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Yvette Guilbert as "Our Lady"
Sketched by Julie Brown

GAYBOUR

A Miracle Play of Our Lady
Fourteenth Century

Neighbourhood Playhouse Plays No. II

1

GUIBOUR

A MIRACLE PLAY OF OUR LADY

VERSION FROM THE OLD FRENCH

BY

ANNA SPRAGUE MACDONALD

730
1122



THE SUNWISE TURN, *Inc.*
2 EAST 31ST STREET, NEW YORK

1919

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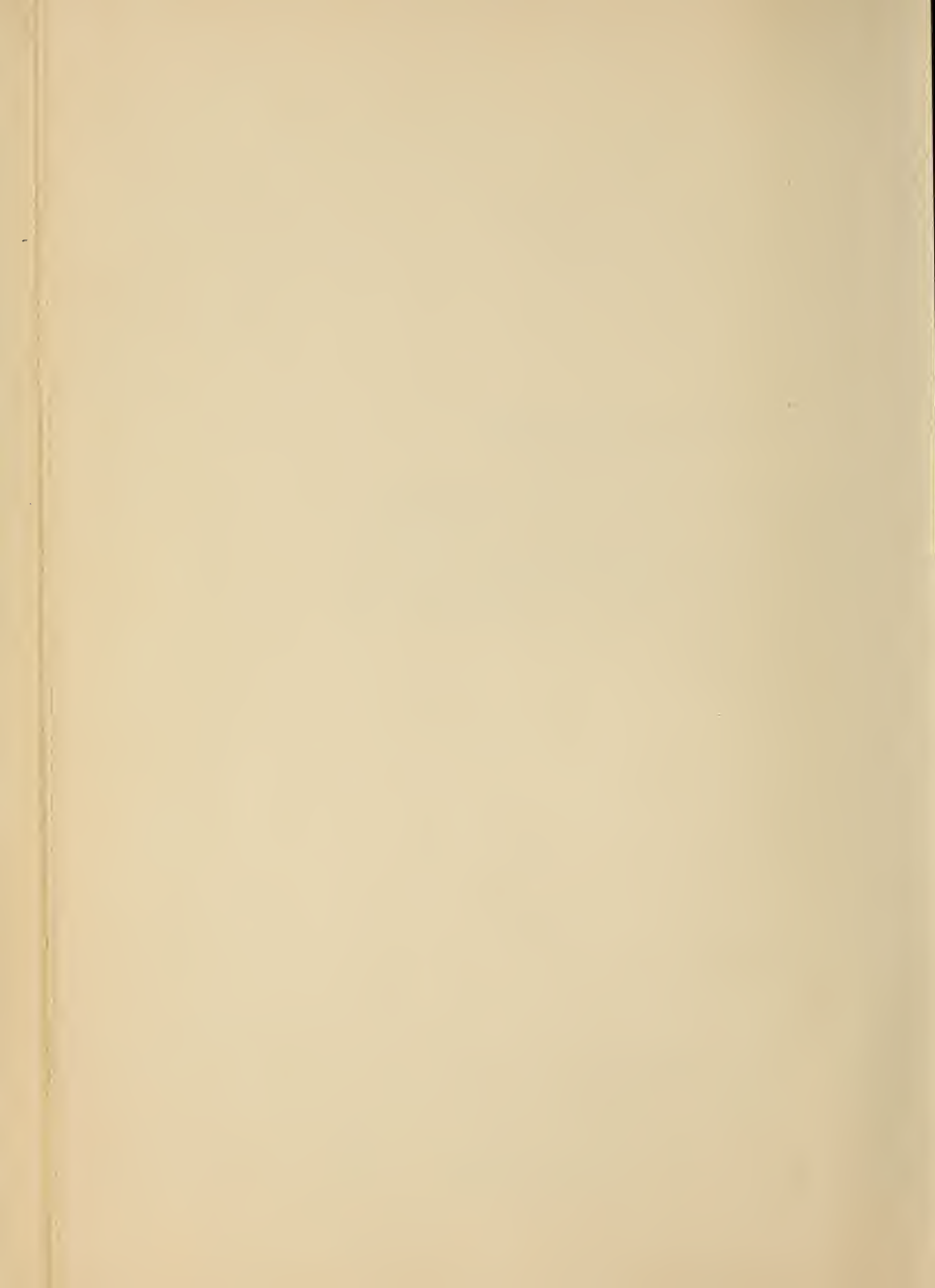
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APR 21 1919

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TO
YVETTE GUILBERT
IN MEMORY OF
HER BEAUTIFUL AND MOST MOVING PORTRAYAL
OF GUIBOUR,
HER FELLOW WORKERS
AT THE NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAYHOUSE
DEDICATE THIS BOOK

6/1/11
Part 1
no.



FOREWORD

“**G**UIBOUR,” or, as it is known in the original French, “Un Miracle de Nostre Dame, Comment elle garda une femme d'estre arse,” is preserved in manuscript number 7208.4.B, in the Bibliothèque du Roi.

Almost nothing is known about this work, except that it belongs to a collection of forty (some authorities say forty-three) Miracle Plays,—all celebrating in some way the intervention of Our Lady. No one knows whether this cycle is the work of one man or of a group of men. From a reference in “Guibour” to “Guillaume, maire de Chiefvi,” it is probable that one of two villages (Chivy), both near Laon, is meant and that the author was a Laonnais.

These Miracles were presented by members of a “Pui Nostre Dame.” The Puy was a mediæval confraternity, half ecclesiastical, half literary in character. Its

connection with the church must have been very close, as sermons preceded or formed a part of many of the Miracle plays. There is a long sermon in the first part of "Guibour."

The most original feature of this play, distinguishing it sharply from the others of the cycle, is the mass episode, the only known instance of this particular use of the mass in French mediæval dramatic literature. Though the "Guibour" mass, with its very simple and colloquial dialogue, may seem strange to a modern audience, yet to lovers and students of old-time lore it is the part of the play most characteristically mediæval. One gets from it the same quality that charms in those primitive pictures of the Holy Family, which show them amid all the homely details of everyday contemporary life. Moreover, the plays were written during the Hundred Years' War, when France was invaded and suffering in northern France acute. Then the hearts of men turned to the pitying Mother of Christ for comfort and consolation, and the nearness of radiant Holy Folk was sincerely and passionately believed. It is this

endearing sense of the intimate brotherhood of heaven and earth that gives a charm all its own to the last part of "Guilbour," and which intensifies the creed of the Middle Ages, set forth in the first part: the idealization of the feminine virtues of chastity and fidelity, and divine forgiveness through the Virgin Mary.

It was Madame Yvette Guilbert who first discovered the acting possibilities of this old play, and to her belongs the credit for the Neighbourhood Playhouse presentment, so glorified by her art.

A. S. M.

THE NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAYHOUSE,
March 8, 1919.

