. My lord, I pray,
 Do grant me leave to give her this,
 And I will to Purgatory go fo't !

Anselm. I tell thee thou wilt go to Hell
 For everlasting ; and, e'er dying, still live on
 In immortal agony. Give me the letter, I say !
 Damnation seize thee, wench, dost hear ?
 Abelard's letters are accurs'd, and even I,
 Holy as I am, do wash mine hands
 Thrice in sacred water ere I touch
 The godly things of earth again.

Agaton (giving letter to ANSELM). Oh ! is there
 grace in acting right,
 When all one's heart would fain do wrong ?

Anselm (unctuously). The path of holiness is
 thorny,
 And woman's nature corrupt.

*(Takes the letter, and crosses himself devoutly as
 he does so.)*

This act of virtue will absolve thee
 Many a sin. Hast thou, perchance,
 Another letter ?

Agaton (beseechingly). My lord !

Anselm (menacingly). Wouldst brave Hell's
 torments, woman ?

Agaton (giving another letter). Alas ! she wept
 so when she gave me this,
 As tho', poor soul, her heart would break.

Anselm. Will tears of wickedness allay the heat
 Of thy parch'd tongue when thou art burning ?

Agaton (crossing herself). Jesu ! Marie !

Anselm. Tell me the truth, wench ! Hast e'er
 Delivered letter of Heloise to Abelard ?
 Are these the first thou wouldst withhold ?

Agaton (trembling). Since you said, my lord,
 that the Devil
 Would fetch me hence alive if I but gave one,
 I swear that you alone have had them all.

Anselm. 'Tis well. Get thee to the chapel ;
 I'll shrive thee anon for thy concern
 In this most black affair.

[*Exit* AGATON.]

Anselm. Foolish oaf ! not thine is woman's art
 Of deft hypocrisy, else better hadst thou serv'd
 thy cause.

Deception oft can work what Truth would spoil,
 And Virtue's reticence is Cunning's opportunity.
 What says Abelard ?

*(Tears open one of the letters given by AGATON,
and reads) :—*

“ Beloved, still beloved HELOISE :
These lines, the last, are from the hapless wretch
Once by thee held dear ! Should my messenger
No answer bring to this my missive,
Then shall I know that for ever changed
Is Heloise to me. Then will I
At once the binding vows of priesthood take,
To render me invulnerable to thy deception.
Alas ! how easy ’tis the world to throw aside,
But oh, how difficult ’tis to renounce love !
The world’s injustice, its friendships feign’d,
Its tawdry pomps and aimless vanities,
Have no charms for me. But my soul
Is fraught with anguish that I must lose thee,
And as reason no consolation is in despair,
If thou art silent, to Heav’n I will offer
My heart’s cold ashes, whose fire so brightly burn’d
One time for Heloise. ABELARD.”

Anselm. One priest the more !

*(Tears the letter into fragments and puts the
pieces into his pocket.)*

What says Heloise ?

(Opens the other letter, and reads) :—

“ Cruel, but well-beloved ABELARD :
Thy silence has o’erwhelm’d my heart
With suffering and grief. Daily have I written thee

For these long months without response.
 Were thy vows like the summer birds that fly
 When winter's nigh ?
 If thou art silent still, I shall pattern take
 Of thy inconstancy and wed Prince Amadeus.
 In pity, Abelard, write one little word to me.
 The pray'r of all around me is
 That I thy hated rival should espouse.
 The Pope himself enjoins me in a letter
 To wed the Prince for fear of his displeasure.
 Pity me, and write to thy forsaken HELOISE."

*Anselm (tearing the letter into fragments, and
 placing them in his pocket).* One wife the
 more in the world of marriage !

Revenge is dear to human hearts as love of Fame.
 Now shall I be even with the hated Abelard.

(*Enter FULBERT.*)

Fulbert. Friend ! what had I done without thee ?
 Since thou beneath my roof hast stay'd,
 Thy counsel and thy weighty presence both
 Have me supported 'neath mine affliction.

Anselm. How fares thy niece ?

Fulbert. She's in her chamber weeping, and her
 grief

Is such that all do weep in sympathy with her.
 Alas ! she mourns the lover, not the fault.
 I read to her a message from the Pope,
 In which he doth command her make amends
 For her sin by lawful marriage to the Prince.

I join'd my prayers unto the Holy Father's
mandate,

And she entreateth me to wait until to-morrow
For her answer. Why till the morrow ?

I cannot tell.

Anselm (aside). I could tell thee why "till
to-morrow"

She would have thee tarry. She hopes an answer
Will forthcome unto her letter,—that one
Which now snugly lies in tatters in my pocket.

(*Aloud to FULBERT*) Will she consent to-morrow
to wed the Prince ?

Fulbert. She hath promised me all I should ask
If I but wait until the morrow.

Anselm. I counsel thee to brook no more delay ;
Marry her outright for fear of Abelard.

Fulbert. 'Tis my intention. Therefore I be-
seech thee,

If Heloise consents, arrange the nuptials,
Appoint the priest, invite the guests,
In pomp and state befitting such a ceremony.

Anselm. I will haste to Notre Dame, and ordain
All dignities pertaining to a noble marriage.

Fulbert. But why so fast ? Heloise will
promise me
Naught until the morrow.

Anselm. When a woman half promises,
Take it as a whole. She will consent.

Fulbert. Thy words like wine do give me courage.

Let us each to our appoint'd work
 In these great nuptials. Anon, good friend !
 My right, true friend, anon ! [Exit.
Anselm. Old dotard ! What ardently he
 wishes, he hastens
 To believe. He begg'd of me t'appoint
 The priest, and so I vow will I.
 To-morrowdoth Abelard take the vow of celibacy—
 None but he shall be the priest
 That joins the pair in wedd'd bonds.

