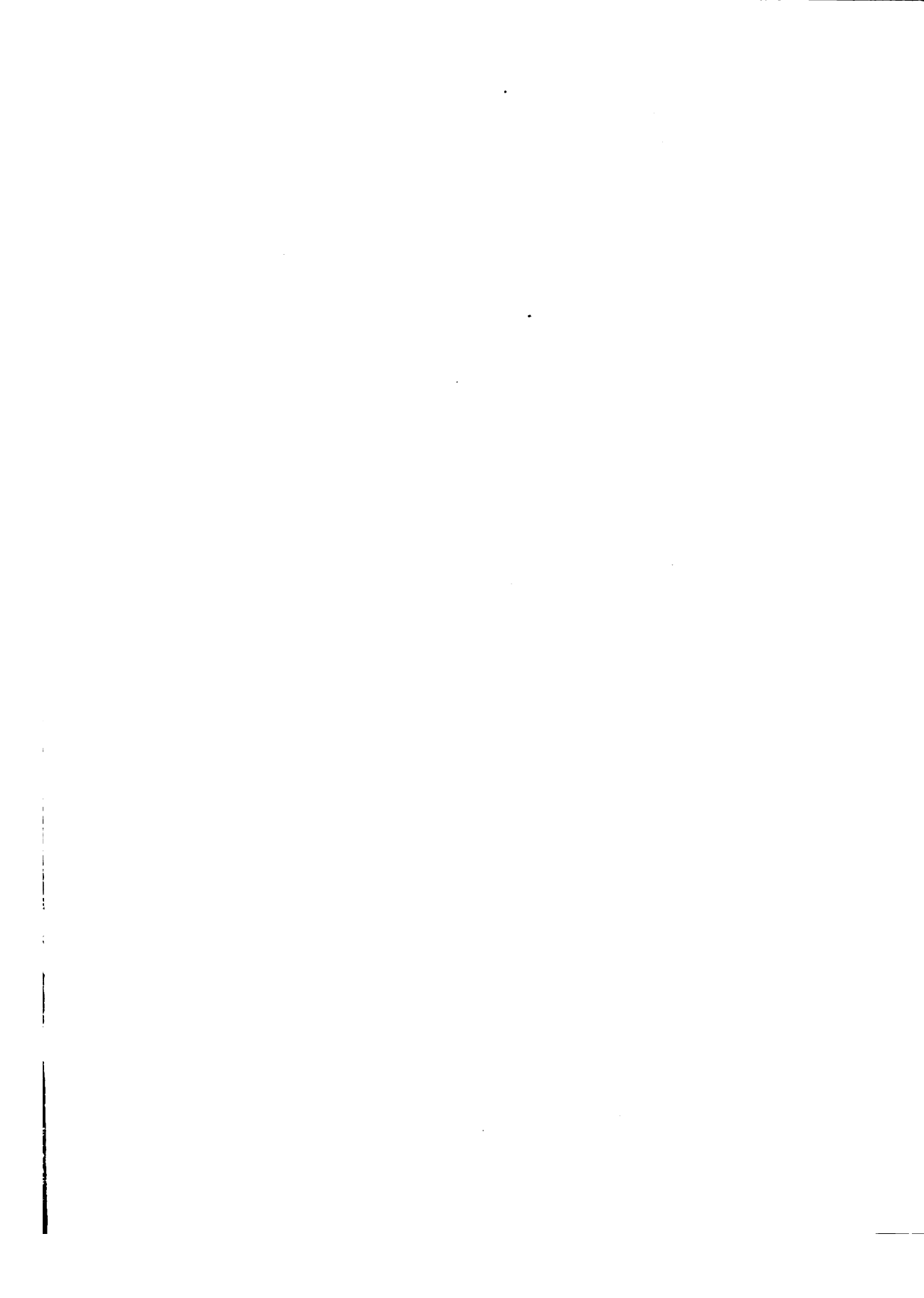
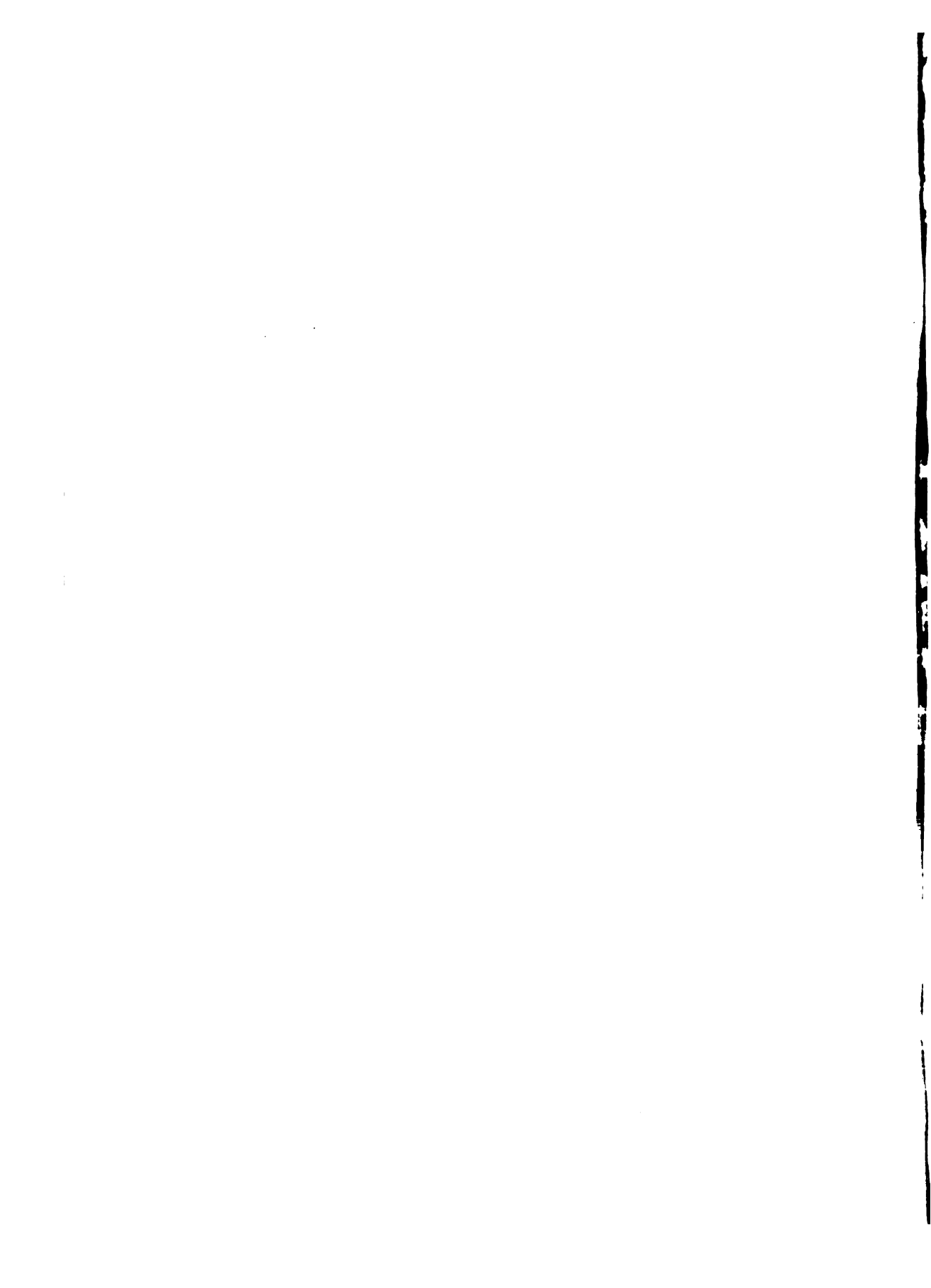


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THE OLDEST AND LARGEST REVIEW IN THE ENGLISH LANGUAGE  
DEVOTED TO POETRY AND DRAMA

# Poet Lore

## World Literature & the Drama

### Spring Number

**The Unforeseen, A Mexican Play in Three Acts**  
By Julio J. Rueda

**Broadway's Beloved Vagabond**  
By Adrienne Battey

**Two Plays for the Negro Theatre**  
By Paul Green

**Peter Gink, A One Act Play**  
By Arthur H. Nethercot

(Complete Contents on Inside Cover)

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# Poet Lore

## Editors

CHARLOTTE PORTER, HELEN A. CLARKE, RUTH HILL

SPRING, 1924

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EDITED BY

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RUTH HILL

VOLUME XXXV

JANUARY—DECEMBER, 1924



RICHARD G. BADGER  
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# THE UNFORESEEN\*

A CONTEMPORARY PLAY OF OLD MEXICO

IN THREE ACTS

BY JULIO JIMENEZ RUEDA

*Translated into English by Gino V. M. de Solenni*

## CAST OF CHARACTERS

MARY EULALIA.

MADAME, *Mother of Mary Eulalia.*

MARTHA, *Mary Eulalia's sister.*

CHARLES, *Mary Eulalia's husband.*

MAGDALENE, *An old sweetheart of Charles.*

MARGUERITE, *Daughter of Magdalene.*

DON PASCUAL, *Brother of Madame.*

LULU, } *Friends of the family.*

LILI, }

COCO.

A PHYSICIAN.

A MAID.

A GOVERNESS.

## ACT I

*A small reception room in the home of the Morels. All newly furnished, and in very good taste.*

### SCENE I

MADAME and MARTHA are giving the last touches to the decorations.

*Martha (A vase in her hand).*—This vase will look much better in the hall than here, don't you think so, mother?

*Madame.*—Yes, but I would prefer to have it here. It harmonizes with the wall paper, and it is not out of place.

*Martha.*—I will put it on the table, then.

*Madame.*—Very well, and we will also place there Charles, and Mary Eulalia's pictures.

*Martha.*—I believe we are through.

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*Madame.*—Yes, everything is in its proper place.

*Martha.*—How glad my sister is going to be on reaching her new home.

*Madame.*—And the more so considering that she hardly knew it when she left.

*Martha.*—The trip was indeed sudden. What a whirl we lived in those days!

*Madame.*—For goodness sake, don't remind me of it.

*Martha.*—The ceremony, the wedding trip, everything had to be rushed through.

*Madame.*—It must have seemed nothing more than a dream to Mary Eulalia.

*Martha.*—Yes, with a pleasant awakening.

*Madame.*—A six months trip around the world . . .

*Martha.*—With a beloved husband.

*Madame.*—Now she will be sad.

*Martha.*—Of course, after a honeymoon in which everything is new and unforeseen, to return to the corner where one has to live forever; to see the same faces, to meet the same obligations,—everything the same, everlastingly the same, must be awfully monotonous. The contrast is too great.

*Madame.*—A little girl like you does understand these things.

*Martha.*—I can guess them. It must be the same as to go to school after vacation.

*Madame.*—These modern girls who know everything and who pass upon everything!

*Martha.*—But it is the truth, nothing but the truth. And besides, Mary Eulalia is not temperamentally fitted for the tranquil and peaceful life of the home. We have worked to arrange her nest, and she will find it faulty. She wants to be always so original . . .

*Madame.*—Are you criticising?

*Martha.*—No indeed. I never criticise any one. Besides, my sister is perfect—clever and beautiful too. Notice, please, that I am always the first to praise her. The only fault she has is that she has it in her head to pose as an artist at all times. Aside from that she is most charming. What a pity that she shouldn't want a baby.

*Madame.*—Heavens, child, are you informed even on this subject? Who told you such a thing?

*Martha.*—She has always said that she did not want children. She must take care of her figure and elegance. It is not fash-

ionable to have to care for children and to have to dress them in a house where there is a supply of lap-dogs and Angora cats—and of the latter she will bring a whole collection.

*Madame.*—When has anyone ever heard of a young girls talking of such things!

*Martha.*—Little mother, don't be angry. I regret only one thing . . .

*Madame.*—What, may I ask?

*Martha.*—I only regret that I am not going to be an aunt, and I am so anxious to be one.

*Madame.*—But some day you will be a mother . . .

*Martha.*—That time is so far away . . . And now I would like to have a tiny baby in my arms, to love him much and to kiss him just like this . . . (*she embraces and hugs her mother, kissing her eagerly, ardently.*)

*Madame.*—You are going to hurt me, foolish child.

*Martha.*—Convince Mary Eulalia and Charles to give you a little grandchild.

*Madame.*—Later on, later on.

*Martha.*—Don't you see, you are the very one to blame for it.

*Madame.*—The reason is that they still love each other as young married people, and they do not want to have a new being enter into their lives and steal from the one the love of the other.

*Martha.*—But the baby would personify their love.

*Madame.*—They look at it in a different light.

*Martha.*—Why did they get married, then?

*Madame.*—To love each other.

*Martha.*—Nothing more?

*Madame.*—To live together.

*Martha.*—It would not be worth the trouble of getting married.

*Madame.*—Martha, for Heaven's sake!

*Martha.*—God says . . .

*Madame.*—Martha, please don't bring God into this question.

*Martha.*—If my father and you had professed the same principle, what a misfortune it would have been for this world.

*Madame* . . .

*Martha.*—Why, you would not have me here discussing a grandson who isn't to come.

*Madame.*—I would have gained something.

*Martha.*—But don't you think that it is a great misfortune?

*Madame.*—A misfortune is your meddling in things that are not your affair.

*Martha.*—And do you know what worries me most?

*Madame.*—Some nonsense.

*Martha.*—The thought of how they are going to manage to disobey God's commandment. . . .

*Madame.*—And again God in this question! I forbid you to

*Martha.*—The trouble is that I don't know how children come . . .

*Madame.*—Martha!

*Martha.*—At will.

*Madame.*—They are ordered from Paris.

*Martha.*—And they come by aeroplane.

*Madame.*—It is intolerable that a little girl . . .

*Martha.*—I am fifteen.

*Madame.*—In my day, at your age . . .

*Martha.*—They believed that children were found in gardens. Now we are advanced, more progressive.

*Madame.*—I see, I see.

## SCENE II

*The same. Enter LILI, COCO, LULU.*

*Lili.*—Were you scolding Martha?

*Martha.*—We were discussing a difficult and important question. Mother, do you want me to inform my friends of the topic of our conversation?

*Madame.*—No, indeed. A trivial matter.

*Martha.*—It was . . . better guess . . .

*Madame.*—I forbid you, child, to even mention a word

*Martha.*—Have you heard? I am forbidden to talk.

*Coco.*—And the travellers have not yet arrived?

*Madame.*—They mentioned twelve o'clock as the time of their arrival.

*Lulu.*—We are anxious to see them among us again.

*Lili.*—We expected to find them here already.

*Lulu.*—I gave up a game of tennis.

*Martha.*—Do you still like tennis as much as ever?

*Lulu.*—My physician has recommended a great deal of exercises. Recently I won a silver cup in the local championship.

*Martha.*—And how old are you?

*Lulu.*—I am young, scarcely fifteen.



*Madame.*—Someone told me that they saw her at the theatre the other night.

*Coco.*—I go to the theatre every night. I am wild over “La Coquito.”

*Lili.*—We have learned all her songs. The “Muse of the Cabaret” seems to us very pretty.

*Coco.*—And “La Coquito” is so young. She has exceptional taste in dress.

*Lili.*—Our dresses are copies of those we have seen her wear on the stage.

*Madame.*—Is she nice?

*Coco.*—As to that . . . of course?

*Martha.*—She was a dressmaker in her younger years.

*Lili.*—She suffered a great deal. Later she went on the stage, and now every home is open to her.

*Madame.*—It was the same thing with Patti and Histori in my time.

*Lulu.*—“La Coquito” is not so great nor as famous as they were.

*Lili.*—She is nothing more than an average singer.

*Coco.*—I wish I could sing like her.

*Lili.*—Her precious jewels, those are what I would like to have. Is that not so, Martha?

*Martha.*—Psh . . .

*Madame.*—She is too young to think.

*Martha.*—Yes, indeed; still, I am not fond of what “La Coquito” does.

*Coco.*—You cannot understand anything.

*Martha.*—I do understand and feel, but what I can’t understand is how a person who dresses so old-fashioned can pass as a model of fashion.

*Lili.*—It is because she has individuality.

*Lulu.*—I prefer my tennis.

*Martha.*—Are you going to play this afternoon?

*Lulu.*—After tea. I am asked to the study of Marguerit Leclerc.

*Martha.*—She is a snob.

*Lili.*—I cannot see how Lulu can enjoy going to Madame Leclerc’s teas.

*Lulu.*—Because she is truly fashionable.

*Coco.*—Just think, Madame, she is a futurist.

*Lulu.*—She is intelligent, very much so. Now she is planning to give a show which will cause a sensation,—the Spring Show.

*Coco.*—Every picture is of or about Spring.

*Lili.*—Of course they must represent something, though she is so near autumn already . . .

*Lulu.*—That's not true. She is as young as any of us.

*Lili and Coco.*—We don't believe it!

*Madame.*—Don't get excited. The discussion is not worthy of being taken so seriously.

*Martha.*—Let us talk about lovers. This interests me more than all discussions over art. When are you going to get married, Lulu?

*Lulu.*—Everything has been planned for November.

*Madame.*—Then the games of tennis and the reunions at the home of Marguerite Leclerc,—everything will be over.

*Lulu.*—Not at all. My future husband is keenly interested in my being a strong woman.

*Madame.*—So as to have strong children.

*Lulu.*—Neither of us wants children.

*Lili.*—They don't want children, Madame.

*Coco.*—It is not fashionable to have children nowadays.

*Lulu.*—Too much suffering, and I can't stand privations.

*Coco.*—Nor losing your slender figure, either.

*Lili.*—And then there is not freedom for anything.

*Coco.*—And besides, it is so unfashionable.

### SCENE III

*The same.* DON PASCUAL *enters carelessly dressed, prematurely old*

*Lulu.*—Here is Don Pascual, who will not let us fib.

*Martha.*—Heavens! How you do look, uncle. Has something happened?

*Madame.*—The child is always worrying over something.

*Don Pascual.*—Good day.

*Martha.*—Goodness, what a sad voice.

*Madame.*—Is your wife sick?

*Martha.*—Have you lost your position?

*Don Pascual.*—It would have been better if it had been so.

*Madame.*—What has happened then?

*Don Pascual.*—The good Lord still remembers me.

*Madame.*—A very good thing indeed.

*Don Pascual.*—And I am a father once more.

*Martha.*—The twelfth time?

*Don Pascual.*—The ninth.

*Madame.*—Can it be possible?

*Don Pascual.*—Yes, indeed. You have another nephew.

*Madame.*—I am glad of it, and at the same time I sympathize with you.

*Lulu.*—But this is beyond belief. And do you still have the courage to bring children into the world?

*Don Pascual.*—What can I do?

*Lulu.*—Prevent it.

*Don Pascual.*—I have not the heart to do so. My quixotism is my enemy. When I married I knew what was expected of me, and, nevertheless, I said the fatal yes. I am a man of my word. When I promise a thing I do so without mental reservations. It has been the tragedy of my life. I have never tried to compromise with others, and still less with myself. And of this tragedy, good Heavens, nine are the acts brought to a good close . . . and the climax is not in sight.

*Martha.*—And is our cousin pretty?

*Don Pascual.*—Red as a shrimp. He has been crying ever since he saw the sunlight. His yells can be heard two blocks away.

*Lulu.*—In a very short while you will reach the dozen.

*Coco.*—And you are comparatively a young man.

*Don Pascual.*—I am grateful to you for saying that I am young. As for the dozen, on the other hand, I feel as you do.

*Madame.*—And your wife, is she well?

*Don Pascual.*—In a terrible mood. You can easily guess.

*Madame.*—It seems a miracle that you should have come. It is so long . . .

*Don Pascual.*—I wanted to tell you, besides . . .

*Lili.*—I am sorry for your uncle, Martha.

*Coco.*—He deserves sympathy.

*Lulu.*—And your employment, is it sufficient to keep th  
nine?

*Martha.*—Just to get along, nothing more, girlie, just to get along.

*Lulu.*—It is indeed foolish to sacrifice one's self in this manner.

*Coco.*—One needs the vocation of a martyr and apostle.

*Lili.*—And that of a shepherd, too.

*Coco.*—What would you do, Lulu, if you were the mother of the nine little angels?

*Lulu.*—Be still, don't even think of it.

*Madame.*—As for her, it is impossible.

*Don Pascual.*—My condition is very difficult.

*Madame.*—We will talk of it.

*Don Pascual.*—It is pressing.

*Madame.*—Wait a minute. Martha, show your friends through Mary Eulalia's house. They will become tired of staying here all the time.

*Lili.*—I would be delighted to see the house of the travellers.

*Coco.*—It is always pleasant to call at the home of newlyweds.

*Martha.*—To follow their example?

*Lili.*—To learn how to fix ours. (*They leave through the door in the background.*)

#### SCENE IV

*The same. MADAME and DON PASCUAL alone.*

*Madame.*—Now you can talk freely.

*Don Pascual.*—I have told you already what I wish from you. You know what such a thing costs. I have no resources. My work produces very little. My expenses are many. I have overdrawn my account.

*Madame.*—You understand that we, too, are not rich.

*Don Pascual.*—You do have the necessities of life, and sufficient to help a poor fellow such as I who is in difficult circumstances. I would not like to go back home with empty hands. You know that my wife has not been able to do anything except fill the house with kids. She is capable of doing anything if I do not bring home sufficient to pay the debts we have incurred.

*Madame.*—And where do you expect me to find what you wish?

*Don Pascual.*—Wherever you can. Women have sufficient wits to put over any difficult task. Positively, I don't know what to do. Don't you understand what my life is? No more ideals, no more ambitions,—nothing, nothing at all. Some might say that I am a coward, that my soul is that of a child, and . . . they will be right. A child every year exhausts anyone . . . with the exception of my wife.

*Madame.*—Easy it is to avoid the repetition.

*Don Pascual.*—I would feel as if I were committing an infanticide every time I would try it . . . It would seem to as if I were about to destroy a hope and an affection. I would be unhappier than I am now. In the midst of all, my children are my only exclusive love.

*Madame.*—What are we going to do then?

*Don Pascual.*—For their sake, Louise, for your nephew who becomes prettier every day, for all of us, make a sacrifice. A loan will be repaid within a few days. I shall try to work extra hours. Before a month, within a month, it will be repaid.

*Madame.*—I had to do some shopping. Charles and Mary Eulalia have sent very little money. It has been necessary to finish the furnishing of this house with my own savings. I could not . . .

*Don Pascual.*—Lucky your children, who have been able to start by knowing the world; to travel through foreign countries without worries, to lead a prince's life and to return home to find the table set. In this way they can wait calmly the arrival of their first baby.

*Madame.*—A baby who, perhaps, will never arrive.

*Don Pascual.*—What, they who are young, they who are able, they who have life before them, are they going to sacrifice everything to their egoism?

*Madame.*—Their ideas . . .

*Don Pascual.*—Which you encourage.

*Madame.*—What can I do in the matter. You know Charles, you know his fondness for travelling. He is a writer, and in order to become known and to succeed he needs a certain freedom of mind. No worries to handicap his life. His vocation requires that he be something more than a mere producer of children. And, besides, we are poor. It takes money to educate a child as it should be educated. She, Mary Eulalia, has seen the hardships of our family caused by the cost of the education of her brothers. They say that it is far better to avoid creating children than to increase the number of unhappy men in this world.

*Don Pascual.*—Very well, but the world is going the wrong way, the world is governed by injustice and absurdity. Those who can afford children do not want them, and I who do not want any more of them, I shall have them by imposition, by the dozen, by the thousands. This is unjust, absolutely unjust! It should not be so. Everything should be equal, everybody equal! Your

children should be punished and should have triplets the first, four the second, and twenty the third time!

*Madame.*—Pascual, for Heaven's sake!

*Don Pascual.*—What they are doing has no name. The children who will remain in the mind of God without ever being brought into life because their parents did not want them! This is as much of a crime as to kill them after they are born. I could not do such a thing, even if my wife would want to do it . . . Ah, if she wishes . . . Everything is in the hands of my wife.

*(Silence. It is evident that the memory of his wife brings sad thoughts to DON PASCUAL'S mind.)*

I am going, ashamed and hopeless . . . I have but one means left—suicide. Maybe it would be better . . . Thus everything is cut from the very root. Farewell.

*(He makes a false start; on reaching the door, he turns.)*

Are you leaving me to my fate? Don't you understand that in the state of mind I am in, I am capable of carrying out my threat? Would you let me hang without making a move to help me?

*Madame.*—No, No! Perhaps I can do something for you.

*Don Pascual (Smiling, relieved).*—Yes, truly?

*Madame.*—For the moment; it is all I have with me. Come tomorrow to my house and I will give you more.

*Don Pascual.*—Thanks, thanks, I knew indeed that I was not to go away empty-handed. You have a heart of gold, Louise, my sister. Forgive me all I have said. I shall not hang. I am happy . . . for the present. Ask Heaven to forget me . . .

. . . When are you coming to see your nephew? He is light haired and has blue eyes like yours . . .

*Madame.*—Why, mine are black.

*Don Pascual.*—Black like yours, then. What shall I call him? Louis, after you? I thought of asking Mary Eulalia and Charles to be godparents; will they accept? In being godparents there is no trouble; or don't they desire even that? How many worries and cares the little one has caused us . . . Farewell. The mother will be furious and in the mood to kill me. Farewell,—and tomorrow I will call for the rest.

*Madame.*—Farewell, unhappy father.

*Don Pascual.*—Good-bye, adorable sister.

*Madame.*—Poor Pascual!

*(She watches him disappear through the door in the rear of stage, and sadly wipes away a tear.)*

SCENE V

*The same.* MADAME, MARTHA, LILI, LULU, COCO.

(MARTHA runs across the stage, goes out by the door at the rear and descends the stairway. Her friends hasten after her. They go to the French window to the right, open it and greet the travelers whose automobile has just stopped in front of the house.)

*Martha.*—Here they are, Mama, here they are!

*Lili.*—Come, Madame, look, they are just getting out of the auto.

*Lulu.*—How elegant is Mary Eulalia!

*Coco.*—And how handsome is Charles!

*Madame.*—Yes, yes.

*Lili.*—They look so well.

*Lulu.*—One would hardly recognize them.

SCENE VI

*The same; A MAID and MADAME; later MARY EULALIA, CHARLES and others.*

*The Maid.*—The baggage.

*Madame.*—To Mary's room, quickly. We will unpack them afterwards.

(*Silence.* MARY EULALIA and CHARLES enter. *Kisses and embraces.*)

*Mary Eulalia.*—Mother, dear, dear mother.

*Madame.*—Children, my children.

*Lulu.*—They look well indeed, do they not?

*Lili.*—The trip has worn them out.

*Lulu.*—Mary, you look so different,—you are better looking, more beautiful.

*Mary Eulalia.*—Thanks, thanks.

*Charles.*—And I?

*Coco.*—More . . .

*Charles.*—Don't hesitate, what?

*Madame (To Coco).*—More handsome, is it not so?

*Coco.*—Yes, yes.

*Charles.*—And you, Martha, what are you going to tell me?

*Martha.*—They have said everything.

*Charles.*—Your opinion . . .

*Martha.*—It is not worth much.

*Charles.*—You are not very flattering to your brother.

*Martha.*—Let us make it a trade-last.

*Charles.*—Tell me.

*Martha.*—You first.

*Charles.*—Enchanting fairy.

*Martha.*—Is that all? My, your brain has been numbed, son!

*Lulu.*—You must have had a good time.

*Mary Eulalia.*—Yes indeed. Until now life has been for us just like a beautiful garden. Is the simile correct?

*Lulu.*—Yes, yes. Maybe a tiny bit overdrawn.

*Coco.*—And are you happy?

*Mary Eulalia.*—We could not have enjoyed ourselves more. A trip through Europe will never be lacking in interest,—Seville, Paris, Florence, Venice . . .

*Lili.*—And the pocketbook?

*Mary Eulalia.*—Empty.

*Lulu.*—Tell, tell us something of your trip.

*Mary Eulalia.*—It would take too long; weeks would be necessary to describe the picturesque landscapes we have seen, the customs we have learned and the places we have visited. And everything lightened by . . .

*Lulu.*—Love . . . of course.

*Mary Eulalia.*—That's just it.

*Lulu.*—Without love everything would have seemed insipid and monotonous.

*Charles.*—And instead we were able to find Seville interesting and picturesque in spite of the ruins in which the Yankee tourists and the French novelists have left it.

*Mary Eulalia.*—And because of the enchantment of our love we forget to send the postals from Venice.

*Charles.*—The sky of Florence and the charm of Paris has witnessed our love. We trembled with emotion before the Giralda, and we sang our barcarole in front of the Doge's Palace.

*Mary Eulalia.*—To marry and to travel,—this is my advice to the friends I like best. The return is the awakening . . .

*Charles.*—From a pleasant dream lived intensively.

*Mary Eulalia.*—Nevertheless, we will continue to be happy. I am filled with ideas; many images are silhouetted before my eyes, ideas and images which I would like to put down with the brush. I shall work. I would like to paint as the artists do over there. Do you remember, Charles, that little girl who was



copying a Rubens in the Louvre? You said that she looked like me. I have many ideas in my mind . . .

*Charles.*—And in your heart?

*Mary Eulalia.*—A great wonderful love for my husband and my mother.

*Madame.*—You must be tired. . . . Our chatter . . . perhaps . . .

*Martha.*—We will leave them for a few moments.

*Mary Eulalia.*—The voyage have been long, but . . .

*Madame.*—We will call again at lunch time.

*Lulu.*—We are going too.

*Mary Eulalia.*—No, no. Every one of you will take lunch with us.

*Lulu.*—But . . .

*Mary Eulalia.*—You can advise your people by telephone. Accompany them, Martha. Now my family and friends . . .

*Coco.*—In a short while, then.

*Lulu.*—The conversation was becoming interesting.

*Lili.*—They love each other dearly.

*Coco.*—Just like doves. The honeymoon is not over as yet.

*Lulu.*—And afterwards they will say that it was too short.

*Martha.*—This way, girls. (*They leave.*)

*Madame.*—I, too, am going. A few moments of rest will do you good. And besides, the number of guests is going to be rather large. We are having a banquet. I will be with you again in a very short time.

(*She goes out by the same door as the girls. MARY lies down on the couch, overcome with emotion.*)

## SCENE VII

*The same: MARY EULALIA and CHARLES*

*Mary Eulalia.*—Poor dear mother!

*Charles.*—Why so?

*Mary Eulalia.*—She was so glad and so moved to see us again.

*Charles.*—And do you pity her for that?

*Mary Eulalia.*—No, because she loves us, and when one loves, one must suffer a great deal.

*Charles.*—How much have you suffered for me.

*Mary Eulalia.*—Conceited.

*Charles.*—No, indeed.

*Mary Eulalia.*—And you?

*Charles.*—So, so.

*Mary Eulalia.*—Egotistical!

*Charles.*—Honey.

*Mary Eulalia.*—Heavens!

*Charles.*—Dear.

*Mary Eulalia.*—Lovers' words have been ever the same since the beginning of time.

*Charles.*—Love is mushy.

*Mary Eulalia.*—And kisses?

*Charles.*—Just one.

*Mary Eulalia.*—No.

*Charles.*—Am I punished?

*Mary Eulalia.*—Yes.

*Charles.*—Why?

*Mary Eulalia.*—Just because.

*Charles.*—Come, one . . . two . . . You can't resist.

*Mary Eulalia.*—You have disarranged my dress.

*Charles.*—You are prettier so.

*Mary Eulalia.*—Let us behave.

*Charles.*—You have stolen my heart.

*Mary Eulalia.*—I give it back to you for a few moments.

*Charles.*—Can it be done?

*Mary Eulalia.*—Let us talk seriously.

*Charles.*—I am listening.

*Mary Eulalia.*—What are you planning to do?

*Charles.*—To love you.

*Mary Eulalia.*—Be serious.

*Charles.*—To work.

*Mary Eulalia.*—Writing?

*Charles.*—Yes, writing also.

*Mary Eulalia.*—Of course, you know what I would like you to write.

*Charles.*—I would not like to do it for a living.

*Mary Eulalia.*—Nevertheless, I want you to write. It is your vocation.

*Charles.*—Very well, I shall write.

*Mary Eulalia.*—A novel?

*Charles.*—I will write a novel.

*Mary Eulalia.*—And the characters?

*Charles.*—You and I.

*Mary Eulalia.*—Impossible. There is no conflict.

*Charles.*—Love . . .

*Mary Eulalia.*—Is not a struggle, it is contemplation. Our love does not furnish material . . . not even for a short story.

*Charles.*—Another woman, for instance . . .

*Mary Eulalia.*—Charles!

*Charles.*—In your interruption there is conflict. You can see . . .

*Mary Eulalia.*—It would be interesting to know how this woman would come into our life. What has been the role of woman in your life, Charles?

*Charles.*—What a question!

*Mary Eulalia.*—Answer me.

*Charles.*—The role of adorable and sweet figures.

*Mary Eulalia.*—I don't care for metaphors. How many women have you loved in your life? I think I have the right to know.

*Charles.*—Whosoever they may have been, they are lost in the foggy darkness of time.

*Mary Eulalia.*—Many?

*Charles.*—One.

*Mary Eulalia.*—And that one?

*Charles.*—You.

*Mary Eulalia.*—You are fibbing.

*Charles.*—Do you want me to swear it?

*Mary Eulalia.*—Yes.

*Charles.*—On what?

*Mary Eulalia.*—On my love.

*Charles.*—I swear it.

*Mary Eulalia.*—Love affairs?

*Charles.*—A few.

*Mary Eulalia.*—Without love?

*Charles.*—Ever without, my dear.

*Mary Eulalia.*—And with what consequences?

*Charles.*—None.

*Mary Eulalia.*—Nothing remains in the background?

*Charles.*—Nothing.

*Mary Eulalia.*—And they, did they love you?

*Charles.*—It might be.

*Mary Eulalia.*—Did you hurt them?

*Charles.*—I don't think so?

*Mary Eulalia.*—Any tears?

*Charles.*—The inevitable ones, and sometimes in between.

*Mary Eulalia.*—What else?

*Charles.*—Why, are you my father confessor? I shall answer no more.

*Mary Eulalia.*—Not even if I wish it.

*Charles.*—Not even then.

*Mary Eulalia.*—And I shall ask no more.

*Charles.*—Then, to work.

*Mary Eulalia.*—And to live the two of us so that none will steal our love.

*Charles.*—Without ballast, free as birds.

*Mary Eulalia.*—Don't you want a son?

*Charles.*—It would be a hindering bond.

*Mary Eulalia.*—Alone, then.

*Charles.*—Love and work.

### SCENE VIII

*The same:* MARY EULALIA AND CHARLES; MARTHA AND THE MAID

*Martha.*—Charles, a lady asks for you.

*Charles.*—For me?

*Martha.*—Yes, for you.

*Charles.*—Who can she be.

*Martha.*—She refused to give her name.

*Charles.*—What does she look like?

*Martha.*—Dressed in mourning. She seems pretty.

*Mary Eulalia.*—Charles, who can she be?

*Charles.*—I don't know.

*Martha.*—The maid did not want to let her in. I objected.  
Have I . . .

*Charles.*—Today and at this time?

*Martha.*—We will tell her to come some other time.

*Charles.*—No, no, let her come in. (*MARTHA rings for the maid.*)

*The Maid.*—Madame called?

*Charles.*—Let the lady who wishes to see me come in.

*Mary Eulalia.*—Be careful and . . .

*Charles.*—She will be homely.

*Mary Eulalia.*—Nevertheless . . .

*Charles.*—What do you expect?

*Mary Eulalia.*—Get rid of her quickly.

*Charles.*—I wish she were gone already.

*Mary Eulalia.*—I will come for you within five minutes.

*Charles.*—More than enough.

*Martha.*—We will not leave you alone for much longer than that.

*Mary Eulalia.*—He would be better alone than . . .

*Charles.*—Than in bad company, is that so?

*Mary Eulalia.*—These are the first five minutes of my husband's unfaithfulness.

*Charles.*—The first five minutes spent with another woman.  
(*MARTHA and MARY EULALIA leave the room.*)

SCENE IX

*CHARLES and MAGDALENE; later MARY EULALIA*

*Charles.*—You . . . you? Magdalene?

*Magdalene.*—Yes, I.

*Charles.*—Here in my home? . . . How did you learn . . . ?

*Magdalene.*—Through the newspaper I learned of your arrival. Your marriage was a painful shock to me. I wanted to talk to you, but it was impossible. Then you fled like a coward. I have waited. You cannot guess what this waiting has cost me. I saw you arrive and I have dared to call.

*Charles.*—You will not dare to disturb my peace.

*Magdalene.*—You have the peace of my life forever.

*Charles.*—You know well . . .

*Magdalene.*—I never believed you would be such a coward and such a snake.

*Charles.*—Speak in a lower tone, very low.

*Magdalene.*—You deceived me, you made me a lost woman.

*Charles.*—I loved you.

*Magdalene.*—You lie.

*Charles.*—Be quiet, be quiet; don't talk so loud.

*Magdalene.*—I was happy in my poverty with my parents.

*Charles.*—It was a foolish moment.

*Magdalene.*—Irremediable.

*Charles.*—We were young.

*Magdalene.*—My parents have driven me away . . .

*Charles.*—There was no need of your confessing your mistake.

*Magdalene.*—Their daughter, their only daughter . . .

*Charles.*—An absurd conception of life.

*Magdalene.*—What a stupid, what a fool was I to believe in your betraying words, to believe in a love that does not exist and never did exist. What a fool to dream of a happy life. Fool, twice a fool in giving myself to you soul and body.

*Charles.*—You were not a child.

*Magdalene.*—Because I was not one, I loved you with all my soul nor did I hesitate to sacrifice my whole life for you.

*Charles.*—We were lovers.

*Magdalene.*—We were supposed to be married shortly afterwards.

*Charles.*—Love is not eternal . . .

*Magdalene.*—You swore that it would be.

*Charles* . . . ?

*Magdalene.*—You are going to have a son.

*Charles.*—You wanted him.

*Magdalene.*—My love was so great that I desired a child with all my heart. I wished that all yourself should be perpetuated by something, that the love I felt for you should become flesh and blood of ourselves. Such was my love.

*Charles.*—Then you should find strength in your sacrifice. Love is free from all considerations and reserves. Being a mother you will soon forget the lover.

*Magdalene.*—Egoist! Egoist! You will be always the same, always!

*Charles.*—Magdalene, be sensible; what can I do for you now? You know that conditions have changed. That foolish moment is past. Nevertheless, I am willing to compensate in so far as possible for the damage. What do you want?

*Magdalene.*—For myself, nothing. I would not have cared.

*Charles.*—Then?

*Magdalene.*—Your child . . .

*Charles.*—Have I . . . ?

*Magdalene.*—Protect him.