PERSONS OF THE PLAY

GUIBOUR
GUILLAUME, *her husband*
DAUGHTER (Marie)
AUBIN, *her husband*
ROBERT, *first neighbor*
GAUTIER, *second neighbor*
AN INTIMATE FRIEND
MANDOT, *first harvester*
SENESTRE, *second harvester*
AUBERI, *first officer of the law*
GASPARD, *second officer of the law*
BAILIFF
A PORTER
SISTER OF AUBIN
COUSIN OF AUBIN
COCHET, *the executioner*
PRIEST
NUNS
POOR FOLK
NIGHT WATCH
VOICE OF GOD
OUR LADY
ST. GABRIEL
ST. MICHEL
ST. JEAN
ST. RAPHAEL
ST. URIEL

(*In the original manuscript there are no scene divisions and no stage directions.*)

“G UIBOUR” was first produced at the
Neighbourhood Playhouse, New York, on
January 18, 1919, with the following cast:

CHARACTERS

G UIBOUR *Yvette Guilbert*
G UILLAUME, her husband.. *L. Rogers Lytton*
M ARIE, their daughter..... *Alice Lewisohn*
A UBIN, her husband..... *Rollo Peters*
S ERVITOR *Sam Gluck*
R OBERT, first neighbor..... *John F. Roach*
G AUTIER, second neighbor.. *J. Upton Lytton*
A N INTIMATE FRIEND..... *Rose B. Schiff*
M ANDOT, first harvester.. *S. P. Zalmanovic*
S ENESTRE, second harvester.. *Bert Rudolph*
A UBERI, first officer of the law.
S. Bennet Tobias
G ASPARD, second officer of the law
I. Robert Broder
B AILIFF *William A. Rothschild*
A PORTER..... *Clement Willenckick*
S ISTER OF AUBIN..... *Polaire Weissman*
C OUSIN OF AUBIN..... *Ida Schiff*
C OCHET, the executioner... *Wells Spalding*
P RIEST *Richards Hale*
F IRST NUN..... *Ludmilla Toretzka*
S ECOND NUN..... *Helen Hoadley*

THIRD NUN.....*Sonya Medvedieff*
 FOURTH NUN.....*Klara Bloomfield*
 NIGHT WATCH.....*Sol Friedman*
 FIRST POOR WOMAN.....*Florence Levine*
 SECOND POOR WOMAN.. *Cornelia Valenstein*
 THIRD POOR WOMAN.....*Sybil Delman*
 VOICE OF GOD.....*Richards Hale*
 OUR LADY.....*Irene Lewisohn*
 ST. GABRIEL.....*Margherita Sargent*
 ST. MICHEL.....*Nell Vincent*
 ST. JEAN.....*Ulysses Goldberg*
 ST. RAPHAEL.....*Bertha Uhr*
 ST. URIEL.....*Blanche Talmud*

Ladies, Gentlemen, Youths, Peasants, Monk
 —*Rose Uhr, Mathilda Wittenberg, Sol
 Friedman, Maurice Friedman, Esther
 Trynz, Elizabeth Hurwitz, Rosetta Hur-
 witz, Ira Uhr, Paula Trueman, Rhea
 Brautman.*

GUIBOUR

GUIBOUR

HEREWITH begins a Miracle Play of Our Lady in which she saved a woman from burning at the stake.

SCENE I

(Music of Mass within church is heard before and during opening of curtain. Front curtains part and reveal a square in a fourteenth century town of northern France.)

Back stage is a two-storied house. Each story has a separate curtain which closes when the action within is over. The lower room is the main apartment of Guibour's house, and is richly furnished. The upper room is Aubin's bedchamber, with canopied bed. The two stories are connected by a staircase. In the floor of Guibour's room is a trap-door leading to the cellar of the house. Steps give access from lower room to square.

Left stage is the Bailiff's Court-Room. Through a Gothic window one sees a stately chair for the Bailiff and a table. The aperture is large enough for the audience to

follow the action within. Extreme left stage toward the footlights, a door leads from the Bailiff's court to the square.

Right stage is the front porch of a church. Wide steps lead from the square to a narrow platform extending the width of the church. The portal is in the centre of the church façade. At the right of the portal, a niche occupied by Saint Jean; on the left, the audience side, another niche in which the Virgin stands. Gabriel and Michel are in niches within the portal. In front of the Virgin, on the platform, is a stone prie-dieu.

As the Mass music ceases, the curtains of Guibour's room open showing all four of the family standing at table and crossing themselves at end of grace.)

GUILLAUME

Hearken, Guibour, I fain would tell you of my day's set task. I am off straightway to the fields to look at my crops. They will soon be harvest ripe, so I must needs take early thought and hire me laborers to reap them, for hands are scarce these times.

GUIBOUR

Sir, your plan is good, and well contents me. I would not gainsay you in anything,

for every word and work of yours is bent to prosper us. Go, therefore, with my full assent.

DAUGHTER

Prithee, dear father, be kind and take me with you. I have not left this house for long and long, so I should like a little pleasuring, and who is merrier comrade than yourself?

GUILLAUME

Gladly, my child. Come you, too, since your heart is set upon it.

DAUGHTER

Off and out with us, then. See, I am ready, sir.

AUBIN

Take care, go you no dangerous way.

(Guillaume and daughter descend steps to square. Enter First and Second Neighbor. All greet one another. Exeunt Guillaume and Marie. First and Second Neighbor converse in low tones.)

GUIBOUR

Welladay, Aubin, mark you how blithe your wife is, jaunting afield with her father. Son, of your courtesy, walk with me to the church. It will please me much to have your company, so prithee come.

AUBIN

Only a churl would say you nay, not I.
It is a joy to serve you, mother, in great
things and in small.

GUIBOUR

Now let us hence. I should be well content if I could only get a place up front near the preacher without elbow-push or ill behavior. Now, walk apace toward church.

(They descend steps to square. Curtains of house close. Meeting First and Second Neighbor, they greet one another. Guibour and Aubin pass within church.)

FIRST NEIGHBOR

Eh—look there, Gautier, see you the Mayor's wife, crook-arm with her son-in-law? They say for certain sure they are love birds.

SECOND NEIGHBOR

Ay, it is common talk he beds her as his wife. Foul misdoings, if you ask me.

FIRST NEIGHBOR

Truly, i' faith, yet our tongue wagging will never stay their wantoning. Come, let us fetch a measure of wine. We'll drink together, man, unless you know a merrier pastime. What say you to a jolly bottle?

SECOND NEIGHBOR

I'll not say nay. What ho, for the tavern!

(Exeunt Neighbors. Guibour and Aubin come out of church.)

GUIBOUR

'Tis thronged. The folk outerowd us, so I will kneel me here.

(Kneels on stone prie-dieu.)

Son, if church irks you, or if you wish to seek your pleasure in the town, go freely. I would not thwart lad's sport this jocund day.

AUBIN

Verily, I choose the gay town streets. I was not schooled to skin my knees in prayer or stuff my ears with sermons. My thanks, dear lady mother.

(Exit Aubin.)

GUIBOUR

(To Virgin in niche.)

Ah, liege lady of high heaven, woe to her who scorns your service. Blessed is she who sets her heart and thought on you, for no one is too lost in evil for your pity. Who seeks you is saved forthwith. O lady, star and crown of Paradise, God's best and nearest, be my refuge. Sweet Virgin, in your loving kindness, purify my soul, that

when my body dies I may escape the dark of hell, and deserve the heritage of heaven that I so ardently desire.

(Congregation leaves church. Last comes the Intimate Friend.)

FRIEND

Gentle Neighbor, God give you good day.

GUIBOUR

May he pardon your sins and mine.—
How fares your husband? Well, I am sure.

FRIEND

Thanks be to God, he is. And you,
Neighbor?

GUIBOUR

In all things prospering. God has showed us many a favor, but blessed us most of all in our dear son-in-law. In faith, I deem that God inspired us to choose him for our daughter. Never was such a goodly youth. She could not find a better.

FRIEND

Neighbor, I cannot rest me snug in any place where I am forced to hear blame and foul talk against a dear loved friend. I speak for her with might and main. Then do my duty and tell her all the scandal, so with good warning she may guard her fair repute.