SCENE 3

The interior of Notre Dame, showing altar magnificently decked with flowers and precious offerings. On one side of the altar is an enormous golden cross, at the base of which are three steps of white marble.

(Enter youths of the choir swinging censers, followed by young girls dressed in white, scattering flowers.)

Chorus. Love, thy great and potent sway
 All the sons of men obey ;
 On the sacred altar, see,
 Types of thy Eternity.

A Youth. Hail, renowned, youthful pair,
 Bless'd with every gift that's rare ;
 Be e'er yours on earth below
 All that Heav'n can bestow !

A Girl. Vernal youth will pass away,
Beauty lingers for a day ;
Love alone shall live and last,
When th' world itself is past.

A Youth. What is glory but a name ?
What so false as fleeting fame ?
But constant as the sun above
Is faithful and immortal love.

Chorus. Love, thy great and perfect sway,
All the race of men obey ;
On the sacred altar, see,
Types of thy Eternity.

(Scattering white roses, hyacinth, and jasmine, and swinging the censers, the youths and girls pass out. Enter HELOISE and MYRTILA. HELOISE is magnificently attired in a white robe, with a diadem of precious stones encircling her head. She looks melancholy and dejected.)

Heloise. Let us tarry here awhile. The others
Will shortly follow. Yet, 'ere they come,
I have a boon to ask of thee, Myrtila.
Wilt thou grant it ?

Myrtila. Thou know'st that all thou ask'st of me
Will be surely done, sweet Heloise.
Would that I could see thee smile again
As thou wert wont to do, ere Abelard,
That false one, did steal away
Thy heart from those that loved thee.

Heloise. Speak not thus! Thou know'st not
What slaves love makes of us, else thy lips
Had been in silence hush'd upon the theme.
List to me! The fearful step which now
I take in wedding Amadeus, is but to save
My uncle Fulbert from the further shame—
Alas! I've wrought enough upon him—
Of seeing me 'neath the Church's ban;
For the Holy Pontiff writes that wedlock's sanctity
Alone my sin can 'solve. If I refuse,
His excommunication follows.

Myrtila. Alas! that shame should spring from
love!

Heloise. Dear God, I love a man too well, and
Thee not enough.

Myrtila. But this request of thine, what is't?

Heloise. When the priest hath join'd the Prince
and me,

The Holy Father will revoke his curse
And change it to a blessing: 'tis then,
To-night, that I shall fly my spouse's arms
And swift embrace a rival's!

Myrtila. Heloise! thou ravest!

Heloise. He has a rival, and his name is Death,
And on his bony bosom would I lay
My weary brow and sleep my sorrow all away.
I, like a child, am weary of the play,
With the colour'd bubble we call life.
Since Abelard has gone I grope in darkness,

And to-night, when the Prince awaits his bride,
 This little friendly steel will ope the door
 To let me enter Death's great world of rest.

(Takes a small poniard from her breast.)

Myrtila. O horror !

Heloise. What horror lies in dreamless sleep ?
 A gentle, lasting sleep with all the senses still'd,
 The storm of passions calm'd, the mind's errors
 Allay'd, and the body's servitude quell'd for ever !
 Not what it is, but what cowards make of it,
 Transforms eternal sleep into a terror dark.

Myrtila. I cannot let thee die.

Heloise. What ! wouldst urge me on a
 wanton's life ?

To be a wife, when I have been
 The love of Abelard ! The thought revolts me !

Myrtila. How can I serve thee, poor wounded
 heart ?

Heloise. Nay, weep not, for thou too must go
 At thy allotted space. See that my cold form
 Is rob'd within that gown that Abelard
 Once lov'd to see me wear. 'Tis of velvet
 And of silk : the colours, white and rose :
 'Tis broider'd with seed pearls.
 Then, lay his book of poems on my breast,
 So if, perchance, I should awake and see him not,
 I still may read his loving, tender thoughts,
 And dream I hear his silver voice again.

(*They withdraw with arms entwin'd. They have scarcely passed out, when ABELARD enters, with his eyes earnestly fixed on the book he is holding. PRINCE AMADEUS, who has just arrived, in a gorgeous habit, is so engrossed with the splendour of his own appearance, that he stumbles against ABELARD.*)

Amadeus (angrily). Look to thy goings, churlish priest !

Thy manners are most damnable.

Abelard (haughtily). Presume not, sir, too much upon this cassock,

For a man's heart beats beneath it.

(*Enter FULBERT, ANSELM, LOTULF, ALBERIC, PRIESTS and ATTENDANTS.*)

Anselm (aside to LOTULF). Abelard knows not 'tis Heloise he must wed unto the Prince.

Lotulf. Hast not o'erstepped the narrow line that

Prudence from foolhardiness doth separate ?

What will he say when he sees who 'tis ?

Anselm. He dare not utterance give unto his thoughts ;

The Church's sanctity forbids it.

Lotulf. Hope not too much from sanctity ;

Passion far nearer to the human heart
Than Heav'n is.

Abelard (taking the place near the altar, aside).

Thoughts like fleeting clouds take shapes
fantastic.

I fear—yet know not why I fear—to meet
The would-be wedd'd pair.

(Enter HELOISE and MYRTILA. HELOISE, who has come upon the scene with drooping eyes, suddenly perceives ABELARD as the officiating priest, and stands as if transfixed.)

Abelard. Heloise !

Heloise. Abelard !

Abelard. Thou, then, art the bride !

Heloise. Thou, then, art the priest ! God save
My tortur'd heart from bursting ere I speak ;
A thousand letters I have writ to thee,
And had not one response.

Abelard. I, too, have writ to thee unnumber'd
times,
And not one answer had.

Heloise (despairingly). See to what thy silence
hath driven me !

Abelard (bitterly). I see well !
Thou seek'st God's blessing on
A newer and a richer lover.