*Charles.*—You cannot mean that I should receive him in my home.

*Magdalene.*—Help him in some way . . .

*Charles.*—He is not born as yet . . . He may die . . .

*Magdalene.*—Charles, Charles! I will be killed first before

. . .

*Charles.*—Be silent, be silent, not so loud!

*Magdalene.*—Charles, Charles, you know that none before you entered my life, and you did so for my misfortune . . .

*Charles.*—Yes, yes, I know; don't talk so loud, not so loud. What do you want, after all.

*Magdalene.*—I am poor, I am in need.

*Charles.*—Money? Money? How much? One hundred, two hundred dollars?

*Magdalene.*—I am not begging.

*Charles.*—I don't understand.

*Magdalene.*—I am very ill. I have no home. They have driven me out of mine and I have been wandering everywhere. There have been days when I needed the charity that I have just now refused from you. I don't know whether I will live for my child, or if my child will outlive me. In this last case . . .

*Charles.*—Magdalene!

*Magdalene.*—My hope to live is great; but, I would not wish by any means that, my hope failing, my child should come into this world without protection . . . I was eager for your return only because I wanted to talk to you about this. Now, in spite of the manner in which you have received me, I am calmer. . . . For my child, Charles, for him . . . an effort . . . nothing more than an effort.

*Charles.*—I will do what I can . . . Really, the surprise . . . pleasure and fear at the same time . . . A child when it is least looked for . . .

*Magdalene.*—Don't be an egoist; don't be bad. Let me live in peace the few months of my life that are left to me. Be kind, I beg it of you on my knees, on my knees, like this, just as if I were asking of God . . . Look at me, look.

*Charles.*—Get up, get up. I will do what you ask.

*Magdalene.*—Thanks, thanks . . . Now I am well, oh, so well. Farewell, Charles farewell . . .

*(She goes away with hesitating, trembling steps. CHARLES remains thoughtful and absorbed. A violent emotion seems to take hold of him; his face contracts, and two tears roll down his cheeks.)*

*Mary Eulalia (Entering suddenly).*—Charles, Charles!

*Charles.*—Mary.

*Mary Eulalia.*—That woman, that woman . . . caused you to cry.

*Charles.*—It is nothing.

*Mary Eulalia (Aside).*—Yes, it has been a great deal. We, too, shall have a child.

## ACT II

*(The same decorations as in first act. Greater display of elegance in the furnishings of the room. Here and there sketches and paintings by MARY EULALIA. A dull, dreary Sunday afternoon. Five years have elapsed.)*

## SCENE I

MARY EULALIA, THE GOVERNESS.

*(MARY EULALIA impatiently rings the bell.)*

*The Governess.*—Did Madame call?

*Mary Eulalia.*—Is the girl dressed?

*The Governess.*—Madame told me that she was not going out, and I, obeying Madame, did not dress the girl.

*Mary Eulalia.*—The fact that I am not going out is no excuse for the girl's not being dressed.

*The Governess.*—I did not say to Madame that the girl is not dressed; what I meant was that she is not dressed to go out, because as Madame told me . . .

*Mary Eulalia.*—That's enough. Dress the girl immediately and be ready to take her to the park.

*The Governess.*—What dress does Madame wish that? . . . ?

*Mary Eulalia.*—Must I think of the dress too? Are you not the one who must take care of the girl in every way? Are you not paid to do it? How many times have I told you that I don't care to be bothered with the child.

*The Governess.*—Madame could . . .

*Mary Eulalia.*—Do as you are told and I will not say a word.

*The Governess.*—Very well, Madame. *(She is about to leave the room, then stops as she remembers something.)* Madame, your mother called over the telephone.

*Mary Eulalia.*—And why did you not call me?

*The Governess.*—Because I thought that Madame was busy.

*Mary Eulalia.*—I am never busy when it is a question of talking to my mother.

*The Governess.*—Your mother said that she would be over immediately.

*Mary Eulalia.*—Very well, you may go.

*The Governess.*—I would regret if Madame . . .



*Mary Eulalia.*—Never mind, you may go . . .  
*The Governess.*—Very well, Madame.

SCENE II

MARY, MARY EULALIA and MADAME

(MARY EULALIA walks nervously about the room; she goes to the French window. Shortly afterward Madame and MARTHA enter.)

*Madame.*—Here you are. They must have told you that I telephoned you a few moments ago.

*Mary Eulalia.*—Yes, they told me so.

*Martha.*—And the child. Where is Marge?

*Mary Eulalia.*—With her governess, in her room.

*Martha.*—I am surprised. I have not seen her for so many days.

*Mary Eulalia.*—You may go in to see her, if you wish.

*Martha.*—Is she as pretty as ever?

*Mary Eulalia.*—I have not seen her for three days.

*Martha.*—You are cruel to her. I shall take your place advantageously. Marguerite! Marge! . . . (She goes out through the door leading to the interior of the house, continuing to call for Marguerite.)

*Mary Eulalia.*—So much the better. We can talk more freely alone.

*Madame.*—Did you need me? I was told that you were trying to get me over the telephone.

*Mary Eulalia.*—One can never get you.

*Madame.*—I have had to go out often. Charity takes much of my time.

*Mary Eulalia.*—In exchange for the personal inward satisfaction that it gives, and the hope of a possible future heavenly reward?

*Madame.*—A duty fulfilled always brings satisfaction without the need of a future reward.

*Mary Eulalia.*—Everybody forgets me.

*Madame.*—Don't think so, Mary Eulalia.

*Mary Eulalia.*—And this is not the worst . . . more is coming.

*Madame.*—What can it be?

*Mary Eulalia.*—The climax to a hopeless situation.

*Madame.*—Tell me what is happening. Why do you keep the secret from me?

*Mary Eulalia.*—Charles did not come home to eat.

*Madame.*—He probable had an engagement for lunch.

*Mary Eulalia.*—Today is Sunday.

*Madame.*—A friend . . .

*Mary Eulalia.*—Don't try to excuse him.

*Madame.*—I don't see anything to worry over in such an insignificant occurrence.

*Mary Eulalia.*—And if such a thing were to happen every day?

*Madame.*—Do you mean to say . . . ?

*Mary Eulalia.*—That he has been dining with another woman.

*Madame.*—You are too suspicious.

*Mary Eulalia.*—Every man has his soul mate.

*Madame.*—Not every man.

*Mary Eulalia.*—After five years of a hateful marriage, it can be easily understood.

*Madame.*—Nevertheless . . .

*Mary Eulalia.*—It is so natural that no other thing in the world could be more natural.

*Madame.*—He loves you.

*Mary Eulalia.*—I don't believe it.

*Madame.*—You are his ideal.

*Mary Eulalia.*—I was; let us not confuse the tense.

*Madame.*—Of what do you accuse him?

*Mary Eulalia.*—Of having lied to me. He has deceived me so many times in his life.

*Madame.*—You are exaggerating.

*Mary Eulalia.*—That woman . . .

*Madame.*—She died five years ago. A jealousy which it is wrong to give in to or nurse.

*Mary Eulalia (Holding out a card).*—This address?

*Madame.*—A card, a name, nothing in it.

*Mary Eulalia.*—But, have you noticed the name?

*Madame.*—Esmeralda! What of it?

*Mary Eulalia.*—No surname.

*Madame.*—No.

*Mary Eulalia.*—Charles is deceiving me with this woman, just as he did with the other one.

*Madame.*—Old stories.

*Mary Eulalia.*—Yes,—old stories that have their epilogue.

*Madame.*—How?

*Mary Eulalia.*—In making a mother of me against my will.

*Madame.*—You ought to be grateful to that unhappy woman for this. You have a daughter without passing through the bitter moments of childbirth and those of nursing.

*Mary Eulalia.*—But it is terrible to be required to love when one hates.

*Madame.*—Mary!

*Mary Eulalia.*—Yes, I hate her, I hate her with all the force of my soul.

*Madame.*—What has the child done to you?

*Mary Eulalia.*—She has brought me misfortune. My lover deceived me with her mother. The child will always remind me of his falsehood.

*Madame.*—Rather the little girl would compensate you for it, provided you were to force yourself to be more kind to her.

*Mary Eulalia.*—The girl is the very picture of her mother, who can tell that she has not inherited the inclination to . . .

*Madame.*—Don't be unjust to her mother. She gave you a lesson . . .

*Mary Eulalia.*—A lesson to me? A lesson?

*Madame.*—Yes, to you.

*Mary Eulalia.*—Which? What?

*Madame.*—The lesson of not fleeing from the consequences of an act done by one's own will.

*Mary Eulalia.*—Do you think, then, that . . .

*Madame.*—In doing the opposite of what you were planning to do, she fulfilled her duty. She knew the consequences of her act and accepted them. You and Charles swore before the altar and before the law to do one thing, and your egoism caused you to forget the oath taken and to find pretexts to justify your action.

*Mary Eulalia.*—It seems to me that I have already fulfilled my duty in adopting that child.

*Madame.*—You mean receiving her into your home, nothing more.

*Mary Eulalia.*—Who nursed her?

*Madame.*—The nurse.

*Mary Eulalia.*—Who brings her up?

*Madame.*—The governess.

*Mary Eulalia.*—Mother, mother, that child has filled my life with trouble. She has diverted my existence from the path I

dreamed. On her account I have been obliged to give up my affections, to forego my friends, to lose my husband.

*Madame.*—But, on the other hand . . .

*Mary Eulalia.*—On the other hand, what? I have been a mother without being one.

*Madame.*—A mother? You have never been one, Mary Eulalia, never. A mother is the one who suffers for her children when they are born in the midst of untold pain! When whole nights are passed at the bedside, watching the sleep of the baby; when worry takes hold of the heart at the least unexpected move of the sleeping baby, then, and only then, is one a mother!

*Mary Eulalia.*—Do you know that I have wished to be one?

*Madame.*—Charles and you fled from that responsibility, and it is the same thing as to be afraid of life.

*Mary Eulalia.*—You approved our conduct.

*Madame.*—I was silent. At times I thought that you were right, because I am a mother and know what a mother must suffer. It was my selfish moment, if you like.

*Mary Eulalia.*—Life cannot continue in this way. I well understand that Charles' dream vanishes little by little. I am getting old, he is strong.

*Madame.*—Win your husband.

*Mary Eulalia.*—If I knew how . . .

*Madame.*—By means of the child. Now that God denies you one, love the girl as a daughter, not as a stepdaughter.

*Mary Eulalia.*—To love, to love her! But for Heaven's sake, do you know what you are asking of me?

*Madame.*—Then there is no remedy. Marguerite is now Charles' love.

*Mary Eulalia.*—Just as her mother was.

*Madame.*—They are two different loves. He can love the child much, and he may never have loved her mother. Be kinder to the child; don't let it be believed that you care nothing for the memory of her dead mother.

*Mary Eulalia.*—You settle things in a very easy, though impossible, manner.

*Madame.*—Everything is settled in this world in the same way. Complications are to be found only on the stage or in our own mind, and the latter is fond of entangling the most natural and simple situation. Your temperament is of this type.

*Mary Eulalia.*—At times, mother, I am thinking terrible things.

*Madame.*—And you build a whole novel over a tiny card.

*Mary Eulalia.*—But don't you think that there is something to it?

*Madame.*—In the card, no. Maybe in the weariness of it all. Lovers' love is not lasting; that of husband and wife with children lasts forever.

*Mary Eulalia.*—And when one cannot have them?

*Madame.*—Then there must be another remedy.

*Mary Eulalia.*—I shall try to follow your advice.

*Madame.*—Receive him in good spirit. Go out with him. Amuse yourselves and all will be well.

*Mary Eulalia.*—Thanks, mama. I will see if it is possible to love the girl.

*Madame.*—Everything is possible in this world.

(*A noise as of someone entering the front door.*)

*Mary Eulalia.*—It is Charles, no doubt. Be silent, don't let him know that I have told you these things.

*Madame.*—Don't worry.

*Mary Eulalia.*—Let us wait for him.

### SCENE III

*The same.* MADAME, MARY EULALIA and CHARLES

*Charles.*—You here, Madame?

*Mary Eulalia.*—There is nothing strange in my mother visiting me.

*Charles.*—I didn't mean that.

*Mary Eulalia.*—You spoke as if you were asking a question, and in a tone of astonishment.

*Madame.*—It is proper, is it not, that a mother give her Sundays to a daughter?

*Mary Eulalia.*—While in our modern times it is very strange for a husband to pay attention to his wife.

*Charles.*—Mary!

*Madame.*—Do not notice her, Charles.

*Charles.*—Are you in a bad humor?

*Mary Eulalia.*— . . . Psh!

*Madame.*—You need to talk to each other alone. You have not seen each other for some time, at least today. Meanwhile, I will go to greet the little girl, my grandchild, Charles.

*Mary Eulalia.*—Mama!

*Madame.*—Be careful. I will be with you both shortly.  
(*She leaves the room.*)

## SCENE IV

CHARLES and MARY EULALIA  
(*An embarrassing situation.*)

*Charles.*—Well . . .

*Mary Eulalia.*—I hope you had a good time.

*Charles.*—No one can be amused by official business.

*Mary Eulalia.*—Have you been with the minister? Does he name you as ambassador?

*Charles.*—Don't joke over serious matters, Mary Eulalia.

*Mary Eulalia.*—No, boy, no, I do you the honor of taking you very seriously. You can see that I am wishing you nothing less than an ambassador appointment.

*Charles.*—Mary . . .

*Mary Eulalia.*—Well, then, be frank enough to state things as they are. Do not invent pretexts and excuses to cover up an affair that in the long run concerns you alone.

*Charles.*—Very well, am I not free to dine with friends?

*Mary Eulalia.*—Oh, yes, you are free to do everything except to lie.

*Charles.*—I do not want to discuss the propriety of white lies. They belong by right to all husbands, and . . . to every wife.

*Mary Eulalia.*—But there are certain things that poison our life forever.

*Charles.*—You are spiteful.

*Mary Eulalia.*—I cannot forgive. As a matter of fact, in my position, no other woman would forgive.

*Charles.*—Even the memory of that lie is gone from me. It was so long, long ago. A life is between it and us.

*Mary Eulalia.*—Because there is a life, it has not been less painful for me.

*Charles.*—Let us talk no more of that affair.

*Mary Eulalia.*—Is it painful for you?

*Charles.*—It is of no importance, whatsoever.

*Mary Eulalia.*—Another topic, then?

*Charles.*—Whatever pleases you.

*Mary Eulalia.*—Shall we speak of this card?

*Charles.*—No matter.

*Mary Eulalia.*—What does it mean?

*Charles.*—A name and an address.

*Mary Eulalia.*—A woman's name.

*Charles.*—And an address unknown to me.

*Mary Eulalia.*—I found it in the pocket of your coat.

*Charles.*—I never dreamed that you would so lower yourself as to go through my pockets.

*Mary Eulalia.*—I have done wrong, I confess it, but I needed proof.

*Charles.*—Of what?

*Mary Eulalia.*—That you are deceiving me.

*Charles.*—And you believe that with that card you are going to convict me . . .

*Mary Eulalia.*—It is at least an indication.

*Charles.*—A proof . . . a woman's name and address!

*Mary Eulalia.*—A proof that you are frequenting this class of women, and that you are lowering yourself so.

*Charles.*—It proves nothing.

*Mary Eulalia.*—Of course, I know that this can only be a passing fancy, but you are hurting me, nevertheless. Answer me, tell me that I am right.

*Charles.*—To your system of inquisition I answer nothing.

*Mary Eulalia.*—Do you mean to say, then?

*Charles.*—That you are mistaken. Your jealousy carries you farther than is right and proper in any woman. You must not mistrust me, nor accuse me, in this way. You are intelligent and you ought to know this.

*Mary Eulalia.*—Charles, you no longer love me.

*Charles.*—Mary!

*Mary Eulalia.*—Tell me so frankly. I much prefer clear and well defined situations. I know I have proved a disappointment to you.

*Charles.*—As far as I am concerned you are still the same, Mary.

*Mary Eulalia.*—When I married you, I dreamed of a life which was to be far different from the one I have lived. My poor ambition to be an artist has been wrecked,—your dreams of being a writer, a brilliant one, have met the same fate; and I had a foolish faith in both of them. We wished to make life a masterpiece of art, and life has made fun of us. Our dream of freedom, of independence, has been corrupted. I believed in the eternity

of love, in the veracity of words spoken in a passionate moment. We assumed to be able to plan our life, to trace it along a well defined plot, just as in a beautiful drama or as in an interesting novel. In homage to these conceptions and to the alluring music of these words, I gave up that which could now save me—motherhood. I believed in your words, “I don’t want a child to come between us to steal from me your love,” because those words faithfully echoed what I felt in my heart,—an immense desire to love. I listened to an inward voice which said, “A son will prevent you from realizing the work of which you have dreamed, a son will take you away from the things that are dear and pleasant to you; in order to be a mother one must have a temperament which you are far from possessing.” It was an evil spirit that tempted me. The punishment has been and is severe . . .

*Charles.*—Mary!

*Mary Eulalia.*—What have you done? What did you do? You brought me the daughter of an ancient mistress so that the child should indeed take away your love from me; should come between us, a constant remorse and an offence to my womanhood because I cannot conceive a child. (*She commences to weep.*)

*Charles.*—It is that the arrival of Marge upset all my ideas. I was a theorist and in our case I was not in favor of having children. This was sheer egoism, if we speak plainly. Of a sudden I realized all that was holy in fatherhood. My life was in that moment changed,—and the catastrophe has not been the less for me.

*Mary Eulalia.*—I understand the condition very well. I have not the courage to reproach you for anything, and yet

*Charles.*—You are unjust to me, Mary Eulalia. I love you just as much as on that first day . . .

*Mary Eulalia.*—I don’t flatter myself to that extent, Charles. Our bodies are together, our lives go the same way, but our souls

*Charles.*—Our souls, too. Our souls live together, as they were living on the day we were married. Don’t attach so much importance to trifles; don’t think so deeply over problems too difficult to solve. Take life as it is, not as a subject for a literary work, but just as life,—composed of unforeseen, illogical sequence of events, incidents which bring us joys and sorrows. Love Marge, love her truly and without reserve. Be good and kind to her, for the little girl will have plenty of time to know what



sorrow is without learning it so early. Let us go out, Mary Eulalia, the afternoon is beautiful and the sunset is arranging its most beautiful hues. Nightfall brings calm and peace, gives serenity to the spirit. Let us go.

*Mary Eulalia.*—I have no desire to go out.

*Charles.*—But I do, let us go.

*Mary Eulalia.*—I can't.

*Charles.*—It is necessary.

*Mary Eulalia.*—If you wish so . . .

*Charles.*—I want you to go.

*Mary Eulalia.*—And I, must I obey?

*Charles.*—Blindly.

*Mary Eulalia.*—We have exchanged serious words.

*Charles.*—Very serious. Yet, what we have said will make us understand each other better.

*Mary Eulalia.*—Our poor dreams . . .

*Charles.*—Life is made up not of dreams, but of very bitter realities. Are we going out?

SCENE V

*The Same: MADAME, CHARLES and MARY EULALIA.*

*Madame (Entering the room).*—Is the storm over?

*Charles.*—A summer thunderstorm that has not left the least trace.

*Mary Eulalia.*—But in the heart : . . .

*Charles.*—Forget it.

*Mary Eulalia.*—You men can easily do without it.

*Charles.*—When it is not worth while to remember such a tender organism.

*Madame.*—And have you convinced her?

*Charles.*—We are going to take tea somewhere. Will you accompany us?

*Madame.*—It is better that you two go alone. The walk will do you good.

*Mary Eulalia.*—Do you think so, mother?

*Madame.*—I hope so.

*Mary Eulalia.*—Very well, I will get ready. (*She leaves the room.*)

SCENE VI

*The Same: MADAME and CHARLES.*

*Madame.*—I have to censure you.

*Charles.*—As a mother-in-law?

*Madame.*—As a friend.

*Charles.*—As a mother will be better.

*Madame.*—I cannot claim that title.

*Charles.*—Yes, indeed.

*Madame.*—You are wrong in being . . .

*Charles.*—She is at fault.

*Madame.*—You leave her alone too often, and that is very suspicious . . . for you.

*Charles.*—I would not even think . . .

*Madame.*—I don't mean that. But love is diminishing, and this is an important matter for the future.

*Charles.*—She is sensitive, too sensitive, and . . .

*Madame.*—That is where the trouble lies.

*Charles.*—Leaving her for a few moments. . . .

*Madame.*—Moments which she uses to imagine all evils about you.

*Charles.*—What can she possibly think?

*Madame.*—Woman's imagination is a terrible thing.

*Charles.*—If it is only imagination . . .

*Madame.*—Which could easily become reality.

*Charles.*—Is she not happy?

*Madame.*—Now, no.

*Charles.*—What does she want?

*Madame.*—Love.

*Charles.*—She has it.

*Madame.*—Sometimes.

*Charles.*—There is nothing for which she can reproach me.

*Madame.*—You would do well to send the little girl away. As things are, she is an obstacle to the happiness of both to you..

*Charles.*—What can I do with the little girl?

*Madame.*—There are boarding schools . . .

*Charles.*—Never.

*Madame.*—Think of my daughter.

*Charles.*—My daughter needs me.

*Madame.*—You must understand that my duty is to watch over Mary Eulalia's happiness.

*Charles.*—And mine to watch over the happiness of the little one who needs and must live with her father.

*Madame.*—I do not find, then, the solution to the problem.

*Charles.*—It is very difficult to find.

*Madame.*—If you only had another child . . .

*Charles.*—If we could hope to have one.

(*MARGUERITE'S voice is heard.*)

*Marguerite (From the interior).*—Papa, papa, am I pretty with the new dress you bought me?

SCENE VII

*The same:* MADAME, MARGUERITE, MARTHA, CHARLES, *the GOVERNESS*

*Charles.*—As pretty as an angel when the angels are as pretty as you are.

*Marguerite.*—Grandmother told me that the other dress was prettier.

*Madame.*—It is because grandmother likes to see you always dressed in white.

*Charles.*—Grandmother is fond of angels.

*Marguerite.*—Did you bring me candy?

*Charles.*—The stores are closed.

*Martha.*—Candy is for good children.

*Marguerite.*—When have I been bad, aunty?

*Martha.*—The governess complains about you, is it not so?

*The Governess.*—Sometimes the child does not pay attention to what I tell her. She is capricious, and that is not good.

*Marguerite.*—And because of it you are not going to tell me the surprise your promised me.

*Martha.*—Yes, just because of that.

*Marguerite.*—(*Pleading with her father.*)—Tell Martha to tell me what the surprise is.

*Charles.*—Why, then it would not be a surprise.

*Marguerite.*—And you, grandmother, do you know what it is?

*Madame.*—Of course, I do.

*Marguerite.*—And are you not going to tell me?

*Madame.*—Martha forbade me.

*Marguerite.*—I am not going to sleep because of my curiosity.

*Charles.*—Now, you are going to talk a walk.

*The Governess.*—It is late and madame will be displeased if we do not return early.

*Marguerite.*—Are you coming with us, father?

*Charles.*—I am going out with your mother.

*Marguerite.*—She can come with us.

*Charles.*—Mother wants to go out with me.

*Marguerite.*—And Aunt Martha?

*Madame.*—Martha is going to accompany grandmother.

*Marguerite.*—Then . . .

*Martha.*—A little walk and then back home.

*Marguerite.*—I am going so sadly; I would prefer to stay at home.

*Charles.*—You will buy candy.

*Marguerite.*—If you could come along . . .

*Martha.*—Do you love us so much?

*Marguerite.*—Much.

*Charles.*—How much?

*Marguerite.*—Much, much, much, so . . . (*she indicates with her hands.*)

*Charles.*—I am satisfied with it. Go. Be a good girl. (*To the governess.*) Take good care of her.

*The Governess.*—The master knows that I know how to take care of the little girl.

*Marguerite.*—Good-bye, papa. Good-bye, grandmother, tell Aunt Martha to tell me the surprise when I come back.

*The Governess.*—Come, let us go, child.

*Marguerite.*—Good-bye, good-bye.

*Martha.*—Good-bye, give me a kiss.

*Marguerite.*—You will look at us from the window, won't you?

*Martha.*—Yes, indeed. (*The GOVERNESS and MARGUERITE leave the room.*)

*Martha.*—Such a precious little girl.

*Charles.*—She causes me a great pity . . .

*Martha.*—Why?

*Charles.*—I don't know. Women have so much to suffer in this world. . . . (*Pause. MARTHA goes to the French window.*)

### SCENE VIII

*The same:* MARY EULALIA, MADAME, MARTHA, CHARLES.

*Mary Eulalia (Entering).*—I am ready.

*Charles.*—Let us go, then.

*Mary Eulalia.*—And the child?

*Charles.*—She went for a walk.

*Mary Eulalia.*—Even without saying good-bye to me?

*Charles.*—It pains you so to see her.

*Mary Eulalia.*—Very well. Are you coming, mother?

*Madame.*—I want to get back home. Pascual . . .

*Charles.*—Has he another son?

*Madame.*—No, some sort of trouble.

*Martha (Still at the window, waving her hand to MARGUERITE).*

—Yes, yes, good-bye . . . (*Speaking to those in the room.*)

The dear little one, she walks giving her hand to the governess and does not stop from looking backward . . . Yes, good-

bye . . . .

*Mary Eulalia.*—And Martha?

*Madame.*—She accompanies me. You two must go alone.

It is necessary that you go alone.

*Charles.*—Have you heard? Just as in our honeymoon.

*Martha (Still at the window).*—Now she looks back again.

She is at the corner. Now they cross . . . (*she utters a violent cry.*) Marguerite! . . . . Run Marguerite! . . .

(*She become suddenly pale, she covers her eyes with her hands and falls overcome in a nearby chair.*)

*Charles.*—What is it . . . Martha? . . . Martha!

*Martha (Pointing to the street).*—Marguerite, there . . .

*Charles (Rushing to the window).*—A crowd stops the traffic

. . . Marguerite! (*He runs out of the room into the street.*)

*Mary Eulalia.*—What has happened?

*Madame.*—My God, may God help us.

*Martha.*—I saw, I saw . . .

*Mary Eulalia.*—What? What? Speak, speak, Martha, tell me.

*Martha.*—A terrible thing, an awful thing.

*Mary Eulalia.*—Speak! Speak!

*Martha.*—Like lightning . . . It was terrible! An automobile.

*Mary Eulalia.*—My God!

*Madame.*—Good Lord, help us! (*A tragic silence. The women are bereft of words.*)

*Mary Eulalia.*—And I am to blame . . . I am to blame . . . I am the guilty one!

*Madame.*—Mary Eulalia!

*Mary Eulalia.*—I have cursed that creature. I have hated her . . . I have hated her. I am to blame . . . I have cursed her!

*Madame.*—Mary Eulalia!

*Mary Eulalia.*—God heard me . . . He takes her away . . . He takes her from us . . . What a terrible thing, what an awful thing! (*She bursts into a nervous crying and sobbing.*)

### SCENE IX

*The same:* CHARLES enters with MARGUERITE'S limp body in his arms. She is covered with a cloth that strange hands have thrown upon her. Whispering of people outside. Strange faces,—moved, terrified faces—of people who have followed the father, appear at the door. The strangers do not dare to cross the threshold.

*Charles.*—A doctor, Martha, a physician . . . Madame, water, water, madame. (*Both MARTHA and MADAME rush to carry out the orders.*) Mary Eulalia. Mary, save her for me! save her for me.

*Mary Eulalia* (*In a voice that comes from the depths of her heart.*)—Marguerite!

*Marguerite* (*Painfully, weakly opens her eyes.*)—Mama!

*Mary Eulalia.*—Daughter, my daughter!

*Charles.*—Save her for me, Mary Eulalia. Save her for me!

*Mary Eulalia.*—Daughter, my little daughter!

(CHARLES lifts the body of the little girl and rushes toward the interior room.)

## ACT III

### SCENE I

*The same room as in the preceding acts. Night has fallen. A soft light in the room. An atmosphere of restlessness and anxiety.*

#### MADAME, THE GOVERNESS, MARTHA

*Madame.*—Do as you are told.

*The Governess* (*She has not recovered from the terrible shock; her eyes are wide open, terrified, she is very pale.*)—Madame must believe me, I am not to blame, not at all, an accident . . . a terrible accident . . . an accident as it would happen to you, Madame . . . We went out, we had not reached the corner . . . Believe me, Madame, I do not know how it all happened. I saw the auto coming . . . I felt as if it was

going to hit me . . . Madame will understand . . . I did not know what to do and I let go of the girl . . . The child did not realize anything . . . What an awful accident, Madame, what an awful accident . . .

*Martha.*—If you had taken a little more care.

*Madame.*—I understand . . .

*Martha.*—Heavens, if I had only gone out with her . . .

*The Governess.*—Believe me, I was not to blame. It would have happened the same.

*Madame.*—The auto tried to avoid . . .

*The Governess.*—I don't know, I don't know. I could not realize anything.

*Madame.*—Things cannot be remedied now. But it ought to serve as a lesson to you.

*The Governess.*—I swear to you that I took all possible care . . . just as much as you, Madame, could have taken. It was an accident.

*Martha.*—Which puts the child at death's door.

*The Governess.*—But she will be saved. Is it not true that she will be saved?

*Martha.*—Poor little Marge!

*The Governess.*—What a terrible thing!

*Madame.*—Now, you will . . .

*The Governess.*—Will I be punished? No, they cannot punish me. I am not to blame . . . The same thing could have happened to you, Madame . . .

*Madame.*—Nothing will be done to you. Do not show yourself around for a while.

*The Governess.*—It is an injustice . . . I was not to blame. . . .

*Madame.*—Charles does not wish to see you any more.

*The Governess.*—Very well . . . very well . . . Madame . . .

*Madame.*—I will arrange everything. Go and let no one see you around here.

*The Governess.*—Madame . . .

*Madame.*—Go, go.

*The Governess.*—Very well, Madame. (*She leaves the room.*)

*Madame.*—Poor woman. Another innocent victim of the tragedy.

*Martha.*—And Marge, how is she?

*Madame.*—I don't know. Are the physicians through?



*Martha.*—No.

*Madame.*—And we cannot hear a whisper. Everything is so still and quiet.

*Martha (She goes to the door leading to the interior of the house, and listens).*—Nothing. . . . It seems . . . No, nothing.

*Madame.*—Come, sit down near me. Let us pray.

*(Silence broken only by the murmur of the whispered prayers of the ladies while the beads pass through their fingers.)*

## SCENE II

*The same:* CHARLES, MARY EULALIA, MADAME, MARTHA.

*(CHARLES and MARY EULALIA enter. CHARLES is helping MARY. MARY EULALIA is pale, upset and shows signs of great grief.)*

*Charles (To MARY EULALIA).*—You had better remain here. You cannot stand the sight over there any longer. I commend her to you, Madame. Martha, you are wanted in the operating room, over there in the dining room . . . You cannot walk, Mary Euallia, lean on me, in this way, so.

*Madame.*—Do you want something to warm you up?

*Mary Eulalia.*—No, this thing will pass. . . . I have been overcome by what I have seen. It will pass.

*Martha (Aside to Charles).*—And . . . Marge? How is Marge getting along . . . ?

*Charles (Shaking his head, as in doubt).*— . . . ? Do me the favor, Martha. *(MARTHA, unable to restrain her tears, leaves the room.)*

*Charles.*—Madame, if anything is needed . . .

*Madame.*—Don't worry. *(CHARLES leaves the room.)*

*(A painful silence. Sorrowful moments in which one does not know what to do nor what to say.)*

*Madame.*— . . . And?

*Mary Eulalia.*—Mother! Mother! *(She sobs.)*

*Madame.*—My daughter!

*Mary Eulalia.*—I saw it all, mother . . . I saw it all

*Madame.*—Be calm, Mary Eulalia, be calm.

*Mary Eulalia.*—On the white table, livid, with her eyes half-closed, and her hands tense . . . I had courage until the

last moment . . . If you had seen, Mama . . . The bistoury of the surgeon entered into her flesh, ripped, cut . . . cut down to the bone . . .

*Madame.*—And the leg had to be amputated?

*Mary Eulalia.*—Above the knee . . . poor little Marge!

*Madame.*—And blood?

*Mary Eulalia.*—She lost a great deal of blood. . . . She is weak . . . very weak.

*Madame.*—But she will live.

*Mary Eulalia.*—I want her to live. She must live! . . . Do you know what the child's death would mean to me?

*Madame.*—An accident like any other . . .

*Mary Eulalia.*—No, murder . . .

*Madame.*—No, no.

*Mary Eulalia.*—Yes, yes.

*Madame.*—But a couple of hours ago, however . . .

*Mary Eulalia.*—Two hours ago I hated that child, I wished . . . everything, everything. I would have given everything to have that shadow which dimmed my happiness disappear, and now . . . now . . . I saw her, mother, open her eyes and look at me, her sight veiled by tears, she moved painfully to say to me in a weak trembling voice, "Mama!" and then, then . . . I forgot everything, all, and wished with a l my heart and soul that Marge be saved and that she live, live, live . . .

*Madame.*—A supreme moment in your life, Mary Eulalia.

*Mary Eulalia.*—And, nevertheless, this girl, this girl, is not my daughter, mother. She is not my daughter, she belongs to that other woman . . . to that . . .

*Madame.*—Mary Eulalia!

*Mary Eulalia.*—My hatred, my poor hatred, so poor that it at this moment does not help me at all to persevere in my hatred, brought this misfortune upon Marge's head.

*Madame.*—This love newly born in you will save her.

*Mary Eulalia.*—I suffer so much, mother. My life is made over in one single hour.

*Madame.*—You will be a better woman after this trial.

*Mary Eulalia.*—May God grant it. (*A pause.*)

*Madame.*—What are the surgeons doing now?

*Mary Eulalia.*—I don't know.

*Madame.*—Was the operation over?

*Mary Eulalia.*—Some time ago.

*Madame.*—Then?

*Mary Eulalia.*—Who knows?

*Madame.*—Nothing is heard.

*Mary Euallia.*—They worked hard. (*Silence again.*)

*Madame.*—Why don't you lie down for awhile?

*Mary Eulalia.*—I can't . . . My nerves won't let me.

*Madame.*—It is getting late.

*Mary Eulalia.*—To sleep, to rest . . . impossible. I could not be alone for one single moment . . .

(*Pause.*)

*Madame.*—Charles has been brave.

*Mary Eulalia.*—He is her father.

*Madame.*—A terrible duty that of this father.

*Mary Eulalia.*—Come near, mother. Pass your hand over my forehead. It burns. I am feverish. The contradictory impulses and thoughts surging in my mind are destroying, killing me . . . I wish . . . I wish . . . I don't know what I want. (*CHARLES enters suddenly.*)

### SCENE III

*The same:* CHARLES, MADAME, MARY EULALIA.

*Charles.*—Dear, just a word.

*Madame.*—How is she?

*Charles.*—Bad, very bad.

*Madame.*—Then?

*Charles.*—Just a second, Madame . . .

*Madame.*—You wish to . . .

*Charles.*—To talk with Mary alone.

*Mary Euallia.*—Is it as serious as all that?

*Charles.*—Yes, just a moment, madame. I ask only a moment.

*Madame.*—I am going to rejoin Martha.

*Charles.*—Pardon me, excuse my rudeness . . .

*Madame.*—O, nothing at all . . . (*She leaves the room.*)

*Mary Eulalia.*—What? Is it all over . . . ?

*Charles.*—Mary Eulalia, Mary, listen to me a moment.

*Mary Eulalia.*—Speak, speak, is she living?

*Charles (With intense emotion).*—My daughter is dying. She has lost a great deal of blood, too much blood; she is weak . . . I have offered my blood to help her . . . mine is no good. Her father's blood is no good to save her . . . no good.

*Mary Eulalia.*—And you wish?

*Charles.*—Yours may help . . . Let us try. You are good, extremely good . . . You forgave everything, and you are going to help her. My daughter's life is in your hands, Mary Eulalia, you can, you must, save her!

*Mary Eulalia.*—Charles!

*Charles.*—I know that I am asking for the impossible. I know already that you are not going to yield, and, nevertheless, Mary Eulalia, I ask it, I beg it of you. That child is everything to me, do you understand? If you save her, I will be your slave. Save her, Mary Eulalia!

*Mary Eulalia.*—And a little of my blood could save that child?

*Charles.*—Perhaps.

*Mary Eulalia.*—My blood . . . my blood!

*Charles.*—Yes, your blood.

*Mary Eulalia.*—And with my blood?

*Charles.*—You would give her new birth.

*Mary Eulalia.*—Just like a mother!

*Charles.*—Like her own mother. She will be then a part of your own self.

*Mary Eulalia.*—Blood of my blood?

*Charles.*—Are you willing?

*Mary Eulalia* (*As if enlightened by a sudden vision*).—Yes . . . Yes . . . !

*Charles.*—Yes?

*Mary Eulalia.*—Yes . . . Let us go . . . I am ready.

*Charles.*—No, no, wait for the surgeon. (*He goes in search of the surgeon.*)

#### SCENE IV

*The same:* MARY EULALIA, CHARLES, *the* SURGEON.

*Mary Eulalia.*—Mother! . . . Mother! A mother at last! (*CHARLES enters with the surgeon.*)

*The Surgeon.*—Madame, Charles has informed me . . .

*Mary Eulalia.*—Yes.

*The Surgeon.*—There is no time to be lost, then.

*Mary Eulalia.*—Will she be saved?

*The Surgeon.*—I hope for the best.

*Charles.*—Everything will come out all right.

*The Surgeon.*—Yes, indeed.

*Charles.*—Is she weak?

*The Surgeon.*—Very, but we will give her strength and she will live.

*Mary Eulalia.*—And I?

*The Surgeon.*—You will not suffer anything. At the worst a slight weakness.

*Mary Eulalia.*—Let us go, then.

*Charles.*—I am going with you.

*The Surgeon.*—It would be better for you to remain here.

*Charles.*—Do you think so?

*The Surgeon.*—It will be too much for your nerves.

*Charles.*—Doctor!

*The Surgeon.*—It won't take very long. Within a few moments your wife will be with you again as if she had not gone through anything.

*Mary Eulalia.*—Charles . . .

*Charles.*—Be brave, dear, be brave.

*Mary Eulalia.*—I am ready, let us go.

*(She is pale; walks out of the room trembling. CHARLES, left alone, is seized by a profound nervousness.)*

#### SCENE V

*The same:* CHARLES, MADAME.

*Madame (Entering).*—Charles.

*Charles.*—Madame?

*Madame.*—Where is Mary Eulalia.

*Charles.*—In there, with the surgeons.

*Madame.*—What has happened?

*Charles.*—Please be calm, Madame.

*Madame.*—Mary Eulalia?

*Charles.*—With the surgeons.

*Madame.*—Tell me.