GUIBOUR

What mean you? Why speak you thus to me? Prithee, say on.

FRIEND

Yea, I shall be frank of tongue and tell you for your good. Neighbor, a tale goes wild fire through the town that Aubin is your light o' love. They say you yield to him right willingly whenso and how much he pleases. The twain of you are close as core and apple. They even wink when he steps forth so bravely decked, and think they know the reason for his comeliness. They say, he must be fine to pleasure two, his wife and mother.

GUIBOUR

Alackaday, that all the town should thus besmirch my name. Neighbor, upon my honour as a woman and a friend, they lie. I am most innocent of this. Whoever has spread this infamy, I know not, but I know him guilty of mortal sin. God forbid they should accuse me of such shame.

FRIEND

Saints aid my soul, I warned you in good faith. Praise me not, nor blame me either, Neighbor.

GUIBOUR

Nay, dame, I thank you from my heart, — yet, prithee, when you hear it said, deny it boldly, for it is not true.

FRIEND

I well believe you, yet, henceforth, be wary and on your guard. I commend you to God's keeping and so farewell.

GUIBOUR

Friend, God brim your day with favors. I thank you once again.

(Exit Friend.)

O sweet Mother of God, what evil has befallen me? Foul the minds that heap such shame on me unjustly. Yet how refute it? I can but sorrow; do naught save weep and wail. O Mother Mary, what shall I do? I shall not rest, but day and night ponder some means to rid me of this infamy.

(Guibour goes into church, as First and Second Harvesters enter.)

FIRST HARVESTER

Senestre, friend and comrade, let us go seek the market-place. Mayhap we'll find a master there. Our pockets are stark empty. We must not leave this town until we earn some money.

SECOND HARVESTER

Well spoke, Mandot, march on. Forward, good fellow, to the big town square.

FIRST HARVESTER

I am away, follow at heel. Senestre, I am afraid it is very early. See, there is not a living soul about save you and me.

SECOND HARVESTER

There is no great harm in that, Mandot; better be first and fat-fed, than last and lean. Please God, some one will come soon and give us means of gain.

(Exeunt Harvesters.)

GUIBOUR

(Coming out of church.)

Never again shall I be glad of heart; never, until this shame is wiped away. Yet this can never be. While Aubin lives, the scandal will not die. Only his death can kill it—naught save that. Therefore I must bend my thoughts and all my will to bring about his end. I *must*; there is no other way. I do not love my gold so much that I would spare it to redeem my reputation. Nay, I will lavish it on any one who will help me. Some stranger who will kill with his hands. The time of year is more than favorable for this. Flit-by-night field hands are now gathered here reaping the harvest.

Though the deed be monstrous, I have no choice. So, I will hie me to the market-place; perchance someone will be there to whom I may unfold my mind.

(Reënter two Harvesters.)

Ah, behold two sturdy knaves—ripe and ready for any devilish stroke. Lordings, have you come hither to work in the fields?

FIRST HARVESTER

Yea, lady. Need you, in any wise, one of us or two?

GUIBOUR

I hope so. Whence come you? Tell me.

FIRST HARVESTER

We are from round about Crotoy. Both of us are master hands to cut and thresh. If you have harvests to gather in we are your men. We reap fast and clean, lady.

GUIBOUR

Good sir, I am a generous giver and will reward you with wide-open hands—if you obey my will.

SECOND HARVESTER

Lady, whatever pleases you suits us. Tell us what you have mind to do, we'll carry it out for you.

GUIBOUR

(Holding out a cross to him.)

First swear on the holy relics to keep my secret—make oath never to speak of it to man or woman; then will I tell you all.

SECOND HARVESTER

Lady, I will be silent as the grave. Your secret is safe with me. No one shall drag it out of me against your will.

FIRST HARVESTER

I promise to keep close teeth about it. Now deign to give your orders.

GUIBOUR

Lordings, kill me a man. That is my will. Albeit he is a friend of mine and one well loved. Dig deep in my purse. Line your wallets till they bulge. The man whereof I speak has cost me my fair name—because of him I am the scorn and mock of everyone. My heart is broken with sorrow and grief has withered me. I cannot speak to you of this in seemly wise, my words go wild, my head is fire.

SECOND HARVESTER

Lady, little the right or wrong of it matters to us. Hand him over. We will despatch him utterly.

FIRST HARVESTER

Yea, verily. But stay, we should take counsel how to carry out the deed in secret, and where, Madam?

GUIBOUR

I know not, I know not.

(Meditates.)

My cellar! My cellar is a black and murky place. There shall you hide, close wrapt in shadows. Thither I'll send my man to fetch me wine; quickly lay hold of him and kill. Yet in such wise, no blood nor wound shall show. Neither on stomach, nor head, nor flanks. Strangle him.

SECOND HARVESTER

We will do so fast and quick. Now lead us to the cellar, then bethink you of your part.

GUIBOUR

Right willingly. On my good faith, I will pay you with both hands. Come your way with me.

(Guibour, followed by Harvesters, goes to her house. Curtains of the lower room open. Enter Guibour and men. She opens trap-door, Harvesters peer down into cellar.)

GUIBOUR

Descend! Fortune go with you!
(Through trap, they go down cellar stairs.)

Food shall not cross my lips till I have sent him to you.

(She closes trap-door.)

My ship speeds with fair wind. When Aubin comes, there will not be a living soul at home. My husband is away, my daughter with him. Aubin will come alone. He will not fail the dinner hour with me. Be-tide what may, I shall await him here.

AUBIN

(Sings off stage. He enters near church and makes a long detour before he reaches house.)

I am tired of this place and will hie me home. Midday and meat draw nigh. Hey and ho for my part of the capon put on the spit this morning.

GUIBOUR

I must feign illness, for Aubin is now hard by. Soft, lie low, my head, and close, my eyes.

(Aubin ascends steps of house.)

AUBIN

Mother, what means all this? God give you sound health of soul and body. Be-shrew me, look at her! Are you ill, lady? Oh, speak and tell me!

GUIBOUR

I shake with chill and yet am hot with fever. I die of thirst, son Aubin. Prithee, take you the wine jug and fetch me a measure from the cellar. Hasten, I long so for a drink.

AUBIN

Lady, although methinks the wine is hurtful to you, I will draw you some right willingly, since that will please you.

GUIBOUR

Go quickly, then.

(Aubin opens trap and descends to cellar.)

My part is done. Soon I shall be rid of him.

(A thud below, a stifled scream, then silence.)

Now must I plan for what will come hereafter.

(Harvesters appear at head of trap stairs.)

FIRST HARVESTER

Lady, weep no more. It is all over.

GUIBOUR

Have you killed him, sirs, and how?

SECOND HARVESTER

Lady, there was no need of trick nor guile. We clutched his throat as in a vise, down dead he fell for certain sure, so strong our grasp.

GUIBOUR

Well done, sirs. You have contented me. But waste no time in dallying here. You must needs bring him to his chamber. We will undress and lay him on his bed. Then will I pay you richly and dismiss you in God's care.

SECOND HARVESTER

We haste to do your bidding and with right good will.

(They descend to cellar. Curtains of Aubin's room open. Harvesters, followed by Guibour, bring body up the stairs.)

FIRST HARVESTER

Lady, now show us where you wish him laid. Prithee be quick, lest someone come.

GUIBOUR

Place him here in the bed, as if he slept easeful and sound. That will take least time and aid to speed you fast.

(They lay Aubin upon the bed.)