Heloise. Cruel one ! be still. To-night had been
My wedding and my death in one.

Abelard. Methought that thou hadst weary
grown,
And car'd no more for me !

Heloise. Abelard ! 'tis thee alone I love !

Abelard. Break, my heart ! Thy words truth's
impress bear,
Altho' thy deeds be strange. 'Tis too late !
I dare not utter now the thoughts that flow
Like torrent from my breast o'ercharged,
For Reason dams them back with floodgates stern :
Thus Art doth stay fond Nature.

Heloise. Drive me not away from thee :
I am thy Heloise unchang'd, and changeless ever.
Altho' the world may turn a Janus face to thee,
'Twill make me doubly constant, if that could
e'er be.

Abelard (in despair). O God ! what time is this
Thus to speak to me ?

Heloise. If thou wait'st for another, thou
tarriest
Too long. Opportunities were but made for
princes ;
I am near thee now, thus let me e'er abide.
Thou hast been the source of all my sorrow ;
Be thou the well-spring of my lasting joy,
And bid me stay with thee.

Abelard. Thy lov'd voice doth urge me to respond
Against those vows that I to Heav'n have made.
Add not to my woe by thy sweet constancy ;

Bid me forget thy favours and that right
 Which they now claim from my too willing heart.
 Plead no more! It is too late;
 We are the sport of mocking fate.

Anselm. Unrighteous priest, recall
 Thy rebel heart unto thy pious obligations.
 Insult no more the Holy Church with the
 Avowals of thy vain love.

Abelard. Surely love partakes of all that's holy:
 The very Church is built on its foundation—
 Or, rather, should be—my noble, reverend lord.

Amadeus. I have withheld myself thus far,
 In pure respect for this most holy spot;
 But, as I am a man of temper hot and passionate,
 I'll brook this saucy priest no more:
 My bride—I claim my bride!

Heloise. Thou claim'st a shadow,
 For I did ne'er mean to be thy wife
 As thou dost think it.

Fulbert. Insensate wretch, miscalled a woman!
 Where is thy softness and thy compliance?
 Thy modesty? thy sex's gracious virtues?

Abelard. O that Philosophy
 Can teach what to itself it never can apply!
 Tempt me no more, Heloise, for I am sworn
 To Him who drieth hence all tears.

Heloise. How like a man! Thou think'st but
 of thy grief,
 And not of me so hardly left to pine.

What shall I do—renounc'd by Abelard—
But seek a speedier peace than Heav'n intend'd ?

*(Draws the dagger from her breast. ABELARD
seizes it from her.)*

Abelard. Hold ! there is a refuge still, when
Ev'ry other hope hath fled.
Tho' affliction doth encompass thee
Like threatening waves about a fragile barque,
To whom the cruel world hath clos'd her ports,
I still do know a harbour, O my Heloise,
Merciful and safe, where storms do never reach,
To harm thee with their passion.

Heloise (with eyes full of hope). And this
Haven of hope, belov'd, show it me !

*Abelard (pointing to the great Cross that stands
by the altar).* There is the refuge from all
earthly ills,

Human woe and pain, and man's injustice ;
'Tis the symbol of all evil, and its cure.
Clasp it to thy breast ; 'twill uphold thee,
And take away the sting of every anguish.
There is the Cross, Heloise ; bear it bravely,
And bravely it will bear thee. O thou dear one !
Now too sensible to human love, go !
Drive it from thy soul, and implant instead
The higher love of thy salvation !

*(HELOISE, taking off her crown of jewels, casts it
down, and going to the Cross, sinks at the
foot of it weeping.)*

Amadeus. False priest ! thy wiles shall never
steal my bride,
Tho' they have robbed her senses ! Die !

(Draws, and, as he would make a rush at ABELARD, PHILINTUS, who has been quietly watching all his movements, darts forward, and parrying the blow with his own weapon, stabs the PRINCE. The PRINCE falls.)

Fulbert. Wretched woman ! see what fearful
consequence
Doth e'er attend an evil deed.
What canst do now ?

Heloise (clinging to the Cross). My choice is
here, since I have lost
That thing in life by me most priz'd.

Myrtilla (starting forward to HELOISE). Speak
but one word, one word to me,
Thy sorrowing friend !

Heloise. Sweet, gentle woman's heart to kindly
pity mov'd,
Pray that never thou shouldst love as I have
lov'd.

(Enter ABBESS and NUNS in solemn procession. They kneel round the Cross, to which HELOISE clings with her face hidden. ABELARD takes a last look at the cause of his misfortune, and tears himself away.)

Act V



ACT V

(After fifteen years.)

SCENE I

(The Convent Garden of the Paraclete.)

(HELOISE is seated at a rustic table reading. A young NUN is picking flowers, and the sound of female voices singing a hymn is softly borne upon the air.)

Heloise (putting down her book). That tears
could wash away the mem'ry
Which lashes me with thongs of long-past
joys,
Kindling my still riotous blood into rebellion
Against these cloister walls. O false piety!
How real a vice there is 'neath seeming virtue,
And how oft 'neath seeming vice is virtue
hid!
While my heart still beats for love of man,
My tongue but teaches here the love of God.

In vain I light my matin lamp and many aves say ;
Between my God and me terrestrial thoughts will
stray.

When sensuous swelling organs tempt the sinner's
heart

To raise his voice in pray'r with music's gentle
art,

I murmur hollow words with wandering thoughts
oppress'd,

For human love, not love Divine, rules within my
breast.

*(The young NUN who has been gathering flowers
approaches HELOISE with a bunch of blossom.)*

Nun. I fear I do disturb your pious thoughts ;
Yet, since your generous heart, sweet mother,
Does ever more forgive than much condemn,
I ask your pardon if I rudely break
Upon your blessed meditations.