*Charles.*—Trying to save the child.

*Madame.*—How?

*Charles.*—By giving some of her blood.

*Madame.*—Are they going to operate on her?

*Charles.*—A slight transfusion.

*Madame.*—Daughter, my daughter! Let me go to her, let me help her. Mary, Mary!

*Charles.*—It is nothing serious . . . just a little cut . . . Everything is probably over by now.

*Madame.*—And if my daughter were to suffer, if my daughter is in pain, who will help her?

*Charles.*—She will be happy afterwards, we all will be happy.

*Madame.*—Let me go to her, I must know what they are doing to her. I want to help her.

*Charles.*—You ought to help me, too. During two hours, I have lived a whole feverish, stormy life. I cannot stand much more, my nerves are tense, and, nevertheless, I shut up my sorrows and worries within myself and I try to be calm . . . and . . . to hope.

*Madame.*—To hope what?

*Charles.*—I hope for this miracle which is to renew our existence and beautify our poor lives—so worn out and so unhappy.

*(A deep and profound silence. Both, absorbed by their own sorrow, are thinking.)*

## SCENE VI

*The same: MARY EULALIA, the SURGEON, CHARLES, MADAME.*

*(MARY EULALIA enters the room, assisted by the surgeon. She is paler, weaker, and is trembling; locks of her hair are pasted over her temples, as if by a perspiration which must have been cold and the result of pain.)*

*Charles.*—Mary Eulalia.

*Madame.*—My daughter!

*Mary Eulalia.*—Mother, Mother! *(The first emotion over.)*

*Charles.*—Has everything gone all right, doctor?

*The Surgeon.*—I hope so.

*Charles.*—And the child?

*The Surgeon.*—Resting nicely. We are hoping for the reaction.

*Madame.*—And Mary?

*The Surgeon.*—She was very brave. The transfusion was very short and almost the proper thing for her well-being. She has behaved wonderfully.

*Mary Eulalia.*—I suffered no pain, whatever. It has been nothing.

*The Surgeon.*—I leave you in loving hands to return to the bedside of the patient. I believe that this time, thanks to you, she has been saved from death.

*Charles.*—And you have done a great favor to her parents.

*The Surgeon.*—I am happy for them.

*(The surgeon leaves the room.)*

*Charles (After a pause).—*Are you feeling well?

*Mary Eulalia (While resting her head on pillows).—*Fine . . .  
 . I experienced a great joy, a wonderful joy. Nothing has  
 been done to me. . . . And yet . . . I feel like another  
 woman.

*Madame.—*Don't talk, don't talk. It might fatigue you,  
 and it may hurt you.

*Mary Eulalia.—*As the blood was rushing out of my artery  
 into her veins, an indescribable happiness took possession of my  
 heart.

*Charles.—*And . . .

*Mary Eulalia.—*I felt myself a mother . . . a mother!  
 Now there is some one with my blood in her veins . . .

*Charles.—*And that is what you had not foreseen . . .  
 The Unforeseen.

*Mary Eulalia.—*I am a mother, my debt is paid.

CURTAIN

## SONATA EROICA

BY MARGARET TOD RITTER

I will go quietly along this street  
 And none shall know that I am drunk with pain.  
 Strange, strange that all one's happiness is slain  
 In one brief afternoon. My heavy feet  
 Shall walk as lightly as light thistle-down.  
 Thank God, the walls are high, the houses few.  
 I will control my thoughts as sailors do  
 Their ships in storm. How terrible to drown  
 Alone . . . perhaps in sight of friendly land . . .  
 Calling in vain for help . . . Oh, what are these,  
 Not tears upon my face? Are there no keys  
 Of pride, or even shame, at my command?  
 I will remember that the past was sweet;  
 I will go quietly along this street.

# BROADWAY'S BELOVED VAGABOND

A STUDY OF THE CHARM AND FRAILTY OF YOUTH  
AS INTERPRETED FOR OUR STAGE  
BY JOSEPH SCHILDKRAUT

BY ADRIENNE BATTEY

The prodigal is still the most picturesque figure in literature despite the fact that he stands like an eloquent sign post at the cross roads of human volition pointing the way not to go. As a stage character he has gained measurably in glamor and prestige at the hands of Joseph Schildkraut, the brilliant young Viennese artist who enthroned rags and rascality in Liliom, and defended his title of Broadway's beloved vagabond with Ibsen's Peer Gynt. Young in years, being still in his twenties, this recent and important acquisition to our stage includes in his equipment an experience of more than three hundred roles in theatres abroad and a dazzling technique acquired under the famous Max Reinhardt.

That an actor of Mr. Schildkraut's intellectual scope and cultural attainments should be identified in the public mind with vagabond guise is one of those paradoxes in which life no less than the stage abounds. But none can deny that the qualifying term beloved removes the curse, and to be heralded as the world's handsomest man is no mean sop to the most outraged vanity. American audiences had their first glimpse of this young star's range and versatility when he made his initial screen appearance with Lillian Gish in Griffith's Orphans of the Storm, imparting to the Chevalier de Vaudray an astonishing elegance and finesse. An informal visit with Mr. Schildkraut in the library of his New York home, surrounded by richly bound first editions and other rare volumes that cover the wall space on all sides from floor to ceiling, discloses another view of a many faceted individual, the student, musician and linguist. To prove his powers further, this important young personage, now under contract with Sam H. Harris, will venture into the field of theatrical production the near future.



During the New York run of *Liliom*, Charlie Chaplin saw the play and went back to congratulate Joseph Schildkraut on his portrayal of the leading role, later recording in his diary: "I was amazed at his beauty and youth; truly an artist, simple and sincere. I wonder if I could play that part?" The striking inventiveness of the boy's performance was due to thorough comprehension of the role and a keen intelligence co-ordinating the various adjuncts of his art. At his command are mobile features, flexible voice and a singularly plastic body which is not the least vivid element of his expressiveness.

The traditional appeal of that dramatic type, the prodigal, lies in the fact that to the adult understanding he is merely an urchin with a gift of unknown value clutched in a grimy hand, who loiters and stumbles to his journey's end, there to learn that the gift he bore was life, and he has lost it on the way. Youth errs—like age—through ignorance. But age has no extenuating charm to plead its case. It is truly a sight to make the gods weep when a gifted neophyte, endowed with genius and its corresponding ego, forsakes the common thoroughfare for selfish paths and loses the human touch, without which it were better not to arrive. But wisdom shakes her hoary locks in vain. Experience may know the route, but only the inexperienced are wayfarers.

In Franz Molnar's *Liliom*, Joseph Schildkraut painted a picture of youthful genius gone astray that won a permanent place in memory's gallery of notable stage portraits. He presents a character of vigorous assertiveness, swift contradictions and the baffling moods of an April day. By turns wistful and insolent he is at once engaging and exasperating. Now he is boxing inoffensive ears, now bowing humbly in worship before the Madonna light in the care-worn Julie's face, his lips quivering with emotion, his erstwhile brutal hands restrained by sensitiveness from profaning her with their touch. Infinite pathos marks his clumsy attempts to share a tender impulse.

Twice, when *Liliom*, on a peak of exaltation, might have wrested his soul free, the good and evil forces in his life locked horns with wings in mortal combat and his noble aim was done to death. With every avenue of his being thrown wide to admit the beneficent influence of fatherhood, his impressionable being was exposed as never before to invasion of the opposite sort. When he would do better, he did his worst. His were the passionate sins that will not be judged according to appearances by that supreme tribunal to which *Liliom* addressed his dying plea: "If they

would only let me come up before Him!" As the tear-blind Julie read: Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God.

Liliom has the mocking witchery of a Jack o'lantern whose spell lures women over the hill to the poor house and down through the valley of death, good women and bad, but none indifferent in the lot. The swaggering youth admits it: "I can have all the girls I want, not only servants either, but cooks and governesses, French ones too!" Thus Julie, serious and circumspect, takes her place in the merry go round of admiration whose center is the Barker. Her closest rivals are the tawdry shop worn keeper of the carrousel and an artless child who proffers her love like a sandwich, between a rose and a kiss.

It must have been for these three women, or their prototypes, that the 13th chapter of 1st Corinthians was penned. Who, if not Liliom's following, have need of the grace that beareth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things? He is the lion of the hour and every girl in circus society has her opinion of him. Mrs. Muskat airily announces: "You're not a respectable citizen, Liliom, you're an artist." Marie makes no effort to comprehend this *rara avis* in their midst. To her he's briefly "a bad egg." Julie, of the household of faith, argues as Wolff at the Cafe Royale might, that parts of the egg are good.

Liliom is the *enfant terrible* of the human family, the fledgling soul, the joy and despair of his contemporaries, for whose maturity a hundred years are as a day. The youngster is an egoist, a tyrant and a villain, as deep-dyed and incorrigible as that species found in the nursery. His pride in being alive and Liliom springs from no baser source than the gurgling delight of a baby over its toes. "Did you know that I was 'Liliom'?" he demands of Julie, and swells his striped chest to bursting.

Into the bleak montony of Julie's days this alien spirit drifts like a shaft of sunlight across the kitchen floor, and in its rays the drudge becomes a Cinderella. Forthwith she embarks upon an emotional toboggan from whose sweet, terrifying thrills she would not, if she could, escape. His impishness entralls the plodding Julie. His stubborn will, his rough, crude ways challenge her gentleness. To her, Liliom's transitory tenderness is more precious for its rarity. It is the kiss in the cup of bitterness. Julie is unhappy more often than not but she is never bored. She prefers life out in the back yard with her exotic lover to sharing a roof with the worthy, uninspired carpenter. As Liliom jauntily ob-

serves, "What's he done anyhow? Any roofer can fix a roof."

"After all, in a good for nothing bum there may be the making of a man." So Liliom put his case to Julie as Adam must have said to Eve at the time of the original fall. It is the open-sesame to every woman's heart. Liliom has nothing to offer Julie but the problem he presents. He can give out no true affection until he has absorbed enough to overflow. Hence his obvious need of her and all the lesser, tributary loves. Julie responds with a divine compassion. From that hour she envisages the perfect man and enters into a covenant of faith that somewhere, some when, will work the miracle of love. With the mantle of charity she cloaks his imperfections, as she covers the tired boy on the couch, and takes up her patient vigil. Confidently she awaits that day when her beloved shall come to himself and know that he has never truly lived except in a woman's faith and hope and love.

Liliom is ungrateful, self-centered as an only child, accepting Julie's consecration and Aunt Rosa's coffee with equal unconcern. To the artist in embryo such details are part of the wonder and beauty of the world—his world—like the acacia blossoms in the park whose fragrance he inhales with the air. Freely they give, freely he receives. But can one be their debtor who so gorgeously displays, for their leaden orbs, the holiday mood of life? He who presently enlivens the dull routine of heaven must have added spice to their bread pudding.

"To be a care-taker, well, you have to be a care-taker," and that's that—not Liliom. He hails the coming baby as a new playmate and shouts his eager welcome from the housetop. The high light of Julie's announcement consists in this: "I'm going to be a father!" It is the "What a great boy am I!" enthusiasm of little Jack Horner, and craves the fond indulgence of a grandparent.

With quick intuition Liliom confides the best in him to Julie for safekeeping. Long before that death-bed scene, the mother eternal in her hears the voice of his child-heart crying: "Julie, hold my hand, tight." It is Liliom, obeying the first law of spirit, soul preservation. So loyalty takes root, the love that will not let him go. Only Julie knows of his hidden talents and estimates their latent power. To others, listening with the outer ear, the boy strikes a discordant note. Her being vibrates to new, exquisite harmonies when he is near, dim shadowings of a triumphant strain he yet will sound in an immortal symphony. It is finally given her who has watched the long night through to see the

promise of the dawn.

The mystery of birth awakens reverence in Liliom. For one brief instant the dross of his materiality is neutralized and a pure spark flames to heaven. For the first time the egoist is aware of an existence outside his skin, a need beyond his own. A sense of responsibility follows the vision of a being more helpless than himself.

After fifteen years of corrective fires, in another world, Liliom is sent back to earth on a redemptive errand—to do one good deed. “And will I be told what I am to do?” he naively asks the heavenly court. “No? Then how will I know?” How indeed! Facing again the test of human relationship, wherein he had signally failed, Liliom slaps the first hand outstretched to him. “Were it not for our heavenly patience,” as the judge remarked with an earthly twinkle in his eye, we might be tempted to dismiss the lad as an unteachable brat, well birched and none the wiser—to use Stevenson’s phrase. But fairness inquires the motive and the circumstance.

Surely it is a regenerate Liliom, an unpractised but not unloving hand, that brings his child a star. When the “dear little girl” rewards this friendly overture with “Go! Go! Go!” it is inevitable he should slap her. “Was that what you came here for,” the mother asks, “to strike my child?” Hear Liliom in his own defense: “No, that’s not what I came here for, but I did strike your child.” He meant well, tried a little, failed much.

The knave is but a knight in reverse. Liliom, the knight errant, is a potential masterpiece, not done, but brilliantly begun. His hand alone can take up the brush where the Master Painter laid it down. And gently destiny compels. He may defy his own design, delay its purpose as he will, but he must become the artist in life. New souls like all young creatures slumber deep, and the voice of spirit may call, “Liliom, rise!” many times before his drowsy conscience stirs. But evolution like the railroad track that quickened his imagination, goes on and on. If he resents being “spat upon” as the wheels of progress pass him by, he must give account of the milestones too. It will continue to be a round trip from earth to heaven and back again, for the perpetual child, until his divine self within breaks the spell of arrested development. Eventually it must occur to him that the object of life is growth.

But it will be a sad day for old earth, and Julie will be out of a job, when Liliom attains the stature of a man—and mounts the celestial escalator for the last time.

# TWO PLAYS FOR THE NEGRO THEATRE

BY PAUL GREEN

## THE HOT IRON\*

### CHARACTERS

TILSY McNEILL, *a washer-woman and farm hand.*

SINA, CHARLIE, BABE, *her children.*

WILL, *her husband.*

*Time, A summer day, the present.*

*Place, Eastern North Carolina, near the Cape Fear River.*

### SCENE

*The scene is laid in the sitting-sleeping room of TILSY McNEILL'S home. In the right rear and at the left front are two low rough beds. A fireplace with a big fire going at the right front. A door at the center rear leads into the kitchen. At the left rear a door opens to the outside. Between this door and the left corner stands an old bureau. A few splint-bottomed chairs are about the dirty, poverty-stricken room.*

*When the curtain rises, TILSY McNEILL, a thin, hollow-eyed mulatto woman of thirty years or more, is ironing clothes on a board, one end of which rests on a small table in the center of the room and the other on a chair. She is dipping snuff as she works, now and then spitting into the fire. Hanging on a chair before the fireplace are several garments she has just ironed. A pile of rough-dried clothes is on the bed at the left. She hurries to and fro as if trying to finish quickly the task before her. And more than once she stops her work and twists her head and shoulders as if trying to ease a pain in her body.*

*Suddenly, with the weight of her pressure upon the iron, the chair topples over, and clothes and all fall to the floor. She clutches at the iron and draws her hand away with an exclamation of pain.*

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*Setting the iron to the fire, she runs to a pan of water on the table and souses her hand in, and stands shuddering and wiping her streaming face with her apron.*

CHARLIE comes in at the left rear, carrying a hoe in his hand. He is a little black, barefoot boy of ten.

Charlie.—Muh, Mr. Johnson—(He sees his mother with her hand to her face.) Whut's de matter, yo' toof-ache worse?

Tilsy (*Whirling at him*).—Look at you a-bringin' a hoe in dis house, an' bad luck wid it! (He throws the hoe out behind him.) Bring me dat soda box in de kitchen. (She groans.) Quick, I tells you! I done burnt me han' to de bone. (He runs into the kitchen and reappears with the soda. She dries her hand, spreads the soda on it, and wraps it up in a rag which she gets from the bureau drawer, talking at him as she does so.) Why you comin' to de house dis time o' day, an' de sun two hours high. You gather up dat hoe an' git right back to dat cotton-patch. Fade from heah or I'll tan yo' hide wid a stick.

Charlie (*Timidly*).—Mr. Johnson run us out'n de cotton fiel'.

Tilsy (*Starting wrathfully towards him*).—He did! An' you a-slubberin' yo work. I tol' you, I tol' you an' Sina to chop yo' rows clean. (He backs away from her wrath.)

Charlie.—Muh, he said—he said you'd oughta keep wid us when we chops.

Tilsy.—He did! Well, how in de name o' God does he 'spect me to git Mis' Johnson's washin' an' arnin' done den? Did he pay you foh whut you chopped? (She hurries back to her ironing.)

Charlie.—No'm, he des' gut a switch an' driv us off.

Tilsy (*Raising the iron in her hand*).—Treatin' you lak dat! I wish to Jesus I could scrush his haid in wid dis heah arn. (She falls feverishly to work.) Whah's Sina?

Charlie (*Edging towards the bureau*).—She's comin' 'long behin' draggin' Babe. (TILSY hangs up a shirt and goes on ironing another. CHARLIE watches her and stealthily opens the bureau drawer.)

Tilsy.—You step to de woodpile an' git me a bucket o' chips. (She catches sight of his hand in the drawer.) Heah me? Whut you doin'?

Charlie.—Nothin'.

Tilsy.—Yeh, you is. I know, you's adder dem dere fishin' hooks I hid.

Charlie.—I des wanted to look at 'em a speck.

*Tilsy.*—A speck! Let you git yo' fingers on 'em, an' in a jook of a sheep's tail you'd be in de creek fishin'. Fetch dem chips. *(As she moves towards him, he backs out through the door. She begins folding up the dry clothes and putting them in a bag. CHARLIE comes back with the chips and lays them on the fire.)*

*Charlie (After a moment).*—Muh, I could ketch some cats if you'd le' me go to de creek.

*Tilsy.*—Listen to me, you ain't gwine down to no creek and drownd yo' se'f, you heah? I wants you to take dis bag o' clo'es an' run up to Mis' Johnson's an' tell her I'll have de others done some time tonight.

*Charlie.*—I—I don' want to go up dere. Mr. Johnson cussed at me while ago.

*Tilsy.*—Cain't he'p it. We gut to have some grub to last over Sunday. An' you tell her to pay you foh dat cotton chop-pin'. Dey promised you a quarter apiece. An' wid fifty cents you kin run over to Buie's Creek an' git some Baltimo' meat at Mr. Haire's sto.' *(A loud squalling sets up in the kitchen.)* Lawd, somethin's happened to Babe. Run see whut's de matter. *(CHARLIE starts out at the rear, but the door opens, and BABE, a little chocolate-colored creature of three or four years, yelling loudly, pushes her way in. SINA, black and about nine, with bare legs as thin as sticks, wearing a slip of a dirty dress, follows her.)* Whut ails dat baby, Sina? *(BABE claws at her mother's dress, and TILSY lifts her in her arms.)*

*Sina.*—She, she hurt her nose.

*Tilsy.*—Po' thing, you's hurt yo'se'f. *(Sternly to SINA.)* Sina McNeill, I done tol' you 'bout takin' keer o' dis chile. *(Setting the baby down.)* An' I's gwine whup you. Now you des' tell me whut you done to her.

*Sina.*—I ain't done nothin! Muh.

*Tilsy.*—Hain't done nothin.' No, you hain't. Fust, you an' Charlie chops yo' cotton so sorry you gits run out'n de fiel', an' we needin' every cent we kin git our han's on. Den next you comes walkin' in so high an' mighty bringin' Babe wid her haid 'bout busted open. *(She picks the child up again and wipes her nose. At the same time she pits her hand to her jaw with a grimace of pain. As she quiets BABE, she makes a sound of sucking her teeth.)*

*Sina.*—I—I was tryin' to git her some bread from de cupboard, an' I couldn't fin' none. An' she kept a-whinin' an' sayin' dey was some in dere. Den she fou't me off an' clamb up to see foh herse'f, an' she fell an' hurt her nose.

*Tilsy.*—De po' thing's hongry ag'in. (*BABE begins to cry softly against her mother's breast.*) But dey's a piece o' bread at de back o' de cook-table. Bring her dat. (*Bitterly.*) I don' reckon de flies has worked it to de'f. (*SINA goes out and brings the bread. TILSY sets BABE on a chair, when she begins eating greedily. Then she hurries back to her work.*) Lawd he'p me, I'll never finish dis arnin today. An' Mis' Johnson's des' boun' to have it tomorrow.

*Sina (Tremulously).*—Cain't I—cain't I he'p you do some-thin', Muh? (*TILSY looks at her sharply and turns away her head and irons in silence. CHARLIE stands at the rear, looking around and scratching his leg with his toe. Suddenly TILSY sits down and stuffs her apron to her face, her body heaving with sobs. SINA and CHARLIE look at each other miserably.*)

*Charlie.*—Muh, I's gwine take de clo'es up dere right now. (*A sob breaks from her.*)

*Sina (Softly to CHARLIE).*—Whut makes her cry?

*Charlie (Wretchedly).*—I dunno, 'less it's her teef. (*At the sound of TILSY's sobs BABE begins to cry again. SINA goes up to her mother.*)

*Sina.*—Muh, you want me to wrop up a arn an' put to yo' haid? (*TILSY reaches out convulsively and draws SINA to her. Tears begin to pour from SINA's eyes, and her lips crinkle into a cry.*)

*Tilsy (Raising her head and drying her eyes).*—Come heah, Babe, to yo' muh. (*BABE rushes into her arms, and TILSY rocks to and fro, holding her to her bosom. She starts singing, and BABE grows quiet.*)

I walk in de mornin', walk in de evenin'—

O baby, don' a you cry.

Work an' pray an' work an' pray,

Wid Jesus by an' by.

Lemme lay my body down, lemme lay my body down

O baby, don' a you cry.

(*She bends and kisses BABE. SINA clings to her in tears.*)

Wid trial an' trouble, trial an' trouble—

O baby, hush a yo' cry—

(*She stops and looks at them affectionately.*)

*Charlie (Gulping).*—Muh, cain't I he'p you none?

*Sina (Wiping her eyes with TILSY's dress).*—You want me to arn an' let you rest?

*Tilsy.*—Dat's all right. You's too good to me, bofe of you.



An' don' you feel bad 'bout me talkin' so rough to you. I don' mean to be bad to you lak dat. But my haid's been des' about kill me, an' I gut so tired. (*Putting BABE down and standing up.*) Now run on an' fo'git I's been mean to you. (*She smiles.*) We'll make it somehow. Things cain't go ag'in us fo' ever.

*Charlie (Brightly).*—I'll take de clo'es now, Muh, if you wants me to.

*Tilsy (Back at the ironing).*—All right, honey. An' if Mis' Johnson ain't gut de money handy, ax her to let you have a liddle side fo' de choppin'. Ah tell her I'll fetch all de wash 'bout dark.

*Charlie (Picking up the clothes-bag).*—All right'm. (*He goes out at the left.*)

*Tilsy.*—And, Sina, you git de gallon bucket an' run down to Mr. Billy Green's an' ax him to let us have 'nough meal fo' tonight an' tomorrow. I owes him fo' a peck already, but I knows he'll he'p us out ag'in. Tell him I'll pay him next week somehow. (*SINA gets the bucket.*) Take Babe along wid you an' pick you some flowers if you finds any. Dem in de vase is done daid.

*Sina.*—Muh, you won't cry no mo', will you? Me'n Charlie'll git some money to he'p you yit.

*Tilsy (Kissing her on the forehead).*—You's smart as a bee, honey. An' whut'd I do widdout you to stick by me. Go ahead now, an' git back purty quick.

*Sina (Going out, holding BABE by the hand).*—Yeb'm. Come on, Babe, we's gwine git some flowers an' see de birds hoppin' by. (*TILSY watches them go with tears in her eyes.*)

*Tilsy (Bowing her head).*—Lawd, Lawd, stay wid me'n my chillun. (*She irons away in silence, now then sucking her teeth.*) (*Suddenly CHARLIE bursts in with a scamper of feet. He is panting and his eyes are wide with fright.*)

*Charlie.*—Muh, Muh!—

*Tilsy (Starting back).*—Whut's all de rucas 'bout? You looks lak you's seed Ol' Scratch.

*Charlie.*—Muh, Muh, Pap's comin' down de road.

*Tilsy (In a scared voice).*—Yo' Pap?

*Charlie.*—I seed him a-comin', an' I run back to tell you. (*Running up to her and catching at her dress.*) He'll hurt you, I know's he will.

*Tilsy.*—Now, now, he won't, nuther.

*Charlie (Running to the door and peeping out).*—Yonder he he comes straight on, kickin' de dirt befo' him.

*Tilsy.*—Charlie, you go on 'cross de fiel' to Mis' Johnson's an' carry dem clo'es. Mebbe yo' Pap wants a word wid me. (*Nervously.*) Hurry up.

*Charlie.*—I's—I's afeared to leave you.

*Tilsy (Firmly).*—You go on, honey. He ain't gwine hurt yo' mammy. (*He takes up the bag and with misgiving hurries out through the kitchen. TILSY looks around the room as if searching for some weapon of protection. A heavy step sounds on the porch outside. She irons faster. WILL McNEILL, a black heavy-set Negro of forty comes just inside the door and stares at TILSY. His clothes are shabby and dust-stained. TILSY shrinks back towards the fire as he enters.*)

*Will (In a deep growl).*—Well, how's my li'l' gal come on? (*He comes farther into the room.*) Don'be skeered, I ain't gwine hurt you.

*Tilsy (With a slight tremor in her voice).*—We's gittin' 'long all right, I reckon.

*Will (Laughing).*—Is? Dat's fine. Better'n I is. Des' de same you don' look like you's flourishin' much. (*Gazing at the walls and furnishings. TILSY makes no reply. He opens the door to the kitchen and looks in.*) Huh,' don' look lak no milliona's pantry in heah eiver. Whah's yo' stove you had in dere las' yeah?

*Tilsy.*—I—I gut rid of it.

*Will.*—I reckon I sees dat you has.

*Tilsy.*—I had to pay Babe's doctor's bill wid it.

*Will.*—Babe been sick?

*Tilsy (Timidly).*—Whut you keer 'bout Babe, well or sick?

*Will.*—Look heah, none o' yo' sass.

*Tilsy (Lowering her eyes before his gaze).*—She was sick most o' de winter, an' I didn't have no money to pay Doctor Haywood, an' he said he'd take de stove fo' payment.

*Will.*—Dat damn nigger do dat! He ain't no doctor. He des' a humbug, wid his worm grease an' snake fat an' sulphur burnin'.

*Tilsy.*—He ain't no humbug, ca'se he cyored Babe.

*Will.*—Co'se he cyored her. She'd a-gut well anyhow. An' he tuk de stove an' lef' you to cook in dat li'l' ol' farplace, de son of a bitch. (*TILSY trembles but says nothing.*) Listen to me, 'oman, you's fo'got I helped pay fo' dat stove, ain't you?

*Tilsy.*—Yeh, you paid five dollars an' I paid fifteen.

*Will.*—An' I's gwine have my five dollars back. You cough up dat dough hot damn quick.

*Tilsy (Laughing shrilly).*—Five dollars! I ain' seed dat much money in six months. I ain't an' dat's de God's truf.

*Will.*—Well, you better see it 'fo' de next six months come by, is all I kin say. (*He suddenly changes his voice to a gentler tone.*) Now look heah, gal, le's fo'git de stove fo' de present. How 'bout a liddle grub? I ain't et no dinner.

*Tilsy.*—I ain't nuther.

*Will.*—You ain't?

*Tilsy.*—Whut you 'spect me to eat—far coals an' ashes?

*Will.*—You must be gittin' low sho' 'nough. (*Eyeing her.*)

*Tilsy.*—I ain't had nothin' but a cup o' coffee dis whole day. De chillun didn't have 'nough to eat fo' dinner even.

*Will (Taking a seat).*—Whut you gwine do fo' supper?

*Tilsy (Still ironing nervously).*—I sent off fo' some meal an' meat.

*Will.*—Why you keep sucking yo' teef?

*Tilsy (Leaning over the board and speaking jerkily).*—I gut a risin' in my jaw. (*Suddenly crying out and beating her temples, with her fists.*) My haid's bustin' open. I ain't slept fo' two nights. An' if you don't hush, I cain't stand it. (*She turns the garment and irons faster.*)

*Will.*—Dat's bad. (*Snapping out.*) Say, you ain't playin' no tricks on me 'bout bein' sick, is you? (*She makes no answer, only rocking her head from one side to the other in pain.*) No, I reckons you is r'ally sick. But I'd sorter looked forward to spendin' de night wid you.

*Tilsy (Staring at him with wide eyes).*—I know whut you wanted. But you kin traipse right back over de river to yo' huzzy over dere if you wants somebody to sleep wid.

*Will.*—Well, I's gwine stay heah tonight des' de same.

*Tilsy.*—If you does, me'n my chillun'll sleep in de fiel's.

*Will (Lighting his pipe).*—Suits me. But anyhow I's usually had my way when I stopped by heah in de past. Mebbe I'll have it tonight.

*Tilsy (In a hard voice).*—Befo' you lays han's on me dis night, I'll stick my butcher-knife in you to de hollow.

*Will (Blinking at her).*—Y' God, you gits r'iled easy!

*Tilsy (Stammering).*—R—i—lede asy! Will McNeill, I wants you to git out'n my house an' go on back to yo' ol' bitch an' her passel o' puppies.

*Will (Starting half out of his chair).*—Damn you, cut out dat talk.

*Tilsy.*—Oh, no, you cain't skeer me. I ain't de woman you married dem twelve yeah ago no longer. An' I ain't de woman you been comin' back to see whenever you felt de sap risin' in you. I's changed, an' I hates you worse'n a snake in de grass.

*Will (Sitting back and smiling).*—Huh, I's heard dat spiel befo'.

*Tilsy (Her voice cracking).*—Yeh, you has. But I ain't never said it befo' lak dat—lak I says it now. I knows whut you's come back fo'. You wants to leave anudder baby sproutin' in me, anudder baby to feed an' ten' to an' feel fumble an' pull an' cry th'ough de long nights whiles you lies rotten wid sin an' udder women. (*Pointing to the rear door.*) If you'll des' go out th'ough dat do' to de forked peach tree back o' de house an' dig down two feet in de groun', you'll fin' in a shoe-box what you lef' wid me de last time. It was bawn daid, an' it ain't gwine happen ag'in, (*Her voice rising high.*) never, so he'p me God!

*Will (Stirring uneasily in his chair).*—Well, you has had it sorter hard, mebbe.

*Tilsy (Setting down her iron and holding her jaw in her hand).*—Hard! you's killed all de heart I had in me, an' me'n my chillun don' know yo' name no mo'. (*Moving towards him*) An' I wants you to git off dis place. (*Crying out.*) Git out'n my house, git! (*He springs up and holds his chair between them.*) Is you gwine?

*Will (Laughing).*—You ain't gwine run me off dat easy. I's invited myse'f to supper, an' I's gwine stay. (*He watches her closely.*)

*Tilsy (With tight lips).*—I gives you des' one minute to hit de grit.

*Will.*—You better watch dem dere clo'es, somebody's dress is burnin' up. (*TILSY turns and snatches the iron from the burning cloth and holds up a lacy dress with a great hole burned in it. She stares at it dumbly a moment, then sits down suddenly with her hands clawing each other and her lips mumbling incoherently. CHARLIE sticks his head in at the left and stands watching WILL. WILL sees him.*) Is dat you, Charlie? (*CHARLIE says nothing.*) Don't be so skittish, I ain't wantin' to tech you. (*CHARLIE lays his package of meat on the bureau.*) Yo' muh's havin' des' a li'p' sick spell wid her haid. She'll be all right in a minute. (*CHARLIE softly opens the bureau drawer. WILL calls out suspiciously.*) Heah, boy, you ain't searchin' fo' a gun or somethin' is you?

*Charlie (Taking out a long fishing hook and speaking softly).*—I's des' gwine git out my hooks.

*Will (Coming out to him).—I dunno. (He looks suspiciously around at TILSY.) You all mebbe's up to devilment. (As WILL comes towards him, CHARLIE runs to the rear door. WILL grabs him by the arm.) Nunh-unh, my li'l' man, I seed you when you run back down de road an' den skeet cross de fiel'. Tell me, did yo' muh sen' you to git Mr. Johnson to come drive me off?*

*Charlie (Struggling and beginning to cry).—Turn me loose! Muh, Muh!*

*Tilsy (Bounding out of her chair).—Let dat boy alone!*

*Will (Holding him from the floor by his arm).—Shet yo' mouf, 'oman. If you all thinks you's drivin' me off by sendin' fo' he'p, I reckon I'll show you. Speak to me, you li'l' devil, an' tell me straight. I's gwine git at de truf. (CHARLIE suddenly hooks him (in the leg.) God Almighty, he's stuck me wid dat fish hook. He drops the boy who darts sobbing under the bed. With groans and twistings WILL finally gets the hook out of his flesh. His face is distorted with anger.)*

*Tilsy (As WILL starts towards the bed).—Don't you bother my boy! (WILL gets down on his knees and peers under the bed. TILSY screams out again.) I'll kill you 'fo' you hurts him. (WILL begins to climb under the bed. TILSY picks up a chair and brings it down on his back. He rises from the floor and strikes her with his fist, sending her tottering across the room.)*

*Will (Panting).—I—I'll kill dat Charlie if I gits my han's on him! (TILSY flies at him again. He hurls her against the table and leaves her limp. Then he starts back under the bed. She seizes the iron and springs towards him. He tries to wrest the iron from her, but as his hand touches it he yells with pain. By this time CHARLIE has crawled from under the bed at the rear. TILSY throws herself at WILL. He stumbles backwards over a chair, and she strikes him in the head with the iron. He drops limply on the floor, blood flowing from his face. The hot iron rolls into the pile of clothes that has fallen off the bed in the scuffle, and a curl of smoke rises upward.)*

*Tilsy.—Will! Will!—Lawd-a-muhcy, I've killed him. (She draws away to the rear of the room and sits dazedly on the bed. CHARLIE runs to her and clings to her dress, whimpering in fear. SINA and BABE come in at the left.)*

*Sina.—Muh, we gut some meal. An' look at de flowers Babe picked. (BABE holds up the flowers. SINA screams.) Whut's de matter wid dat man on de flo? Lawd, it's Pap! (She and BABE both run crying to TILSY.)*

*Tilsy (Hugging BABE to her, and rocking to and fro).—We gut to git he'p! (She backs out at the rear, carrying BABE in her arms, with CHARLIE and SINA holding to her dress. They are heard sobbing wildly as they leave the house and go into the fields.)*

CURTAIN

# THE END OF THE ROW\*

## CHARACTERS

AUNT ZELLA

NORA, *her daughter.*

LUCILE, *a farm hand.*

LALIE, *another farm hand.*

ED ROBERTS, *a young farm owner.*

*Time, Noon, a spring day a few years ago.*

*Place, Eastern North Carolina near the Cape Fear River.*

*The curtain rises, disclosing a clump of low shady umbrella china trees and shrubbery in the middle foreground. Stretching off to the right and rear are the wide cotton-fields glistening hot in the burning noonday sun. Several tin pails hang to the lower limbs of the china trees. A high monotonous singing is heard off the right, punctuated regularly by the "hanh, hanh," of hoes tearing through the dirt and grass. The singing and chopping draw nearer.)*

"Gut up in de mawnin',  
Heahd my mother say,  
Big white hoss come a-ridin',  
Deaf is on de way.

"Shout hallelujah, hallelujah to de lam'  
Early in de mawnin', de'f is on de way."

*(The singing stops and a mellow voice calls out) Come on heah, you slubberin' niggers, cain't you keep up wid a ol' 'oman!  
(The singing begins again, nearer.)*

"Settin' in de evenin',  
At de close o' day,  
Mo'nfully I 'members,  
De'f is on de way.

"Shout hallelujah, hallelujah to de lam'  
Early in de evenin', de'f is on de way."

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(*After a moment AUNT ZELLA comes in at the right, stamping the dust and dirt from her feet and clothes. She is a stout middle-aged negro, carrying a hoe in her hand. Sweat is streaming from her face. Taking off her bonnet, she fans herself and stands looking back the way she has come. The "hanh, hanh" of other choppers draws near. A voice calls.*) He'p me out, Aunt Zella!

*Aunt Zella.*—He'p you out! I sho' ain't gwine do it. Git out when you kin. Ef you cain't stay wid a hoe han' whut is a hoe han', den you gut to hoe yo' own row. (*She sits down in the shade and undoes her shirtwaist at the throat, twisting her neck around and taking in deep breaths of air. Then she crooks up her leg and begins picking at the bottom of her bare foot.*) Lawd, dem li'l' sawtoof br'ars sho' do play thunder when dey gits in 'tween yo' toes. (*While she is working at her feet, NORA and LUCILE come in and throw their hoes down on the ground. They stand fanning themselves.*)

*Lucile* (*A stout, chocolate-colored girl of eighteen.*)—You want to he'p Lalie out wid her row?

*Nora* (*A pert dark mulatto, about the same age.*)—Naw, let her git out herself, draggin' way back there behind.

*Lucile.*—Aunt Zella, yo' row had a lot o' skips, dat's why you beat us out.

*Aunt Zella.*—Listen at dat gal! Skips! I allus leads de hoe'-han's. Dey ain't nobody in dis country kin kill crabgrass de way I kin, dat's my repitation. Hunh, of you gals'd take off dem gloves an' th'ow away dem shoes, you mought step along in front. Des' look at dat Lucile—gut on her Sunday paten' leathers!

*Nora.*—An' if you'd wear shoes, Muh, you wouldn't allus have your feet full o' br'ars an' your toenails tore up.

*Aunt Zella.*—Never min' dat. Dey's my feet, I reckon. An' ef I did wear shoes, I'd buy 'em myse'f. I bet Antney gin you dem shoes, didn't he, Lucile?

*Lucile.*—I gut 'em over de river.

*Aunt Zella.*—Over de river! Antney gin 'em to you. (*Laughing meaningly.*) An' dat nigger didn't do it foh nothin'—hah?

*Lucile* (*Smiling and not noticing her sarcasm.*)—'Tain't all he's gin me nuther.

*Aunt Zella.*—Haw, haw, haw! I reckons it hain't. When you'n him gwine marry?

*Lucile.*—Not yit awhile. (*She sits down and begins wiping the dust from her new shoes. NORA sits watching them admiringly.*)



*Nora.*—How much you reckon they cost?

*Lucile (Shrugging her shoulders).*—Mus' been 'bout six dollars.

*Aunt Zella.*—Six dollars! An' dat fool nigger sweatin' his guts out over at dat saw-mill foh a dollar an' a ha'f a day.

*Lucile.*—He's done ordered me a lavalier from way off yonder too.

*Nora (With a touch of envy).*—Has he?

*Aunt Zella.*—Well, he sho' is pushin' you. Has he said anything 'bout marryin' you?