'Tis well and I am satisfied.

(She pays them.)

Now wings to your heels. Be off, lest someone find you here.

SECOND HARVESTER

No fear of that, while I have legs to run with.

FIRST HARVESTER

I will put many a mile between us and at once.

(Both come from house into square.)

Since we have gold to clink, let us go hence and spend it royally, good friend Senestre.

SECOND HARVESTER

Ay, this is no wholesome place for us. I am with you, Mandot.

(Exeunt Harvesters, running. Enter Guillaume and Marie. They proceed to lower room of house. Guibour in the meantime has come down stairs from Aubin's chamber and is there to greet them.)

GUILLAUME

Home again, lady, and in good time.

(To Servant who enters.)

Now bring fair napery and bread and wine.

(Servant goes to cupboard.)

This mantle is as heavy as a cloak. I will take it off. It is a winter mantle. I am hungry and fain would break my fast.

(To Servant.)

Haste and get you to the wine bin.

(Exit Servant.)

Meanwhile, daughter, go summon Aubin and we shall dine. Tomorrow, methinks, we'll harvest and I must get me laborers. So time is precious, and, for the nonce, must not be wasted sitting here. Go, child, warn Aubin of the hour.

*(Daughter moves toward stairs.
Guibour intercepts her.)*

GUIBOUR

Daughter, Aubin still sleeps.

GUILLAUME

He has passed the live-long morning slug abed! Call your husband, madcap, bid him rise.

DAUGHTER

(As she goes up-stairs.)

Aubin, Aubin, if it will not vex or bother you, tell me—is it day or night? Fair sir, lie you abed clock round? He answers not. Lo, no reply. Frown he or smile, I shall steal close and learn for sure whether he

sleeps or wakes. Come, sir sleepy-head,
rest you in bed all day?

(She folds back sheets.)

God, what is this? Mother, mother!

GUILLAUME

What ails you, why weep you thus and
moan?

DAUGHTER

Aubin is dead. I have seen him stark
and cold.

GUILLAUME

(Going up-stairs.)

This is indeed a hard and heavy blow.
Daughter, you are sure whereof you speak?

DAUGHTER

He is yellow as wax already. Father,
you do not believe me? Alas, my love has
left me lonely and bereft!

GUIBOUR

(At foot of stairs. Aside.)

Ah, God, I did not think of her!

(To Daughter.)

Marie, my child, come, come!

DAUGHTER

(Descending stairs.)

Alas, alas! what shall I do? I shall die

of grief for him. Ah, my sweet Aubin, our life together is over, ere it is well begun!

GUIBOUR

My daughter, a heavy loss in truth. Well may I, too, wring my hands and weep forever more, since Aubin has gone from us. Aubin so courteous and so debonair, who honoured me with his whole heart, and loved me truly.

DAUGHTER

Alas, mother, he was always gentle and fair of speech.

(Enter First Neighbor.)

He called me ever his friend and his beloved. My heart is broken and it has cause to break.

(First Neighbor goes to steps of house and knocks with his staff.)

FIRST NEIGHBOR

God be with all here. Why shriek you and lament so wildly? What has befallen and have you reason for such an outcry?

GUILLAUME

(Leaning over balustrade of Aubin's room.)

Ay, verily, good neighbor Robert, Aubin is dead.

FIRST NEIGHBOR

How now! May God have mercy on his soul. I am much pained to hear of this, neighbor Guillaume. By our Lady of Pontoise, I would have tried my best to keep him if I could.

(Enters Guibour's room. Speaks to her and to Marie.)

Yet, why kill yourselves with grief? How serves it him or you? I know nature will have her way with us in these sad events; but pray you, moderate your grief. It will be better for you.

(Guillaume comes down stairs.)

DAUGHTER

Alack, how is that possible? I declare, Robert, God gave me the most courteous and loving, the gentlest, as well as the wisest and most generous man that ever trod this earth. So it is right and just my heart should break.

GUIBOUR

You speak the truth, my daughter. None other was so fairly wed as you. No wife had a husband as handsome and as good as yours. Now he is dead. May God in his loving kindness give rest to Aubin's soul.

FIRST NEIGHBOR

(To Guillaume.)

Hearken, if you have any errand that I may do, tell me forthwith and I will gladly do it.

GUILLAUME

Robert, prithee then, go send a coffin hither. Another time I will do as much for you.

FIRST NEIGHBOR

I will hasten on the instant and fetch it to you. Betide what may, you shall have your coffin.

(First Neighbor takes leave of family. The house curtains close. Enter Second Neighbor and Second Officer. They greet First Neighbor.)

SECOND NEIGHBOR

Robert, God keep you sound in wind and limb. Where go you?

(Enter First Officer.)

FIRST NEIGHBOR

Gautier, my gentle friend, I seek a funeral coffer.

SECOND NEIGHBOR

For whom? Is it for Conseil? Tell me, neighbor.

FIRST NEIGHBOR

Nenni, Gautier, it is for Aubin, the Mayor's son-in-law.

(Exit First Neighbor.)

SECOND NEIGHBOR

Aubin! God be gentle and merciful to his soul.

FIRST OFFICER

God guard you all from sin. Whom did you say had passed beyond?

SECOND OFFICER

Aubin,—he who was son-in-law to Guillaume, the Mayor of Chievi.

FIRST OFFICER

God rest his soul, a piteous loss indeed! Handsome and young, wise, and most gracious in his port.

SECOND NEIGHBOR

It is a journey we all must take. Adieu, my friends.

FIRST OFFICER

Gautier, I commend you to God, who be-times gives a fair day and a fair month. I will tarry here no longer, but go to the court room. It is time for the session there.

(Goes to Bailiff's office. Curtain of Bailiff's window opens, showing him at the table, writing.)

BAILIFF

(To First Officer.)

God aid you, and whence come you? Is Amé summoned again? What stirs in the town today? Tell what you know.

FIRST OFFICER

More than a thousand persons are dumb struck at the death of Aubin, that strong and goodly youth, cut down since prime.

BAILIFF

By the Almighty, what say you? Aubin dead!

FIRST OFFICER

All the neighbors are agog with it.

BAILIFF

I am astounded at such news. Sit you down. I maintain he met with some foul play; this the cause of his too sudden death.

(Enter First Neighbor and Porter with coffin. Both curtains of Guibour's house open. Guillaume is in lower room, Guibour and Marie are sewing on shroud in Aubin's room.)

FIRST NEIGHBOR

Mayor, behold, I have brought you a fine coffin. 'Tis spick clean new and will carry the corpse in a seemly manner to the cemetery.

GUILLAUME

Friend, God protect you. Lower the coffin very gently so it will not break. Now, if you shrink not from the task, you two, place the corpse within.

(All three go up-stairs to Aubin's room. Neighbor and Porter take body wrapped in winding sheet and lift it from bed.)

PORTER

We'll soon settle him in solid comfort. Wait—you carry that end and I'll take this. Ohé!

(They descend to lower room with body, followed by Guillaume. As they put it into coffin:)

Put it down—Ohé—

GUILLAUME

On his back, not on his stomach, fair friend.

(They right corpse.)

FIRST NEIGHBOR

There he is, fine and easeful at last. May Christ be gentle and merciful to his soul.

PORTER

Who is going to pay me for the haulage?

GUILLAUME

I, friend, with all my heart. You have no need to bargain. Behold three silver pieces. Now pray for him.

PORTER

May Christ, who is a powerful King, truly pardon his soul. If my toil were always paid like this, I would soon see myself decked in fine new clothes.