Heloise. What wouldst thou, daughter ?

Nun (timidly). Will it please you, sweet mother,
To give me leave to deck the altar, and that
No other hand but mine should do 't ?
Oh, chide me not for this ambitious sin !

Heloise. Thy wish is grant'd, daughter !
Go ! thy task accomplish. None else
Shall do the work. It is my order.

*(NUN makes a grateful obeisance and goes into the
Convent.)*

Heloise. There are none so meek but have
Their triumphs and ambitions.

(*Enter MYRTILA hastily, habited in the garb of a nun.*)

Heloise. Ah, Myrtila! hast thou come to
cheer me
With thy discourse merry? God forgive me!
For ne'er do I behold thee but I feel
A pang that thy bright spirit is entombed
Within this gloomy place, instead of that
Gay world without the Convent gates.

Myrtila. There was no world without my
friend for me;
And when my friend I followed, I did
Not leave the world; or, if I did, I found
A better one than it beyond the Convent walls.
But I have news for thee.

Heloise. News! Didst say that thou hast
news for me?
What is it? Hath the Convent tabby-cat
Lapp'd up our cream or ate the fish?
Perchance the hens have suck'd up all their eggs?
If that be so—and surely it is Friday on the
morrow—

We shall but poorly fare.

Myrtila (retrospectively). To think that once
we far'd so sumptuously!
How mortals change!

Heloise. Thy news, my fair philosopher, if
 thou
 Hast any ?

Myrtila. Dear friend ! I ne'er see thee but I
 think
 That 'neath thy sombre garb thy tortur'd
 heart

Doth ev'r bleed in mem'ry of Abelard.

Heloise. Hush ! Breathe not that name !
 There are some griefs we dare not utter,
 Tho' they are ever upmost in our thought,
 Sapping our vitality, as the ivy which
 Like a vampire doth suck the strength
 From the body of the oak.

Myrtila. How couldst thou live and suffer thus !

Heloise. The tortur'd mind lasts longest.
 (*Pauses*) But this news ?

Myrtila. A messenger did bring this letter

[*Gives HELOISE a letter.*

And the messenger was sent by Abelard.
 I did delay to give it thee before,
 For fear its very suddenness would hurt thee.

(*HELOISE seizes the letter, and opening it, reads in
 a voice trembling with emotion*) :--

“ Abelard to Heloise, a well-beloved sister in
 Christ !

Rome's Holy Father hath enjoin'd

The Convent of the Paraclete I should visit,
 To enquire the method of your teaching,
 For which your name is justly famous.
 When you, renowned Abbess, have then me
 instructed,
 A full report thereon to Rome I will transmit
 For the world's enlightenment. The Holy Father
 Sends his blessing on your virtues.
 Unless untoward accident befalls,
 I should arrive at noon to-day. ABELARD."

Heloise. How colder than the snow that rests
 on Alpine heights

His words do press on me ! I had rather had
 One loving line from him,
 Than all the praise of Christendom.

Myrtila. Mayhap 'tis but a pretext feign'd
 So he again should see thee !

Heloise. O Friendship ! thou alone canst
 solace us
 When Love deserts !

*(Convent clock strikes twelve. NUNS, SISTERS,
 and SCHOLARS troop out of the Convent, and
 passing by HELOISE, respectfully salute her.
 Enter ABELARD, whom fifteen years have
 greatly altered, with PRIESTS and ATTEND-
 ANTS.)*

*Heloise (striving with difficulty to maintain a firm,
 dignified, but withal gentle demeanour).*

Most holy and renowned Father, you are welcome !
 Welcome to this place to which you yourself
 Have given fame, long ere you did give it me
 To govern. Pardon me this halting
 And disjoint'd speech. Greatly am I overcome
 With this unexpect'd honour !

*Abelard (in calm, measured, and deliberate tones,
 looking at her as though she were entirely
 strange to him, from under his drooping
 eyelids). Rever'd and gracious Abbess,
 Your gentle words*

Reproach me more than sharp reproof could do.
 This visit's suddenness, in truth, is worthy blame ;
 But let the number of my varied labours
 My excuses frame. The niceness of refined ways
 Are in active life, alas ! too soon forgot ;
 And labour, whilst it polishes our souls,
 Oft roughens our externals. Therefore, I pray
 you,

Pardon me for being thus abrupt !
 Faith's zeal, if not vain worldly form, must plead
 for me.

*Heloise (tremulously, but significantly). The
 presence of the famous Abelard is plea
 enough*

To exculpate far greater faults than this.

*Abelard (with courteous, but careless unconcern,
 inclining his head as if in thanks for the
 compliment). Thanks !*

Gentle Abbess, with you I would confer without
delay

Upon the matter of my letter. Rome
Fain would know the method of your teaching,
To impart it thro' the world.

Heloise (making a profound obeisance). This
mountain of honour heaped upon me
Doth truly overwhelm my humble heart.

(Aside) His voice and manner turn my blood
to ice ;

His praise doth make me hate the name of
virtue,

His tones do make of it so harsh a thing.

(To the NUNS, SISTERS, and SCHOLARS) Go,
daughters ! I would have private converse

With our illustrious visitor. I pray ye, show
These gentlemen our far-fam'd Paraclete.

FIRST NUN *(whispering to another as she passes).*

Is that the renowned Abelard,
Of whom 'tis said all ladies were enamour'd ?

Second Nun (whispering). How cold and stern
he looks ! And inaccessible

To love and tenderness as the very rocks !

First Scholar. They say he once was young
and debonair.

I'll not believe it !

Myrtila. Come, gentlemen, and let us to you
show

The wonders of our convent home.

(*Exeunt* MYRTILA, NUNS, SISTERS, SCHOLARS,
PRIESTS, *and* ATTENDANTS.)