*Lucile.*—No, he ain't. Why I want to marry?

*Aunt Zella.*—You gut mo' sense'n I thought you had. Dat's right, bleed him foh all you kin while de bleedin's good an' you don't have to pay too much foh it. (*She looks straight at LUCILE.*)

*Lucile.*—I knows shut you mean. But I reckons you mought 'member you had Nora dere befo' you'n Uncle Jeems married.

*Aunt Zella (Laughing).*—I sho' did. But dey won't no feeble-minded nigger her daddy. Hit was a white man an' one o' de stroppin'est dey is walkin'. Now you can't say dat much, kin you? Haw, haw, haw!

*Lucile (Disconcerted).*—Well, de white men ain't never tuk to me somehow.

*Aunt Zella.*—Dat dey ain't. You's too nigh lak a stick-and-dirt chimley, you's ugly as Ol' Scratch.

*Lucile (Hotly).*—I don't want no white man. Nohow.

*Aunt Zella (Wagging her head).*—Whedder you wants him or not, I knows dis—it'll be a freeze in August when you gits one, adder yo' cuttin' up an' carryin' on wid foolish Antney.

*Lucile (Sarcastically).*—You's a sight to be talkin' now an' you done gone by de boa'd! An' look at me wid de fine things I gits out'n Antney. You ain't even gut no shoes, an' dem dere o' Nora's is full o' holes.

*Nora.*—You needn't be throwin' off on me. 'Twon't be long an' I'll have dollars where you got cents, an' clothes! Lord, I'll make 'em all sick at church, see if I don't?

*Aunt Zella.*—Haw, haw, haw! Now whut you gut to say?

*Lucile.*—How you gwine do dat, Nora? Aw, you's des' talkin', ain't you?

*Nora.*—I shore ain't. I'm keepin' my eyes open, an' when I brings home the game, it'll be game what is game, not no crazy Antney Russel. (*AUNT ZELLA rolls her eyes in merriment.*)

*Lucile (Curiously).*—Who is it you gut yo' eyes on, Nora?

*Nora.*—That's all right.

*Lucile.*—Whut nigger kin it be?

*Nora.*—Nigger! Hunh, 'tain't no nigger! Whut you think I am?

*Aunt Zella.*—You 'spects my gal to consort wid a nigger r'at off de bat? She kin do dat later.

*Lucile.*—Who is it, Nora?

*Nora.*—I don't min' tellin' you. It's de richest white man in de country.

*Aunt Zella (Complacently).*—It sho' is.

*Lucile (In amazement).*—Lawd, you don't mean Mr. Ed!

*Nora (Taking off her gloves and looking at her brown hand).*—What's to hinder me from meanin' him?

*Aunt Zella.*—Now whah is you an' yo' Antney? Whuts he he now?

*Lucile (Scornfully).*—He won't look at you, him wid all dese thousan' acres o' lan' his pap lef' him. He wouldn't spet on you. I bet he don't even know yo' name hardly.

*Nora.*—You needn't be so uppity 'cause you're jealous an' know you ain't got no show. You jest wait an' see.

*Aunt Zella.*—Dey ain't no white man gwine stan' out ag'n as as good lookin' gal as Nora is. But I done laid down de law— Mr. Ed's de only one or nothin'.

*Nora.*—He's the only one I want. (*Beating her fist against her thigh.*) An' I'm goin' to have him.

*Lucile.*—My, my, you sho' is a bol' critter, Nora. No other nigger gal'd think o' sich.

*Nora.*—They ain't got the nerve, that's why. Everyone of 'em'd stick they hands in fire for the chanct, but they're a-scared to come out an' try.

*Aunt Zella.*—Dey air dat. Dey'd all make a dive at him ef dey could.

*Lucile (Pointing off to the right).*—How 'bout Lalie dere?

*Aunt Zella (Pondering).*—Lalie—hunh, I done fohgot her. (*Shaking her head.*) Mebbe Lalie wouldn't, mebbe not. I dunno dough, you never kin tell.

*Nora (Spitefully).*—Course Lalie would. She ain't half as good as she makes out she is. Most of it's put on.

*Aunt Zella.*—I dunno 'bout dat, Nora. Dey ain't a s'picion' 'g'in' Lalie's chareckter. An' she's had a hard time too, po' gal, wid her muh dyin' on her dese two yeah. But she sticks an' don't never complain.

*Lucile.*—Whut's de matter wid her today? She chops slower'n most times.

*Nora.*—She wants to stay behind so she won't have to 'sociate with us. Everybody knows she's as biggity as she can be.

*Aunt Zella.*—I ain't never found her stuck up a bit. Dey's somethin' on her mind, dat's whut.

*Lucile.*—Mebbe she's thinkin' 'bout dem books she's read. Dey say she reads a powe'ful heap foh a nigger.

*Aunt Zella.*—I heard she's tryin' to git de school at Flat Branch next yeah.

*Nora.*—She told me she was. Next month she's goin' over the river to stand examination for a ce'tificate.

*Lucile.*—Whah'd she git all dat hankerin' foh 'rithmetics an' grammars an' g'ographies. Never seed nobody lak her.

*Aunt Zella.*—She 'herited it f'om her white daddy, I 'spects. Dey say he was some kin' o' writer whut stayed 'roun' heah a while an' den went away an' never come back.

*Nora.*—All her learnin' won't git her nowhere in this country. Them that gits education is looked down on by the white-folks.

*Aunt Zella.*—Sho' is—But le's shet up an' eat our dinner. Dere's Lalie most out. Bring dat bucket down, Nora. (*NORA gets the largest of the buckets from the tree, and they begin eating their dinner.*)

*Lucile.*—I des' been thinkin' dat if Mr. Ed tuk a notion to any o' de colored gals, it seems dat Lalie'd be de one.

*Nora (Quickly).*—He won't look at her, Lucile.

*Lucile.*—He mought.

*Nora.*—He won't, though. He's sorter stand-off like, an' a gal's got to go after him herself.

*Lucile (Reaching for her bucket and sitting down).*—Hunh, she mought a-been gwine after him foh all you know. She's knowed to be de pirtiest gal aroun', an' she's gut mo' sense an' has high notions 'bout raisin' de niggers out o' sin an' sich.

*Nora (Somewhat angrily).*—Eat your dinner, she'll hear you talkin'. (*Leaning towards LUCILE.*) You ain't seed nothin' s'picious, have you, Lucile?

*Lucile (Cunningly).*—Yeh, mebbe I have—Mebbe Mr. Ed's already tuk a likin' foh her.

*Aunt Zella (Looking up quickly, her spoonful of peas half-way to her mouth).*—How come? How you know?

*Nora.*—She don't know. She's jest tryin' to rile me with her lies.

*Lucile.*—Well, I seed him standin' in de do' talkin' to her when I passed Lalie's house yistiddy.

*Aunt Zella.*—Nothin' in dat. He was des' down to see how her muh was gittin' on.

*Nora.*—Course. She's his tenant an' her muh bad off, an' why wouldn't he come aroun' an' see how they git on?

*Lucile.*—Aw right ef you want to b'lived at. (*At a sign from AUNT ZELLA they fall to eating. LALIE is heard chopping at the right. AUNT ZELLA calls out.*)

*Aunt Zella.*—Peas an' hoecake time, Lalie.

*Lalie.*—Well, I'm glad I'm out at last. (*She comes in and drops her hoe and sits down fanning herself. She is a very light mulatto of eighteen or twenty, with regular features and intelligent face. She is dressed in shabby but clean clothes and wears no gloves.*)

*Aunt Zella (Looking at LUCILE and NORA).*—We was thinkin' o' helpin' you out, Lalie, but we was so tard.

*Lalie (Wiping her face with a clean handkerchief).*—Oh, that's all right, I ought to have chopped harder.

*Aunt Zella.*—You do chop slower'n usual, whut's de matter?

*Lalie.*—Not much of anything. I was up most of the night with Muh, and I feel pegged out.

*Aunt Zella.*—How's she gittin' now?

*Lalie.*—No better as I can see. Her cough's even worse.

*Aunt Zella.*—Dat's bad, bad.

*Lucile (After a moment).*—Ain't you gwine to eat yo' dinner, Lalie?

*Lalie.*—I'm not hungry now. (*Looking over the burning fields.*) Isn't it hot?

*Nora (Pointedly).*—Ain't it hot?—Yeh, hot as hell! (*LALIE looks up quickly and then stares across the fields again.*)

*Aunt Zella.*—You cut out dat wecked talk, gal. Lalie ain't used to no sich.

*Lalie.*—Never mind. Let her talk that way if she wants to.

*Nora (Wrathfully).*—I feel I'd ort to all right, if you want to know how I feel.

*Lucile (Grinning).*—Whut's de matter, Nora? You's gut mad as a hornet all of a sudden, ain't you?

*Nora.*—What if I have? You got nothin' to do with it.

*Aunt Zella.*—Heah, heah, le's not git tore up, it's too hot.

*Lucile.*—You hadn't ort to snap at me lak dat, Nora.

*Nora (Throwing her hunk of bread from her).*—Shet up your damn mouth!

*Lalie.*—Nora!

*Nora (Turning towards her with a sneer).*—Unh-hunh, you don't like my talk, you so high and mighty. Well, you mess with me, an' you'll hear more of it. I'll cuss you out to a son of a bitch, I will! (*LALIE turns away with hurt face.*)

*Aunt Zella.*—God A'mighty, whut ails you—a run-mad dog bit you? An' don't you say nary'nudder word to Lalie. Heah me?

*Nora.*—Why, I'd like to know? She ain't no better'n we are.

*Aunt Zella.*—Dat kind o' gab ain't fitten foh nobody to heah. Now le's go on wid our dinner in peace.

*Lalie (Standing up).*—I guess I'd better go back to chopping till Nora finishes her dinner. She must have a grudge against me or something.

*Lucile.*—No, you don't, Lalie. Set down an' eat yo' dinner here with us, we ain't gut no hard feelin's ag'in you.

*Aunt Zella.*—Yeh, set down, gal, an' rest an' eat yo' grub. You'll need somethin' to prop up yo' backbone time de bull-bats is a-flyin'. Heah, take a piece o' dis blackberry pie. (*She takes a cut out of the bucket.*)

*Nora.*—Yeh, yeh, go ahead an' eat an' don't notice me.

*Lalie (Hesitating and then sitting down).*—Thank you, Aunt Zella, I really don't want a thing to eat now. I've got a plenty in my bucket there. (*She indicates the bucket hanging in the tree.*) When I get hungry, I'll eat.

*Aunt Zella (A little sharply).*—Aw right, suit yo'se'f den. I ain't beggin' nobody to eat my rations. (*LALIE starts to reply but bites her lip.*)

*Nora.*—Maybe you feel too proud to eat Muh's cookin'.

*Lalie (Throwing out her arms).*—Good Lord, no! (*Turning to AUNT ZELLA.*) You don't feel that way about it, do you?

*Aunt Zella.*—I ain't sayin' yes ner no. But you does act stuck up lak 'bout all de time. Why you think you's better'n us uther niggers?

*Lalie (Nervously).*—I don't.

*Nora.*—You act mighty like it. Anyhow, everybody in the country feels that way about you, don't they Lucile?

*Lucile.*—I 'spects so. (*Suddenly.*) Well, if dey do, it's de right way to feel. Lalie's better'n you'n me, an' dat's de long an' short of it.

*Nora.*—I'm one that don't think so, an' you can stick that in your year.

*Lalie* (*Looking at her with tears in her eyes*).—And you're right about it, Nora. I'm not any better than any other colored girl, and I don't want anybody to think so.

*Lucile*.—Des' de same, you's gut eddication an' you never carry on wid no nigger men.

*Aunt Zella*.—Dat's so, ain't it, Lalie? Dat po' Sol Jenkins been flyin' 'roun' you foh th'ee yeahs, an' hes funder off f'om gittin' you dan ever he was.

*Lalie*.—Sol hasn't been to see me for six or eight months.

*Lucile*.—'Cause you wouldn't let him.

*Nora*.—You'd better not let your swell head make you throw Sol down. Ain't another young nigger in the country owns his own farm an' has money in the bank, like he has.

*Aunt Zella*.—Co'se he ain't lousy wid learnin' lak you, Lalie, but he'd sho' take some yo' trouble off'n you. Nobody kin see whut you gut ag'in him.

*Lalie*.—I've got nothing in this wide world against him. But Sol's going to be married next Saturday.

*Aunt Zella*.—G'won. Is he?

*Nora*.—Has Callie got him at the last?

*Lalie*.—I reckon so. She's the one he's going to marry.

*Aunt Zella*.—Lawd, Lawd, I knows dat gal's happy to her gizzard. She's had her trap sot a long time foh Sol. But he's a slam fool. She'll bre'k him up, take a bank to hol' her. I reckon she'd never a-cotched him ef you hadn't give him de go-by completely. Pshaw, Sol don't love dat critter, he loves you, Lalie.

*Lucile*.—Quair to me you'd turn him down. Ain't you ever gwine git you a man, Lalie?

*Lalie*.—No, I'm never going to have a man. Don't you think that's terrible?

*Lucile*.—Seems sorter onnatural lak.

*Aunt Zella*.—Air you allus gwine live by yo'se'f?

*Lalie*.—No, I've got Muh.

*Aunt Zella* (*Shaking her head*).—Yeh, but you ain't gwine have her long.

*Lalie*.—What you mean?

*Aunt Zella*.—Don't git upset now. I des' mean she cain't stay wid you fohever. An' when she do go, whut you'spect to do?

*Lalie*.—Maybe by that time I'll have the school or some sort of job. But let's get off the subject of my business.

*Nora*.—I cain't see why Lalie'd turn Sol Jenkins down 'less'n they's somethin' in what Lucile said a little bit ago.

*Aunt Zella.*—Whut'd she say?

*Nora.*—You know what it was.

*Lucile.*—I ain't said nothin'.

*Nora.*—Yes you have. You know what you said about Lalie an' somebody else.

*Aunt Zella.*—Heigh, you keep dat to yo'se'f.

*Nora.*—I won't that. I b'lieve they's somethin' in it after all.

*Lalie (Uneasily).*—What'd she say about me and somebody else?

*Aunt Zella.*—Now, Nora, don't you say no mo'.

*Nora.*—She said maybe you was castin' eyes where you had no business.

*Lucile (Angrily).*—I didn't say no sich.

*Nora.*—That's what you meant jest the same.

*Lalie.*—What in the world you talking of?

*Aunt Zella.*—Nothin', nothin', Lalie. Don't pay no 'tention to whut Nora says. She's mad wid de heat an' red-bugs.

*Nora.*—No I'm not. I'm mad with you, Lalie Fowler, you an' your fine ways. You makes me tired. You set as well with me as grass in a dog's belly. You're a hypocrite, an' your learning' is humbug through an' through; that's what!

*Lalie.*—I can see that you don't like me, well enough.

(*Suddenly clenching her hand.*) But someday I am going to know things, and I'll teach the negro children in this neighborhood better'n they've ever been taught, folk'll see I will.

*Nora (Standing up and looking down at her).*—Listen at her, will you! Think you'll throw me off the scent with them rollin' words, do you? Well, you won't. (*She wipes her mouth with her sleeve.*) An' I'm goin' to spit somethin' right out at you. Listen, ain't your mind this minute on—on—Mr. Ed Roberts—ain't it? (*LALIE locks her hands together.*) Speak up, tell me. (*AUNT ZELLA and LUCILE watch her closely.*)

*Lalie (Coldly).*—I don't know what you're driving at.

*Nora (Her eyes blazing, and pointing her finger at LALIE).*—Oh, you don't, do you? Well, I mean that you've been makin' eyes an' purty faces at Mr. Ed all for your own good time an' maybe a fine roll o' greenback.

*Lalie (Blinking at her).*—You must be crazy and don't know what you're saying.

*Nora.*—Hunh—I've got more sense right now than I ever had. An' I warn you that I got the same idea myself, an' I won't 'low no buttin' in.

*Lalie (Hotly).*—Are you trying to insult me? (*She stands up and gets her bucket.*) Please don't say another word to me. You're as silly as you're crooked. (*She sits down and opens her bucket without noticing NORA.*)

*Nora (Choking with anger).*—What you call me! Mess with me an' I'll snatch your purty hair out in handfuls. (*She moves towards her.*)

*Aunt Zella (Yelling).*—You come back an' set down, Nora! Lalie ain't gut no sich notions in her haid. I done tol' you dat.

*Nora (Stopping, as LALIE shows no sign of moving).*—I know better. Anyhow I've give her fair warning.

*Lalie (Closing her bucket and hanging it again in the tree).*—Fair warning about what?

*Aunt Zella.*—Eat yo' dinner, chile, you won't be able to hold out till night.

*Nora.*—Fair warnin' 'bout Mr. Ed. 'Tend to your own business if you want to keep my fingers out'n your eyes.

*Lalie.*—You mean you're planning—planning to have Mr. Ed?

*Nora.*—You heard me. (*LALIE breaks off a twig and begins picking at it.*) An' I mean you want to have him yourself an' I ain't goin' to let you. Now what you think o' that?

*Lalie (Bursting out).*—It's a dirty lie, as dirty as you are!

*Nora (Eyeing her).*—Maybe you ain't plannin' it, but I got my doubts. An' don't you call me no dirty lie, if you know what's good for you.

*Lalie (Blinking the angry tears from her eyes).*—You've got no right to think such things.

*Nora.*—Well, what was he doin' down at your house twict last week, I want to know.

*Lalie.*—He came to see how Muh was getting on.

*Nora (Sucking her lips scornfully).*—No young fellow's that much interested in a ol' nigger woman an' she et up with consumption.

*Lalie (Putting her fingers in her ears).*—I don't want to hear another word from you.

*Nora.*—You will though. If you ain't layin' up plans, he is, an' that's the truth.

*Lalie.*—Stop it He's straight and clean and honest, and it's your hateful evil-mindedness that makes you talk so. You ought to be ashamed as long as you live of what you're saying about him.



*Nora.*—He may not be the walking Jesus you think he is. An' yah—yah, in a few days I'll be wearin' finery his money's paid for.

*Lalie (Helplessly).*—That's what you're up to is it? (*Scornfully.*) Look at you and Aunt Zella and Lucile—look at all the negro girls around here. Always thinking of having a good time and no matter how they get it. You never think of anything except the present, let the future go as it will. What morals have you got? None. The goats and hogs in a pasture are more decent. What do you care for education and clean-living and building up homes and having healthy children? Not a thing. Can't you see we'll never get anywhere living the way we have in the past! Your whole life is spent in filling your stomach and catering to every whim that rises in you. How can I ever do anything in all this mess, how can I! (*She whirls on AUNT ZELLA.*) How do you expect Nora to be anything beside the dirty thing she is and you bringing her up the way you have! And you, Lucile, with your greasy Antney. Why'n the name of heaven don't you marry him and try to be something besides a bag of gluttony! (*Waving her hands at them.*) Get away from here and leave me alone, all of you. Go on! (*She turns and leans against a tree, her shoulders heaving with sobs.*)

*Aunt Zella.*—Lawd Jesus, I never heahd sich a passel o' talk!

*Nora.*—Somethin' she learned out'n a book. Sounds like a speech.

*Lucile (Getting to her feet).*—You all come on an' le's go to de spring an' git some water.

*Nora.*—All that storm o' talk don't f'aze me none. I'll do what I please, an' she ain't goin' to stop me.

*Lalie (Looking up).*—Go ahead then. But you'll never touch Mr. Ed, never!

*Nora.*—Unh-hunh, I knowed you had eyes set for the same meat. You cain't fool me. But I done warned you to let him alone. (*To LUCILE and AUNT ZELLA.*) Come on, le's git some water. (*They go out at the right rear. LALIE sits down at the foot of a tree and rests her face upon her knees. In a moment ED. ROBERTS comes in from the left and stands watching her. He is an awkward young fellow of twenty-five or six, dressed in strong outdoor clothes. Presently he calls out kindly.*) What's the matter, Lalie? (*She starts up in embarrassment.*)

*Lalie.*—Why—why, Mr. Ed, I didn't know you were around.

*Ed.*—I thought I'd drop over and see how you folks ere getting along with this grassy cotton. You haven't been crying, have you?

*Lalie.*—No—no, maybe not, I was just sitting there thinking.

*Ed* (*Laughing and catching nervously at a bush*).—I'm—I'm afraid you think too much. Were you trying to plan out some way of bettering the nigger race?

*Lalie.*—I was thinking that I'd have to give up trying, Mr. Ed.

*Ed.*—You were?

*Lalie.*—Sometimes everything seems to be absolutely cross-wise in this world.

*Ed* (*Soberly*).—Yes, it does. Is this one of the times that it seems that way?

*Lalie.*—Yes sir. (*He suddenly drops his head and begins digging in the dirt with his shoe. LALIE timidly raises her eyes and watches him. For a while neither says anything.*)

*Ed* (*Looking up*).—*Lalie*—(*Breaking off*.) Why do you stare at me that way?

*Lalie* (*Stammering*).—How—what way?

*Ed* (*Quickly*).—Never mind. It was nothing. Sit down and rest—*Lalie*, the sun's hot enough to give you brain fever. (*She sits down and hides her shabby shoes with her skirt. In her embarrassment she begins stripping a weed. ED throws himself down on the ground, fanning with his wide-brimmed hat.*) Lord, it's hot all right. Good weather to kill grass. How'd you get along this morning?

*Lalie.*—Pretty well. But somehow I couldn't keep up with the others.

*Ed.*—Guess you need sleep, don't you?

*Lalie.*—It wouldn't hurt me, I reckon. But I couldn't sleep if I had the chance. (*Noticing that he is lying down, she stands up and looks across the fields.*)

*Ed.*—What's the trouble?

*Lalie.*—I don't know hardly. For one thing I've just preached a sermon to Aunt Zella and the rest, and they've gone down to the spring mad with me. Oh, it left a bitter taste in my mouth. And I don't think a word I said made a bit of impression.

*Ed.*—Don't mind them, *Lalie*, they're not worth the powder it would take to kill them.

*Lalie.*—But they are, Mr. Ed. And I don't seem to get along with them any better than I do with other colored people. They're all suspicious of my trying to learn and get ahead in books.

They all believe I'm a humbug and feel myself too good for them. But I don't, not in that way.

*Ed.*—Well, sit down and tell me all about it. (*But she remains standing.*)

*Lalie.*—I'm near 'bout sure they won't give me the school next year. But if I don't want to hang around with a crowd of loafers on the street corners in Lillington every Saturday and shout and carry on at meetings and such, they ought not to condemn me for my way of doing things, had they?

*Ed.*—Of course not. But don't get excited. Sit down and rest yourself. (*She looks at him timidly.*) Why don't you sit down?

*Lalie.*—I—I'd as lief stand up.

*Ed.*—All right, just as you like. What did you lay down the law to Aunt Zella about?

*Lalie (Hurriedly).*—I didn't mean to blurt out a tale of troubles. It was nothing worth mentioning.

*Ed.*—But you seem all cut up over something. Is Aunt Mary worse?

*Lalie.*—She's hardly any better, I reckon.

*Ed.*—But she'll improve if you use that money to buy her better food and have the doctor regularly—at least she'll be helped some.

*Lalie.*—Maybe so.

*Ed.*—I know she will. And, Lalie, you need a new pair of shoes.

*Lalie (Trying to hide her feet).*—Please, sir—

*Ed.*—Sit down and you can keep them covered up.

*Lalie.*—I—I can't sit down and—and you like that.

*Ed (Sitting up quickly).*—Oh, I forgot. You want me to stand up.

*Lalie (Nervously).*—Perhaps it'd be more proper if one of us stood up.

*Ed (His face flushing).*—I'll stand up then. (*He gets to his feet and she sits down.*) You certainly keep your distance, Lalie.

*Lalie (Humbly).*—Yessir.

*Ed.*—You're thinking how it looks, are you? Well, there's nobody to see us.

*Lalie (Uneasily).*—I—I don't know what you mean.

*Ed (Kicking the dirt again).*—Nothing. But I can't see why you—well, why you want to be so drawn off to yourself. You're tending my land, at least living on it. Why can't you tell me your troubles and let me help you out?

*Lalie (Unhappily).*—But suppose you can't help me.

*Ed.*—I can though. I think I already have. The money I gave you yesterday ought to help you, for one thing.

*Lalie (Perplexedly).*—I—I thought that was a loan. I borrowed it from you, and it will help us. But the Lord knows how soon I'll be able to pay it back!—not till I get the school.

*Ed (Sharply).*—But I gave it to you, and I'm not going let you pay it back.

*Lalie (Impetuously).*—You're too good to us, Mr. Ed. No, no, I got to pay it back.

*Ed (Turning and staring across the fields again).*—Have you started reading the books I gave you?

*Lalie.*—They were borrowed too, Mr. Ed.

*Ed (Bluntly).*—They were not—you've got to keep them.

*Lalie (Quietly).*—I've read the one on rural schools already.

*Ed.*—You're smart all right. How many years before you're going off to college?

*Lalie.*—When I've saved enough teaching.

*Ed.*—Pshaw, by that time you'll be fifty years old. And your mother's got to be taken care of.

*Lalie.*—I'll make it somehow.

*Ed.*—Maybe going to college is not as great a thing as you think it is. Say, suppose I said I didn't want you to go?

*Lalie.*—You can't say that though—can you?

*Ed.*—Why can't I?

*Lalie.*—Why just last week you were saying how nice it would be for me to go to Raleigh and take some courses. And—and I thought all the time that was why you were lending me the books.

*Ed.*—Oh, well, a lot of things can happen in a week. I been thinking—I got a proposition to make to you, Lalie.

*Lalie.*—Yessir.

*Ed.*—How would you like to leave off this blistering and slaving in the sun?

*Lalie.*—I'd like it better than anything.

*Ed.*—You can if you want to. Now you won't think so much of what I'm going to suggest. But it would be a lot better for you than it sounds. How would you like to come up to the house and cook for me?

*Lalie (Her face falling)*I—I'm afraid I—no, I couldn't do that, Mr. Ed.

*Ed.*—I thought maybe you'd feel too fine for such a job.

*Lalie.*—I don't mind the work, but—but—

*Ed.*—Then why couldn't you? I'll pay you whatever you say.

*Lalie.*—I'd love to come and fix things for you, yes, I would, but I can't.

*Ed.*—Well, why not?

*Lalie.*—I don't know, maybe.

*Ed.*—You don't exactly see why I'm asking you, do you?

*Lalie (Lowering her eyes).*—No, sir.

*Ed.*—I'll tell you. (*Boldly*) It's because I don't want you to go away.

*Lalie (Her lips trembling).*—You're too good to us, and we not even able to keep you paid up for what we eat, not counting all the other things.

*Ed.*—Lord, you're worth more than I can ever give you.

*Lalie (In a low voice).*—No, sir, no, sir, I'm not.

*Ed.*—Yes, you are. You're the finest girl I ever saw almost, white or—or colored.

*Lalie (Hiding her face in her arms).*—Please don't talk like that.

*Ed.*—Don't you like to be told that you're fine and good-looking and—

*Lalie.*—Not by you, Mr. Ed. You mustn't— (*He fingers his hat and kicks at a bunch of grass. Presently he turns to her.*)

*Ed.*—Lalie, I gave you that twenty-five dollars for Aunt Mary just because I like you.

*Lalie (In alarm).*—Lord, Mr. Ed!

*Ed.*—Well, you don't think I'd been doing all these things for her unless I'd thought a lot of you; do you?

*Lalie (Rising quickly to her feet and blinking back her tears).*—Oh, I don't know.

*Ed.*—I think right much of you, Lalie.

*Lalie (Stammering).*—Then you let me have the books just because you—you—

*Ed (As she stops).*—Yes, I did. Since I came back and took charge here and got to know you a little better, I—(*She sits down and stares at the ground.*) Now, Lalie, if you'll stay on here and be contented and everything, I'll see that you both have what you need and want. You'll never lack for anything. You know what I mean. (*She says nothing.*) It's all foolishness, your plans about going out and educating the negroes and teaching school and building up the community. They don't want to be lifted up. That's not your business. I'll give you almost everything

you want if you'll stay and forget the rot about the great works you're going to do. (*After a moment.*) Why don't you answer?

*Lalie* (*Crying out*).—What can I say! It's all so, they don't want to be helped. (*Bursting out.*) But that ought to make no difference to me. I got to go on and do what I can. (*Pulling a roll of money from her apron pocket.*) Here's the money back, Mr. Ed. If Muh hadn't told me that I'd better watch out, maybe I'd never have thought of it. All this morning I been wondering what to do about it. (*She holds the money out to him. He refuses it, and she drops it to the ground at his feet.*)

*Ed.* (*In a hurt voice*).—Don't take on so, *Lalie*, I've told you I want you to keep it.

*Lalie*.—No sir, I can't do it. (*Helplessly.*) What's to happen now! (*Half-sobbing.*) All the time I've worked on the books and studied and struggled along, I been thinking—maybe—maybe you'd be glad I'd done so much.

*Ed.*—And I am glad. You're the smartest girl I've ever seen. (*With a touch of joy in his voice.*) Did you think of me like that?

*Lalie*.—Don't ask me, please, sir. It's not right to say such things.

*Ed.*—Well, I'll give you books right on.

*Lalie* (*Suddenly bursting into sobs*).—I can't listen to what you say, Mr. Ed. You—you're different from me, and I've got to do what's right. (*Clenching her hands.*) I'd never have done a thing if it hadn't been for you. None of my people helped me a bit. I did all I have because you inspired me to. And now—now you talk so to me—

*Ed* (*Kindly*).—Don't cry. Lord, I'm a poor sort to inspire anybody.

*Lalie*.—You're the best man in the whole world!

*Ed.*—You sure think more of me than I do myself. (*Decisively.*) You do like me some, don't you, *Lalie*?

*Lalie* (*Shaking her head*).—You mustn't ask me, Mr. Ed.

*Ed* (*Fiercely*).—You do, say you do! (*She shakes her head again, and then nods a guilty assent.*) I knew it, and I'm glad, glad, I tell you. (*Watching her with with distressed face.*) I won't say any more to you now, poor child.

*Lalie*.—You can't leave like that. I tell you I mustn't stay here. Please help me to do what's right.

*Ed.*—I can't help you if it means letting you go away. (*He comes nearer and stands looking down at her.*) Dry your eyes.

You're not the only one that's had to try to do what's right. I've thought it all over—Well anyway I'm not going to let you go. Here's the money take it back. (*She suddenly falls down and embraces his feet. He lays his hand on her head, and she springs up and stands away from him.*) Take the money back.

*Lalie.*—I can't do it. Oh, Mr. Ed, we'd be ruined if we went on. Help me.

*Ed.*—I'll go now. We'll talk it over later.

*Lalie.*—There won't be any later. I'm, going to leave tomorrow.

*Ed.*—You're not, Lalie. You want to stay, and I want you to stay. (*Stopping as he starts out at the left.*) Here's the money by this bush. (*He goes out. LALIE sits down sobbing. Soon the women come back from the spring. They stop in the background and watch her.*)

*Aunt Zella (Coming up to LALIE).*—Whut's de matter wid you? (*She makes no answer.*) Lawd, you cries lak a reg'lar wild woman!

*Nora.*—Let her cry.

*Aunt Zella.*—Is yo' muh daid sudden or somethin'?

*Lalie (Taking her hoe and standing up).*—Oh, I was just having a baby cry. Let's go back to work. No use standing here at the end of the rows all day.

*Lucile.*—We ain't mo'n had time to git our win' back.

*Aunt Zella.*—Git yo' hoes an' le's be movin'. (*They all pick up their hoes and go off at the right. The "hank, hank" begins again. LALIE comes quickly back, and with a glance around her, gets the money and goes out. AUNT ZELLA is heard raising her song.*)

“Gut up in de mawnin’,  
Heahd my mother say—

CURTAIN

# GARSHIN'S MALADY

## WORDS ON A NEGLECTED MASTER

BY VIRGIL GEDDES

### I

There is a particular quality and a word which one associates with the work of V. M. Garshin that distinguishes him, in kind if not in degree, from most of the Russian moderns, and even assures him a like distinction throughout all Russian literature. The quality is that of directness, and the word is frankness. Other Russians have a certain frankness too, but in more cases than not it is an indirect frankness; desperate and grave admissions concerning their personal predicaments, faiths, hopes, sentiments, prejudices, and any of the other likewise biased traits of individualism. In Artzibashev the quality of frankness has the merit of being detached and being able to provoke in his people a sort of guilty feeling toward their physically material desires. In Gorki it is the faithful retelling of the incidents in his melancholy life; in Andreyev it is a concession to the pursuit of his own despair. In Garshin, it is the terror of foreboding information, made a malady by his broodings on irrefutable death.

### II

V. M. Garshin, the melancholic, the man of passionate despair, the analyst, the intuitive psychologist of mental disorder, the pitiful rebel against pain who was yet intrigued by its terror, author of that beautifully analytical masterpiece *The Signal*, and the man in whose promise critics, Russian and international, found an heir to Tolstoyian greatness, wrote, what may be taken as the consummation of his own malady, in that superb story *The Red Flower*, these words: "It has gathered all the blood of innocent victims (that is why it is so red), all the tears, all the misery of mankind. It is a mysterious dreadful being, the anti-thesis of God, the 'Dark Spirit' in an innocent shape."



So, Garshin himself. Pathetic child of an intellectual over-ripeness and decay, he was tortured from infancy by a malady which threatened to derange his brain. Continually agonized and tormented by sudden hallucinations, together with such an intensity of penetrative vision that even psychiatrists could not determine whether they were the result of genius or insanity, as a completion to his madness at the age of thirty-three he threw himself over the staircase in the house of his confinement, and realized through suicide a release from the obsessions of his mind.

### III

Self analysis is the oldest of the arts. Just as intellectual honesty is the statement of individualism. It being individualism's demonstration, and the positive apology for its presence.

Honesty, as it is universally accepted and practiced, is so far removed from intellectuality—that is to say pure intellectuality, detached and motivated by forces higher than those of mere material sentiments—that the words when linked together as one term are suspiciously contradictory. Yet honesty being in the material world a definite explanation for many actions, it being a sort of conceived excuse for the exercise of restraint on many of our natural desires, it is well to use the word for the sake of its association—for its appeal rather than for its advantage. The honesty of the spiritual mind, however, is quite another matter. It has (and we are speaking here only of *actual* honesty) no restrained impulses within the limits of its comprehension; or, better, we should say its inquiries are not moderated at any point of its activities.

Garshin inquired into the crisis of death. Death as it would be if accepted at the violence of his own hands. The temper of his stories is derived from the intensity of his approach toward that crisis, and take their value from the clarity and sanity of his report.

### IV

Thus Garshin became in love with death. Yet not, in fact, so much in love with death itself as the apparent advantage of death. To be in love with death is quite a different thing than to fear death. When one fears death, life is proven to have sufficient allurements of its own, with which we do not wish to

part; but to desire death, to become preoccupied with that possible ending of material consciousness which death is supposed to afford, means that the attractions of death transcend and preclude those of our conscious existence—life. Life to him was an unending sequence of pains, which he could not conceive to be the purpose of existence. In death, therefore, he believed there was something more desirable, and his preoccupation with the subject led him to magnify it into a sort of distorted beauty.

The approach, the strained maneuvering toward the point of death, is the theme of his tales; and states, fundamentally, the method which is responsible for his peculiar artistry and embodies his technical skill. His strongest stories all follow this plan; it being a speculative variation on the problem with which he, outside of his art, was inextricably and irredeemably concerned.

## V

His stories are models of clarity. They are written with a conscious conception as to the purpose of the artistic gift. They are condensation which approaches the extreme; and the kind of condensation which comes only from an artist mind accustomed to brooding over problems while practicing a process of careful elimination, grown out of an incessant habit of searching for hidden meanings. As a matter of pure technic it is inevitable to note the fineness with which these stories proceed from the contextual concept upon which they are built to a final, and almost perfect, denouement.

During a time such as our literary present in America, when the gropings in this form of literature are so vague and distressing, if not pathetic, it would be hard to conceive of a better example of achievement from which we might learn the mastery of execution, than these stories of Garshin, with their excellence of craftsmanship and their psychological directness.

## VI

They are beautiful stories, too; almost painfully beautiful. Beautiful in their inner tonality, however, and not in their mere pictorial delineations. Beauty of a kind which proves that for the artist who would touch the realm of the *infinitely* beautiful there remains but one course of personal and legitimate procedure—that of intense concentration.

The genius of Garshin was that of a beautiful insanity.

# INTERPOLATED

BY KATHARINE BARRON BROOKMAN

## CHARACTERS

HOWARD CARTER, *the archæologist.*  
LADY EVELYN HERBERT  
ANKH-NES-AMEN, *queen of the Egyptians.*  
ENTU, *the guard*  
KING TUT-ANKH-AMEN  
TWO ETHIOPIAN FAN-BEARERS  
FOUR EGYPTIAN SERVITORS  
TWO MUSICIANS

*The scene is the tomb of TUT-ANKH-AMEN, A. D. 1923. In the back wall is the crude opening which leads to the canopy where the Pharaoh is interred. To the right of this stands a wooden guard. To the left is a conglomerate mass of furniture which is seen only indistinctly by the audience, owing to the peculiar light in the tomb. The tail of the Hat-hor couch manages to pierce the gloom. A second guard, a replica of the first, can be vaguely descried at the left, behind the piled-up furniture.*

*Royalty and their retinue are gorgeously apparelled. Throughout the play they use the traditional angular gestures, as seen in the tomb decorations.*

(HOWARD CARTER and the extremely modern LADY EVELYN are leaving the chamber.)

Carter.—Well, let's follow the others up and get our bit of lunch.

Lady E.—Think of what we may see in an hour!

Carter.—Yes, this hour will make all the difference.

Lady E (*Irreverently tapping the wooden guard*).—Not to this old fellow.

Carter.—“Old fellow”—Why, he's young! He has qualities not meant for age. Here's love, hatred, avarice—why, it's all here in this face, or could be. He's got it hid there under the impassivity of the servant.

Lady E.—You're giving me the creeps. And it's hot.

Carter.—Right.

*Lady E.*—Isn't it too thrilling? In an hour we shall see the great Pharaoh himself.

*Carter.*—*Perhaps.*

*(They both go out.)*

*(The electric lights, strung about by the excavators, snap out, leaving the tomb in blackness. A glow, very faint at first, becomes more and more apparent until the scene is relit for us, as though our eyes had simply become used to the darkness. Voices come faintly from above; absolute silence for a few moments, then the far-off clang of a gate.)*

*The small bewildered figure of the child-like queen, appears from the opening in the back wall. She looks about uncertainly, she dances and laughs until her eyes rest upon the guard. He is in the livery of a slave of Pharaoh's household, the royal cobra ornamenting his head-dress; and he carries the mace and staff of authority.)*

*Queen.*—Entu! *(Then imperiously.)* Entu! *(She claps her hands.)* Entu! Miserable slave. But oh yes, I was to touch you. *(Does so gingerly with her forefinger.)*

*(ENTU starts.)*

*Queen.*—Entu, don't you remember that the priestess said that after the passing of the thirtieth century of sleep, I should awake? This must be that. Being in this tomb isn't too cheerful.