GUILLAUME

Now go to your work.

(First Neighbor and Porter lift coffin and carry it down steps. House curtains close. As coffin is borne past church, Porter gestures to lower it. Mops his brow and sits on end of coffin, despite horrified protests of Neighbor.)

BAILIFF

(Looking out of his window. To Second Officer.)

Why knit your brow and scowl so heavily, friend Gobin?

SECOND OFFICER

My heart is wrung, I ponder why and wherefore Aubin died.

BAILIFF

By the rood, I swear, and none can shake me, he was felled to the earth, or foully struck or slain. Therefore this quick and baleful end. So let us hence, I must be present at his burial. Whoever wrought this crime I mean to run him straight to earth.

(Bailiff leaves window, followed by First Officer. House curtains open. Guibour is kneeling at prie-dieu, Guillaume sits bowed in prayer, both in lower room. Marie is on her knees at foot of bed in upper room.)

DAUGHTER

Oh, gentle Aubin, when I recall your goodly mettle, the love you bore me and your comely ways, small wonder I lament and mourn. Happiness has fled and woe has stricken me. Oh, death, you have sundered us and given us short shrift. Take me now too, make me your prey. Methinks you are more kind than such a sorrowing.

(Bailiff leaves his house and crosses to that of Guibour.)

BAILIFF

(At threshold of Guibour's house.)

God give you his mercy and his peace.

GUILLAUME

May he render the same to you.

BAILIFF

Mayor, I mourn your heavy loss. I wish I might do aught to soften it. Wherefore, think you, came it so swift and sharp? Had Aubin hidden ill of body?

GUILLAUME

Never, my lord, since he wed our daughter had he in any way complained of irk or ailment.

BAILIFF

I marvel but the more.

(To Guibour.)

And you, woman, on your soul, know you naught else—was he in any company that would mishandle him—tell me?

GUIBOUR

Nay, worthy magistrate, it is mystery to me. I am dazed at his unaccounted end.

(To Officers.)

Get you hence, minions. Bring the bier before me and uncover it. Unsew the winding sheet that I may view the corpse from head to hip. I must report in full upon the case ere he goes forth to burial.

FIRST OFFICER

Sir, you shall be promptly obeyed. Forward.

(Officers go to coffin, still on ground, and wave aside First Neighbor and Porter.)

I am commanded by my lord the Bailiff to take possession of this body.

(Officers lift coffin and carry it to threshold of Guibour's house. Crowd gradually filters in.)

BAILIFF

Lift the cover, now unsew him, since the case is such.

(Marie descends the stairs from upper to lower room. To crowd pressing about coffin:)

Withdraw from there in silence.

SECOND OFFICER

I wish to pluck out these stitches; the shears, Madam.

(Guibour hands them to him.)

Sir, have I undone enough, think you?

BAILIFF

Uncover him well that I may view throat and chest.

(They unfold winding sheet; Bailiff examines corpse.)

Holà! seize the mother, the daughter and father. They cannot deny that this man bears every mark of murder. It is plain beyond doubt or question. See how black his throat is. Indeed he has been strangled. Quick, secure them without more parley. Bind their hands crosswise behind their backs. Lead them like dogs on leash. I shall know forthwith the truth of this affair.

(Hysterical cries off stage. Enter Cousin and Sister.)

SISTER

(To Bailiff)

Ah, good sir!

BAILIFF

Lady, I must tell you your brother Aubin has been slain.

SISTER

Slain—

BAILIFF

I am most sure of it.

SISTER

(Bending over coffin.)

Alas, what is this? Well may I sorrow when I see you thus, my brother; and I do; I am crushed with this misfortune.

COUSIN

God curse you, death! You have seized him as your prey, you have taken the bravest and the best of all our race. Alas, to be the prince of youths and cut down in your flower! Oh, welladay, 'tis sad beyond all grief.

BAILIFF

(To Neighbors.)

Sirs, he was foully slain, I am sure of it, but, by God's truth the guilty shall pay heavily. Since crime was done, justice demands the proof and I shall learn it.

GUILLAUME

Sir Bailiff, mercy for God's love. Prithee be not so hard upon us. We are willing to yield ourselves and to go whither you command.

BAILIFF

It is useless.

(To Officers.)

Men, do as I told you.

FIRST OFFICER

While I bind the father, Gobin, go there and bind the mother. Hasten.

SECOND OFFICER

You need not urge me. I'll have no dalliance.

(Ties Guibour.)

By my soul, then, woman, give me your arms and be quick about it.

GUIBOUR

Alas, what pain I suffer, and nothing can avail to spare me! Ah, then, sir, do your will with me.

DAUGHTER

Oh, woe is me! Alas, alas, such bitter grief; to see the law mishandle thus my father and my mother. It binds and shackles them because of Aubin whom they mourn with all their hearts.

BAILIFF

It will do no more nor less to you, fair friend. You three are one and go in company. Bind her,—bind.

FIRST OFFICER

Willingly. Come, mistress, I must have both your hands to fetter. It is useless to refuse. Make haste.

DAUGHTER

Now am I afflicted on every hand as much as woman can be. Ah, Lady of Heaven, may your sweet eyes look down on me with pity.

BAILIFF

Forward, no more delay. Sirs, lead them to my tribunal. By the oath I gave the king, they shall speak truthfully or feel the rack and wheel.

SECOND OFFICER

(To Guibour.)

Come you hence quickly. No more lingering here.

BAILIFF

Bury this body and be quick about it.

COUSIN

Cousin, in my opinion we ought to have him carried straightway to the cemetery. He should not lie flung on the ground like this. When he is buried we will order a memorial service, fair and befitting him.

DAUGHTER

(To Cousin.)

'Tis well.

(To Neighbors.)

Pray you, good people—lift him and bear him hence.

(Guibour, Daughter and Guillaume are led before the Bailiff's window. Neighbors, followed by crowd, lift coffin and bear it off stage.)

GUILLAUME

(On his way to tribunal.)

Oh, Virgin, sweet mother of the King of Heaven, way and harbor of the strayed, console us, Lady, for we have need of it.

BAILIFF

Gobin, come quickly. First take the mother to Gourdain jail and then lead the daughter opposite to Paradis prison; meanwhile I shall question Guillaume.

SECOND OFFICER

Sir, since so you say, I will lead them with a right good heart.

(He takes hold of the daughter.)

GUIBOUR

Sir, sir, free these two people; they are innocent. Punish my crime, I yield me to your judgment. My heart can no longer endure the sight of my dear ones suffering. They had no hand in this affair. I alone had Aubin slain. I alone.

(Daughter with a cry of horror rushes to her father. Both regard Guibour with unbelieving eyes.)

BAILIFF

Guibour, tell us how and wherefore was this murder done.

GUIBOUR

Yes, I will speak the truth and all of it. Aubin was dear to me, none dearer. From his marriage day I loved him with all my heart. But honorably, sir, mark you, honorably. Many perceived this love and misconstrued it. They spread dark and noisome tales about us through the town. They said I played the wanton whenever it so pleased him and that we two were one. The scandal was repeated not once but more than five hundred times. At last, in secret, it was brought to me. I was so ashamed, so grieved, so angered at the insult that my mind and senses reeled. Then the devil took a hand and harrowed and confused my understanding. Henceforth my mind was bent on killing Aubin,—all was clouded, but it seemed to me, once he was dead, their lying tongues would blister me no more.

BAILIFF

Woman, how killed you him?