Heloise. Hath grief so alter'd me, that thou
look'st so,
With calm, approving eyes bereft of love ?
Hath Change's hand so drawn the face of Heloise,
That thou regard'st it no more as the one
Thou once didst swear was all the world to thee ?
I'd rather have thee frown on me in anger,
Than gaze with eye so still and so dispassionate.
Perchance thy fame hath marr'd thy heart,
And raising thee, hath lower'd me !

Abelard (with proud humility). Regard me not,
I do beseech thee, as one
In any way above my fellows. I am a sinner
Prostrate before my Judge, and thy bitterness
Doth ill accord with my deep humility.

Heloise. Thou didst never love me !
Or, like all men, thy passion wan'd
When I had nothing more to offer thee !
O nature, human nature ! a shallow thing art
thou !
Ingratitude and cold neglect do bind thy wanton
brow.
A love unhallowed by the Church reaps this
reward :
To live desert'd and alone, or die a thing ab-
horr'd.

Abelard. Through Satan's ways our Father
leads us to His own.

Our former sin hath brought us here for good.

Th' illusion of life

Is short, but remorse is long. Curse me !

Curse me, Heloise, as a villain, and thy enemy,

For I did steal thine innocence from thee,

Which not Heav'n itself can e'er return.

I have pray'd and offer'd up my heart

T' appease the wrath to come, that I alone,

Not thou, shouldst suffer for our guilt.

Heloise. Thou hast no audience before thee
now,

But only one sad, broken woman, who

Doth love thee still beyond all earth and heav'n.

Come ! speak not more to me in measured tones,

In which, as France's highest and noblest prelate,

Thou teach'st students wisdom and cause of all

phenomena.

Frame thy words gently, Abelard, to me.

Remember why I enter'd here, and cast my youth

And pleasure all aside for thee. I was so young !

That for pity and for mem'ry now, feign a little

love,

E'en if thou dost mean it not.

Abelard. Speak not thus to me, Heloise, speak
not thus !

We are no longer of the earth. Wouldst thou

Destroy my piety in its infant state,

And strangle conscience' voice ? For penance
 We retir'd from the world ; let us not
 Recall those false joys past.

Heloise (with scornful bitterness). How easy 'tis
 for men those passions to condemn,
 When they in them no longer find delight.

Narrow is that mind which Heav'n hopes to reach,
 By doing only that which dogmas cold ordain !

Abelard. Are the lives of dead saints " rules
 and dogmas ? "

And the constancy of martyrs but a name ?
 Come, then, if thou think'st it fit and meet,
 And in thy holy habit thrust thyself between
 My God and me ! Come ! be thou a wall
 Of separation from salvation, and my sacred
 peace.

And yet, I would entreat thee, by all fondness past,
 To suffer me to shun destruction, and to lead
 Thee too from the yawning maw of Hell.

Heloise. There never did man reason yet,
 But it did blast the sentiment of woman.
 Thou hast made great strides to Heav'n's attain-
 ment !

But my devotion's earthly, and is fix'd upon a
 man.

Hast thou forgot those shining days,
 When all the world had no such joy
 As our two hearts did hold ? I needs must weep
 When now I think on 't. Delightful dream !

Tender vision of man's constancy, too soon
Dispell'd by time. Thou wert my dream,
My dream come true : my world, my light,
My nobler, better, higher self.

Darkness spread her wings where thou wert not,
And sunlight stream'd where'er thou trod'st,
Though night had fallen ! Thou wert my peace,
My soul's tranquillity ; and sorrow stood aside
Nor dar'd approach, when thou wert near,
Nor joy had one delight when thou wert far.

Abelard (in hurried and repressed accents). Thy
tears have washed the secrets of my soul,
That I had thought to take unto the grave.
Priestly vows have stemm'd my passion ; but
My thoughts in solitude are filled with dreams
of thee.

I search'd for an asylum far from love,
But the stillness as of death did minister
To summon up the heaven of our past.
I love thee ! Shame presses me on ev'ry side—
I should remember I am a priest—
But alas ! the love of God and piety do not
Annihilate the love for woman ! Ye cloisters !
Your murky shadows hide, but do not quench
The pangs of human passion and their attendant
tortures !

Why are the chalices of saints so harsh and bitter,
And the sinner's cup so sweet ? Easy 'twere
To tread the path of virtue, were it fair !

Heloise (in a voice of unutterable delight, going to ABELARD to embrace him). Thou lov'st me yet !

Abelard (moving away from her). To love thee truly is to leave thee !

I dare not even stay fulfil the Pope's behest ;
I cannot trust myself.

(Enter PRIESTS, NUNS, SISTERS, SCHOLARS, and ATTENDANTS, and MYRTILA.)

Abelard. Farewell, most wise and reverend Abbess !

In your pray'rs forget not mine iniquities,
My wretchedness, my sorrows, and my penitence.
Farewell ! Farewell !

[Exeunt ABELARD, PRIESTS, and ATTENDANTS.]

Myrtila (to HELOISE). Thou look'st so strange,
and like to swoon !

O God ! what ails thee ?

Heloise (faintly, and as though her mind is waning). 'Tis the old, old pain—my trouble o' the heart.

The disease is Abelard, and knows no cure ;
He's gone, and with him goes my life !

(Pauses, and, in her distraction, believes she sees ABELARD before her.)

But stay, he is not gone, for I behold
His eyes transparent, thro' which the world

Could view a great and noble tortur'd soul—
Tortured by earth's injustice—bend upon me
Their matchless light and proud intelligence.
His air divine, mysterious, and strange,
Doth mark him as a god 'midst men of clay !
Dear image of great Abelard !
Oh ! merit and celebrity ! Oh ! wonder of the age !
Despite the calumnies of thine enemies.
But mark, Myrtila ! Ne'er scorn a foe,
Howev'r base he be ; for little spites
Can work great ills—at least, so I have proved.
Hold me in thy arms, unworthy as I am,
And press thy lips to mine with kisses
Such as angels do exchange in Paradise.
How bright the world is thro' love's glasses !
Give me thy hand ! Inconstant ! Dost say,
Nay !
Then, prythee, go before !—to Heav'n lead the
way !