*Entu.*—Oh Queen, live forever! Forgiveness! Never before have I slept on watch.

*Queen.*—Well, your nap hasn't done you much good. You're still trying to be humorous, I notice.

*Entu.*—Neither have you changed, most delicate of beauties—you are even wearing the carnelian robe.

*Queen.*—So I am!

*Entu.*—Of course you would be. When your subjects dreamed of your astourding loveliness, they dreamed of the slim, red-clad—

*Queen.*—Why, I ought to be all stiff with little bandages!

*Entu.*—Don't you know that ideas held by masses of people never die? Hence the court dress.

*Queen.*—Don't be silly, Entu.

*Entu.*—Naive one, you *are* unchanged, and something tells me that you almost forgot to touch me, which would have cost me my hour of life.

*Queen.*—Was it only an hour of life that Sem-al prophesied?

*Entu.*—Yes. Let us make the most of it.

*Queen.*—Back, slave.

*Entu.*—Aha!—Slave!—Slave? So be it, but the Queen's favorite *once*.

*Queen.*—Oh! Oh! The King! I must touch him, too, and I've kept him waiting. (*She runs out through the wall-opening.*)

*Entu.*—As usual.

*Queen* (*Back again.*—*Entu*, I've forgotten something. He won't budge.

*Entu.*—Won't he, though? Most unfortunate.

*Queen.*—You know what I should do. I can see it in your face. (*ENTU folds his arms and smiles.*)

*Entu.*—The Queen's faithful guard, having been put to death at the time of the Queen's death, though he may have *heard* all that the priestess said at the royal death-bed, knows it no more.

*Queen.*—*Entu*, don't torture me like this. There is something I must do. (*Rushes to the break in the wall.*) Most gracious King, awake! (*Rushes back.*)—*Entu!*

*Entu.*—Yours truly has always been ready to listen to reason. But, as all the Court knew, *Entu* loves the Queen, and the Queen—afterwards the widowed Queen—loved—

*Queen.*—Don't *dare* to say it.

*Entu.*—Quite so. Did *Entu* presume to touch the Queen's person? Would he have kissed her hand without—permission? Has Her Majesty forgotten—in the garden, with the stars so near we could reach up and pluck them down like flowers?

*Queen.*—Silence!

*Entu.*—Quite so. Has the Beauty of the Nile rather conveniently forgotten?

*Queen.*—The Queen is seared with remembrances. But oh, *Entu*, be high-minded. Tell me what to do to make the King get up.

*Entu.*—Madame, three's a crowd.—Oh Lovely Flower, forget the King as he deserves to be forgotten. Did he not torture you to find out about that night in the garden—and with his own hands, fearing scandal?

*Queen.*—Ah—h. *Entu* is omniscient.

*Entu.*—What?

*Queen.*—The King showed me only love. Mercy and gentleness—and I'm keeping him waiting. *Entu*, *tell* me, what have I forgotten?

*Entu.*—No.

*Queen.*—I have placed my hands on his brow, I have raised his head, I have—oh, I'll try, try—Entu, if I kiss you, will you tell me?

*Entu.*—Pish! A fine bargain. But as I said before, Entu is not unwilling to listen to reason. (*He kneels and drags his lips from her wrist to her elbow.*)

*Queen.*—Ugh! What do you want?

*Entu.*—The powder; all of it.

*Queen.*—The powder?

*Entu.*—Yes. Forgotten that too, have you? Well, I don't think so. (*Leaps to his feet and grasps her wrists.*) You hid it in your clothes.—Ah, a golden weapon! It would be interesting to see what a thrust with that could do to me now, but I'll forego that experiment, if you please. (*He bends her backwards, and in getting the weapon from her, his face comes close to hers. He releases her. She walks to the break in the wall.*)

*Queen.*—The Queen's thanks, Entu. Your action has made me remember. "Breathe into the King's nostrils, and he will rise with love to you." (*She flees, out-distancing ENTU, who leaps after her. A moment of silence, the stage empty.*) (*ENTU then enters backwards, and stands with his hands over his eyes, palms out. The KING and QUEEN enter, hand in hand. The KING is a boy of seventeen.*)

*Queen.*—My lid was off. It was quite easy to sit up. But you had a tight double thing that I had to raise first.

*King* (*Seeing ENTU*).—Stand away! How did you come here?

*Entu.*—O King live forever! I was placed here by popular acclaim, safely to guard the glorious Queen.

*King.*—Serpent. You were put to death and your body cast into the Nile.

*Entu.*—So the King thought.

*King.*—What do you mean? Vile dog, I knew that you were my assassin.

*Queen.*—You were the King's assassin!

*King.*—On my death-bed I gave the order, and long before my last breath was drawn, the sweet report came that you had been done in.

*Entu.*—Craving mercy, the executioner lied. I promised him stolen corn.

*King.*—A—ha!

*Entu.*—The populace in general knew nothing of the plan to send your Majesty on the long journey. That was Entu's own little private affair.

*Queen.*—The court physician said he had the mumps.

*Entu.*—Madame, the swelling caused by the sweet insect which I courageously domiciled in the King's collar-band while he slept, warranted such diagnosis.—As I say, Entu was reserved about it. The King, fearing scandal, was also discreet as to his orders to the Executioner. Entu, therefore, lived along quite contentedly, basking in the—

*King.*—Silence, dog.

*Queen.*—There, there, darling. Nothing happened that I couldn't tell you about.—Go on, Entu.

*Entu (Salaaming).*—By command.—As the custom is, Entu was put to death at the time of the Queen's death. And lest his body pollute the royal sepulchre, his effigy only was placed here to guard the beautiful Queen.—As is also quite the custom.—All this time, the populace loved Entu as the Queen's protector, and so placed *him* here in their thoughts, not just the effigy. I hope you follow me.

*Queen.*—We're trying.

*Entu.*—They *thought* me here, as they thought the Queen's carnelian robe onto her.

*King.*—Insolence!

*Entu.*—Because they thought it, and because their thought was never allowed to die, here am I. (*Salaams ironically.*)

*King.*—But *I* thought otherwise.

*Entu.*—The thought of a nation outweighs the thought of an individual, even though he be King.

*Queen.*—But the people have thought us dead all these years. How then can we come alive now?

*Entu.*—Lovely Sun-Daughter, over the great episodes of Life and Death, the gods alone hold sway.

*King.*—See here, you know too much. Retire.

*Entu.*—The King's will is law. (*Salaams, moving oft.*) His humble slave dutifully wishes joy to his Majesty and his *faithful* Queen in the three-quarters of an hour left to them. (*Goes out, left.*)

*King.*—What does he mean? The priestess said an hour.

*Queen.*—Majestic One, live forever. I forgot the charm, and I couldn't remember it for about fifteen minutes, and Entu wouldn't help me.

*King.*—S—S—S—You and Entu unchaperoned here for fifteen minutes? That was going it rather steep.

*Queen (Fondly).*—Jealous! You know I hate Entu, and this is no time for nice etiquette.

*King.*—But you kept me dead while Entu kissed you. He did, didn't he?

*Queen.*—That I cannot deny. But I can't help it if he thinks me a little nice.

*King.*—Out upon you! Who would think I'd been dead for three thousand years? The same little songs from my wife—

*Queen.*—Are we to spend our one hour squabbling? I used to try to think what I'd do if I knew I had only one more hour to live. I decided I'd try to be very agreeable to my King.

*King.*—Tell me. *Do you love me?* I was still wondering when I woke up.

*Queen (Laughs)* I'll never tell.

*King.*—Vixen!—I say, aren't you hungry?

*Queen.*—Starved.

*King (Claps his hands, whereupon a slave appears).*—Cause the banquet to be set before us.

*Queen.*—Mercy! Where did he come from?

*King (Cleverly, twiddling his mace).*—Has the populace ever thought of me as preparing a banquet with my own lotus hands? Quite simple. *He gestures toward the left entrance, whence appear slaves who, in the twinkling of an eye, bring out from the left wall thrones for the KING and QUEEN, chests and baskets containing mumified duck, haunches of venison, etc. The Second Guard comes to life and aids in the process. Two fan-bearers take up their positions behind the KING and QUEEN. Two slaves assist their Majesties to amount the thrones. These, with two others, offer food.*

*King.*—Vide!

*Queen (Clapping her hands).*—You are wise, O King. (*Two musicians take their places R. and L.*)

*King.*—Where there is only an hour—(*ENTU, entering by leaps and bounds, interrupts.*)

*Entu.*—Less, O Ra! Far less!

*King (Thundering, to slaves).*—Bring me a foot-stool. (*Slaves fall upon ENTU, bind him, and place him under the King's eet.*) Where there is but an hour, it should be spent in kingly fashion. This duck is devilish tough, however.

*Queen.*—Now, now, my Lord. You always did complain about the duck. And it really was cooked to a turn. Indeed, this looks quite red.



*King.*—Been killed too long. Remove it! Bring on the venison.

*Queen.*—Dearest, for my sake, forego the venison.

*King.*—The same little song. You always say, "for your sake." Why can't I have my venison?

*Queen.*—Because.

*King.*—Now you know that's perfectly maddening. (*At this point, ENTU reaches for the hem of the QUEEN's garment and removes something from it which he conceals in his clothes. His action is seen only by the audience.*)

*Queen.*—Majestic One, we have only a few minutes here. Who knows how long the journey to the Place of Judgment will be? Oughtn't we to save some of this food for the journey?

*King.*—There's something to that argument—something to it.—Remove the feast. (*Slaves remove the duck, etc., replacing it at L., and group themselves in the background.*) Ho! Hum! I suppose we might have some archery. (*Kicks ENTU viciously.*) Get out! (*ENTU sprawls. His bonds, rotten with age, are loosed and he crawls as inconspicuously as possible to R.*)

*Queen.*—That's right, take it out on him because your dinner wasn't just so.

*King* (*His voice falsetto with rage*).—What? Showing favor to my assassin? LEAVE the banquet-hall!

*Queen.*—No, please. Listen to me. The time is going, and I want you with me always.

*King.*—You don't say.

*Queen.*—Piggy. Don't interrupt. The priestess gave me a powder, some of which we were to swallow. Don't you remember? It was to make us live forever.

*King.*—Where? Here?

*Queen.*—I—I forget where I put it.

*King.*—Same little song. She forgets. I mean, are we to live *here* forever? Because I'd rather go to sleep. I'm distinctly bored.

*Queen.*—No, no. The walls of the tomb are to be opened by the Caucasians, and we are to go forth into the world.

*King.*—By Hat-hor! I'd like to see the old palace again.

*Queen.*—But where d'you think I could have put it?

*Entu* (*Coming forward and prostrating himself*).—Entu knows.

*King.*—The devil you say! Produce it.

*Entu.*—I have the powder and will not yield it. You can do nothing. The populace never thought of the King as in personal

combat with a slave. Ha!

*King.*—I can have torture applied.—The hot irons!

*Slave (Prostrate).*—May it please the great Son of the Sun, there is no fire.

*King.*—Isis! Hept—hor! Buto! Amen! Aten!

*Queen.*—Don't swear. Try diplomacy, my Lord.

*Entu.*—The Queen is wise. Try diplomacy, my Lord.

*King.*—I will make you Vizier, Entu. I will create an estate for you, lush with fertility. I will—

*Entu.*—Ha! Ha! Ha! Really, Sire, you do not keep abreast of the times at all.—However: if I swallow this powder before our hour is up—and it's most uncomfortable not to have a clock about—I shall live forever.

*King.*—Granted. Get on. Get on.

*Entu.*—Well, if the King swallows the powder, *he* will live forever.

*Queen.*—Yes, Entu, and I think you're very mean to—

*Entu.*—Craving pardon for the interruption, your Majesties, the time being short and all that sort of thing. The King I do not love. Entu I do love. Entu keeps the powder and gives of it to the glorious Ankh-nes-Amen, whom he covets. Just Entu and Ankh-nes-Amen faring forth together, or, if the Caucasians fail us, alone here in a world of pulsing stillness and ever-lasting sleep.

*Queen (Screams).*—No! No! The Sun-god forbid!

*King.*—You damned villain!—There, dear, you sha'n't.

*Entu.*—Does this mean you were playing with me all along?

*Queen (Trembling).*—I—d—don't know what you mean.

*Entu.*—I mean: did you really love me, ever?

*Queen.*—Yes, yes.

*Entu.*—Ah!

*King.*—What?

*Queen.*—Darling, he was so diverting.

*Entu.*—After the death of your royal master you sought the son of the Hittite as consort. Was that because of my lack of caste, or did your heart yearn for that little beast?

*Queen.*—Entu,—we couldn't have married. Think of the scandal! (*Piously.*) My people were my first consideration.

*Entu.*—Rot. Did you love the King?

*Queen.*—Yes, yes.

*King.*—O Bright Ray of the Dawn's Cool Gleaming!

*Entu.*—It is impossible for a woman to entertain two loves simultaneously.

*Queen.*—Dear Entu, what does the past matter? Now my heart beats in your up-turned palms. This one hour! (*QUEEN approaches ENTU and places her hand on his shoulder, attempting to get the powder. He leaps aside and goes down on one knee, his hands downward, palms out.*)

*Entu (Absolutely taking in the situation).*—I am not worthy.

*Queen.*—Oh Entu, don't rebuff me. Come with me. (*Motions toward outer door L.*) I can prove how much I love you.

*King.*—No, you don't. This is outrageous. This is—this is—I tell you I won't have it. Woman, return to your throne!

*Queen (to KING).*—O Dazzling One, let the Queen love where diplomacy bids.

*King.*—Let—let—You always do as you please.

*Entu (excited).*—Diplomacy! If you *truly* love me, and oh how Entu hopes—If you love me, I will give you half of this powder, and we shall live and pass out into the world. But before I give to you this exquisite boon, you must prove your love. Hat-hor forbid that I should saddle myself for all eternity with a grumpy woman.

*Queen.*—Prove my love? There's no time. (*Distracted*) O Isis! Another hour! Just one more.

*Entu.*—There's time. All I ask is that you dance for me—the sacred dance of the priestess.

*King (Bursting with rage).*—You—you—

*Queen (To ENTU, laying a restraining hand on the KING's knee.)* That I cannot do.

*Entu.*—You can. You can.

*Queen.*—You know it isn't done.

*Entu.*—A Queen can ignore tradition; besides, what have we to do with all that now? I've always wanted to see that dance.

*Queen.*—Yes, you were flogged for trying to peek into the inner court of the temple on the Feast of Isis. No man but the King has ever seen the Queen dance as priestess.

*Entu.*—That's just the point.

*Queen.*—If I dance, will you give me the powder into my own hand to divide between us?

*Entu.*—Yes.

*Queen (To the musicians).*—Make a joyful noise. (*The slaves remove the furniture, replacing it against the left wall. The KING seats himself upon a stool at the left to watch, the fan-bearer behind*

him. *The slaves, including the QUEEN's fan-bearer, disappear, the Second Guard taking his place again a little behind the furniture, exactly as before.* (ENTU stands at the Right, opposite the Second Guard.) *(The QUEEN dances.)*

King.—You are captivating! *(ENTU does not look at the QUEEN during her performance.)*

Entu *(Turning, as she finishes)*.—Come, dance Daughter of the Sun. The music is pulling at your little feet.

Queen.—Why, I *did* dance. I'm all out of breath.

Entu.—What do you say? Entu is no fool. *(Suavely.)*  
The Queen mistakes. Entu has not seen her dance.

King.—IMBECILE! For three thousand years the populace has thought of you and your kind as barred from such mystic spectacles. What could you expect? *(ENTU starts to protest.)*

King.—Silence! *(There is absolute silence. From far off comes a clinking sound.)*

Queen *(In a whisper)*.—It's the Caucasians come to free us.

King.—It was so prophesied.

Queen.—And I am growing ver-y sleep-y.

Entu.—No! Quick! The powder!

Queen.—I'm too—oo sleepy.

King *(Tapping his annoyance with his foot)*.—She always would get up first and then get sleepy and have to go to bed early.

Entu *(Fumbles with his garments and brings out the phial)*.—Here, my Beauty. *Proffers it to the QUEEN who is too sleepy to close her fingers around it. The sound of a gate comes from above.*

King *(Snatching the phial)*.—Damn tradition! *(This is too much for the KING's fan-bearer, who disappears.)*

Entu *(snatching the phial)*.—No, you don't. *(The KING and QUEEN watch in fascinated horror as he swallows the entire contents of the phial.)*

King.—Come, Beloved, to the golden canopy. I will tuck you in. *(He leads her toward the break in the back wall.)*

Queen *(murmuring drowsily)*.—Dearest Princeling!

King.—Entu will live. But we shall slumber on, potent to move men by our silent dignity. When the Caucasians come, they will cast down their eyes, and their hearts will crowd their breasts with awe. *(The QUEEN is limp in the KING's arms.)*

Entu.—What aw—ful ro—ot. I—

King.—As you were, sir! *(Sleepily ENTU regains his staff and mace and assumes his original pose.)*

King *(Looks curiously at ENTU for a moment, then steps up to*

*him and taps him*).—By all the gods, he's turned back to wood. Either the priestess lied, or the stuff lost its strength with age. My, what a sell!—One hour! That was time well spent; a noble hour; for I know now that you loved me, Daughter of the Dawn! (*Lifting the dead QUEEN.*) Ho! Hum! (*Sleepily.*) Oh, what a sweet weight! (*He staggers off with the QUEEN through the break in the wall. The light fades, and the electric lights of the excavators snap on. LADY EVELYN and MR. CARTER enter.*)

*Lady Evelyn (to break the tension).*—Hello! This fellow's still here. (*Poking her finger into ENTU's ribs.*) Has the hour made any difference to you, old young sir?

CURTAIN

## WINTER WEARINESS

BY GIOSUE CARDUCCI

*Translated by William A. Drake*

And did the shining sun  
Once make this sad earth bright?  
Were there smiles, warmth and light,  
Roses and violets?

Was there, once, radiant youth  
Rising to hope and duty,  
To glory and to beauty,  
Faith, valor, and to love?

Perchance such times there were  
When Homer sang his lays;  
But those were ancient days;  
Now shines the sun no more.

And these sad, wintry fogs  
Upon my spirit lain  
Are all that now remain  
Of that forgotten world.

# CONFESSIONS OF AN ERRATIC READER

BY FELIX SPER

I am one of those easily consoled beings who have been heartened by the fact that Samuel Johnson's early reading was desultory. Try as I may to map out a one-road course of systematic reading to gather up beauty and knowledge from one sector of literature, I utterly fail! My feet *will* roam into forbidden trails. I must be poking my nose here, there and elsewhere as the curiosity prompts, tearing off different flowers, tasting varied herbs, admiring shifting scenes and never staying long to gaze fixedly at any particular horizon.

How often the folly of such meandering prods my conscience, I hesitate to confess. Something within me—perhaps the scholar's passion for cultivating intensively a single patch—reproaches me with trifling. The astonishing growth of knowledge stretching away to limitless boundaries, coupled with the extraordinary multiplicity of books has brought the scholar face to face with the choice of making all knowledge or only the back yard his province. Shall it be foggy diffusion or focal point; dilettante or expert: this is the modern dilemma. I am nailed to the two horns.

But anon, the serious voice is stilled by the mocking elves, and my soul is afire with perversity. Literary gypsying, they whisper, joyous dallying along the by-roads that wind upward to rainbow heights, the pursuit of fire-flies—only in this carefree loafing does one attain to ecstasy and reap the richest spiritual reward. Away with iron-shod plodders a long steel-straight lines!

For a time, the spell endures; but presently stern duty raises her head and hisses: How much of the Bible have you read . . . how much of Darwin . . . Why don't you finish the Divine Comedy . . . When will you follow up your enthusiastic discovery of Aristophanes. . . When . . . ? When someone in a literary journal mentions "Romany Rye," the book eyes me reproachfully from the book rack. The slightest allusion to "Wuthering Heights," "Tristram Shandy", "Sartor

Resartus" or "Hail and Farewell" upsets me. Then I wonder when I shall do my serious reading. Finally if a colleague asks whether I have read "The Republic" of Plato, I shrink with shame. Arrows of self-criticism fly in clouds. I blush, I stammer, I grow dizzy as my delayed reading list unrolls before my conscience. Usually, at this point, all the demons that plead for ancient versus contemporary literature charge pell-mell into the arena and clash. Out of the fray my spirit is dragged bleeding. The result is a compromise. Henceforth I promise myself to wobble between Euripides and D. H. Lawrence. And the mischievous genius Whim is caged for the nonce.

But when the shadows lift, I am again a creature of moods. The mood and the book—there's your lucky crossing. Odd how moods respect neither the hour nor the study-course. When sick of the human comedy, I am driven to Swift, Anatole France, Samuel Butler, all of whom articulate my own world-contempt. When the mood of melting sorrow comes on, I lull myself in the rhythms of Omar and Keats. The nervous stutter of contemporary pens sends me fleeing to the placid beauty of William H. Hudson, George Moore and Lafcadio Hearn. In flippant moods, I take down a volume of W. S. Gilbert or Max Beerbohm or James Stephens, and—for thoughtful jesting—the evangelic Bernard Shaw. There are moments when I long to exchange the roar of the subway for the foam of the South Seas, and times when I would feel the pulse of the class-struggle in mine, mill and factory. Moods, countless and unmentionable! . . .

Nor are these moods fragile as bubbles. Often they extend over many days. Could a spell of interest be lengthened for a month or more, there would be no problem. I should be saved literary damnation. Worst of all, I cannot read a book until ready for it. Always the next volume is looming ahead. If denied it, I rush about restlessly until my fingers clutch the covers. Once I pass beyond an author or period, I am reluctant to return. New worlds are always luring!

Is this zig-zagging among book-rows a symptom of literary insanity? I ask without hoping for a reply. Allow me to enjoy to the full my only eccentricity. . . .

# THE SOUP STONE\*

A COMEDY IN ONE ACT

By W. A. STIGLER

## CHARACTERS

MRS. O'KEIFE  
MRS. PATRICK  
MRS. YATES  
MRS. O'ROURKE  
MRS. DAUGHERTY  
MRS. HAGGERTY  
SHAWN O'KEIFE  
TIM HAGGERTY  
MIKE DAUGHERTY  
THE BEGGAR

## SCENE

*The green before an Irish farm village which is not in view of the audience. MRS. O'KEIFE is standing at right in shouting distance of MRS. PATRICK who is at extreme left. MRS. O'KEIFE is thirty-five, tall and wiry. She has her sleeves rolled to her elbows; her fists are on her aproned hips. MRS. PATRICK is fifty, wrinkled, and gray, but not bent. She is holding in her hand a rolling pin which she forgot to leave as she came out of her hut to complain with her neighbor.*

*Mrs. Patrick.*—He's goin' into Mrs. Yates' house now. And what did he take from you?

*Mrs. O'Keife.*—It's my own little pig that he took from his pen, and loaded it onto his wagon and me keepin' it these many weeks and feedin' it all the scraps from the table.

*Mrs. Patrick.*—'Twas a sorry day for us when Peter Namara came into this land from his old father; God rest his bones. Each year the rent goes higher and must be paid or he takes something surely.

\*The author had not read Yates *A Pot of Broth* prior to writing this sketch. The plot is taken from the old Irish folk tale.



*Mrs. O'Keife.*—But I thought you could pay this year, an' your man havin' sold the old mare and colt.

*Mrs. Patrick.*—Ah, but it's a lot of things that had to be paid for with that money! Sure and it's our sack of potatoes that he loaded onto his wagon, and the children cryin' their eyes out because they couldn't have some for their breakfast.

*Mrs. O'Keife.*—We'll all be starvin' in a pile with him for a landlord.

*Mrs. Patrick.*—It's not at all like his blessed old father he is at all. It was himself that never lost his patience and if we did not pay him his rent for a year.

*Mrs. O'Keife.*—'Twas a grand old man he was. And I'm thinking he'll not be resting in his grave and his son oppressin' the poor people so.

*Mrs. Patrick.*—It's myself that's thinking this old world's getting worse very fast surely. When such a fine man can be having such a worthless spalpeen for a son. It's only three times that he asks us for his rent and then he comes and takes all you have to live on and keep body and soul together.

*Mrs. O'Keife.*—'Twould not be as bad if he'd be after comin' himself instead of sending his agent. And we not wantin' to talk to the likes of him.

*Mrs. Patrick (Shouting to MRS. YATES of right).*—And what was it I saw him lugging away from your house, Mrs. Yates?

*Mrs. Yates (Begins speaking before she enters. She is 24, neat, and pretty).*—He would not wait and see if my man could come and work for him, but took down the onions from the peg where we'd been hangin' 'em to dry for winter. Oh, why did we ever commence trying to rent land from Peter Namara, and every-one tellin' us he'd take the last thing we could raise!

*Mrs. Patrick.* You're young, and you can move to another place, but you'd never get Kirk Patrick to move from the place where his father was raised, and if the landlord took the clothes from his back.

*Mrs. O'Keife.*—My man will be comin' home for his dinner in a little while and me with nothin' to cook for him.

*Mrs. Patrick.*—It's hard set we'll be after this surely.

*Mrs. Yates.*—We'll have no call now to be worrying that the thieves will break into our houses and Peter Namara taking all we've got already.

*Mrs. Patrick.*—He's coming from Mrs. O'Rourke's house now. Did he say what he would be after from her?

*Mrs. Yates.*—He did not. But you can see he's got something in a big bag on his shoulder, God rot his bones.

*Mrs. O'Rourke* (*Enters from right. She is 45 and inclined to be stout*).—Good mornin' to ye.

*All.*—The top of the mornin' to ye, Mrs. O'Rourke.

*Mrs. O'Rourke.*—'Tis no cheer I see on your faces this mornin'.

*Mrs. Patrick.*—'Tis little cause we have to be cheerful surely, and the landlord takin' everything we've skimped and saved for these many years. And did he be after takin' the last bite from your own children's mouths?

*Mrs. O'Rourke.*—Yes, God rot his bones! He took a sack of peas from the door, and never once listenin' to me sayin' that my man and children would have nothin' for their dinner.

*Mrs. O'Keife.*—Yours is not the only ones that'll be wonderin' where their dinner is to come from, Bridget O'Rourke, and him a takin' something from everyone of us. Are there any peas left in the house?

*Mrs. O'Rourke.*—There are not; and if it hadn't been for the ones I am cookin' for dinner and the ones in the cellar, we'd be without any peas at all.

*Mrs. O'Keife.*—It's old Mrs. Daugherty's house he's in now. I'm thinking she'll be heavy with sorrow and this is the first of the like she's seen in all her 65 years of living. Did he skip Mrs. Haggerty's house?

*Mrs. Yates.*—He did not, and it's not Peter Namara to be skipping anybody surely. (*MRS. DAUGHERTY enters right with MRS. HAGGERTY. MRS. DAUGHERTY is about 65; a dried up old cripple whose face looks like a cracked piece of peat. She wears a bonnet. MRS. HAGGERTY is 40; of medium height, and somewhat refined.*)

*Mrs. Daugherty.*—The top o' the mornin' to ye. But no good can come from a day when a man comes into your house and takes away all you've got to eat. I could see him comin' when he was at Mrs. Haggerty's house, and me too crippled to hide everything while he was aloding her turnips onto his wagon. (*She speaks in a screechy whine.*)

*Mrs. Haggerty.*—And Tim will be comin' home from the field, and 'twill be a sad man he is when he finds the turnips taken away. (*Whistling is heard off left.*)

*Mrs. Patrick.*—Sure and it's nobody but a crazy person or a beggar that has nothing to lose that would be whistlin' this day.

*Mrs. Daugherty.*—Sure and it's a beggar it is, or my old eyes be deceiving me one. It's bad luck he'll be bringing us and him coming from the South.

*Mrs. Patrick.*—He will not be finding much to eat in a place which has just been visited by a man like Peter Namara

*Mrs. Haggerty.*—He'll be after having no sadder story to tell than what we can tell him.

*Mrs. O'Keife.*—Sure and it's the same one who was at my door when Peter Namara came. It's bad luck he'll be bringing us.

*Beggar (Enters left carrying a package under his arm. He is clad in the usual garb of the tramp. The whistling continues until he is well on the stage).*—Good day to you all. The top of the mornin' to you. And why do you stand gaddin', and your children cryin' for something to eat, and your husbands soon comin' home from the plow?

*Mrs. Daugherty.*—It's the likes of you to be askin' us that, and you without nothin' for Peter Namara to take.

*Mrs. Patrick.*—It's us that be workin' for daily bread that must starve with nothin' left to cook in the house.

*Beggar.*—Then it's me that has come along at the right time. I'll be after showin' you how to make some of the finest soup you ever tasted.

*Mrs. Haggerty.*—But what will you make it out of?

*Beggar.*—Sure, and I'll be after usin' this magic stone that I carry with me everywhere for no other purpose.

*All.*—A stone?

*Beggar.*—Sure, and if you'll get me a pot, I'll make you some of the finest soup to be had in Old Ireland from this very stone.

*Mrs. Haggerty.*—You be after makin' a fool of us.

*Beggar.*—'Twill only be a little trouble to get me the pot and you can soon see whether I be after makin' a fool of you.

*Mrs. O'Keife.*—Mrs. O'Rourke, it's you has got the biggest pot among us. Will you be after bringing it? And I'll bring the hot water I left on the stove to boil the meat in. (*They exit right.*)

*Beggar.*—And will you be helping me with the fire? (*They gather small sticks, bits of grass, and loose pieces of peat. Soon the fire is burning brightly. Re-enter MRS. O'ROURKE and MRS. O'KEIFE. The former places a large pot on the fire while the latter pours hot water into it.*)

*Mrs. O'Keife.*—There, 'tis boilin' it was when I took it from the stove. 'Twill soon be at it again.

*Beggar (Placing the stone carefully in the water).*—Sure, and we'll be havin' soup for everybody in a few minutes. We'll be after needin' a little salt.

*Mrs. O'Keife.*—The water has already been salted. Here's a spoon; you can taste it for yourself. (*Gives him a large spoon.*)

*Beggar (He stirs the soup thoughtfully for a few moments, then takes a spoonful, blows it, and tastes it).*—Ah, and already it begins to have the wonderful flavor of the magic stone! And when it's done you'll all be sayin' it's the finest soup you ever tasted. 'Twill be a little better though if you'll be after bringing the piece of meat that you were goin' to cook fer dinner and hid to keep Peter Namara from getting it, Mary O'Keife.

*Mrs. O'Keife.*—I'll be bringing it right out, and you'll be lettin' us all have some of the soup as soon as it's done. (*Exits right.*)

*Mrs. Daugherty.*—It's me that's been livin' over 65 years and never before have I seen anyone make soup from a stone.

*Mrs. Haggerty.*—We don't know that this will be good soup yet, either.

*Mrs. Daugherty.*—No, 'tis no good that can come out of a day like this. But 'twould be good if we could learn how to make soup out of all of Peter Namara's rocky field!

*Beggar.*—It's no stone in Peter Namara's field that will be after makin' soup like this, and me gettin' this one from the magician at Dublin. Sure, and you've never seen a stone with such magic powers, have you?

*Mrs. Patrick.*—Never since I was born and it's myself has lived in three places besides this.

*Mrs. Daugherty.*—Never has there been such a great need for such a stone surely. And it's myself that's been livin' in this place for over 65 years by the grace of God and never before havin' the food taken from my house before my very eyes.

*Mrs. O'Keife (Enters from right and gives a large piece of meat to the Beggar, who immediately places it in the pot).*—It's a fine piece of meat that I cut from a piece in the box where it was salted down with my own hands.

*Beggar.*—It is a fine piece of meat, and so it should be to be allowed to cook with my magic stone. Annie Patrick, it's you who is the finest judge of porridge in all the country. Will you be after tastin' this to see if it's done?

*Mrs. Patrick (Tasting the soup).*—It is fine soup, surely. But it would be better if I put in some potatoes which I was cookin' when Peter Namara came sneakin' in. (*She exits left.*)

*Beggar.*—Will ye be after noticin' that fine smell. Only the magic stone makes that kind of soup. It's many and many a day since I got this magic stone from the magician in Dublin, and there's never a blessed one of these days passed but it has made soup for me. In all the towns in Old Ireland it has been my friend.

*Mrs. Yates.*—It's myself that's wishin' Jimmy hadn't gone to town to-day, and there'll be so many to eat it all up from him.

*Mrs. Daugherty.*—It's no good wishin' for him back sooner to learn that Peter Namara's left us all to starve. It's myself that's been living for over 65 years, and I'm thinkin' this is the blackest day any of us will ever see.

*Mrs. Yates.*—But 'twould be a deal blacker had we not learned to make soup from the magic stone.

*Mrs. Daugherty.*—It's yourself that is young yet, Collin Yates, or you'd not be after seein' good could come of a day like this.

*Mrs. Patrick (Enters left and pours the potatoes from pan into the pot).*—It's mighty fine potatoes they are, and me keepin' them buried in the rick by the barn since they were dug.

*Beggar.*—There are no better potatoes to be found, Annie Patrick. Now, would you mind tastin' it, Collin Yates? Though you're just a wee bit of a girl, they say it's yourself that makes the finest soup to be had in Old Ireland.

*Mrs. Yates (Tasting the soup).*—It is good soup, but I'll be bringin' the onions I was stewin' when the landlord knocked. (*She exits right.*)

*Beggar.*—Will ye be after keepin' the fire burnin'. (*The women bring fuel, some going off the stage as though going to their homes for it*) Bridget O'Rourke, do you see the men comin' yet from the plow?

*Mrs. O'Rourke.*—It is not likely they'll be comin' for a bit yet, and they not knowin' what is goin' on.

*Mrs. Yates (Re-enters right with onions in stew pan which she hands to the BEGGAR. He examines them critically then puts them into the soup).*—It's nice, sweet onions they are and the landlord takin' a whole sack of them.

*Beggar.*—Will ye be after stirrin' this awhile, Collin Yates? It's myself that is gettin' warm standing by the fire all the time. (*He hands her the spoon but remains near her as she stirs.*)

*Mrs. Daugherty.*—That smells like mighty fine soup. Let me have the spoon, Collin Yates, and I'll be after tastin' it. (*She tastes it critically, shaking her head as she returns the spoon.*) It's myself that'll be bringin' some carrots from the stove. (*She hobbles out right.*)

*Beggar.*—Bridget O'Rourke, will you be tastin' the soup, and you Eileen Haggerty? It's the best soup ye'll ever be makin'.

*Mrs. O'Rourke* (*She tastes soup and hands spoon to MRS. HAGGERTY.*)—The peas I was cookin' will help the taste a bit surely. (*Goes out right.*)

*Mrs. Haggerty.*—And I'll be addin' the turnips I was boilin' for Tim's dinner and the children's. They'll be makin' it taste a little richer. (*She exits right meeting MRS. DAUGHERTY who is returning with the carrots which she adds to the pot.*)

*Mrs. Daugherty.*—They'll make it look darker, and they say that carrots keep away the croup.

*Mrs. Yates.*—And dry the black blood from the body I've heard my old grandmother say.

*Mrs. O'Rourke* (*Re-enters from right with the peas which she pours into the pot.*)—And here are the peas. I see the men comin' from the plow. They'll be expectin' their dinner and they not knowin' that Peter Namara's been here.

*Beggar.*—Sure, and we'll be givin' them some of the finest soup to be had in Old Ireland, and the only soup they'll ever be tastin' that is made from a magic stone.

*Mrs. Haggerty* (*Re-enters with the turnips. The BEGGAR now rises and adds the turnips to the soup and relieves MRS. YATES of the stirring and tasting spoon.*)—It's almost cooked they are and me a leavin' them so long to cook for Tim's dinner and the children's while I watched the makin' of the soup with the magic stone. But they'll help it a bit anyhow.

*Beggar* (*He stirs for a few minutes then proceeds to consume several large spoonfuls in his effort to determine its exact merit. He at last decides that his magic stone has added its full measure to the liquid.*)—Sure, and it's about done it is. And will you be after rustlin' some bowls, and bring me one, Bridget O'Rourke.

(*They go to their respective homes. While they are gone the BEGGAR continues to taste the soup with evident satisfaction. Men's voices are heard off right. Presently the women re-enter followed by TIM, MIKE, and SHAWN. They all have bowls, but the men are not aware of their intended use. MRS. O'ROURKE presents the BEGGAR with a bowl.*)

*Beggar.*—Now, if ye'll be after passin' by with your bowls, I'll fill them—

*Mike.*—And what'll ye be putting in them?

*Beggar (Continuing).*—With the finest soup ye ever tasted. (*They pass by and are served. The BEGGAR fills his own bowl and all drink.*)

*Mrs. Daugherty (Whining the tale of woe).*—And Peter Namara came for his rent and ourselves not having enough to feed the children—

*Tim.*—Did he take anything?

*Mrs. Daugherty.*—And he took all we had and left us to starve.

*Shawn.*—Will you be after explaining how you came to be makin' soup out here together?

*Mrs. O'Keife.*—Sure, and we were all talkin' together about Peter Namara when he came along (*pointing to the BEGGAR*) and says he can make the finest soup in all Ireland.

*Beggar.*—And I'll be after leaving it to all of ye if it's not the best soup ye ever tasted.

*Mrs. Haggerty.*—It's myself that's never tasted any so good.

*Mrs. O'Rourke.*—Nor myself neither.

*Mrs. O'Keife.*—It's the best I ever tasted.

*Mrs. Daugherty (Still in her whine).*—And it's myself that's been livin' for over 65 years and I never yet saw such fine soup made before, and himself makin' it in such a queer way.

*Tim.*—Will ye be after explainin' what he found to make this soup out of, and Peter Namara takin' everythin' we had?

*Beggar.*—It's made out of a stone, that I brought along with me.

*The Men.*—A rock!!!

*Tim.*—Faith, and who ever heard tell of stone soup?

*Beggar.*—It's stone soup that ye all be eatin' and likin' so well this very minute just the same. (*Fishing his rock out of the pot with the spoon*) And here is my magic stone for your own eyes to look at and see for yourself.

*Mrs. Daugherty.*—Yes, and it's ourselves that saw him make it right before us, and him puttin' the stone in just as the water was beginnin' to boil and stirrin' it carefully while it was cookin'. And we must be after savin' enough of it for the children.

*Tim.*—We'll be after buyin' the rock of you. How much will you sell it for?