GUIBOUR

I will reveal you all. Yesterday, in the market-place, I met two youths. I know them not, save that they sell their brawn as field hands. I opened my whole mind to them and said I wished his death. They agreed upon the deed for the reward I promised them. Thereon I hid them in the

cellar of my house and sent my son-in-law to the same spot on pretext I was sore athirst. He went! My hirelings sprang to his throat and throttled him. Down dead he fell. At my behest, they bore him to his bed and laid him there as if he slept for pleasure. I paid the lads much gold and sent them hot-haste far from here. Sir, that is all.

BAILIFF

That is enough—to prison with her, Gobin, where I told you.

SECOND OFFICER

Sir, I obey.

(To Guibour.)

Come lady, forward with you.

GUIBOUR

(Stretching out her arms to daughter.)

Marie, forgive me, forgive!

DAUGHTER

(Turning away.)

That is most hard, my mother.

GUIBOUR

(Appealing to her husband.)

Your pardon, Guillaume!

(Passionately entreating him.)

Guillaume!

GUILLAUME

Think you on Aubin!

(Guibour is led away. As she goes Guillaume and daughter follow her with desperate and yearning gaze, but she cannot see. Exeunt Guibour and Second Officer.)

BAILIFF

In truth, 'tis many a year since I have heard so horrible a murder tale. Strike off his bonds. I free you, Guillaume, and your daughter too. But get you hence and speedily.

(Fetters are removed.)

GUILLAUME

Sir, what you ask is right and just. We will go at once.

(Exeunt Bailiff and First Officer.)

GUILLAUME

Oh, my daughter, no more home for me. I must go forth to the church of our Lady of Finisterre, there to pray and beseech her to stand your mother's friend. She needs the Virgin's help, since, methinks, her life is forfeit.

DAUGHTER

Hasten, father,—as for me, I shall hie me straight to Limoges and offer my weight in candle wax to Saint Leonard. I shall beg him to pray our Lord to guard my mother

and preserve her from a bitter and shameful death.

GUILLAUME

May she who is full of grace be Guibour's friend in this necessity. My parting blessing on you, child.

(Kisses her forehead as she kneels.)

Go in God's care.

DAUGHTER

Farewell, father! I shall not tarry until I reach Saint Leonard's. I go to dress myself in pilgrim garments.

(She goes into house through curtains.)

GUILLAUME

I do not know if I shall ever see this place again.

(Exit. Stage curtain is dropped for a short interval to mark the passing of time.)

CURTAIN

SCENE II

(When the curtains open again, the Bailiff is seen seated within his house. Enter Sister and Cousin.)

SISTER

Gracious sir, we have come hither to ask justice for our dead.

BAILIFF

Is Aubin buried or is he in the middle of the square where I left him with you?

COUSIN

Fair sir, Aubin rests in his grave.

BAILIFF

I know now the truth in regard to the deed. Your business shall be despatched at once.

(To First Officer.)

Auberi, go seek the executioner. Tell him to come and erect a stake for the burning of a woman. When this is done let him report to me at once. Go with speed.

FIRST OFFICER

Willingly, sir.

(Sees Cochet off stage.)

I see him. Cochet, come at once.

(Enter Cochet.)

Our master, the Bailiff, bids you erect a stake and be quick about it. Do not delay. When you have finished, haste to his court room.

EXECUTIONER

Fair sir, it shall be done forthwith. I go this instant to attend to it.

FIRST OFFICER

Friend Cochet, I shall certainly inform him.

(Exit Cochet. Officer returns to Bailiff's window.)

Sir, I have spoken to Cochet; he has bel-lows, pitchfork, hook, cords and all that is necessary for his work. He will without fail seek you ere long at court.

BAILIFF

For the nonce, Gobin, lead Guibour to my presence. I fain would speak to her once more.

SECOND OFFICER

Sir, I run.

(Exit Gobin. Speaks off stage.)

Out with you, Guibour. We must go straightway to the Bailiff's.

(Enter Guibour, clothed in a white shift and led by Gobin.)

GUIBOUR

O sweet mother of God, deign to be mindful of my misery. I think my span of life is short—therefore I pray your mercy on my soul. Sinner that I am, O pity

me, and in your loving kindness, comfort me.

BAILIFF

Guibour, fair friend, you have confessed and sent your son to death and hell. You have cleared husband and daughter and assumed sole guilt; thus have I understood.

GUIBOUR

Sir, I swear it is the truth. I told you why I caused the deed and how. Because of it I am here for your judgment. Wherefore may God have mercy on my soul and draw it to himself. May he preserve it from eternal hell and all its torments.

SISTER

Sir, deal with this infamous murderess as she has dealt with my brother. Justice on her who killed him treacherously. Deign to give me justice.

COUSIN

In truth, sir, her demand is seemly. The woman has confessed, therefore grant you her demand.

(Enter Cochet.)

EXECUTIONER

Master, my work is done. Your orders are carried out. Is there aught else you want of me?

BAILIFF

Take a halter and twist it about this woman's neck; she must die shamefully. Tie her hands, then we will go forth to the execution place.

EXECUTIONER

I have a good trade and I like it, so I shall work at it since you command.

GUIBOUR

(To Virgin.)

Oh, Lady, take thought and care of my poor soul since my body must soon die a shameful death.

SISTER

Ay, murderess, hurt and shame for you! Nothing is bad enough for you who slew my brother in the way you did.

BAILIFF

She shall pay to the full. Auberi, cry aloud in the square. Bid every household head come quickly to the execution place.

FIRST OFFICER

Sir, I obey straightway.

(Crosses to centre, then divides his proclamation into four parts, speaking it in the four corners of the square.)

List ye and hark! Folk, I command you, together and separately, to hie you promptly to the execution place, there to witness the Bailiff's sentence on a woman. He who stays at home is guilty of high treason to the King.

(Gradual entrance of crowd.)

FIRST NEIGHBOR

Faith, I'd rather go than pay a fine.

SECOND NEIGHBOR

I also, lest they should clap me into jail.

BAILIFF

Forward, our company is large enough and will augment.

EXECUTIONER

Lady, forth with you. Lag not and ask no silly questions. See, I am going to lead you like a dog on leash.

GUIBOUR

O God, why does my heart not break? Would death might take me ere I drain shame's cup and suffer this excess of torment. Sir Bailiff, grant me one boon, one only. Give me a little time to beg our Lady's mercy. We pass before the church, I beseech you let me pray to her for pardon.

FIRST NEIGHBOR

For God's love, grant it her. She need not enter the holy place.

SECOND NEIGHBOR

Give her, fair sir, a little respite. Thus will she make a goodlier end, and Scripture says we should desire the salvation of everyone.

BAILIFF

So many ask I grant the favor. To it, then, woman, and be quick with you. But do not keep us dawdling here. Down on your knees.

GUIBOUR

Gentle and courteous sir, my thanks.

(Goes slowly up church steps, addresses Virgin in shrine.)

Ah, Lady of Heaven, reconcile my soul to God, your own dear Son. Refuge of sinners, pity me, bowed down with grief and woe. Aid my soul, stay it with your comfort, for my body is doomed to perish very soon, burned and charred by fire. Beseech God to forgive me; he alone has power and only he can clearly see the true repentance of our hearts.

BAILIFF

Up with you now, and on. Forward all. We cannot waste time listening to

nonsense; much of our day is lost already. Guibour, go before. Cochet, to the stake with her forthwith. Make a burning torch of her body.

(Procession led by Guibour and Cochet. Nuns and Priest come from church and join it. All follow. Exeunt all. Stage curtain falls.)