(She fancies ABELARD is leading, and tries to follow him, but, overcome by the mental strain, she falls lifeless into MYRTILA'S arms.)

Myrtila (calling). Help ! Help ! Help !
Our abbess is dying !

SCENE 2

The Abbey of St Cluni.

(Enter PHILINTUS as monk.)

Philintus. I have known places more holy than
 a monastery,
 Where the scenes of busy life were wildest ;
 And I have seen a layman lead
 A better life than many a monk.
 A priestly garb no more creates a godly mind
 Than kingly robes do make a righteous man.
 Tho', God's patience ! courtiers would have us
 Believe this miracle !

(Enter ABELARD.)

Abelard. What news, Philintus ?

Philintus. When thou didst go unto the
 Paraclete,
 I was called to shrive a woman.
 'Twas Agaton. Dost thou remember the pretty
 maid
 That waited once on Heloise ?

Abelard. Her waiting-woman ! As in a dream
 I do remember her. Well ! well !

Philintus. She was changed, as all of us
 Whom Autumn's sere has overtaken.

In weeping tones she did confess to me
 A sin that all her soul perturb'd
 With wild unrest. Then her poor, parch'd
 lips

Did murmur forth the story of her guilt,
 Which sore afflicted me. Dost thou recall
 The countless letters thou didst write to Heloise,
 And which to Agaton I did deliver ?

Abelard (impatiently). Well ! well !

Philintus. With threats and vile endeavours
 too successful,

Did Anselm, false and perjured Anselm, worm
 Them from the maid, who fear'd her soul's
 damnation.

So never one of all thy words reach'd Heloise,
 And ne'er a note of Heloise reach'd thee ;
 But all were giv'n to this villain, who compos'd
 Of all those notes harmonious a most profound
 discord !

Abelard. Chill time has cool'd my once hot
 blood ;

Tempestuous rage requires all youth's vigour
 To sustain it. O cruel, fiendish villain !
 To blight two loving hearts without a cause !
 I dare not think too much on 't, for fear
 My days be spent in vain regret, not work.
 O Justice ! thy bandaged eyes are blind indeed,
 Thy sword with rust corrodes, or never
 Turpitude like this unpunished had been !

Philintus. This earth were not earth at all if
wickedness
Thriv'd not more than honesty. Fulbert is dead ;
Anselm is rais'd
To be Archbishop in his stead.

Abelard (musing). Canst tell me, Philintus,
why the good are taken
And the wicked left behind ?

Philintus. The good are taken from the trouble
yet to come ;
The wicked stay that more may be their
share.

Abelard. My friend ! many strange events by
chance occur,
That, strive we how we may, never hap
By work alone.

(*Enter a MONK hastily.*)

Monk. Hold yourself in readiness, I pray !
His Majesty the King himself doth honour you
By coming here.

Abelard. The strumpet Fame, like Aphrodite
of Paphos,
Tho' she be Corruption's self, kings do worship
her.

An evil-doer patt'd on the back by Fortune
Is the welcome guest of monarchs, whilst
Modest merit pines thro' cold neglect.

Go, Philintus! see to my duties i' the chapel,
 Whilst I a king receive!

[*Exit* PHILINTUS.]

(*Fanfare. Enter* KING OF FRANCE, ANSELM,
now ARCHBISHOP OF PARIS, ATTENDANTS,
 COURTIERS, PAGES, PRIESTS, *etc.*)

King of France. 'Tis a monarch's privilege
 and glory

To seek those sons of fame who lend
 Honour to their country. Renowned Abelard,
 Hither have we come to tender thee our thanks
 For thy learning's services to France.

Abelard (with an obeisance and covert sarcasm).

Happy is that country whose king
 Looks to his people's welfare! Whom justice,
 And not party spirit, sways; whose mind
 Doth scorn the fickle tongue of flatterers and
 rises

Eagle-like to heav'n for the truth of things,
 Which he ne'er can hear from courtiers.
 From such a king judges will take pattern
 And mould their canker'd hearts to his,
 So ne'er wrongful or unjust sentence be
 Passed upon the innocent.

K. of France. Fain would we reward thee for
 thy work;

Therefore, learned Abelard, we charge thee
 To speak, and tell us thy desire.

Abelard. My desire is every man's, my liege ;
I ask for justice. 'Tis all, and yet therein
I feel I ask for more than is on earth.

K. of France. Think'st thou there is no justice ?

Abelard. It doth exist—in dreams !

K. of France. Thou speak'st as one embitter'd.

Abelard. When Fate pour'd out my cup of
life, my liege,

She did forget to sweeten it. Or, mayhap,
She poured my share into another's,
Who now two portions hath.

K. of France. Give words to thy complaint.

Abelard. Let me recall into your thoughts, my
liege,

A story of the Holy Writ the prophet Nathan
Did tell unto King David, and 'tis this.
Once there liv'd two men—one rich, one poor ;
The rich man had exceeding flocks and herds,
The poor man but one ewe lamb.
A puny thing it was, but greatly cherish'd,
As they who little have alone can love.
But lo ! there came a traveller one day,
And the rich man took not of his flock,
But slew the poor man's one ewe lamb,
And left him desolate.

K. of France. I answer as King David did :
He who did this thing shall die !
Thou speak'st in parables ; unfold thyself !
Who is he that wrong'd thee ?

Abelard (pointing to ANSELM, who in the parable has recognised himself as the rich man, and shrinks before the accusing eye and voice of ABELARD). There stands the whited sepulchre :

So mild to outward view, so full of hate within !
Full fifteen years gone by, by methods devilish
He me part'd from my love.