*Beggar.*—This rock is not for sale. It's myself that must

keep it by me. (*He wraps the stone carefully in a paper, places it under his arm, and exits right, with a cheery, Good day to ye all.*)

*Mrs. O'Keife.*—All this good soup for nothin'!

*Shawn.*—And himself makin' it out of a stone!

*Mrs. Daugherty.*—And myself sayin' that nothin' good could come out of this day!

*Mrs. Yates.*—Maybe Peter Namara's comin' was good luck to us all.

*Mrs. Haggerty.*—It's ourselves that should be havin' a dance at our good blessin'.

*Tim.*—Faith, and it's bettern' a wake!

CURTAIN

## PANTHEISM

BY GIOSUE CARDUCCI

*Translated by William A. Drake*

Ye wakeful stars, I never, never told thee,  
Nor told I even thee, all-seeing sun:  
The name of her, the flower of every beauty,  
Whose echoes in my silent heart still run.

Yet one star to another is repeating  
My secret in the darkness of the night,  
And with a smile the sun, in evening greeting,  
Tells to the silver moon my happy plight.

The shaded hills and joyous meadows know it,  
'Tis told by every shrub to every flower;  
The birds in flight are singing, 'Gloomy poet,  
At last thou'st learned of love's sweet dreams the power.'

I never told: yet with divine indulgence  
All earth and sky her dear name call to me,  
'Mid the acacia's full-blown effulgence  
Whispering the Splendid All. 'She, she loves thee!'



## A WORD ABOUT "AUNT LASMI"

When the fatal Asiatic Cholera breaks out no god or goddess other than Kali can save the populace in some parts of India. The Hindus, Mohammedans, Buddhists, Christians—all send their trays of worship and healthy goats for sacrifice to the black goddess, Kali—who takes them alive—one and all. All night long the worship goes on; feasts follow amidst the horrors of death—for is not Kali the goddess of death and horror and ruins! Scientists will have us believe that the contagion spreads quickly under such holy circumstances, but the Hindus know better after one hundred and fifty years of British rule.

Let no one laugh at Maha-Kali! Day follows day. And one sees, hears, feels, breathes, lives—death—living death. Father, mother, brother, sister, sweetheart, wife—they die—fall sick—die—die while talking, laughing—close their eyes and die. One, two, three, four—the young one and the old ones—the white ones and the black one, the haughty ones and the humble ones—They drop on the floor! Dance of black death! Ghastly funeral cry of the Hindus and Mohammedans! The silent procession of the Christians; and the yelling of the stray dogs—moaning and groaning—through the black night. Science? Logic? Reasoning succumbs to almighty cholera. Imagination fails to conceive it. If you want to know what it is, visit the British empire.

The cult of Kahalik believes in the conquest of fear and all other passions. They believe the only way to learn to swim is to be in water. They want to learn to be beyond good and evil—so they practise it. Raghu Pundit of my drama is a Kahalik—and when Asiatic Cholera breaks out one is liable to turn anything from a Kahalik to a Bolshevik.

I am sure I am not a social reformer, therefore my little drama will hardly supply any nutrition to the missionaries. I am sorry for the patriots who are ashamed of these social conditions in India—to them, one may point out—Go, remedy them—or I shall take better snapshots of things.

To an artist nothing matters. Art is not photography. So what I have said in these pages may not be very true to life, (life may be ghastlier yet), but is an attempt at Art. So I owe no apology.

# AUNT LASMI

A ONE ACT TRAGEDY

BY SREE BASUDEB

*The Moving Finger writes; and, having writ,  
Moves on: nor all your Piety nor Wit  
Shall lure it back to cancel half a Line,  
Nor all your Tears wash out a Word of it.*

OMAR KHAYYAM

## CHARACTERS

NARES BABU  
RAGHU PUNDIT  
DINA NATH  
PRASANNA MUNDAL  
TITU MIYA  
MATI LAL  
AUNT LASMI  
HARI MATI, *the maid.*

*The village of Deva-gram.*

*The outside sitting room of Nares Babu's thatched house.*

NARES BABU *is seated on the matted floor, smoking the Hukkah.  
He is solving some serious problems of life in his mind.*

*It is raining hard outside.*

*Appear HARI MATI, the maid, weeping.*

*Hari Mati.*—Please, Babu, we better send some more sweetmeats for the worship of the Goddess Kali.<sup>1</sup>

*Nares Babu (Without looking at her).*—Mother Kali have mercy on us! If the Cholera keeps up there will not be a soul left in Deva-gram.

*Hari Mati.*—Charu Sila's sister died in three hours. The big doctor from Burdwan could not do anything for her.

*Nares Babu.*—The wrath of Maha-Kali is on Deva-gram! What can the doctors or Kavirajs do? Pray to her. Pray to the goddess, Hari Mati.

*Hari Mati.*—I have bathed again and I have changed my Sadi.<sup>2</sup> I have gathered some Bel leaves and Durba grass. I have

1. Native doctors practising herb-medicine.

2. Indian gown.

fixed some Atop rice and peeled some fresh bananas for the worship. The tray is ready. Now, Babu, if you give me eight annas I go and get some sweetmeats and take the tray to the temple. (*A funeral procession cry of BALA HARI, HARI BOL is heard at a distance.*)

*Nares Babu.*—One more! One more is gone! O Kali! O Maha Kali! It is thy wish! (*To HARI MATI.*) Here is half a rupee, Hari Mati. Get the sweetmeats. Give the goddess more worship!

(*HARI MATI picks up the coin and retires.*)—Maha Kali takes them alive. No one can save. No one can save Deva-Gram! Deva-Gram is doomed. (*Restless.*) Ah, ah, where is my opium box! Where did she keep it? (*Finds it and takes a dose.*) Have mercy on us, Mother! Have mercy on us!

*Enter Dina Nath (Brushing the rain from his hair and body).*—The wish of Kali! Just her wish, Nares Babu. I come from the cremation of Jugger Nath's son. The poor man is prostrated.

*Nares Babu.*—Kali! Kali! Oh, Maha Kali! (*To DINA NATH.*) Have a seat, brother. Let us figure it out. We must please her. We must sacrifice more goats before her. Maybe she does not like her priest.

*Dina Nath.*—It may be that, I never thought of that, Nares Babu! I never thought of that. Suppose we ask Robhu Pundit to give her a special worship for the village. I wonder if he has been fasting.

*Nares Babu.*—Maybe he is not fasting today. Then, again, who knows, mother Kali may not like the change of priest. Ram Pundit has been attending her for the last fifteen years; and nothing like this has ever befallen Deva-Gram!

*Dina Nath.*—Have you a little opium, Nares Babu? My box is empty and I cannot think. (*The funeral cry is heard at a distance.*)

*Nares Babu.*—Another! Another! The same ghastly sound. Three days and three nights—continually the same cry; Bala Hari—Hari Bol! Have a little opium brother, have a little opium! Let us figure it out.

*Dina Nath (Taking the opium).*—I have three more goats left in the barn. I better send them to the temple at once. Mother Kali can read our minds. Nothing must be spared from her worship

*Enter Raghu Pundit (With a jug of brandy in his hand).—*I come with the sacramental Karaz<sup>3</sup>; blessings of Maha Kali to you, sons.

*Nares Babu (Bowing to him).—*O great Pundit!

*Dina Nath (Bowing to him).—*O god on earth. Give thy blessings.

*Raghu Pundit.—*In the name of Mighty Mother of Pralaya.<sup>4</sup> I bless you my children! Have her thrice blest sacramental Karan. (*Offers the brandy.*)

*Nares Babu.—*I fetch three cups.

*Raghu Pundit.—*What! Cups! There is no caste in the drinking of Karan, Nares Babu! No caste or creed in Karan, blest by the sight of the goddess! As before birth, so after death, so in the worship of the greatest Mother, there is no caste of creed. Ah, drink from the jug!

*Both.—*Aye, aye, Master!

*Raghu Pundit.—*There is no death, sons. Casting off the old garments and taking on the new. So grieve not, mourn not, shed not a drop of tear! Drink. (*The funeral cry is heard again—louder.*)

*Nares Babu.—*There goes another! another!

*Dina Nath.—*Over five hundred so far! Oh, Master!

*Raghu Pundit.—*Fear not, for the almighty mother laughs at death! She dances in ruins! She comes and takes all that are dear and near to us lest we forget her might! Drink—

*Enter PRASANNA MUNDAL weeping.—*My only son! The pupils of my eyes are gone! I am blind! I can not see this hideousness any more! The world has become a morgue!

*Raghu Pundit.—*For Maha Kali to dance upon, Mundal! To dance the dance of death. For the mother loves to dance on the corpse of the mortals and ruins of their dear possessions. Sit and drink, sit and drink her Karan, Mundal, for there is no death! Drink. (*The funeral cry is heard again.*) One more goes her way, Mundal! This is a world of illusion! She takes your son. She takes my brother. She takes whoever is dear to us. Sit, be calm, think and drink.

*Nares Babu.—*Shall we drink, your holiness?

*Raghu Pundit.—*Yes, Yes! I forgot! Drink. Let us all

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3. Holy Brandy

4. The end of the universe. When the earth will be filled with sin, the goddess Kali shall destroy it with her furies.

drink, children, for it is the all-forgetting Karan of the Mother that make us realize that we are but phantoms, the ghosts of what we are not. It makes us forget and gives us glimpses of oblivion. Let us drink.

*Nares Babu* (*Taking the jug and offering to RAGHU PUNDIT*).—Our lord first.—

*Raghu Pundit* (*Drinking*).—The nectar of Kali—(*passes over*).  
(*Every one drinks heartily*.)

*Raghu Pundit*.—Prepare some Hashish, Nares! Prepare some good Hashish. These are evil days.

*Nares Babu*.—Aye; aye, Master! (*CALIS HARI MATI, the maid*.) Hari Mati! Hari Mati! (*Appear HARI MATI weeping*.)

*Hari Mati*.—Master! The end is near!

*Nares Babu*.—The end! The end!

*Raghu Pundit*.—The end? Who is it? Where is it?

*Nares Babu*.—My poor aunt! Aunt Lasmi!

*All*.—Aunt Lasmi!

*Nares Babu*.—Peace! The wish of Kali!

*The maid*.—She speaks no more! She no more complains of pain!

*Raghu Pundit*.—She no more complains of pain!

*All*.—She no more complains of pain. (*The funeral cry is heard very near*.)

*Raghu Pundit*.—Thy glory, O almighty Mother! The way is long and the souls are weary.

*All*.—O Kali! O Maha Kali!

*The Maid* (*Staggering*).—I feel ill myself!

*Rames Babu*.—What! You too!

*The Maid*.—It seems, Master, some one is calling far away—and I can only hear a faint echoe!

*Raghu Pundit*.—Rames, you go with her and prepare the Hashish.

*The Maid*.—Master, I can hardly walk.

*Rames Babu*.—Perhaps you take a sip of Maha Kali's Karan.

*All*.—Yes, yes, take a sip and you shall feel fine.

*The Maid*.—No, no, it is for men. I have no strength to talk; I am so feeble. I hear some one calling me. It can not be Aunt Lasmi; yet, I hear the call.

*Raghu Pundit*.—They say there is but a thin thread of a line between life and death—and those who are very near the other end, they can hear the call.

*Rames*.—Oh, Master!

*Mandal.*—My son! My son!

*Dina Nath.*—Let us drink. Drink and forget as the master has so recommended. (*A faint, half inaudible moan is heard.*)

*Rames Babu.*—Hush! It must be Aunt Lasmi! (*Exits.*)

*Hari Mati (Staggering).*—She is unconscious! I must go to her. (*Exits.*)

*Raghu Pundit.*—Let us all drink. This is a terrible night. The rain pours black through the night long and heavy until all we can hear is but the pouring of rain. All else is quiet—the quiet of death. Through it occasionally they shout the funeral cry—Bala Hari—Hari Bol—to remind us the nothingness of life. A life is a waning here in that room to make us sure that we all have to follow her sooner or later. (*The funeral cry is heard again.*) One more! One more goes the way!

*Dina Nath.*—Let us drink! Let us drink the blessings of Kali.

*Raghu Pundit.*—Yes, yes, drink—as though that will ever stay the hand that will seize you when your time comes.

*Comes Romes Staggering.*—Faint breath oozes out and one can hardly feel it. Her eyes are cloudy, muddy and one can hardly tell from them whether she has been suffering or not. But her hands are getting cold, cold as snow. Yet, there is a vague smile on her lips. She can not recognize me—oh—

*Raghu Pundit.*—On a strange journey like this one has hardly time to take notice of the commonplace things.

*Dina Nath.*—Let us drink and forget. (*Drinks.*)

*Mundal.*—Forget? The horrors of the Maha-Kali! Forget! Son, daughter, brother, sister, wife—forget! Yes, forget—(*A gruesome, weird music, beating of songs, blowing of conch shells, beating of drums is heard.*)

*Raghu Pundit (Throwing up his arms in ecstasy).*—It is midnight. The first goat is sacrificed.

*All.*—Aye, Master!

*Raghu Pundit.*—All hail the Almighty Mother of destruction.

*All.*—Joy, Maha Kali Ki Joy!

*Raghu Pundit.*—I bow to thee O Mother of Pralaya—death, and destruction and ruins!

*Enter TITU MIYA.*—Allah! Allah! In this village of idolators, we Muhamadans can hardly put up any longer—(*Sees RAGHU PUNDIT.*) Bow to thee, O great Pundit.

*Raghu Pundit.*—Blessings, my Son! Have you sent some worship to the Maha-Kali, Son?

*Titu Miya.*—No, Pundit, No. I am a Mohammedam and I intend to keep to my faith.

*Raghu Pundit (Seriously).*—You may be a Mohammedan, Miya, but do not defy Maha Kali! She takes them alive—Hindus or Mohammedans, Buddhists or Christians—she discriminates them not—she takes them all—all alike—

*Titu Miya.*—My wife is ill, O great Pundit, and I came to ask you—

*Raghu Pundit.*—That is all right, Titu Miya—send her a tray of good sweetmeats and a couple of goats. That will not interfere with your religion, son! (*The funeral cry is heard.*) Hear it! There they go—and where they go—there—there, Titu Miya—Hindus, Mohammedans, Buddhists, Christians all are alike. (*The music is heard as before.*)

*Dina Nath.*—One more goat to Maha-Kali! Victory to the almighty mother!

*Raghu Pundit.*—When the Cholera breaks out, Titu Miya, even the great Christian Magistrate Sahib sends his worship to the Kali. He was haughty like you, Titu Miya, until the mighty mother chose his golden haired daughter.

*Tity Miya.*—My wife! My wife!

*Pundit.*—Have some sacramental Karan, Titu Miya, and we shall pass the pipe of Hashish to you and you shall understand. (*The same music at a distance is heard again.*)

*All.*—Kali Ki Joy!

*Titu Miya.*—Forgive me Kali Mayi! I shall send thee a couple of goats—please spare my wife. (*to RAGHU PUNDIT.*) You are a great pundit, Sire, can you not please Kali and save our poor little village.

*Raghu Pundit.*—How can I, Titu Miya? How can I? In the olden days before the Christians invaded our land, we knew the wish of the Mother! (*All gather around to hear the pundit.*) On a time of pestilence like this, Titu Miya, her priest used to be told in a dream that Mother had had thirst for some fortunate one's warm blood; and then the sacrifice.

*All.*—Aye, aye, great Master!

*Raghu Pundit.*—It was wise to sacrifice one man for the lives of his native village. It was in the days when we did not dare defy the wish of the Almighty Mother.

*Titu Miya.*—But, O Master, did'st thou not dream of anyone in the present crisis? (*RAGHU PUNDIT gives a sneering laughter.*) Ha! Ha! Ha!

*All.*—Who was it, O Pundit! Who was it?

*Dina Nath.*—Tell us, O great one.

*Nares Babu.*—Perhaps, Deva-Gram can yet be saved. (*The funeral cry is heard.*)

*Mundal (Shouting).*—Tell us, Master, tell us! There goes another.

*Nares Babu.*—Save Deva-Gram, O divine priest! Save Deva-Gram! (*Falls at his feet.*)

*Titu Miya.*—I am a Mohammedan, O great Pundit, and yet I believe in what thou sayest. (*A procession with triumphant music approaches the house.*)

*Raghu Pundit.*—All of ye—drink Maha Karan! Drain it to the draught, children. (*They all obey.*) Let me have the last drops—(*Drinks and throws away the Jug.*) I am a Kaplik! And you are Hindus and Mohammedans! Maha-Kali does not take the worship of anyone but her devout Kapalik sons.

*All.*—Aye, aye, divine one. (*The procession with music is at the door.*)

*Raghu Pundit.*—All hail, Maha Kali! All stand ad bow inn reverence!

*All obey.*—Enter Mati Lal with three heads of goats on a golden tray. The goat-heads are bathed in a pool of blood. The music stops outside the house.

*Mati Lal (bowing).*—O great pundit! O supreme Kapalik! The first three sacrificed goats are for thee.

*Raghu Pundit.*—Blessings to you all, my sons.

*Mati Lal (Retiring and coming with a jug of Brandy).*—And this jug of Maha-Karan to the supreme worshipper of Maha-Kali.

*Raghu Pundit.*—All of ye drink of the Mother's Maha-Karan! All drink reverently. (*They all obey. Some stagger! The all hail MAHA KALI.*)

*Raghu Pundit.*—Take the rest to the followers of the mother—Mati Lal give them my blessings. (*Exit MATI LAL with the half empty jug of brandy. The music starts and gradually the beating of drums and gongs and blowing of chonk-shells fade away.*)

*Raghu Pundit.*—I will tell you, the Almighty mother's wish, Nares Babu: prepare some Hashish in the name of the Supreme Mother. (*Exit NARES BABU.*)

*Dina Nath.*—Who is the fortunate one, Master? If it be I.

*Prasanna Mandal.*—No, no! It may be the Mother has wished my blood and because I was ignorant of it she has taken my son.



*Titu Miya.*—Can it be that Kali has wished a Mohammedan's blood?

*Raghu Pundit.*—Hush, children, hush—I will reveal when the time comes.

*Dina Nath.*—Oh—! It must be Nares Babu.

*Raghu Pundit.*—Make no guesses! She desires the blood of the most pious, the most virtuous.

*All.*—Then it is not we? Who can it be. (*Enter RAMES BABU with a pipe of hashish already prepared and lit:*)

*Rames Babu (To PUNDIT).*—Sanctify, O Master! My aunt's breath runs low. She is beyond pain! Hari Mati sits by her waiting for the end.

*Raghu Pundit (Sanctifying and smoking the pipe and passing it to others.)* The wish of the Almighty goddess! It is her wish.

*Dina Nath.*—But thou can't stay the hand of fate, O Master!

*Titu Miya.*—Who is the fortunate one, O Pundit? (*They all smoke the pipe of Hashish, shake their heads and look stuporous.*)

*Raghu Pundit.*—I dreamt that Deva-Gram was but a ruins of yesterday upon which the ghosts and demons of the black mother were dancing—laughing—laughing the horrifying laugh Mohafa Kali.

*Rames Babu.*—It cannot be, O sage! Thou must save Deva-Gram! Thou must save us. (*The funeral cry is heard and instantly break the music of drums and gongs, etc.*)

*Titu Miya.*—Save us from the wrath of Kali—black Kali.

*Raghu Pundit.*—I dreamt that the Mother was thirsty—thirsty for the blood of the most pious one, the most virtuous one, the most fortunate one.

*Rames Babu.*—It cannot be I! I have known many sins of life.

*Enter Hari Mati staggering.*—Her hands are cold, cold and stiff, yet her eyes are as beautiful as they were when she was but a child.

*Rames Babu.*—My aunt! My aunt! O Pundit she is no more—(*Rushes out. HARI MATI follows.*)

*Pundit.*—Weep not. There is no death. Where they go, there—there is no cause for tears, for there is no pain.

*Titu Miya.*—For God's sake, Pundit, we must stop this. We must give the coveted one to Kali or she will eat us alive.

*Pundit.*—So shall we, Titu—so shall we! But let her rest a while.

*Dina Nath.*—She? Who? You mean—you mean.

*Mundal.*—Oh, God, no! Not she! And—

*Titu Miya.*—But she is dead! She is a woman! I thought Kali always wanted the blood of a man and goat.

*Pundit.*—The blood of the most pious, the most virtuous, the most fortunate.

*Dina Nath.*—But she lies dead.

*Pundit.*—Hush! There was no death, I said!

*Enter Rames Babu.*—It's all over, O Pundit—oh—(*weeps.*)

*Pundit.*—Weep not. (*Louder*) For I have told you a thousand times there is no death! A Kaplik, the true son of Maha-Kali knows no death.

*Rames Babu.*—What canst thou mean, O greatest of the Sages?

*Pundit.*—I mean what I say. (*Louder.*) I shall show you all there is no death! I shall, yea, I will bring her back to life. (*All of them prostrating before PUNDIT.*) Oh—! O Lord of the lords! O God on earth—

*Titu Miya (Gathering himself).*—O Allah! He will show us a ghost! Toba!<sup>5</sup> Toba! I must go home.

*Pundit.*—Coward! Do not run away from truth! There is no death, I say. I will presently bring her back to life—to life, I say—because—because—the almighty mother of the Universe hath thirsted her blood. (*RAMES BABU shrieks.*)

*Rames Babu.*—Not she, O Pundit! Not she.

*Pundit.*—Yes, she. None but she. The most pious, the most virtuous, the Virgin, the most fortunate.

*Dina Nath.*—Oh, Pundit! This will be but the horrible ceremony of the Kapalik.

*Pundit.*—Rames Babu! go, prepare one sheer<sup>6</sup> of your Hashish and let us all drink it, first; then prepare a great Hom-fire<sup>7</sup> yonder that barn there. Now hurry. It is past midnight. In a while it will strike the darkest hour of the Amabasya-Night,<sup>8</sup> the blackest night.

*Dina Nath (Nodding to TITU MIYA).*—If that be the wish of Maha Kali.

5. A cry of Loath

6. Two pounds.

7. Holy fire of sandal wood.

8. Darkest—new moon night

*Titu Miya (Nodding and to DINAH NATH and MUNDAL).—*Well, it can not harm her much—she is dead.

*Rames Babu.—*Please, Master! Do not ask me that—*(The music for the sacrifice of the goats breaks at a distance.)*

*Pundit.—*All hail Maha Kali! The hour approacheth!*(The music stops. The funeral cry is heard.)*

*Rames Babu.—*One more goes the way! One more! One more! Until the entire village is but a cremation field!

*Pundit.—*Bring the Hashish, Rames Babu. *(RAMES BABU looks foolish and retires, HARI MATI comes out staggering.)*

*Hari Mati (To PUNDIT).—*Let me touch thy feet, my Lord!*(All rush to aid her.)*

*Pundit.—*And you, too, my child.

*Hari Mati (To PUNDIT).—*Send the great mother some worship in my name—Bless me, sire—give me the dust of thy feet—say the Mantram.<sup>9</sup> *(PUNDIT chants from GITA. HARI MATI collapses, then dies.)*

*Dina.—*O, horrible Goddess!

*Mandal.—*I think I also feel ill.

*Titu Miya.—*I think I feel like vomiting. *(The funeral cry.)*  
*(Enter RAMES BABU with a jug of Hasis. Sees the corpse of HARI MATI.)*

*Rames Babu.—*Oh, God! Our faithful Hari Mati too! O God! Oh—oh—

*Pundit.—*Weep not, fool! The wish of the great Mother. Take her in the barn. Place her there. And mean while all drink the Hashish—The hour cometh. *(RAMES takes out the corpse of HARI MATI.)*

*Dina Nath.—*I feel like vomiting.

*Pundit.—*Keep quiet, fools. You will be gone unless you take refuge in the faith of the great mother. All hail Maha Kali.

*All.—*Maha Kali Ki Joy! Maha Kali Ki Joy! *(All but PUNDIT shout repeatedly.)*

*Titu Miya.—*My stomach is upset. My head is dizzy.

*Pundit.—*Drink Maha Kali's Hashish. Drink it and pray to her. *(TITU MIYA drinks while mumbling the name of KALI between his lips. He passes the jug to others, others do the same. Then they start to laugh, one after another, foolishly, meaninglessly.)*

*Pundit (Drinking).—*There is no death, ye fools.

*Dina Nath (Laughing).—*There is no death—Ho! Ho! no death! Ho! ho!

9. Prayer.

*Titu Miya (Laughing).*—No death! Ah, allah! No death—hi—hi—hi—

*Mundal (Laughing).*—Had I had brought the corpse of my son, Pundit would have revived him. I was a fool! A fool! hi—hi—hi—(*Enter RAMES, and looks at everyone suprisingly.*)

*Rames.*—My poor aunt lies dead there! My faithful maid lies dead there! And you fools laugh.

*Mundal.*—There is no death—Hi—Hi—my son did not die—he went to live real—real life—you fool—Hi—Hi—Hi.

*Pundit (Sternly to RAMES BABU).*—Is the Hom-fire lit?

*Rames Babu (Trembling).*—Yes, Sire!

*Pundit.*—Have you got the bael leaves, the durba grass, the red sandal, and a white cloth ready.

*Rames Babu.*—All ready, Sire.

*Pundit.*—Then sit with the rest of the fools and wait until I call. I go for the worship. (*Drinks HASHISH and retires.*) (*RAMES BABU sits and drinks heavily.*)

*Rames Babu.*—Maybe he is right! Maybe there is no death.

*All (Laughing loud).*—Ho! Ho! Ho! There is no death! No death! Ho! Ho! Hi! Hi! Hi!—(*A swishing then crackling noise of fire is heard.*)

*Rames Babu.*—The fire! The Moha-hom fire of Maha Kali burns! Hear it! Hear it.

*All.*—All hail Kali.

*Rames Babu.*—Silence! Hear it! Hear it! (*Loud chantings are heard.*)

*Rames Babu (Drinking again).*—It may be! Who knows! Who knows! (*The fire roars and lights the stage!*)

*Rames Babu (Now laughing).*—Ho! Ho! Ho! I am a fool! Of course there is death! No death! (*The funeral cry is heard.*) You, fool, you are going to live henceforth. There, where you are going—there is no pain, no fever, no death—the great land of Maha-Kali.

*Enter RAGHU PUNDIT in a scarlet robe. The caste-mark of VERMILLION on his forehead and arms is seen. Blood drips from his hand. As he stands and opens the curtain, a white figure by a great fire is seen hazily at a distance.*

*Pundit (Pointing to the fire).*—By the fire of Kali—Behold.

*All (Shrieking).*—Aunt Maya! Aunt Maya! God! She has come back to life.

*Ramesh (About to rush).*—I must see her, touch her, speak to her.

*Pundit (Standing in his way).*—You can not, fool.

*Rames Babu.*—Why not? Why can I not speak to my aunt?

*Pundit.*—Because, she is no longer your aunt. (*Closes the vision.*) Now, you all wait and I shall bring you the Mahaporasad<sup>10</sup> of Kali for your feast. (*exits.*)

*Titu Miya.*—The feast! He speaks of feast! Ho! Ho!

*Mundal.*—Surely! We shall eat the Maha-porasad!

*Dina Nath.*—I am no longer, ill! See—see—I am hungry.

*Rames Babu.*—I saw her—yet, I did not see her! yet—yet.

*Titu Maya (Drinking).*—Here, Rames Babu, drink. There is no death—didn't you see.

*Rames Babu (Drinking heavily).*—I did! By god, I saw her—(*In hysterical laughter.*) Ho! Ho! Ho! Hi! Hi! Hi! There is no death! No death! (*Looking at himself.*) See! I die no more! I suffer no more! For I have seen! I have seen! I have seen with my own eyes! There is no death! Maha Kali is great! Hashish is great! Our great Pundit is great! (*Enter Pundit with a large portion of half roasted meat and a dagger. Sets before all and eats with them.*)

*Pundit.*—All share in the Maha—prasad of Kali. (*The PUNDIT drinks and eats and laughs.*) *All eat and laugh hysterically.*

*Titu Maya.*—This goat tastes good.

*Dina Nath.*—No, it is not a he goat. The meat is tough.

*Mundal.*—We could have relished it in curry.

*Rames Babu (Laughing and picking up a piece.)* Ha! Ha! Ha! How foolish!

*Titu Miya.*—What is foolish! It tastes good!

*Mundal (Picking up a piece.)*—This piece looks funny! Almost like a human figure! (*All laugh loud.*)

*Pundit.*—All hail, Maha Kali!

*All.*—Maha Kali Ki Joy! Maha Kali Ki Joy!

*Rames Babu (Brushing aside a piece).*—Pardon for my foolish thoughts! That piece looked so much like my aunt's little finger. (*The funeral cry is heard.*)

*All.*—There is no death. No death!

*Pundit.*—Rames Babu! Fetch us some salt. This meat needs some salt.

*All.*—Yes, Yes! Let us have some more salt! (*The music for the sacrifice of goats is heard!*)

10. The food Blest by a deity by partaking of it.

*Pundit.*—The wish of Maha Kali! (RAMES BABU goes out for salt and comes out running. He gives a shriek:)

*Rames Babu (Shrieks).*—My Aunt—Oh, God—

*Pundit (Commanding).*—Sit down and eat, for there is no death! (*All laughing.*) There is no death! Ho! Ho! Ho! Hi! Hi! Hi!

*Pundit.*—Put some salt in the meat. It will taste better. (RAMES stands petrified.)

CURTAIN

## THE OX

BY GIOSUE CARDUCCI

*Translated by William A. Drake*

I love thee, pious ox; a sentiment  
 Calming, of strength and peace thou givest my heart.  
 O, thou art solemn, like a monument  
 That watchest the wide, fertile fields apart!

Or in the yoke, thou meekly bearest thy load,  
 In man's quick toil to lend thine ardors wise;  
 Submissive still, on lashing oath and goad  
 Turnest mute entreaty of thy patient eyes.

From thy broad nostrils, black and moist, arise  
 The odors of thy breath; and, like soft hymns,  
 Dies on the tranquil air thy lowing's strain.

In the grave sweetness of thine emerald eyes,  
 So large and calm, there in reflection swims  
 All the divine, green silence of the plain.

# IN THE GARDEN

ESTHER MATSON

Perennial matter for astonishment is it how Shakespeare impressed himself on the garden! Whether our particular garden be large or little, whether it be formal or informal, be well or ill-considered, it is bound willy-nilly, with some of its colors, scents or flower-names to bring before us certain pictures from the plays of the Gentle Will.

Who, for instance can smell rosemary without seeing Ophelia and hearing her murmured, "That's for remembrance?" Who can look at the piquant little faces of pansies without being reminded that they are "for thoughts?" Or at carnations without confessing them the "fairest flowers o' the season" each one a perfect "pink of courtesy."

Even the herb bed is redolent of "Sweet Master Shakespeare." The rus is an "herb of grace o' Sundays." Fennel is the emblem of flattery. Sweet-marjoram is the heroine "of the salad." Indeed, "Doth not Rosemary and Romeo begin both with a letter"! Yes,

. . . . mickle is the powerful grace that lies  
In herbs, plants, stones . . . . .

These allusions are like the musical overtones on an organ and by them is our inheritance of garden-love infinitely enriched. More than this, through Shakespeare as a medium, if you will, we are carried back into the atmosphere of garden associations more antiquated even than those of his own Elizabethan era; through him as medium we are initiated into folk and fairy lore that harks far back in the dim days of our race history. Spellbound by his magic we seem to be visualizing for ourselves Queen Mab, Titania, Oberon and Puck, and even that quintessence of sprite-liness, Ariel. Almost we are persuaded,—even we of this sophisticated age—to confess we do believe in those fairies which, as Sidney Lanier pointed out, the dramatist contrived to put "in every flower-bell."

On the other hand it is astonishing what an amount of practical lore this wizard had. Never did he hesitate—not he—to call a spade a spade nor to deny the need of much use of it from

the days of Adam (before whom there were no "no ancient gentlemen") down to date. Nor did he ever belittle the importance of weeding and pruning in a garden.

Small herbs have grace,  
Great weeds do grow apace.

That from Richard Third. This from Hamlet:

How weary, stale, flat, and unprofitable  
Seem to me all the uses of this world;  
Eye on it, oh fye! 'Tis an unweeded garden  
That grows to seed: things rank and gross in nature  
Possess it merely.

As for pruning listen to the complaint against King Richard Second.

O, what pity is it,  
That he had not so trimm'd and dress'd his land  
As we this garden. . . .  
. . . . All superfluous branches  
We lop away, that bearing boughs may live."

Would this surprise us as a clipping from one of our U. S. Agricultural Bulltins?

For a certain sweet reasonableness and sense of proportion which he had we might do well to imitate this sixteenth century gardener.

Says he:

At Christmas I no more desire a rose  
Than wish a snow in May's new-fangled shows;  
But like of each thing that in season grows.

An eye for Situation too, was his as we see in King Henry Fourth, Part Two. Here Bardolph describes the "plucking down of a kingdom" and setting another up as if it were the mere building of a country estate. For that it is quite necessary to . . .  
. . . . survey

The plot, the situation, and the model.

In Macbeth Duncan's comment on Glamis is "This Castle hath a pleasant seat." Yes, we suspect our dramatist of having had both an inclination and a talent for that which today we glibly term the Art of Landscape Gardening. He knew well the value of trim borders, of well-kept hedges and even of how the effectiveness of a pleasance may be heightened if it is "circummur'd with brick." He also liked "The quaint mazes in the wanton green" and fantastical "knotted" or patterned gardens.

He had preferences about paths. Some he liked to have straight—"Forthrights" they were aptly named in that day. Others he would have winding mysteriously, and to be called



“meanders.” Wise was he also as to the way flowers must be cut if one would have them keep well. Positive is his rule:

While’s yet the dew’s on ground,  
Gather these flowers.

And to see them at their best one must see the “roses newly washed with dew.”

Preferences also in the matter of color. Indeed in the Shakespeare garden-pageant those conspicuous characteristics of the Elizabethan age, love of heavy scents, love of primitive colors and of strong color contrasts, and the fondness for the splendor of gold of silver, and of tinsel,—all these are revealed with a vividness. The spring is “the sweet o’ the year.” April is the “proud-pied” or many-colored. Shakespeare relished the “daisies-pied” beloved of Chaucer, and he delighted also in “streaked gillivors” and in “freckled” cowslips. He revelled in the contrast made by the

Crimson drops

I’ the bottom of a cowslip,

in the contrast of peonies and lilies growing side by side, in the intense complementary harmony of purple violets and dazzling marigolds. He mentioned roses so many times that it would be a task to count them all. His ardor for the “damasked” red and white Rose of York and Lancaster was patriotic as well as sensuous. Victorious Richmond proclaims, “We will unite the white rose and the red,” while in the Sonnets.

The Roses fearfully in thorns did stand

One blushing shame, another white despair,

A third, nor red, nor white had stol’n of both

To “paint the lily” and “throw a perfume on the violet” as our player-man himself put it, he would sometimes add the lustre of jewels and precious metals to the flowers. Sometimes his “lady-smocks” are “all silver-white.” Again his

Winking Mary-buds begin

To ope their golden eyes.

The “cowslips tall” (variegated spring flowers, mark you) are the pensioners of the Fairy Queen, wherefore

In their gold coats spots you see

Those be rubies, fairy favors . . . .

And the reason Puck must “go seek some dew-drops” is because in every one of those cowslip’s ears he has been ordered to “hang a pearl.”

Yes, there is no doubting it,—none of our gardens today would be the same had not one William Shakespeare loved a garden in that Elizabethan yesterday. True, he took his stage plots from

many sources, molding them by force of genius into new and stupendous creations,—but his garden-plots, somehow as we read him we feel he must have taken *them* from nothing less than downright personal experience. All of his flowers seem to be, as the quaint old English phrase goes, “loved-up posies.” Small wonder then that they still blow and give out fragrance, whether met in his plays or in our own or our friends’ gardens.

## MORNING SONG

BY GIOSUE CARDUCCI

*Translated by William A. Drake*

The sun knocks at thy window: ‘Lovely maiden,  
He cries, ‘O come ye now, for love is waking!  
I bring thee violets with desire soft laden,  
And hymns that roses to thy grace are making.  
And from my splendid realm their faith to pay  
Thy servitors I bring, April and May;  
And the young year, that stays, as is youth’s duty,  
To love the flower of thy serene young beauty.’

The wind knocks at thy window: ‘Farand long,  
He sighs, ‘I’ve fared o’er mountain and o’er plain;  
Yet on the earth today there is one song,  
Among the living and the dead one strain.  
High in their verdant boughs the young birds sing,  
“Now let us love, love, love, for it is Spring!”  
And from their blossoming graves the dead are sighing,  
“Ay, love ye, love, love, love, for time is flying!”

My thought knocks at thy heart, which is a garden  
All gay in bloom, and asks: ‘May I rest there?  
I am a traveler old and sad, dear warden,  
And very weary, and oppressed with care,  
I would repose among those peaceful flowers,  
Dreaming of bliss that never has been ours:  
In that most blessed place would I repose,  
Dreaming of bliss no future may disclose.’

# PETER GINK

BY ARTHUR H. NETHERCOT

THE LITERARY RADICAL  
THE POLITICAL RADICAL  
THE PAINTING RADICAL  
THE HEAD OF THE PICKLED HERRING CLUB  
THE WOMAN IN GREEN  
THE STRANGER  
THE WOMAN IN A TURBAN  
THE 'JAZZ' GIRL  
OTHER MEMBERS OF THE CLUB

*The main room of the Pickled Herring Club, seen from the side, is long and narrow—having been made over, in fact, from the stable which the premises of the Club once formed. The impecunious condition of the members, and the austere glamour of self-denial in all the luxuries of advanced art and free-thinking explain the quarters of the society, now becoming famous—or notorious—through the heavily humorous gibes of the local press.*

*The bare wooden walls of the room are poorly put together, but are almost covered with greatly sprawling paintings, unframed and crudely imitative in their kaleidoscopic colors of Manet, Matisse, Picasse or whoever is the latest in Impressionist, Futurist, Cubist or Ovalist art. As nearly as one can make out, these pictures seem to have been done mostly by painters who were obsessed by women . . . in all shapes and forms . . . On the back wall is a bulletin board, with some gaudy placards. At the left is a small platform, or stage, which projects far enough when the curtain is down (as it now is; it has been designed by an imitator of Norman Bel Geddes) to give room for the presence of a table and chair. On each side of this stage is standing a small Chinese idol—hideous, but incongruous nevertheless.*

*There are wooden benches ranged along the walls, and folding chairs are scattered about the room just as they have been left from the more or less regular order of the last performance. Toward the right end of the room is a large iron stove, about which the newcomers always congregate for a moment or two after they enter.*

*For an instant before the curtain rises, a piano is heard playing a vaguely familiar tune. It is 'jazz' music, and yet it recalls something—one impatiently dismisses the matter from one's head, but the question keeps coming back intrusively as the piano is heard playing the piece intermittently, mixed with other jazz music, during the action. The sounds themselves evidently emanate from a smaller room which opens off at the right rear, not far from the stove. The main entrance is also near the stove, in the right wall, being flanked by the only windows in the room—two of them, with tattered shades, also disguised under splashy daubings and drawn tightly. The room is lighted fairly well by oil-lamps, hung in brackets about the wall and provided with large, spotted reflectors. The Pickle boast of their primitiveness.*

THE LITERARY RADICAL, THE POLITICAL RADICAL, and THE PAINTING RADICAL are alone in the room. They have drawn their chairs together not far from the stove, and are in the midst of a hot discussion.