CURTAIN

SCENE III

(When the curtain rises, a stake has been erected on a platform centre stage. Guibour is tied to it, and faggots are heaped about her. The Bailiff, Officers, Neighbors, Sister, Cousin, Executioner, and crowd are grouped about it. The Priest and Nuns chant and then enter church.)

EXECUTIONER

Since I must despatch you, lady, kneel down. Steady. Arms at side. I am going to tie them to your body, then bind you to the stake.

(Does so.)

GUIBOUR

All you who see me now, implore our Lady for me. My body will soon be prey of flame and fire; beg that my soul escape the pains of hell.

EXECUTIONER

Next, a string noose for your neck and breast, and I am done with you.

GUIBOUR

O good, kind folk, I beseech you, visit not my crime upon my husband and my daughter—they are innocent, yet they suffer because of me. They share the pain and terror of my death.

BAILIFF

Cochet, we wait. Make haste. Now she is stoutly bound—heap logs and straw on all sides. Set fire everywhere.

EXECUTIONER

No meat nor drink for me until my task is done. Look, master, I know not how to lay a better fire. See, she is shut in by logs on every side, just like a rabbit in a hutch. She will kindle quick this way.

BAILIFF

The torch! The torch! Tarry no longer, the torch to her.

EXECUTIONER

Sir, I go to fetch it.

GUIBOUR

Mother of God, I give you my soul. Keep it, save it!

EXECUTIONER

Behold, all is ready.

VOICE OF GOD

Mother, mother, the time is at hand when you must hie you down to earth to save and protect Guibour. List, she calls to you in piteous tones. She asks so earnestly to be restored through you to my friendship, imploring pardon for her crime. Go, defend her well. So though fire be set about her body it shall not touch nor injure nor destroy it in any manner.

OUR LADY

Son, I am full ready to descend. Come, Gabriel, to earth with me. And you, too, Michel.

(She steps from her niche, Gabriel and Michel join her.)

Now sing you as we journey.

(Virgin in centre of church steps. Angels kneel on either side.)

GABRIEL

Lady, I am your humblest servant and so obey. Spread your wings, Michel. Friends,

as we wend our way let us raise our voices
in fair melody.

*(Music from within church in which
angels join. Holy people move
forward on church porch as far
as possible.)*

EXECUTIONER

Stand back! I have such heaps of fuel
I am going to make a roaring fire. So
'ware the sparks!

(Flames leap up.)

OUR LADY

Friends, ward off the fire from my loyal
servitor. Let not the flame come nigh her.
Guibour, courage, keep a stout heart, your
prayer is heard; neither fire nor torment
shall have power to harm you.

*(Crowd see that Guibour's ropes
have broken.)*

BAILIFF

I cannot believe the woman is not burned
to a crisp. This fire has burned in such a
leap of flame she must be charred.

EXECUTIONER

Lordings, the noose, the rope and all the
faggot bands are burned, but she is safe
and sound. No wounds nor a drop of
blood—on the contrary, she is more beauti-
ful than before.

SISTER

By soul and body, murderess, you shall not thus escape. Bailiff, understand, we wish this murderess burned straightway, her flesh cast to the wind in ashes. That was your sentence.

BAILIFF

Throw fuel and kindling upon her. Let not one interfere. Heap it high. More, so the fire may quickly catch. It must consume her till neither flesh nor bone remain.

(Cochet lights more fuel, fire leaps high.)

OUR LADY

Fire, I forbid you to touch this woman. Flame, harm her not.

(Flames die away. Guibour stands free.)

Come, lordings, let us now return to Paradise.

(Holy people return to their original positions.)

BAILIFF

(To awe-struck crowd.)

Sirrahs, behold a miracle! A marvel beyond telling! Never in my life have I seen so great a prodigy. We have sinned grievously against God in so maltreating this sainted body.

GUIBOUR

Here I am, risen from death and flame.
Our Lady was my shield, and God my de-
fender.

BAILIFF

Lady, on bended knee, I ask your par-
don for the anger and wrath I showed
towards you, for all my harsh and violent
treatment. On my soul, I deem you holy
and will never harm you more. Curse me
not to hell, nor spurn me in this life.

GUIBOUR

Rise, for the love of God. I cannot see
you thus brought low. In truth you
wrong me not. My crime deserved a thou-
sand deaths. Only the Virgin's mercy
stood between me and my just doom. I
prayed her from my heart and she pre-
served me. If you scorned and mocked me
very grievously, may our Lady pardon you
as I do. And may she bring us all to a
happy ending. Ave Maria! Ave!

FIRST NEIGHBOR

Let us not tarry longer here, but go our
way. Yet, first fare we with Guibour to
the church. There it were fitting she should
render thanks to God and to his Mother for
her deliverance.

GUIBOUR

(Advancing to church steps.)

Lady, sceptre of royal glory, fountain and well of mercy, here I kneel before you. With all my heart and strength, I thank you. Henceforth while I live, I dedicate my whole life to you, and to your service.

(Rising.)

Sir Bailiff, have I your leave to pass to my abode?

BAILIFF

Go your way freely, Guibour, but not alone; myself and all the folk will see you to your door. Way for the Lady Guibour—way for the saint of God!

(Enter Nuns singing. Crowd joins in Alleluias. Procession to Guibour's house. Bailiff leads Guibour to her threshold. As she pauses in doorway formed by curtains:)

GUIBOUR

Lordings, who hitherward have given me most gracious company, God bless you with unending joy. Now, if you truly love me, leave me henceforth alone, apart, to silence and to prayer.

BAILIFF

We will disperse upon our several ways. I commend you to God's keeping, Guibour.

GUIBOUR

May his loving kindness go with you always. My thanks, my long farewell!

(As she gestures her blessing and farewell, the stage curtains close.)

CURTAIN

—
SCENE IV

(As the curtain rises, First Poor Woman crosses stage.)

FIRST POOR WOMAN

Virgin, whom God has seated at his side, watch over all who do me good. I am most wretched, for I know not who thrusts me away, whether it be man or beast. I cannot tell lead from silver or brass from golden coins; alas, good folk, he loses everything who loses sight.

(Stumbles against threshold of Guibour's house. The curtains of lower room open.)

Alack, no one has pitied me today. For God's love give to the poor blind woman.

GUIBOUR

Worthy dame, prithee stir not from this place. Wait, I come. Here, my sister, pray to the King of Heaven for me.

(Gives money to beggar.)

FIRST POOR WOMAN

Ah, lady, God keep you sound of body, and in the end have mercy on your soul.

(Exit First Poor Woman. Enter Second Poor Woman.)

SECOND POOR WOMAN

(Crossing to Guibour's house.)

Ah, God, is there man or woman will comfort me with charity? For God's love, aid, dame Guibour. I am a poor farmer's wife who works hard to give my three small children bread. On my soul, I know not where to get them food.

GUIBOUR

Friend, calm yourself, be not distressed. You shall not stay unhelped. Take this sack of wheat and go in God's care.

SECOND POOR WOMAN

Lady, may God who sees and prizes each generous impulse of the heart, requite you here—at the last judgment, too.

(Exit Second Poor Woman. Enter Third Poor Woman.)

THIRD POOR WOMAN

See my misery. It is real. I do not sham.

(Goes to Guibour's house.)

O Lady, in your charity be good to me.

GUIBOUR

What can I do or give to serve your body's need? Gold have I none, not even small pence, yet my heart feels for you. Wait until I see if I have aught to help you.