K. of France. Alas ! I do remember well that
sad and woeful tale

Of two who lov'd so true and tenderly.
Did Anselm work this cruel thing ?

(To ANSELM) My Lord Archbishop, answer to this
charge !

Abelard. What matter his words when guilt
Is writ upon his mien and countenance ?

K. of France (to ANSELM). What the King
hath giv'n, the King can take away.

We shrive thee of all honours, tho' the pain
Of just remorse belongs to Higher Hands ;
'Tis the lightning power beyond the commands
Of earthly potentates.

Anselm. O woe ! Guilt's punishment is
doubled

When it falleth on old age. Misfortune's mael-
strom

Sucks us down, and vigour being gone,
We have no pow'r left wherewith to wrestle !

[Exit.]

K. of France. Art thou satisfied now ?

Abelard. Can sated vengeance sorrow heal ?
Or present smiling fortune hide the scars
Of suffering past ?

K. of France. Nor Heav'n's King himself can
make
That which has been ne'er to have happ'd.
Take heart of grace, great Abelard ; the highest
honours
Are in store for thee.

Abelard. Honours that are thrust on age
Come too late, my liege. What is a marble
tomb

To the dead heart beneath that crav'd
In life sweet human love and fame ?

K. of France (excusatively). So much thou hast
assailed been,
That all thy bright ability avail'd not
In the balance 'gainst thy defects reputed.
Tardy recognition is better sure than none.

Abelard. Kings are nurtur'd in an air of falsity,
Like hot-house plants that know not heav'n's
breath.

Yet, being kings, their royalty should clear
The atmosphere corrupt that doth surround them.
'Tis not enough to be a king : a king should be
a man ;

Not heed such idle lying tales that sycophants
Do bring him.

K. of France. Dar'st criticise a king ?

Abelard (with affected humility). Nay; I criticise but that which men make of him.

Many there are that do think a crown
Brings every virtue with it. Yet Wisdom,
Temperance, Mercy, Stability, and Truth
Are not vain baubles which monarchs can
Acquire as they do the diadem and robes of
state.

The graces of the heart need years of practice
To perfect them, my liege. So it be e'er said,
The head the crown becomes, not the crown the
head.

K. of France. Monks are shorn of manners as
they
Are of hair.

Abelard. In courts, men's honesty from their
souls
Is shorn, my liege.

K. of France. Mannerless priest! one word of
mine
Could level thee with the dust!

Abelard. There is another King 'fore whom all
men
Are equal. One word of His, my liege,
And you and earth would chaos be.
Lesser fears are e'er by the greater swallow'd;
Therefore, with greater fear upon me,
How can I dread the wrath of temporal power ?

K. of France. Thy priest's robe saves thee
from mine anger !
Farewell, proud man ! we shall not meet again.

(Exit, followed by ATTENDANTS, PRIESTS, COURTIERS, etc.)

Abelard (alone). Will a king's robe save him
from retribution
For his many deeds of cruelty and wrong ?
O Guilt ! thou art more damning in proportion
To the offender's rank !

(Enter PHILINTUS.)

Abelard. What tidings, Philintus ?

Philintus. Alas ! they are grievous.

Abelard. All tidings are ill to me of late.
But what is this new one ? Methought
That sorrow had no shaft that she
Had not against me sped.

Philintus (aside). Unhappy messenger that
I am !
More hapless than the story to be told !

(Aloud) Dear Abelard ! one of the renown'd
lights
Of our Church is dead—extinguished !

Abelard. Let masses be said for the soul
depart'd.
See to 't at once ! But stay, who was't ?

Philintus (with emotion he endeavours to suppress). An abbess.

Abelard (meditatingly). Did she come within my jurisdiction ?

Death is a cold journey we all must take.

Philintus (aside). Will he apply that chill philosophy

To his own affliction ?

(Aloud) Thou didst know her, Abelard. She was thy star

For good and evil in this life—thy Heloise !

Abelard (after a pause, in which he appears stunned with horror and astonishment. He speaks in a voice of intense emotion). Dead, say'st thou ? Then say no masses for her,

But let us pray to her that she should pray for us.

She, the fairest angel of them all in heav'n.

Dead, say'st thou ? But no, I'll not believe thee ;

'Tis a trick to lure me to her. Come ! say 'twas

A falsehood told for love, and I'll forgive thee ;

Ay, love thee more for telling it, *Philintus*.

Death dare not claim the good and beautiful,

And leave the old and wicked still to live.

The grisly shape would fear to touch her,

So much was she of glowing life the image.

Philintus. Alas ! would that I had died instead !

Abelard. My friend! she is not dead. The
stars that shoot
Athwart the firmament but change their places;
So she hath places changed, but liveth still
Where we with human eyes can never follow.

Philintus. Take what comfort that thou canst
of grief;
Nature's sweet relief it is to sorrow for the dead.

Abelard. Of what disease died she?

Philintus. 'Twas said of a broken heart.

Abelard. But when my eyes did last behold her,
She seemed well.

Philintus. The Master of all good hath said
Appearances lie more than words.

Abelard. I kill'd her by my harshness,
And mask'd the blow in duty's name
To make it less severe.

Philintus. Reproach not thyself; 'twas fated
thus,
And mortal hand had naught to do with it.
Yet, 'tis passing strange she liv'd so long
Without thee, and, when thou cam'st, to die.

Abelard. Prosperity destroys thousands, but
adversity
Tens of thousands. Her life hung upon
A hope, the hope to be with me once more.
Alas, that I should say it! And when I cut,
Like Atropos, the slender thread that held her,
She fled from earth.