*Lit. Rad. (Short, squat, with a trace of the Italian in his swarthy complexion and in his gesticulations).—Suppression! That's what we're all suffering from! For years we've suppressed ourselves, and we still expected to produce great art. Fools! Yes, and I was once one of them myself. (He addresses whatever Gods there be) Mea culpa, mea maxima culpa! I suppressed my own thoughts and desires—smothered them—strangled them! And what I did allow myself to produce—yes, I suppressed it too, by just as sure a method—in the strait jackets of sonnets, triolets, and quatrains. Sup—!*

*He is about to continue his invective, but the POLITICAL RADICAL has become impatient waiting for his chance.*

*Pol. Rad. (Interrupting. He is tall and rather cadaverous; very harmless-looking and dreamy—until he speaks).—Suppression! And they think the country will never boil over and burst the kettle! (He goes metaphor-mad.) Festering sores, the capitalist newspapers call us! Well, any doctor would tell them that lancing is the remedy. Sickly, blanched weeds, they say, grown in damp cellars. But we grow, they see that. And they are afraid to give us the light because we may grow faster and stronger than them. (Sic.) Suppression! The—! (He is about to explode with an epithet which would probably prove rather shocking to a mixed audience, but the PAINTING RADICAL seizes his chance.)*

*P. Rad. (He looks to be the kind who have done the wall decorations of the room: a bit sleek, a bit glutinous, with sensuous*

*lips and fingers:)* No subject is bad enough to be suppressed! What is evil anyway? The preachers and moralists contradict themselves. What sort of a God is it who gives his 'children' (*heavily sarcastic*) the weapons—toys, rather—by which they destroy themselves? The French are the only people who look at life without glasses. Here is man, they say—look at him! Here is woman—a woman—look at her! (*He shoots a finger out at one of the pictures—an especially pornographic one, if the observer is able to appreciate its technic.*) Be yourself! No more suppression!

*Lit. Rad.*—Right you are, Caliban! And don't forget the societies. Societies for the Prevention of Vice—of Virtue, they'd better call them! And this latest one—a Society for the Suppression of Good Literature, I'd christen it. What poet or author now will dare to show his soul? *They* don't want to know what his soul is like, and so other people can't know either. They're hypocrites—Scribes and Pharisees—afraid to look in the mirror, and see their reflection. Take *Jurgen* for instance.

*P. Rad. (Quickly).*—Ah, *Jurgen*! There's a book for you. The greatest American production of the century! And for pure, artistic delicacy of touch—why, the man must be a painter! And clever, witty—you'll understand me when I say I couldn't lay the book down until morning.

*Lit. Rad. (A bit dryly).*—Yes. His—er—phallic symbolism probably would appeal to you.

*Pol. Rad. (Out of his depth).*—Yes, just your type. A good phrase!

*P. RAD* *glances at them both, but before anything can happen, the door opens, and the HEAD OF THE PICKLERS enters, shaking a little snow from his shoulders. As he warms himself at the stove and the conversation continues, the same half-familiar strain of music comes from the other room—reminding one of a woman who has seen better days.*

*H. P. (He is big, fat, vulgar, but his money is largely responsible for the continued existence of the Club. His grammar is shaky, his enunciation rather thick, but his laughter sincere. Sometimes it is hard to tell whether he is laughing at himself, or with his followers. He often says that he wouldn't know a tendency in art or literature if he met one on the street).*—Well, comrades, what's th' good news? Not much stirrin' yet, I suppose.

*Pol. Rad.*—Nor won't be neither, probably, with no program

on. No outsiders anyway—sensation-mongers, all of 'em. Well, we'll give 'em what they're looking for, won't we?

*H. P.*—They got an eyeful the night before last, I'll say—and an earful, too. That little play of Saclotti's was the—the—nee plus ultra. No suppression there.

*Lit. Rad.*—Saclotti's greatest asset is his frankness—he's as candid as Ibsen must have seemed to his first audiences. A middle-aged Victorian female sitting near me called it Saclotti's lack of modesty, his lack of respect for religion, his lack of good taste, his lack of a moral sense, his lack of—well, he lacked everything a dramatist should have, according to her. She thought she was being herself, but I doubt it. I *know* he was being *himself*.

*H. P.*—Well, what I know is that I got a note from the Commissioner today, in which he accused us of being immoral—and not having enough fire escapes!

*P. Rad.*—Not really? Isn't the ingenuousness of the old thing delightful? I really must paint his picture some day.

*Pol. Rad.*—Yes, on the wall of your cell, likely.

*Lit. Rad.*—Well, what are you going to do? Let him close the place?

*H. P.*—Close? (*Laughs.*) Him? Naw, he's just givin' us free advertizin'!

*Pol. Rad.*—That reminds me. How about that divorce suit of yours the papers are talking about? Good advertizing for the cause too, but where in hell did *you* ever get a wife? Never told us about it.

*H. P.*—Thought marryin' was against my principles, didn't you? Well, it is. That's why I'm bustin' my bonds, like a little caterpillar turnin' into a butterfly. (*He enjoys his own figure of speech.*) But it wasn't—ten years ago. That's how she got me. Neither of us never said anything about it, even then, tho. Thought it was nobody's business but ours. Now we don't approve of each other no more, and so we agreed to disagree. Savve? We're both bein' ourselves, and not dividin' up with nobody else.

*Lit. Rad.*—Perfectly proper, and the most moral thing you could do—Er—you're sure there's nobody else?

*H. P.* (*Grinning.*)—What's that? You think—?

*The door opens, and the WOMAN IN GREEN enters in a flurry snow. There is something outre, troll-ish, in her bearing and costume, and yet upon analysis they seem as conventional as could*

*well be expected in her environment and surroundings. She seems very welcome. Again the music is heard.*

*W. G.*—Hello, everybody!

*H. P.* (*Advances toward her familiarly, with a slight softening of his voice*).—Well, Dovrita! Couldn't keep you away, eh? Glad you came—help live up the conversation. Come over and warm up. (*He goes to the stove with her.*)

*Lit. Rad.* (*Sardonically, as if his judgment were confirmed*).—Humph!

*A slight pause.*

*P. Rad.*—Hear the news, Dovrita? Commissioner wrote threatening letter account of Saclotti's play?

*W. G.*—What! Why, the old—the old—Christian!

*H. P.*—Good! That's just what he is. That's why Saclotti's play was so shocking to his tender soul. Well, it *was* a little er—bold—no denyin' that.

*Pol. Rad.*—What was it? I wasn't here.

*W. G.*—Oh, you missed the best thing we've done here yet. It was practically a monolog, you know. Old drunk comes along the street—tight as they can get, even today—stops in front of a store mirror. Late at night—sees his reflection by arc-light. Thinks it's another man, and starts a conversation. Has just passed a Salvation Army meeting, and inside a minute his drunken brain concludes it's Christ come to upbraid him for his sins. Well, he gives Him what-for in his everyday language. Accuses Him of all sorts of crimes—curses Him—well, it really was rather breath taking for a moment even for me. Then he becomes angry when the Figure won't answer, and smashes the glass with a stone.

*Lit. Rad.*—So you see he'd really been talking to himself all the time. There's an idea there. Christ himself only a reflection of this old piece of drunken human flotsam.

*Pol. Rad.*—Well, the drunk did better to recognize Him than most people would today if He returned, didn't he? There's lots of dead and gone heroes we swear by, who we wouldn't recognize if they came among us today.

*The door again opens, and the STRANGER enters. The music is heard once more. He is covered with a long, old-fashioned cloak and a broad-brimmed, movie-villain hat. When he removes these he reveals himself to be an old man in his sixties, his blond hair not yet entirely gone grey, and his figure still straight but spare. His*

face is creased with wrinkles, which still betray the traces of an intense egotism. His clothes are of an old-fashioned cut. When he speaks, a slight Scandinavian accent is just noticeable.

No one pays any attention to him at first, except for a glance of non-recognition. He goes slowly to the stove, warming his hands and throwing back his cloak. Two or three other PICKLERS, male and female, drift in during the ensuing conversation, but arouse no other interest than a nod. The STRANGER, altho plainly interested in all that goes on, remains aloof, and therefore prominent.

H. P.—Then to be ourselves, we must overthrow everything—reverse everything—if it doesn't seem true to us.

W. G.—Black has seemed white, and ugly has seemed fair too long in this world.

The STRANGER starts at this speech, as if hearing something he has been acquainted with before, and moves nearer to the group, one or two of whom look up at him for an instant and then turn again to the discussion.

P. H.—Well put. That explains our principles—reform in government, reform in wealth, reform in art, reform in divorce—(He exchanges a quick look with the WOMAN IN GREEN. For an instant the STRANGER seems about to speak, but thinks better of his intention.)

W. G.—And more than that. Not only must we be ourselves, but we must nourish our individualism. For anyone to be really great, he must be enough—sufficient—to himself. He—

Stranger (Coming forward with his hat in his hand).—I beg your pardon, but would you mind if I joined your extremely intelligent discussion? It interests me greatly because of my own point of view. Indeed, I have wondered if we are entire strangers after all. The young lady (He turns toward the WOMAN IN GREEN) now—has it never been my fortunate chance to meet her before?

W. G. (Crudely disdainful of his old-fashioned gallantry).—I don't believe so. Do you remember where?

Stranger (Slowly and vaguely).—Oh, far from here. Indeed, now I think of it, it could not possibly have been you. (As he speaks, his resonant tones seem to throw a sort of spell over his audience, from whose mystery they try to shake themselves free whenever he ceases. But as the action progresses, the charm becomes stronger and stronger, until the atmosphere of the Pickled Herring Club is replaced by a totally new and foreign one—tense and almost supernatural.) It was long ago—one night—at a court in



the mountains—in my native land—when I was young—like you—But again I beg your pardon for interrupting.

*A Pimpled Member (Aside to his neighbor, but rather audibly).*  
—Cracked, I guess. But harmless. (*There is a general restless movement in the room.*)

*P. Rad.*—I can see this is going to be a pretty dull evening. With this crowd, something ought to be arranged. What say to dancing for us, Dovrita?

*Stranger (Involuntarily).*—Dovr—! (*He stops himself.*)

*W. G. (To STRANGER, a bit sharply).*—That's what they call me. A nick-name—nonsensical, of course. But I've always had it.

*Stranger.*—Yes, yes. Of course, the king, your father—. (*There is an outburst of laughter but the dignity of the STRANGER makes it hush suddenly to an uncomfortable silence.*)

*H. P.*—Well, on with the dance. Where's my banjo? What say, Dovrita? Let joy be unrefined!

*The fore-stage is cleared, and the WOMAN IN GREEN dances a wild, ungraceful sort of dance, to the accompaniment of the Head of the Picklers on the banjo. At its conclusion she leaps suddenly from the flimsy stage and lands in a heap at the feet of the H. P., who awkwardly snatches a kiss, with great applause from the on-lookers.*

*Stranger (Passes his hand over his eyes).*—Strange!—

*Lit. Rad.*—What's that? Didn't you like it?

*Stranger.*—On the contrary, both the dance and the music were utterly charming. It was a recollection I had—of seeing her dance before—a not altogether pleasant memory (*he smiles*)—that's the great contrast with this. It was the night I first heard the subject of your evening's discussion broached, to yourself be enough. I've been testing the advice ever since.

*Lit. Rad. (Humoring him).*—And with what result, may I ask?

*Stranger.*—Ah, that's the question. Unsatisfactory, from all points of view, I should say. The Button-Moulder held—well, but he was wrong.—

*The LITERARY RADICAL turns away with the air of giving up the riddle, so that now the STRANGER stands isolated while the others gradually draw away from him.*

*The WOMAN IN THE TURBAN enters from the interior door, with a couple of companions. Her costume is a bizarre mixture of the oriental with the most modern American, but it seems to fit her. She is particularly beautiful, but the STRANGER perceives her also with a start of uncertain recognition.*

*W. T.*—What's all the noise about? We've been listening to Carmina play some of the latest jazz music. And talk about play—! That girl puts herself into it more than anyone else I know. The music is herself—But what's been happening?

*Pol. Rad.*—Dovrita's been dancing.

*W. T.*—Why didn't you call us?

*Pol. Rad.*—Really forgot you were there, Nitra. Sorry!—

*Stranger* (*Suppressing his exclamation*).—Nitr—!

*All look at him.*

*W. T.*—What's the matter?

*H. P.* (*Answering her indirectly*).—Well, stranger, know her too?

*Stranger.*—No, no. Just a passing resemblance. I've traveled so much, you see. Almost every country in the world, after the end of the slave trade and the Chinese idol business left me independent. (*Notices the idols on the stage, and approaches them.*) Queer thing how businesses will change. The set would have brought in a pretty penny, and furnished occupation for several missionaries. But reform—!

*Pol. Rad.* (*Bolstering up his courage by jovial words*).—First intelligible thing you've said, old man! Reform.—

*W. T.* (*Childishly*).—Bother your reform now! I want to know where he met me.

*Stranger.*—Years ago—I was a Prophet then—.

*The PICKLERS nudge each other and force smiles.*

*Stranger* (*Continues*).—It was on an oasis—in the desert—in Sahara. I was still young, tho not so young as before. And the jewels—opals—.

*W. T.* (*Girlishly*).—I love opals!

*Stranger.*—It couldn't have been you. But I told you I'd get you a soul—you said women didn't have any..

*W. G.* (*Attempting a diversion*).—And what would Nitra do with a soul? She certainly has always insisted she had no use for one!

*Stranger.*—You danced—yes, I was young then—I had lost myself—and hadn't gained the world either.—But you danced—(*His voice dwindles away into a sort of reverie.*)

*H. P.* (*Taking advantage of the opportunity*).—Good idea, ain't it? You danced then, Nitra. Let's see you do it now. You've always had a reputation here, but you'll have to beat it tonight—Up you go. (*He lifts her to the stage.*)

*W. T.* (*Bowing with a laugh to the applause*).—Well, what shall it be?

THE HEAD OF THE PICKLERS *is about to take up his banjo, when again the familiar strain, almost recognized now, bursts loudly from the inner room. It is jazz—jazz with a vengeance—but it has a basis which speaks of better things.*

*W. T.* (*Continues*).—Carmina has answered. Thus, then—

*She dances, as the tune dictates, without restraint, and with a steady, sensuous rhythm—half oriental and half Scandinavian in her movements—sinking down exhausted at the abrupt end of the music. She is thanked by "Bravos" and hand-clapping.*

*But when the crowd looks around for the STRANGER, he has disappeared. A stir of relief goes thru everyone, and all look half-shame-facedly at their neighbors.*

*H. P.*—What sort of a conjuring stunt is this the old bird's pulling? Not very good manners, I'd say, when we're putting on a benefit performance. Queer nut, wasn't he, Nitra?

*W. T.* (*Half-dazed, and still panting*).—I—I don't know. For awhile—I thought—he was—right—while—I was—dancing. I almost—almost—remembered—.

*H. P.*—Oh come now! Don't pull any of that psychic stuff! He was probably just out of an asylum—Nonsense.

*The 'Jazz' Girl enters from the back room.*

*W. G.*—Here's Carmina. Thanks for the music, Carmina. It was great—almost mesmerized Nitra here, when she got dancing to it. Hasn't quite come out of it yet. (*Pats the WOMAN IN THE TURBAN on the shoulder.*) By the way, what was it you played last, Carm'?

*J. G.*—That? Rather catchy, wasn't it? Funny you didn't recognize it, tho. It's rather new; called 'Peter Gink'. Parody of *Amitras Hance* in Grieg's *Peer Gynt* suite, you know. It actually made me go home one night and read Ibsen again. Well, I must toddle home. Night-night, everybody. Be careful of your *selves*! (*She goes.*)

*An expressive silence. Finally—*

*H. P.*—Well, what I want to know is, who's been puttin' up a job on us now?

*Lit. Rad.*—A job? You old Philistine! I wonder.

CURTAIN

# ON TITLES

BY FELIX SPER

Given, the bone of a fossil, boasted the French anatomist, Cuvier, and he could reconstruct the prehistoric monster. Scientific insight can penetrate no deeper. Literature, dealing with less mathematical certainties, offers no parallel of passing from part to whole. To be specific, no one-way road runs from title to theme. None the less, the clairvoyant eye should be able upon seeing the mere title of a novel or essay or poem to glean the color, trend, purport (if any) of a given opus, together with the characteristic genius of the writer.

Perhaps some scholar with a talent for title-mongering might establish a theory as to the evolution of the title. But not mine the task. No system will be attempted; merely a flitting here and there as the whim urgeth.

Recall for a moment such loose-jointed captions as Ben Franklin's *Scheme for a New Alphabet and a Reformed Mode of Spelling with Remarks & Examples Concerning the same, and an Enquiry into its Uses*, or— what may be considered the longest title in the language—*An Essay on the Principle of Population or a View of its Past and Present Effect on Human Happiness, with Enquiry into our Prospects Respecting the Future Removal or Mitigation of the Evils which it Occasions*, by the much-quoted Malthus. Such ponderous inscriptions over the lintel would deter the hardest from entering the edifice. They fail to touch the imagination or quicken the curiosity.

It was sometime during the Victorian period that the title began noticeably to crystallize. *Sartor Resartus* hisses defiance; almost growls. *The Egoist* hints the psychological. *Cloister and the Hearth Vanity Fair, Past and Present* illustrate the tendency toward crispness. Ruskin seems to resist the current. His titles glow with a soft nimbus of poetry, as in *The Seven Lamps of Architecture, The Crown of Wild Olive, Sesame and Lilies*. Today the halo would dim rather than illuminate.

Many a masterpiece announces the pervading note in a resounding title. *Marius the Epicurean* (coddle it on the tongue awhile) flutes airily. It bespeaks the precious temperament.

How beautifully modulated is *The Picture of Dorian Grey*. *Romola* sounds like a long-drawn echo. Had George Eliot named her book after the hero Tito Melema (pronounced in a soft Italianate manner) she would have achieved a hauntingly musical name. Contrariwise, the sensitive ear will detect in *Jude, the Obscure* a harsh collocation portending the futility of the human struggle against the Cosmic Cruelty that pulls the strings.

## II.

Since the opening of the present century, the flow of printer's ink has been torrential. Books have multiplied to the point where the struggle for literary existence has become painfully acute. As a result, the title has been keyed up. It has been obliged to copy the psychology of the advertisement. Only that which pricks the curiosity sharply, wakes the jaded interest of over-fed readers can hope to live. Pep, snap, sting—the trinity of the contemporary scribe—must be flashed in a word or two. The scrupulous craftsman must resort to methods formerly left to noisy pamphleteers and penny-a-liners. Necessity is the mother of the incandescent title.

No less an author than Kipling employs the modern psychology. His titles trip and sing and tease. *Puck of Pook's Hill*, *The Light that Failed*, *Wee Willie Winkie*, *Departmental Ditties*—what an amazing handful; and how unforgettable!

Such rubrics as *An Unsocial Socialist*, *Socialism for Millionaires*, *Tremendous Trifles*, *The Superstition of Divorce* give the instant stamp of the topsy-turvyists, the paradoxiacs as one might call the Shaw-Chestertons. Drum-taps to call the unthinking to attention! The easy chuckle is a friendly invitation to partake of the feast of ideas; reading becomes a painless exercise.

Among recent titles which burn with a soft glow, we rescue: Hudson's *Far Away and Long Ago*, rich in simplicity and breathing tender retrospect; *The Moon and Sixpence* which happily embodies the dreamer's wish; and—a masterpiece of ingenuity perfectly expressive of philosophical humor—*Moonbeams from the Larger Lunacy*.

One need not read *Flappers and Philosophers* to note a new variation on the Adam and Eve theme. *The Cream of the Jest* and *The Cords of Vanity* are rememberable and graceful inventions redolent of courtly gallantry. Reminiscent of Omar is *The Hand of the Potter*—a pregnant title suggesting any study in social pathology. *Black Oxen* is drenched with the nine mysteries.

How shall one explain the psychology of the new title? Briefly, what the current writer aims to put into his title is the spark electric, the smart fillip that will twang a common, human cord. Nine times in ten, the cord winds downward to a buried wish. It is the business of the word to set this underground wish vibrating. Thrice fortunate is he or she who finds the magic syllables!

Returning to our opening thought, we ask: Could you, from the threshold of a title, guess what stretches beyond?

## THE RETURN

BY MAVIS CLARE BARNETT

Was this the hill? And this the rocky shore?  
 And over those old brown roofs was that the sea,  
 Shining and open, that would ever be  
 A wind upon his face and something more  
 Than wind about his heart? Down the long roar  
 Of indrawn tides he heard the cod come in  
 Past the gray northern fjord where there had been  
 Ice in men's beards and ice along the oar.

Now the buffeting sea-wind in his ears  
 Was like an old familiar shouted word  
 Down a dark beach, and now his memory stirred  
 With fishermen's laughter and a sound like tears  
 That somewhere, long ago, a boy had heard  
 And thought he had forgotten in the years . . .

# I DID BUT JEST

BY GODFREY P. SCHMIDT JR.

## CHARACTERS

WANT-WIT, *A clown of a vagrant circus.*

LADY ADELE, *Daughter of the dead noblewoman who lies in state upon a bier in the funeral chamber.*

A MAN-AT-ARMS.

## SCENE

*The funeral chamber, with ADELE'S mother lying in state. Candles give only dim illumination. There is a heavy, almost oppressive stillness, broken every now and then by the sound of the sentry's footsteps in the corridor seen thru the door at back. At one corner is a small casement, leading into the open. This is suddenly pushed open and the clown enters stealthily, with a cloak about him which he constantly holds over his chest. He creeps by the door so as not to be seen by the man-at-arms and then approaches the body on the hearse, or bier.*

*Time, About two o'clock in a night of December, circa 1400.*

*Want-Wit (He goes to bier, gazes on it tenderly, then sighs and speaks.)*

Sleep on, in thine eternal sleep, sweet mother,  
'Tis only I, a very fool, do come  
To pray beside thy hearse and bless thee, . . . if one  
Unblest as I can bless at all . . . for those,  
The kindest words that yet mine ears have heard:  
Thou spok'st and stayed the lash that beat me so,  
And then I heard thee murmur "Poor, poor clown,  
Perhaps he is some mother's only son"  
. . . Yes, some poor mother's only son I am,  
But ah, my mother died when I was born  
They say, and died of hunger in a dungeon  
Cell, because she stole a little bread.  
And so, I never heard a mother's gentle  
Sympathy thru all my life except  
Those words of pity thou didst speak. I was  
An eerie child with eerie ways, and so  
They called me Want-Wit, made me play the fool  
To earn my daily bread, and painted me  
In colors bright, and clothed me in a coat

Of motley, and perforce, they covered up  
 My soul, and straight forgot that I am human.  
 And by some spiteful irony of fate,  
 I, all melancholy and always sad,  
 Was set to make the others laugh, when most  
 I felt like dying . . . . .  
 Upon my wounded heart thy pity poured  
 The only balsam it hath felt in years.  
 Oh! could'st thou know what slaves they of the world  
 Do deem the lot of us poor circus fools  
 Thou'dst know why I have tramped these weary miles  
 In bitter cold, to kiss thy death-cold face  
 In thanks, then dear to pray beside thee and  
 To sing thee one last song

(sings) I slept and I dreamed  
 That men are all happy;  
 I woke and it seemed  
 That men are all sad.  
 But of all I'm the saddest  
 And withal, the maddest,  
 Playing I'm living }  
 When really I'm dead } Repeat

(*He ends in a violent fit of coughing and does not see that the man-at-arms has entered.*)

*Man-at-arms.*—What back again—out, circus carrion!  
 How came you here, at this still hour, to sully a funeral chamber  
 with your painted presence (*he beats him*) there—gross vaga-  
 bond, get thee hence with thy vile shouting!

*Want-Wit* (*tearing away*) No! No! give me but time,  
 ah no! not now—not yet.

*Man-at-Arms.*—How now! . . . . thou witless beast,  
 shall I spot thee on my sword?—hence e'er I beat thee livid with it.

*Want-Wit.*

Great, brawny hulk that you are, well may  
 You brave a wretch so weak as I, from whom  
 Keen hunger, cold and sorrow have sapped all strength  
 Away——(*he is beaten*)——ay, beat and play the tyrant,  
 'tis

The privilege of strength——

*Lady Adèle* (*Entering*).—

Pray, what sacrilege is this, to so  
 Dishonor with such crying out and cruel



Violence, the sacred stillness of  
This place?

*Man-at-arms.*—

Madam, 'tis this churl whom evil conscience and witless head  
have tempted to make merry in so dread a presence.

*Adèle (To her dead mother).*—

Alas! that such a wretch should stir thy peace  
And rob thee of so calm and holy a repose  
Dear mother!

*Want-Wit.*—

Believe it not, for sooner would I wish  
Myself in hell than do that sainted dead  
A wilful harm. I made no merriment  
Within this . . .

*Man-at-Arms (Gagging him).*—

Silence! . . . Past me, unawares he crept; for  
here I found him. Therefore I belabor him to drive him out; such  
stubborn rascals have dull feelings, which sense no language but  
the lash. (*He beats him again.*)

*Adèle.*—

I pray you, beat him not . . . ah see, he is  
So young, and almost pitiful; he cannot  
Purpose evil . . . fool, why came you here?  
(*WANT-WIT does not answer.*)

Unhappy creature, he has fainted!

*Man-at-Arms.*—

Here, this will rouse him (*He kicks him and turns him over  
roughly at which WANT-WIT groans.*)

*Adèle.*—

Be not so cruel! how cold his forehead is!  
He scarcely draws his breath. How could you be  
So cruel? He seemed to crumble in your grasp.  
Go you to the monastery and  
Require hither one of the holy monks.  
This clown seems near to death! . . . How fiercely firm  
He holds his meager cloak about his breast! . . . (*pause*)  
To think that once a mother fondled you!

*Want-Wit (Awakening)* . . . (*Speaks weakly.*)—

Oh! once! . . .

*Adèle.*—

Fear not poor fool. . . why came you here this night?

*Want-Wit.*—

In sooth, I came to thank thy mother for  
 The pity that she showed me long ago,  
 When here before your castle doors, our band  
 Of circus vagrants once did play. Some men  
 At arms began to beat me, which she saw  
 And straight did bid them cease. And well do I  
 Remember, *you* stood at her side while she  
 Protected me and asked me for my name.

*Adèle.*—

And are you that unhappy harlequin  
 Who bears the name of Want-Wit?

*Want-Wit.*—

The same.

*Adèle.*—

And did so slight a deed, this long,  
 Long time, within your memory dwell?

*Want-Wit.*—

Ay, madam,

Always.

*Adèle.*—

And wherefore came you *now* to give your thanks?

*Want-Wit.*—

Because out yonder in the town I heard  
 That she had left this dank morass below,  
 To soar forever in the great serene  
 Above; and so, as soon as I had played  
 My part, I came directly, just to see  
 The empty mansion of her soul, and here  
 To pray beside it. . . . (*Points to door.*) At that entrance  
 while

The sun still made the day I begged admission,  
 But forth they drove me with abuse, and so  
 I hid me in the night and crept thru that  
 Small casement there, and here I came to pray.

*Adèle.*—

To pray?

Can you, do you ever really pray?

*Want-Wit.*—

Ay, madam, often.

*Adèle.*—

Strange! what can you know  
 Of prayer? Who taught you how to pray?

*Want-Wit.*—

A broken Columbine, now long since dead,  
 Upon her death-bed, bid me pray for her.  
 And when I said I knew not how, she taught  
 Me how to speak to Him, the kindly Father  
 And to His Son, the most compassionate Christ!

*Adèle.*—

Such words from such a source! 'Tis wondrous strange:  
 How apt a subject for the Master's words:  
 "Such Faith I have not seen in Israel!"  
 But still,  
 How deep and dark a contrast here there is;  
 Sweet mother, death, the leveller, hath laid thee low,  
 And made thee for a monument to sorrow,  
 But, you, poor fool, here sit you, tho you know  
 It not, a veriest symbol of painted joy  
 And laughter. Lord! This contrast strangely jars!

*Want-Wit.*—

Mistress, would you deem it stranger should  
 I tell you, deep as does this contrast seem,  
 And so irreconcilable, my whole  
 Life long hath been but such a contrast sad,  
 Between my face of painted laughter and  
 My inner self, a soul of sorrow.

*Adèle.*—

Unwonted is thy speech . . . 'tis almost wild! How  
 I ne'er did dream such thoughts could dwell within  
 A clownish head.

*Want-Wit.*—

Did you think that just  
 Because our masks are ever grinning, we  
 Are therefore one wit less a man.

*Adèle.*—

I almost do. You come upon our lives, Sometimes  
 You circus pageants, like colored butterflies  
 In summer's wane, shedding a slender moment's  
 Lustre, as you pass, so soon to be  
 Forgot . . . perhaps, as children think, too soon . . .  
 In the dull oblivion of chill and windy autumn.

*Want-Wit.*—

Ay, just because we come from whence, none knows  
And go whither no one cares, we live upon  
The ragged edge of all mankind and so  
We're deemed less human.

*Adèle.*—

How came you by such thoughts?

*Want-Wit.*—

The greatest Teacher, Sorrow, taught them me.

*Adèle.*—

What can you know of sorrow, so ever gay  
And dull withal, as every clown must be.  
See, this is sorrow, to see my mother here  
Lie dead!

*Want-Wit.*—

Ah! is't not greater sorrow ne'er  
To see so dear a mother,—neither alive  
Nor even dead, except with infant eyes?

*Adèle.*—

What! canst thou care? Nay, thou art wont to caper,  
All-heedless, in the circus ring before  
The noisy crowd, and dance, and sing, and play  
The fool, and let the world go by.

*Want-Wit.*—

The world

Doth pass me by and overlook me wholly:  
I would not let it if I could.

*Adèle.*—

The same

Great world bears thee, bears other men, and them  
It does not overlook.

*Want-Wit.*—

But they have not

Their whole humanity concealed within,  
A circus clown his mask. The world believes  
Them men, because they seem so, being clothed  
As men and not as clowns. But us, the world  
Doth know as underlings too miserable  
For men. The world sees but our outer selves  
Which do belie our souls. Like some deformed  
Unfinished sculptured stones, we're kicked about  
The world's vast studio and walked upon

As rubbish, else we're merely used to be  
 The pedestals for fairer models. . . . .  
     We are all of the same stuff, see you, all of the same  
     stone, but some are carved more fair than we . . .  
 Here lies our tragedy: that in this age  
 Of swords and wars and haughty, belted knights,  
 Men will not recognise that we are but  
 Their fellow-men, fellow human mortals!

*Adèle.*—

Strange clown, your words strike me to admiration.  
 And are there others in your garish bands  
 That hide such secrets in their costumed hearts?

*Want-Wit.*—

Ay, many. For if there be but one, that is  
 Too many.

*Adèle.*—

Yet, in your performances  
 You seem so merry, truly.

*Want-Wit.*—

Ay seem . . . . what worlds

Of sorrow lurk beneath the only "seeming"!  
 Can you not see, that in the transient span  
 In which we please the crowd, we so forget  
 Ourselves and all our care that we can live  
 The parts we play? . . . .  
 But see, there is an aftermath: this crowd,  
 This same applauding crowd, doth often change  
 Into an angry mob . . . grim and hard  
 To please, who use us but as wilful, petted  
 Children do their toys,—until they break them.

*Adèle.*—

But if you so abhor the life you ply,  
 The world is large, go seek to mend your fortune  
 Otherwhere. . . .

*Want-Wit.*—

See this weak body o'mine, this woebegone and haggard,  
 hungered frame . . . to be a warrior I am not able, to be a  
 tradesman, I know not how . . . .

But even if I knew, we are as branded  
 Mountebanks, doomed to exile in this age  
 Of wars and paladins, still followed by  
 Some curse like Cain's, that hounds us always, and

To all this universe proclaims that we  
 Are tumblers, clowns, buffoons, mute Punchinellos  
 And withered Columbines or hapless Harlequins  
 So that e'en from the church's doors they drive  
 Us, us and all mimes with us. Oh, how can we  
 Persuade a world like this, that wills not to  
 Believe, that we are men with the same great minds  
 To think and the same red hearts to bleed!

*Adèle.*—

Thine earnestness doth make thee eloquent!  
 Oh Lord, that I should ever see such light  
 In one I deemed so dark; more likely were  
 It, had I seen a water crystal clear,  
 Within a stagnate fen, than see a clown  
 So nobly melancholy! . . . And yet this dull  
 And idle melancholy cannot bring  
 Thee profit. Have you never heard that men  
 Must play the man to be considered men?

*Want-Wit.*—

If we but try to play the man, the world  
 Doth misconstrue and think us more the fool.

*Adèle.*—

Nay, that cannot be; do thou but one  
 Thing worthy of a man, and all this world,  
 With me, will help thee doff thy cap and bells.

*Want-Wit.*—

Mistress, you are kind and here then let  
 Me try . . . And yet, I need not try, for since  
 I saw thee first at thy sweet mother's side,  
 When that our circus played for soldiers in  
 Your courtyard there . . . I did, and always did  
 Do something worthy of a man. . . .

*Adèle.*—

Why gleam your eyes so? Thy speech doth seem  
 Too passionate; say on, what was't you did?

*Want-Wit (Raving).*—

Since then the world doth greener seem, its buds  
 And flowers all abloom and the sweet high hills  
 And the grassy fields, the virgin air, the clouds,  
 And all the sunset pageantry! . . . they make  
 Me passing glad that I am still alive

In spite of ruthless fortune . . . Oh, on  
This very eve . . .

*Adèle.*—

How madcap runs thy blood

With wild deliriousness and moody madness! . . . .

*Want-Wit.*—

How bright the stars did shine within heaven's sea

Of night, and with their influence did fill

My heart brimful with wondrous poetry. . . .

And the moon, the silver, silent moon, yea all

This fair, stupendous universe hath now

Assumed a loveliness supernal and

Unwonted . . . beauty inexpressible

Because of what I did . . . because I *did*

Do something worthy of a man.

*Adèle.*—

Speak, speak!

Say what you did! Your eyes . . . they glow as if

By sorcery, your very words exhale

A mystic witchcraft like weird things enchanted! . . . .

Why pause you then? Ah, speak, fool, tell me what

You did so worthy of a man? Oh! speak!

*Want-Wit.*—

Hear first this age-old story:

A man there lived who loved a maid with Love

So deep, dispassionate, unselfish that

Most willingly he took his death wound to

Avenge an insult to her name. And such

An one am I, for my love, too, is deep,

Dispassionate, unselfish truly, and

I love a noble woman!

*Adèle.*—

Art thou mad!

*Want-Wit.*—

See, see how your crest has fallen, now you think me mad.

It seems too incompatilbe and most incongruous that such a wretch

as I can love. Ah, see! you do not believe it, you do not believe

that I am a man . . . and yet to love greatly is a touchstone

for real manhood. How can you believe that mine is a great love!

No you cannot! And yet where have I heard: "Greater love

than this no man hath, than that a man lay down his life for his

friends". . . .

*(He opens his cloak and reveals wounded breast.)*

And see, here is my wound, my death: In this  
Warm trickling blood, my life will soon be laid.

*Adèle.—*

Oh heavens!

Was it that man-at-arms?

*Want-Wit.—*

Nay, nay, out there

Upon the highway leading to this place

An ugly beast I met who lied about

My love, and so I fought him but he gave

Me this *(He points to his wound)* . . . . .

he gave me this, yet this is small

When I but think of my great love . . . . .

FOR THEE! . . . FOR THEE! . . .

*Adèle (Screams and slaps his face).—*

Madman, avaunt, out maniac with thine unhallowed presence!  
To jest within this chamber: so foul, insensate, reasonless a jest!

What ho . . . the guard! *(Runs out.)*

*Want-Wit (Laughing distractedly).—*

Ha, ha, a jest, a jest; ay, to live is but a jest; sweet mother, see they will not believe me! But you can understand, for you can see my heart. They say I did but jest . . . I am no man. . . I am not human . . . I do but jest I am. Even this wound's a jest and yet the blood is wet, feel how warm it is! Ha! Ha! it's cold, I did but jest . . . Buffoon I am forever merry Andrew . . . I do but jest? Can jest so bitter be? Great God, what cursed spite doth ever follow me and such as I, that we must always merry Andrews be, before the world . . . merry Andrews soul and body . . . We have no hearts to bleed but only one vast bitter grin, a dire, sardonic grin that's painted on our faces and our souls and make them both a jest. I fought for her, I'm dying for her but in jest . . . this is no blood, ha ha . . . I did but jest, I . . . . .

*(Dies)*

CURTAIN



# WHITHER\*

BY ALICE MARY MATLOCK GRIFFITH

SUSAN, *The young wife*

TOM, *Young University Instructor*

HELEN, *Their friend, a year younger than Susan.*

*A modern library-living room is very meagerly, but nevertheless attractively furnished in browns and tans and cretonnes. There is a settee in the middle with library table near it, on which a potted plant is valiantly blooming. The street door is to the right, and the bedroom door is to the left of stage. SUSAN, a pretty young woman, dressed in plain house dress, enters from bedroom door carrying a gorgeous, highly colored evening dress over her arm and a pair of scissors in her hand. She goes to the table and takes from the drawer a household account book, then sits on settee, alternately snipping open a seam on the dress and consulting the account book.*

Susan.—“Rent—Light—Water—Coal—Groceries—It is no use—There is no one place I can cut any closer. And every thing going up—up—up—up—”

*(Tom, a good-looking young man of the semi-athletic, college type, enters from the bedroom and hears the “up—up—up—”. SUSAN is too absorbed to hear him, and he steps behind her and starts to lift her up, saying.)*

Tom.—“Up—up—up—up—”, are you alone so much that you have commenced talking to yourself, little wife?

Susan.—So you know you neglect me, do you? *(Laughs.)*

Tom.—Goodness knows I would rather be with you, but it is always classes, conference, committees, faculty-meetings, exam papers, quizzes, or something—all day long, and so I must study at night.

Susan.—All right, Mr. Professor, but you hurry and get through that studying. Tom, I have something to tell—

Tom *(Interrupting)*.—But we have to study and keep on all our lives; there is never any end. That is the lure, the quest, the leading on.