(Gives her a cloak.)

Here, good friend, take this, make you a long cloak from this mantle. It is my only one, and clothed me when I walked abroad.

THIRD POOR WOMAN

May gentle Jesus and Mary, his sweet mother, requite you. May they reward your kindness a hundredfold, and one day take you to dwell with them among the saints.

(Exit Third Poor Woman. Curtain of Guibour's house closes to mark passage of time. Enter Watchman.)

WATCHMAN

(As chimes ring five times.)

Candlemas day, five o' the clock and all is well.

(Exit Watchman. Enter First and then Second Neighbor, carrying lanterns.)

FIRST NEIGHBOR

By Saint Agatha's bones, well met! I was on my way to seek you. Are you ready for early mass? It is Candle-offering day.

SECOND NEIGHBOR

I mind it well. Shame to him who does not go to church on Candlemas, the day of old when blessed Mary bore her Son up to the Temple, and offered two small doves to the high priest.

FIRST NEIGHBOR

I think it the fairest service of the year. We must not tarry, the church is such a long and weary walk.

SECOND NEIGHBOR

And we should be there in good time. Come you to my home. It is on our way, and my candle is there. I have it ready for the offering.

FIRST NEIGHBOR

Here is mine. I shall give it to the priest.
(*Exeunt Neighbors. Curtains of Guibour's house open, disclosing Guibour, clothed in a plain white shift and seated beside a little shrine. A statue of the Virgin occupies the place of honour in the shrine and is surrounded by lighted candles and flowers.*)

GUIBOUR

(Speaking to the statue.)

O Lady, whom God chose for his mother, it is a long time since I have heard mass or listened to your office. Today, in times bygone, you put on goodly raiment and went forth to the Temple; there, with all devotion, you brought your Son and underwent the purifying rite. That is why, and meetly, mine eyes are filled with tears. Once I used to have a priest who said mass for me in my private oratory. But my worldly goods are gone. For love of you have I given them all away. Nothing is left. I have stripped from my back even the mantle I wore out of doors. So, if I do not go to church, I hope God will not blame me. If I went everyone would stare and jeer to see me clothed only in my shift, more so since I was always richly garbed and jewelled. O Virgin, I hope that you will understand and pity me. Your son likewise. Therefore I stay at home and pray devoutly to you on your feast.

VOICE OF GOD

Come, mother, and all you saints—on this day, when I was offered in the Temple, I wish to pleasure Guibour who serves me well on earth. She would fain hear a mass

and merits it. Angels, both of you, go before.

(Michel and Gabriel step down from their places.)

Mother, you follow them.

(Virgin and Saint Jean step from their pedestals.)

We shall now proceed. Angels, make ready to sing a joyous canticle.

MICHEL

Lord, we obey with joy for many a reason. Gabriel dear, my comrade, let us sing a glad and glorious song.

(Song by Angels, and by Nuns within the church. Raphael and Uriel come out of church, and stand at foot of steps. Jean, at end of song, takes candles from stand within porch of church and presents them to the Holy People.)

SAINT JEAN

Empress of God's universe, please you offer this candle at the altar.

(To Gabriel and Michel.)

And you, present these in the same manner.

(To Virgin.)

Lady, I descend to earth.

(Goes down steps.)

Behold your candle, Raphael. Uriel, here is yours. Give them to the priest when he has sung the offertory.

(Enters Guibour's house.)

Here, woman, is one for you; receive it, and bless God for the vision you behold. Thank him with all your heart.

(Jean returns to his pedestal.)

GABRIEL

The Introit and the Confiteor are over, let the mass now proceed. Come, Michel, begin.

(Chant of Blessing of Candles within church. Virgin and the other Holy Folk light and present candles at church door.)

OUR LADY

Michel, go tell that woman she will incur heavy guilt if she keeps the priest standing await for her. Let her come and offer her candle at once, and make no further ado about it.

MICHEL

Glorious Virgin, I fly to do your bidding.

(Goes to Guibour's house.)

Lady, come straightway, make your offering; the priest attends you over long. It is not seemly.

GUIBOUR

Friend, I do not intend to give this candle to the priest, nor to anyone. It is my treasure and I shall keep it for myself. Let the priest say his prayers and finish his mass without me.

MICHEL

I shall repeat your answer to the realms above.

(Returns to Virgin.)

Glorious virgin, she said she would not come and that the priest had better go on and read the Preface at once.

OUR LADY

Gabriel! Descend once more; tell her to make haste and offer her candle as is the custom of this festival.

GABRIEL

Lady, I go speedily.

(Crosses to Guibour's house.)

Woman, be quick with you, our Lady orders you to bring your candle and offer it. You are most unmannerly keeping the priest attending you. Present your offering now.

GUIBOUR

He can get along without me. Once and for all, let him say his mass. I do not in-

tend to give him my candle and I will not go to the offering.

GABRIEL

Very well, I shall tell Our Lady that you will not come.

(Returns to Virgin.)

Blessed Queen, she means to keep her candle and will not offer it; that is, pardi, the whole case in a nutshell.

OUR LADY

Go to her once again; tell her she must not dare refuse. If she persist, tear the candle from her grasp.

(Gabriel returns to Guibour and seizes one end of candle.)

GUIBOUR

Friend, you are not strong enough to make me open my hand. I forbid you to touch my candle.

GABRIEL

Since I already have it by the middle, I shall get the rest and master you and it.

GUIBOUR

It shall not leave my hands; you pull in vain.

GABRIEL

Beshrew you, soon you will sing a sorrier song.

(Breaks off part of candle.)

In any hap, I shall take away this end.

(Returns to Virgin.)

Star of Heaven, behold, this is all I could contrive to get from her. I strove with all my force, and could break naught save this.

VOICE OF GOD

Verily, it is precious in her sight; she guards it with her whole strength and great devotion. Let us leave her it and wend us back to heaven. As our procession passes, sing, you angels, since you do it best.

MICHEL

Almighty, we joyously obey and contradict you not in any way.

(Virgin and Saint Jean step back into niches. Angels pass within church.)

GUIBOUR

(As if coming out of a dream.)

Ah, Lady, I thank you for your great goodness. God, where have I been? Truly, it seemed to me that I was in a very large church, Virgin, where I saw you as a queen and with you a great company of saints.

An angel offered me a candle which I thought was mine own to keep. He strove with me and forced away one part of it. Yet, Lady, I have one consolation. I hold the greater end. Now do I see that I have been rapt in ecstasy and beheld a vision. I thank you humbly for this grace, and your beloved Son also, who has been merciful and remembered me. I praise and glorify His name, who this day let me kneel at holy mass.

(Enter Nuns, singing.)

FIRST NUN

Guibour, let your heart rejoice in the Lord. We are sent to reveal God's will to you. Prepare forthwith to leave all things, to enter our holy order and receive its habit.

SECOND NUN

He desires you to renounce the vanities of this world, to serve him utterly, and so merit greater glory in the world to come.

GUIBOUR

In sooth, this has long been my great desire. God's will be done and perfectly fulfilled in me. Let us go hence, I am ready; lead me to your nunnery.

FIRST NUN

Come, then. But I think we all should sing as we journey hence, praising the King of kings and his sweet mother.

GUIBOUR

Virgin, we sing your praise, because you shield us from dark hell. God was made man in you, and saved us from the death that Adam brought upon us when he ate the apple.

*(Exeunt Guibour and Nuns, singing,
into the church.)*

CURTAIN

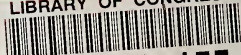
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