Philintus. Life's a battle ! She is at peace.
Be thankful that her wars are o'er.
The messenger who brought these tidings did
avow

That at the Paraclete confusion reigns supreme,
Like a braid'd hive when the queen bee's flown !

Abelard. Go thou unto the Convent and arrange
All fitting obsequies for my belov'd.

Spare not state, and say I'll come anon.

Bid them clothe her form in vestments sacred,
Which yet will be more holy by the contact
With her person noble. Let white-stol'd priests
Prolonged masses 'cite beside her relics cold,
Since it is the custom ; her spirit

Needs no such help. What slaves are we to habit,
That, when an angel lives and dies amongst us,
We needs must pray for her, as tho' her life
Was not a supplication far more worth
Than empty words of deedless hypocrites.

Philintus. I will look to the mournful rites,
As thou thyself wouldst do. [Exit.

Abelard (alone). Come, Death ! twin-brother of
unlighten'd Sorrow,

And be my night of rest ! Hold forth thine icy
hand,

And clasp my living one in thine, and I will bless
thee !

Come, sit beside me, and I will welcome thee

As never man has welcomed friend ! Be my guest,

And I will entertain thee like a king, altho' thy
 retinue
 Be endless, mute, and terrible ! Then, king-like,
 thou
 Must ask me back unto thy land, and I will
 prove
 Thy loyal subject, not to leave thee ever.
 O God ! that what we pray for most should be
 Grant'd in the least degree ! When she liv'd,
 Duty did come first ; now, she's gone,
 Love's recollection bows my spirit to the earth,
 And duty seems but mockery.

(As ABELARD soliloquises, he gradually and almost imperceptibly changes from the cold-hearted ascetic priest to the wild dreamer.)

How strange it is that, ere we leave the world,
 There comes a time when youth's sweet vernal
 days
 Flow back upon the mem'ry, like a tide
 Upon the strand, which age and grief have
 parch'd !
 Each trivial act and thought is magnified, and
 assumes
 Aspect so portentous, that things of moment
 Oft are lost within them ! I recollect Heloise
 Did love to see me clad in gallant garb,
 Not cloth'd in this dull habit. But why recall
 This pretty whim ? What greater grief is there

Than thoughts of pleasure past when misery is
near ?

O hell ! thou hast no torture like to mem'ry !

* * * * *

There's something in the air. 'Tis passing warm ;
I'll ope the casement, and let the wind blow in.

*(ABELARD opens the casement, and the place,
hitherto dark, is suddenly overspread by a
flood of moonlight. He appears to change
still more, as he passionately apostrophises
the dead HELOISE in words of mingled grief
and sadness. His old-time self—the ardour
of his youthful love—seems to rejuvenate
him.)*

Where, O my belov'd, do now thy footsteps fall ?
Canst, from where thou art, hear my plaintive
call ?

Oh ! for one brief hour to have thee back once
more,

To learn that there is meeting when mortal life
is o'er !

Now Fancy—cruel spirit !—doth the passions
rouse,

Calling voiceless phantoms from her charnel-house.
They wear bright living colours, hapless man to
show

Life's elusive joys—and the reality of woe.

Hear, O my belov'd! each chalic'd flow'r dear
 Lowly hangs her head and drops a dewy tear.
 The song-birds silent brood, the hills are grey
 and stern,

Since Heloise has gone, and never must return.
 Nature rules by changes. The seasons come and
 go :

Summer deck'd in flowers, Winter wrapp'd in
 snow.

'Midst the world's mutation I am changeless now,
 Since sorrow hath with wither'd leaves endiadem'd
 my brow.

*(In the flood of the moonlight the shade of HELOISE
 is seen slowly to disclose itself.)*

Heloise! thou who wert the sunshine of my life,
 Which without thee is like night,
 Take me hence with thee!

* * * * *

Hear me! Hear me!

Heloise, my belov'd! O take me hence!
 And in that space of blue infinitude
 Let us together be! Or let us sleep
 Deep and dreamless in the breast of earth;
 I care not which—so that I am with thee.
 I tortured thee in life, and now in death
 Thou rackest me with fond remembrance
 Of sacrificéd love! Take me hence!
 'Twas for thee alone I sought renown!

When men applaud'd, I did think of thee
 And how my fame would please thee.
 Like the sun, thou shon'st on me from far,
 Knowing not that thou didst generate
 My better self unto a noble ferment
 'Gainst injustice and the thousand persecutions
 Which e'er beset new thought.

* * * * *

Christ, sweet Christ is merciful !
 None did yet appeal to Him in vain.
 He doth grant the contrite heart its peace,
 When bruis'd and wound'd in life's battle.

*(The shade of HELOISE stretches her arms towards
 ABELARD.)*

I may come then, and shall not be divid'd
 more !
 Where now is thy sting, O Death ? Where, Grave,
 Thy victory ?

*(As the entranced and deranged ABELARD moves
 towards the shade of HELOISE, the moon is
 suddenly obscured by a sombre cloud and
 wraps the scene in darkness. Presently the
 place becomes light again, this time from the
 torches of MONKS who enter, preceded by PHIL-
 INTUS. With an ejaculation of horror and
 despair, the latter beholds the lifeless form of
 ABELARD on the ground, and sinks beside it*

in an agony of grief. The MONKS kneel reverently and pray for the departed soul of their chief. As they do so, the peals of the organ and the voices of the choir are heard at their orisons, chanting) :—

“ ’Gainst earthly passions, Jesu, pray,
Deliver us by night and day;
Unlink those fearful chains that hold
Men to lust and thirst of gold.

Miserere Domine ! ”

THE END

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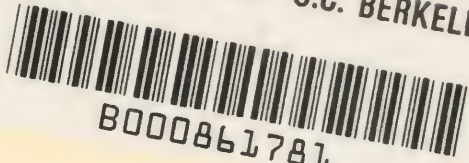
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