Susan.—Well, I hope it leads on to some more money.

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*Tom.*—That reminds me! I was assessed for twenty-five dollars for a bunch of associated reliefs.

*Susan (Horried).*—Assessed for twenty-five dollars! Wyh Tom, that would get me a new dress.

*Tom.*—You always look mighty fine to me.

*Susan.*—But I have worn this party dress for two years, and every thing else.

*Tom (Takes the dress and wraps it around her).*—And it certainly makes you look a peach.

*Susan.*—It may h ave once, but I cannot go out in it now, even if I looked like a peach then and laughed because I thought some of the faculty wives envied me my dress.

*Tom.*—It is still just as pretty, isn't it?

*Susan.*—But every body notices that you have never gotten me any new clothes, and they think you are stingy and won't let me have any money.

*Tom.*—If that is the kind of friends you have, they are not worth bothering about.

*Susan.*—They are worth bothering about. They are your friends, and mine. They think I am just slumping off as married women do. I used to think it was horrid that they did not care, and now I know it is still more horrid that most of them cannot help themselves.

*Tom.*—That's all bosh. (*Looks at watch.*) I am missing an appointment.

*Susan.*—Missing an appointment! You are always missing an appointment whenever I want to discuss money matters.

*Tom.*—I do not see that there is anything to discuss. There is just so much money. I turn it over to you to budget. You have all there is.

*Susan.*—And because I try to budget it out till it is too thin to skate on, you think you can wash your hands of the whole affair.

*Tom.*—You knew how much we would have when you married me, and you have no right to be fussing now.

*Susan.*—What did I know about it! But you knew that you were paid just enough to meet your needs as a bachelor, and now you are insulted when I say that a bachelor's salary is not enough for a family.

*Tom.*—You talk as if I enjoyed doing without things.

*Susan.*—What have you done without?

*Tom.*—Chances to study. Trips to associations. Chances to meet my fellow-workers. An occasional trip abroad. All, all the things my work and training require for me.

*Susan.*—You do not do without things the way I do.

*Tom.*—What have I had?

*Susan.*—Books!

*Tom.*—They are for you as much as me.

*Susan.*—For me! I can't even read the darn titles.

*Tom.*—Well, if I study and get promoted, it will be for you, won't it?

*Susan.*—You've been telling me for the last six months that you can't get promoted till you go off two years more and get your doctor's degree, and travel and meet people. You are only getting restless under the restraint of two living on enough for one. I see plenty of men around here with their doctor's degrees who are getting precious little more than you. And none of you will ever get enough more to amount to a row of pins. (*She softens a little.*) And what would you do if we had a baby?

*Tom.*—Good Lord, Susan! First you want a lot of clothes, and now you want a baby. We agreed when we married not to have any children until I got my two years away studying. The eternal feminine, I suppose.

*Susan.*—The eternal fiddlesticks! Why do men think women are always dying for children?

*Tom.*—They are so becoming, my dear.

*Susan.*—Becoming! With old faded dresses and tacky hair ribbons.

*Tom.*—Boys wouldn't. You could make their clothes out of my old ones. Everybody does.

*Susan.*—While you run naked, I suppose.

*Tom (Laughs).*—That would be shocking—so let's put off the evil day.

*Susan.*—You talk as if I go down and buy them at a cash and carry.

*Tom.*—I am not going to quarrel with you any further. I would love a dozen babies, and let's hope for some, sometime, but it must be nix on the family now. And I will have to pay that twenty-five dollars.

*Susan.*—But, Tom, we do not have it.

*Tom.*—We will have to borrow it then. You do the best you can. I know that it is the best that can be done.

*Susan.*—But we must not commence borrowing.

*Tom.*—But I feel that we must do at least that to help out. My position demands it, and I cannot very well refuse.

*Susan (Flares up).*—If you want to give to everything, why don't you do something to make the money?

*Tom.*—This work is too important to have men who can do it leave just to make money.

*Susan.*—If it is so important why don't they pay you for it? You talk about doing your work. You mean half doing it. Nobody can do anything on a string. People act as if educating them is giving them castor oil. You should have an M. D. and given it to babies. That is appreciated.

*Tom.*—Now let's get this settled. I am not going to give up my work. We will just have to adjust our lives to it. Educational and aesthetic work is never paid for. We do it to get it done.

*Susan.*—Then people are indecent to accept it from you. (*Knocking at door is heard.*)

*Tom (Taking himself in hand).*—Susan, dear, do not be mercenary. You knew when you married me that I would never make a lot of money. (*Knocking again.*) Kiss me good-by, Sweetheart, quick. (*He kisses her and starts to door.*)

*Susan.*—Good-by, Tom love,—When you come back—

*Tom (Opens door and lets in a radiant young woman).*—Hello, see who's here!

*Helen.*—Hello, everybody!

*Susan.*—Come in, Helen. It is fine to see you. (*They greet affectionately, and go to settee to sit together.*) Susan carelessly gathers up the dress to get it out of the way and holds it on her lap as they talk. (*TOM looks at watch and hurries out.*)

*Helen.*—You old recluse! I just had to hunt you up.

*Susan.*—My, it is good to see you again.

*Helen.*—I never see you anywhere.

*Susan.*—I do not get out much.

*Helen.*—Susan, I have a great, big, precious secret, and I came to tell you the very first.

*Susan.*—Helen! What is it? I have something, too.

*Helen.*—You have been so happy I want you to know the very first.

*Susan.*—Oh, Helen!

*Helen.*—I am going to do as you did, marry a University Instructor.

*Susan.*—Oh! (*Weakly.*) Which one?

*Helen.*—Why, Susan! Aren't you glad?

*Susan (Rousing herself).*—Oh, yes, Helen—tell me all about it.

*Helen.*—It is Richard Downing.

*Susan.*—Richard Downing. He is a nice boy.

*Helen.*—Nice! He is a love. So sweet and gentle.

*Susan.*—Just like Tom.

*Helen.*—And he is so tall, and has such blue, blue eyes.

*Susan.*—But he does not have his doctor's degree!

*Helen.*—No. We have it all planned out. We are going to marry now—just as you and Tom did.

*Susan (Gaining enthusiasm).*—Just as Tom and I did!

*Helen.*—Then when we have saved a little we will go to Harvard.

*Susan.*—Just as Tom and I planned.

*Helen.*—And while he goes to Harvard, I will go to Radcliff.

*Susan.*—Just as Tom and I planned.

*Helen.*—That way we have all these young years together.

*Susan.*—I am so happy for you. (*They embrace.*)

*Helen.*—What were you going to tell me?

*Susan (Startled, gathers up her evening dress in a nervous way.)*—Oh—why—what do you mean?

*Helen.*—Susan, honey, (*Notices dress.*) What are you doing with that old dress? It certainly was pretty when they wore that style; so much prettier really than this year's or last year's. What are you doing with it?

*Susan.*—I am trying to make it over.

*Helen.*—You can't possibly. It is 'way too short, and the bodice is wrong. One thing I have promised myself is that I will have proper clothes.

*Susan.*—Yes, I promised myself that, too.

*Helen.*—I don't think it right the way the faculty wives take no interest in their clothes.

*Susan.*—That's just what I thought.

*Helen.*—It is not treating their husbands' positions with proper respect.

*Susan.*—That's just what I said.

*Helen.*—Why! people make fun of them.

*Susan.*—I know. I did it.

*Helen.*—Let's run down town and get you a new dress. You look run down, Susan. It's a good thing I came around to chirk you up, and drag you out. I know the duckiest new style that will just suit you. (*Knocking at door is heard. SUSAN goes to door and takes package from express man.*)

*Susan.*—I wonder if these are the books Tom has been looking for. (*She and HELEN put them on the table and open the package. They find a statement. SUSAN looks at it.*) Twenty dollars!

*Helen.*—My, aren't you proud of Tom's books?

*Susan.*—Yes, if they did not take all his interest.

*Helen.*—What do you mean—all his interest?

*Susan.*—He never wants to do any thing but keep soused in them. That's one reason I can never go anywhere. Tom never wants to go.

*Helen.*—You ought to drag him out.

*Susan.*—And they cost so much!

*Helen.*—Twenty dollars isn't much. Who would ever have thought you were such a mercenary little wretch!

*Susan.*—Helen, don't you call me that, too; I just cannot stand it. (*She commences crying.*)

*Helen (Comforting her).*—Dearie, don't cry, you used to joke back when one said things like that.

*Susan (Getting control of herself).*—Helen, don't marry now. Let Richard finish for his degree first.

*Helen.*—And lose all our young years?

*Susan.*—You'd better lose them than—spoil them.

*Helen.*—And not go together?

*Susan.*—He will probably never get to go at all, then.

*Helen.*—Aren't you and Tom going?

*Susan.*—We are still struggling and hoping. But after two years of doing without clothes, shoes, shows, entertainments, every thing but the mere necessities of life—(*Commences getting excited.*) Tom even resigned from the Faculty Club to save thirty dollars a year, and after two years of this we have just ninety-five dollars in the bank. We could not possibly go for a year under a thousand—and then borrowing in the end. At that rate—le's see—we can go something like twenty years from now. (*She becomes hysterical—laughing and crying as she goes on.*) And then maybe Tom would commence being promoted—perhaps a hundred a year for five or six years—and then if he has written a lot for scientific journals that never pay for contributions—and I have entertained a lot—and persuaded people we are something special—and one of the very few precious full profs dies of old age—and somebody else has not beat us to it—Tom may reach his one goal in life—be made a full professor. (*Sits there laughing crazily and frightening HELEN.*)

*Helen.*—For Heaven's sake! Susan, stop that. (*Takes hold of her trying to quiet her.*) Now stop it, Susan! I am going to tell Tom it is terrible the way he treats you.

*Susan (Straightens right up in defense).*—Tom! Tom can't

help it. If he had any imagination he would have hysterics, too.  
(Starts off again.)

Helen.—Susan, stop it!

Susan (Controls herself).—Why should I stop it? There is nothing else to do, is there?

Helen.—Tom must do something.

Susan.—He is in it just as much as I am.

Helen.—If he were like Richard he would.

Susan.—Like Richard! Like Tom! Like them all—they are all just alike. They train themselves to enjoy a rare academic atmosphere and that is where they belong. They train their tastes for pictures and music and travel and then marry and get this, (*Waves her arms at the room*) and run-down wives, with no clothes, and then they bury themselves in their old books for a retreat. They are monks anyway, the bunch of them. Education came out of monasteries and whither is it going? The world is trying to put it back. Helen, don't ever marry Richard. Maybe you can keep him from marrying at all that way.

Helen.—Richard never marry!

Susan.—More and more, they do not marry.

Helen.—But Susan!

Susan.—There is no "But," Helen.

Helen.—But men ought to marry—

Susan.—Go on, say it, "and have children"—(*Sits there there helplessly.*)

Helen.—Susan?

Susan.—Yes, Helen. (*Puts her head on HELEN'S shoulder to be comforted.*)

Helen.—You aren't afraid?

Susan.—I'm afraid to tell Tom.

Helen.—How terrible!

Susan.—And use that ninety-five dollars.

Helen.—Will it take it all?

Susan.—Oh, Helen, when you marry be sure that circumstances will permit you both to be happy over at least the first baby. (*They hear some one at door, and HELEN hurries SUSAN into the bedroom. TOM enters and seeing the books commences excitedly opening them one by one. HELEN looks in through the bedroom door, and, seeing TOM, goes back in, and presently returns through the room to leave. TOM rises and keeps finger in place in his book to show his mind is still there, as he tells her good-by.*)

Tom.—Helen, are you going so soon?

*Helen.—Yes—do you—know—I wonder—(Look as if she must cry and points to bedroom.) Susan is in there. (Then hurries out.)*

*Tom (Opening his book as he sits down again).—That was queer for Helen, she is usually so jolly. (He sits there poring over the new books. Presently SUSAN comes and stands in the bedroom door, watching him helplessly and holding her throat to keep from crying. SUSAN, still watching him, comes slowly into the room. He does not realize she is there. She finally picks up a piece of the evening dress between thumb and finger, and goes miserably out, dragging the dress on the floor behind her.)*

CURTAIN

## DEAD PROFOUNDS

BY GUSTAV DAVIDSON

I do not know why I should go about  
Steeped in the shadows of a long ago  
When here is April come without a doubt  
And here are buds importunate to blow.

The moss-pinks and forget-me-nots are out  
Together with the hawthorne white as snow;  
And here are jonquils in a tender rout  
Emancipate in winter's overthrow.

But I am wedded to some by-gone day.  
Whose dreads and dearness, silences and sounds,  
Make dim for me the trumpets of this May;  
And where my heart might break beyond its bounds  
To gather in this loveliness, I stray  
Further and further into dead profounds.



# THREE MEN

BY HENRY BELLAMANN

*A Triptych*

## I

I have been blind so long I have forgot  
The pictures of the world that go with words—  
I understand that words are just the sound  
Of things, somewhat as shadow is the blot  
Which men and trees make on a field of light;  
And so I hear the wings of speech in flight  
About my ears like subtle, unknown birds  
Passing to secret islands in the night.

I miss completeness in all words you say—  
The faces of the ghostly actors blur:  
I find I listen past the echoing play  
For signals of more certain utterance.

I hear a curious language of my own,  
Continuous in the multitudinous drone  
Of falling steps that chatter dissonance  
Of delicate staccato counterpoint  
Above the Doric choruses of streets.

So when I tap my way along the walk  
I read the whole orchestral cry that beats  
Upon my sense—spell out the ringing talk  
Of April romance on the lyric stone,  
And the dull tread, like muffled elegies,  
Of those who walk already with the dead.

Those steps are but the marching sound of dreams,  
The sound of hope, the sound of those who run  
Like stripped and broken leaves in twisted streams  
Of wind—they are the whispers of delight,  
They are the trumpet notes of victory,  
They are the mordant thunders of lament.

I do not fully understand the lore  
 Of words; but I can hear on stony streets  
 The straining and exultant feet of men  
 Crying the soul's long epic, step by step.

## II

He sat alone in that old basement room  
 For forty years and heard the muffled boom  
 Of passing feet outside the window, where,  
 If he looked up at all, he saw no more  
 Than feet that seemed to wave on empty air,  
 Although an ever changing beat would pour  
 Like noisy waters down the narrow stair.

The shelves were filled with worn, misshapen shoes—  
 An ark arranged grotesquely two by twos.  
 I can remember how it seemed too dark,  
 Too grim a place for simple, casual things  
 Like shoes.

Sometimes he talked to us, the stark,  
 Severely simple talk, and straight, that rings  
 With sober echoes of a few great books.  
 And if he saw exchange of wondering looks,  
 He snapped, his rich Babarian accent thick,  
 "I know a thing or two. I've been to school:  
 My friends, I spent a year at Gottingen;  
 But this humped back of mine made trouble quick,  
 The kind that turns a wise man out a fool.  
*Und* now—I fix old shoes!"

We watched him go,  
 He labored down his stair as though he dug  
 A painful way into the stubborn ground,  
 While we who loitered in the courthouse shade  
 Would smile a little, wonder, then forget  
 About his talk of Hegel and of Kant,  
 To have the wonder reawake sometime  
 When passing by the rusty swinging sign  
 Which read, "Here I. K. Schwartz Makes Old Shoes New."

One day, about a year ago, I think,

He sat with me on this same shaded bench.  
 I still can see the way he had to wrench  
 His wrinkled neck to bring his face around  
 To mine—it gave his voice a half choked sound—  
 And how his stained and crooked fingers crawled  
 Along his stick and scratched as though they scrawled  
 A crabbed legend of the words he spoke.

“I’m not so crazy as I sound, my friend,  
 But forty years it is I’ve worked on shoes.  
 Perhaps you have not thought of shoes so much;  
 You do not know what all a shoe can tell.  
 You bring a pair of them to me to mend  
 And when I took at them they tell me news  
 Of you you hardly know yourself—some things,  
 You could not know.  
 And then I patch and sew,  
 And all the time I work I read your life.

It is not good to think so much of shoes—  
 One day you wake and find your eyes refuse  
 To see another thing but walking feet  
 All dressed in worn out shoes that seem to beat  
 Their stories in and in upon your brain  
 Until the grinding patter comes to eat  
 It full of holes like sod beneath the eaves  
 When there has been a month of steady rain.

For forty years I twist my head and look  
 Out of that piece of window in my shop.  
 Always I see those feet that never stop—  
 At last I learn to read them like a book.  
 I know a lonesome step: I know the way  
 It wears a shoe.  
 I know a guilty walk—  
 Listening so long I understand the talk  
 Of all of them . . .  
 For forty years and more . . .

You know the *motif* of Beethoven’s Fifth?  
 Four notes! You know the way they pound and roar  
 And make your whole thought swing and go in time

To those four notes?  
 For forty years I hear a symphony  
 Of walking, running, scraping feet up there.  
 And all the time I work I only see  
 The broken instruments worn out of tune.

Now when I walk, my humped back bends me down  
 So that I see but one thing of this town—  
 Shoes and forever shoes  
 Tramping a dreadful rigadoon!

Old shoes forever standing in my hands—  
 See how my hands are knotted up and bent!—  
 Old shoes forever resting on my lap!  
 Old shoes forever sounding in my ear—  
 This devil symphony of shoes goes on  
 Even at night. I lie awake and hear  
 Them curse and mutter, whine and beg till dawn.  
 Schiller, and Goethe, and Beethoven, . . .  
 '*Nur wer die Sehnsucht kennt!*' . . .

Who could remember, when the grinding shoes  
 Of a whole town has walked for forty years  
 Across the heart?"

Old I. K. Schwartz has shot himself. I hear  
 He rigged a shotgun with a wooden bar  
 And that the buck shot made a purple smear  
 Above his heart quite like the brutal scar  
 A hob nailed boot might leave on human flesh.

### III

This is already half a grave, this bed;  
 I know what Heine meant, but then the dead  
 Are eaten quickly in the dark by worms  
 Far more dispassionate than things assumed  
 To be a mercy to a man who burns  
 In little fires, yet never is consumed.

Soft pillows, coverlets, and all the bland  
 Slow rotting silences devour flesh

## THREE MEN

As surely as the creeping, grinding sand  
That breaks the coffin lid and rends the mesh  
Which fettered once the dream we call a soul.

Not least among the terrors of this quiet room  
Is the dull throb of feet that pass the gate,  
As, step by step, they measure off the length  
Of life, and tick away the springs of strength.

This ceiling is a sort of sounding board,  
And when the steps play most like xylophones  
I think that hands, no longer flesh but bones,  
Are rattling dice inside my skull—  
And then I think the ceiling is a floor  
And that those feet come waltzing through the door  
While heads hang down like grapes on swinging vines.

How can they walk so slowly on the way  
With feet like the indifferent pendulums  
Exasperating clocks might swing in hell?  
I know if I could move myself today  
My feet would go ringing like a wild bell  
Outspeeding all the world to that black door  
Which swallows the last step of every man.

I wonder if the oceanic roar  
Of steps will still shake through six feet of earth  
Until, hating the grave as I hate this bed,  
I clamor in my shroud for some new birth?

# FALLACIES

BY LAURA RIDING GOTTSCHALK

## I

He never would have been a man to feed  
Her subtleties, saying: You're like a tree  
In moonlight, when he meant that she  
Was wrapped in her own shadows, and yet he  
Succeeded obscurely in pleasing her  
Because perhaps he had a smile that seemed  
To understand ten times as much as he  
Could ever see himself. She almost loved  
Him for that smile, but with a troubled sense  
Of its unfitness. For his eyes were like  
Two empty cups whose substance had been poured  
To fill a disappointment, and there was  
No more of him than that—two empty eyes  
That hung above his smile like two old pools  
Too shallow for a young and slender moon  
To rest upon. She'd warn him laughingly  
And say that if he'd ever lose that smile  
He'd lose her too, for she'd ride off on it  
Up to the sky where it belonged. But he  
Began to think she meant himself when she  
Had only meant his smile, and came to love  
Her in a giddy way that chased his smile,  
For it had paradoxically been  
A rare sophisticated little thing.  
She waved him then a frivolous farewell.  
Goodbye, she said, I'm going riding, Sir!

## II

This one she likened to a dragon fly,  
He came to poise on her so nervously  
And hover in a dogged queasy way  
Round her indifference as if he might  
Delicately prick her inattention.

He did not want to play the butterfly,  
 Not that he was afraid of what she had  
 To give but rather that he was too fond  
 Of his despondency, having as lief  
 Be still the weeping flagellant upon  
 Her hand and worry his wan wings until  
 They titillated her desire, but she  
 Had heeded him as little as if he'd been  
 A wind. So having scorned her lips and found  
 Her hand insensible when he had come  
 To brood upon it tragically, he thought  
 In a soft melancholy mood, to mind  
 His lady of a horned asp that once  
 Had been allowed the gentle liberty  
 Of Cleopatra's bodice. But she laughed  
 At him unfeelingly and cried: "Poor thing,  
 You're too ambitious for a dragon fly!  
 How can you woo me when you have no sting?"  
 He made a brittle armor of his wings  
 And all his slenderness was changed into  
 A plump and middle-aged disconsolateness  
 While he crawled off with wounded memories  
 To trust his soul to a lugubrious beetle.

## III

It would be an unpardonable cliché  
 To say that he danced to the tune she played  
 If he were not a man absurdly like  
 A dunder-pated circus bear that had  
 Been trained to a pathetic merriment  
 For his own imbecility and he  
 Had hopped so long to her *Pizzicatos*  
 That he began to feel that she was now  
 No longer his accompanist but that  
 He had come to be hers, and so he went  
 Collecting pennies in the audience  
 For her like an organ-grinder's monkey.  
 Oh, she was never cruel to him, and yet  
 She was more savage in her gentleness  
 Than if she'd roundly beaten him and sent  
 Him capering alone, for very soon

Her pretty beast began to witness how  
 She loved an untaught tiger better than  
 His tutored skill, and he said to himself:  
 "I will be fierce, oh fondly fierce, enough  
 To make her fear enough to fancy me,  
 And I will growl, oh sweetly growl, enough  
 To show how much I'd growl if it were not  
 Herself I was tenderly growling at."  
 He tugged his chain and gently growled at her,  
 Enough to make her laugh more tenderly  
 Than had his proudest tricks, and fondly laugh  
 Until he sadly ambled off. For how  
 Could Bruno growl again since she had laughed  
 At him, and how could Bruno dance again  
 Since he had learned just what it was to growl?

## IV

She says her merchandise is images—  
 I might add something else, a little store  
 Of esoteric humor that is sold  
 To those alone who have the proper coin  
 (If there are any such)—and whispers then  
 As seriously as a worried child  
 That there's no profit in her trade because  
 She draws too much upon her stock herself,  
 Leaving the poorest choice to customers.  
 It was so she apologized to me  
 For her extravagance when she began  
 To speak of him. She told me that he was  
 Her prodigal and that the figures she  
 Had bought to deck each small return of his  
 In quaint festivity, would surely reach,  
 If bordered end to end the echo of  
 The farthest cry some vagrant poet might fling  
 To call his doughtiest imagining.  
 But best of all she liked to say that he  
 Was like a patchwork shawl to wrap her in.  
 And she was not afraid that it might grow  
 Too thin for her, for each time that he came,  
 He lightly spoke some little brilliant thing  
 That could be stitched into her shawl, until,



She said, it was as piced as Joseph's coat—  
 Some smooth, anæmic work of Marivaux's,  
 A saucy cretonne of Voltaire's, or else  
 A gracious verse of Horace's all stitched  
 Together with some gay quips of his own  
 With corners so acutely trenchant that  
 They fitted as demurely in the others  
 As if the cloak were woven of one cloth.  
 So she rejoiced to think how she went dressed  
 In what he said, unwisely so, for he  
 Began to think it was himself she loved  
 And not his words, and fell to loving her  
 Himself. Then humor fled from him as once  
 Another's smile had fled before the fear  
 Of love's solemnity. His silence was  
 The worse to bear for all that he had spoken.  
 Her shawl grew threadbare and he never could  
 Be brought to patch it up again, while she  
 Went shivering through a silent season  
 And then dismissed him angrily, saying  
 She would not let herself be denuded  
 By anybody's taciturnity.

## GOD SPEAKS TO TRAVELERS

BY HAL SAUNDERS WHITE

God speaks to travellers by night  
 In lamp-light seen athwart the rain;  
 He lights the soul with taper light  
 Holy and still and strangely white;  
 He bringeth comfort out of pain.

In firelight I have seen his eyes  
 Bright as the coals the martyrs knew;  
 And felt his wakened mysteries  
 In a budding branch in winter skies,  
 When the crouching beggar's hand was blue.

God 'ild me from the coldest sin  
 That numbs the quickened pulse of pain,

Denies my sweet and bitter kin  
 With beggar and tree on the road I'm in  
 And takes my neighbor's loss for gain.

## FUNERE MERSIT ACERBO

BY GIOSUE CARDUCCI

*Translated by William A. Drake*

O thou that sleepest 'neath the flowering sward  
 Of Tuscan hill, where our dear father sleeps;  
 Hast thou, in thy green sepulchre, not heard  
 Upon the breeze a gentle voice that weeps?

It is my little boy, who at thy drear  
 Lone portal knocks: in whom thy great and wise  
 Name is renewed; life thou didst not hold dear,  
 Like you, O brother! he thus early flies.

Ah, no! for lovely visions on him shed  
 Their radiance as he played; till to that other,  
 Thy cold and lonely shore where dwell the dead,

The shadow thrust him. O, receive him, brother,  
 To thy dark dwelling, for he turns his head  
 To the sweet sunlight, calling for his mother.

## DANTE

BY GIOSUE CARDUCCI

*Translated by William A. Drake*

O Dante, how is it that the refrain  
 Of praises and of vows from me ye win;  
 And why, bent o'er the verse that made thee thin,  
 Finds me the sun at eve and dawn again?

No prayer for me doth sweet Lucia say,  
 Matelda doth not guide the way above;  
 And Beatrice, she and her sacred love  
 Traverse in vain toward God their starry way.

I hate thy Holy Empire; and the crown  
 And skull of thy good Frederick, for his wrongs,  
 In the Olonian vale my sword had cleft!

Empire and Church have reaped the ruin sown,  
 Yet to the heavens resound thy mighty songs;  
 Jove dies, but still the poet's hymn is left!

## ANCIENT LAMENT

BY GIOSUE CARDUCCI

*Translated by William A. Drake*

The tree to which my darling  
 Would stretch his baby hands,  
 The green pomegranate stands  
 In glorious, scarlet flower,

In the still, lonely garden  
 Its green renewed again  
 By June's reviving rain,  
 In summer light and warmth.

Thou of my plant the blossom,  
 Thus withered and stricken,  
 My vain life didst thou quicken,  
 Its last and only flower;

In the cold earth thou layest;  
 Doth the black earth affright thee?  
 Ne'er more shall sun delight thee,  
 Nor love awake thee more.

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I have no newer song to give the sky  
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No swelling symphonies, yet I must sing  
To ease my own heart's wonder ere I die.

I have no golden verse to give the seas  
The poets of all time have sung its waves,  
Its far gray distance and its dim green caves  
Yet must I, too, for my own spirit's ease.

The lofty souls have hymned the lofty heights.  
I would not add my piping from the dust.  
Yet I go singing still because I must  
Through all the wide blue days and vaster nights.

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# Poet Lore

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*World Literature & the Drama*

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By Mariano Jose de Larra

**Two Carolina Folk Plays**

By Paul Green

**Does Alcohol Stimulate Poetic Inspiration ?**

By C. E. Graves

**The Marvelous Romance of Wen Chun-Chin**

By C. C. Hsiung

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# Poet Lore

## Editors

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SUMMER, 1924

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# QUITTING BUSINESS

A COMEDY IN FIVE ACTS

BY MARIANO JOSE DE LARRA

*Translated from the Spanish by Kenneth C. Kaufman*

## CHARACTERS

DON DEOGRACIAS, *A Merchant.*

DONA BIBIANA, *His Wife.*

JULIA, *His Daughter.*

BERNARDO, *Her Lover.*

THE COUNT DEL VERDE SAUCO.

SIMON, *His Valet.*

SEÑOR BORDERO, *A Tailor.*

FRANCISCO, *A Servant.*

PASCASIO, *A Gardener.*

A JOCKEY OF THE COUNT.

*The scene is laid in Madrid, in the house of DON DEOGRACIAS.*

## ACT I

*The scene represents the room at the back of a large store; at the rear, a door, leading to the store; left, a door opening on the street, and another which apparently opens into a garden; right, two doors, one of which leads to the interior rooms, and the other to the room of DON DEOGRACIAS. The usual furniture.*

## SCENE I

DON DEOGRACIAS, DONA BIBIANA

*Deog.*—But, woman, is it possible that you have lost your mind to such a point that you believe that you can play the lady? You, the daughter of an honorable button-peddler, who during her whole life never got out of the porticos of Santa Cruz with her stand for bone buttons and her fans—Your grandfather, a poor lace-maker of Las Urosas Street, who, thanks to your marriage with me, ended his days in a bed with three mattresses and a dimity counterpane—

*Bib.*—And what have we to do with this long-winded tale



about my father, and my grandfather, and me? I must say it's funny. Yes, sir, I want to quit business; God knows what fate has in store for me; it is true that my mother sold buttons; but that's no reason why I should want to sell them—anyway, I know what I owe to myself—And look here, tell me one thing; what was the Marchioness of Encantillo, who goes about tearing up the pavement of these blessed streets in a magnificent landau? Tell me if her grandfather wasn't a poor Valencian, who came here selling mats, and who wound up besides, by becoming a beggar in a portico of Las Urosas Street. If he wasn't a sight to see! Anyway, let's drop the question; Deogracias, I've already told you, I'm sick of the counter. I've had twenty-four years of measuring silk, of stretching linen to beat the customer out of half a finger-length, of drawing the shades so they couldn't see the spots on the goods,— and the Lord knows what else! Darn the whole business; I've had enough, I tell you, and I'm ready to quit!

*Deog.*—Why, wife, look here. Isn't it the very business that you are fussing so about, that has put us in a position to play the gentleman, and to spend money, and?—

*Bib.*—So much the more reason for quitting it, and enjoying what we have made. Every time that I remember that dance the other night, where I went with our daughter Julia, and the way Dona Amelia has her house arranged—. I tell you, Deogracias, and don't you forget it, until I get my fine house, with me in it, on a splendid chair, receiving swell society people, and giving orders about the chandeliers and the lamps, and the card table and the rugs, and the spreads, and my lackeys coming in and announcing; "Count So-and-so—, Viscount What's-his-name"—, and until I get a box in the opera and a jockey to accompany me to the Prado on winter mornings, with my shawl over his arm and my parasol in his hand—, don't fool yourself, I'll be dying off with ennui one of these days.

*Deog.*—I'd be in a pretty fix in your fine drawing-room, mixed up with counts and marquises—, you might say, when I never in my life have been outside of Guadalajara Street. See here, Bibiana, take my word for it.

*Bib.*—Bibiana! My Lord! What a low-brow husband! Haven't I told you a hundred thousand times already not to call me Bibiana again? When did you ever see a fine society lady that was named Bibiana? I want to be called Concha, and I will be called Concha; and I'm going to be Dona Concha until the day I die; and everybody else shall call me that, too, else

what's the use of having money! and "How are you, Conchita?—Conchita, my dear, how pretty you are!"

*Deog.*—Look here, woman, you were Bibiana Cartucho when I fell in love with you, worse luck for me; I married Bibiana Cartucho, I'm sorry to say, no doubt as a punishment for my sins in the flesh, and for me Bibiana Cartucho you have been, you are, and you will be until I die; and if you die first, I'll have cut on your tomb-stone, "Here lies Bibiana Cartucho," and nothing else.

*Bib.*—Oh, my land! What a shame! Even after my death! Well then, old spiteful, go to it, stay here in your Guadalajara, slave to everybody that comes along to buy a yard of flannel—. Do as you please, if you haven't any better sense than not to want to shine and put on style; anyway, people don't pay so much attention to husbands as a general thing; but you have children, and I hope you don't intend to sacrifice them to your caprice; you surely haven't got your mind made up to make counter-jumpers of them too.

*Deog.*—Yes, of course. Theodore will soon be fourteen years old; he shall leave school as soon as he learns to write a little better and gets a start in Latin, not to put on a lawyer's robe, as you think, but to take my place in the store. He won't wear a sword; but he can be a good Spaniard without it; like me, his only coat of arms will be the yard-stick; but who doubts that he can serve God and the King with it as well as anybody else? Besides, the King has plenty of young and willing noblemen, who were born to defend him, who are perfectly capable of sustaining the brilliancy of their uniforms, the glory of their ancestors, and the honor of their sovereign.

*Bib.*—Is it possible? All right; but as far as my daughter Julia is concerned, she is old enough to marry now—a really worth while girl, for I have trained her myself; she sings, she dances, she plays—It is true that she doesn't know how to scour, nor sweep, nor sew at all; but she doesn't need to, to be in style.

*Deog.*—Yes, Julia shall marry; I have had her marriage arranged for some time; and if you didn't know it, it's your own fault. Your eternal rush to marry her to one of the four hundred forced me to hide it from you; I'm going to marry her to Bernardo, the son of my friend Benedicto, the tapestry dealer of Barcelona.

*Bib.*—I, the mother-in-law of a tapestry dealer?

*Deog.*—Of a tapestry dealer; and why not? How much better is a tapestry dealer who can count on twenty-five thousand

pesetas a year of income and a good name, than a fashionable gambler, a marquis overrun with bad debts, a rattle-brained soldier, a lawyer without clients, a doctor without patients—!

*Bib.*—Well—but suppose your daughter had a particular aversion to this marriage?

*Deog.*—Aversion is hardly possible; she doesn't even know him yet; I, myself, if I met him on the street, couldn't say "That is he"; naturally, since I have never seen him. His father wrote me about the scheme for marrying our children; and I accepted, for I don't expect to find a better match anywhere. As far as Julia is concerned, I don't believe she has even thought of this; you are driving her crazy.

*Bib.*—All right; then, I'll depend on her; she may decide between the two of us.

*Deog.*—All right; I know that the child has more sense than you.

*Bib.*—Julia, Julia!

*Deog.*—She shall tell us her wishes; but with the understanding that if she is willing, the marriage shall take place at once.

*Bib.*—Such a hurry! Julia!

*Deog.*—Yes, ma'am; this is a good chance to provide for her; and God only knows, if we let this one escape us, when we shall find another one as good.

## SCENE II

DONA BIBIANA, DON DEOGRACIAS, JULIA

*Julia.*—Mama, did you call me?

*Deog.*—Come here, daughter. You are to answer freely, without any attention to our wishes—, to declare frankly your preference.

*Bib.*—It is a question of something very serious for you; your father wishes you to be married.

*Julia* (*Married, great heavens! now.*)

*Bib.*—Raise your head; look at me without embarrassment; do you want to get married? (*Shakes her head at her, giving her to understand that she is to say "no."*) The truth.

*Julia.*—Mama—I am so young—married—.

*Deog.*—You are young; but daughter—.

*Bib.*—That isn't what we agreed on; you see that I am not making her answer; so you leave her entirely alone, too. Come,

daughter, tell me, if you were about to be married to a rich tapestry dealer from Barcelona, with more than twenty five thousand pesetas a year—?

*Julia* (*Ah! my friend doesn't look the least bit like a tapestry dealer.*)

*Bib.*—Come, answer. (*Again shakes her head.*)

*Julia.*—Mama, if you insisted—,Who knows?—,I should obey and resign myself—.

*Deog.*—No, indeed, the truth; no resignation, no obedience, no nothing—yes, or no.

*Julia.*—Papa—indeed, I don't feel inclined—.

*Deog.*—No?

*Bib.*—What, daughter, shouldn't you like to be all day long in a magnificent tapestry store, measuring, and taking in money, and—?

*Julia.*—No, mama.

*Bib.*—Now you hear her yourself; she's talking for herself now.

*Deog.*—This beats me.

*Bib.*—And in case you did marry, would you prefer a society man who wouldn't have anything to do all day long, a nobleman, who wouldn't have to earn a living, who would take his wife to Vista-Alegre and the opera every day, who would take you driving on the Prado every day in a tillbury or landau, who would give you rings, shawls, caps, feathers, furs, and chains, in a word, who would never look at the milliner's bill, who would let you keep your piano teacher, and let you give concerts, like for example, Count del Verde Saucó, who went to Paris, and whom we have heard so much about, say, would you? (*Making signs to her.*)

*Julia.*—Yes, mama.

*Deog.*—Yes, mama; (*mocking her.*) well, Miss, you will take the husband—.

*Bib.*—There you go, breaking our agreement again—,in spite of what you promised, you are getting angry—.

*Deog.*—No, I'm not getting angry—,but at least, let her hear about the one I have to propose, let her meet him and get acquainted with him—. See here, Bernardo ought to have arrived from Barcelona, at this very minute; he has probably devoted the first few minutes to his relatives; but we shall have him here from one minute to the next, and you are going to receive him as befits my future son-in-law; you shall meet him, and then—

*Bib.*—We know him well enough already by what you have

said about him; and it is certainly a pity to have to give my daughter to a man of his class; that's why I had her take lessons in dancing, and drawing, and French, and Italian; that's why I've had her take piano lessons for four years in succession; my darling child, what good did it do you to work so hard and take such pains, when you never could hit the scale, to learn the duet from Crociato, and Semiramis, the aria from the Donna del Lago, and the whole part of Cesari in Osmir? The whole thing is going to be swallowed up in the humiliation of business.

*Deog.*—The humiliation of business. Bibiana! Bibiana!

*Bib.*—There you go with Bibiana again. Great heavens, what a shame! If anybody heard it—!

*Deog.*—But there is somebody in the store, hurry up, that boy is so lazy—. It may be Bordero the tailor who is to come for a piece of moire and the pearl gray velvet.

*Bib.*—All right, I'll go; but listen to what I say; you may marry your daughter to Bernardo, you may sacrifice her; but as for me you are mistaken. This is the last day that I spend in the shop; you can close it tomorrow or do as you please. I'm through, I'm through with business, I tell you. Come, daughter.

### SCENE III

#### DON DEOGRACIAS

Go, and God bless you! Is there anything harder for a man than to make his wife listen to reason? And to think that I was fool enough to get married! But there isn't any help for it now, for it's been twenty-four years since I pulled off this foolish piece of business. It's the same thing every day—and there's not a chance but that she'll break up this plan just as she has every one that I've ever made since that day. But, hello there! Who's coming?

### SCENE IV

DON DEOGRACIAS; BERNARDO, *who enters left, dressed simply*

*Bern.*—Have I the honor of speaking to Don Deogracias de la Plantilla?

*Deog.*—At your service; what can I do for you?

*Bern.*—I believe that you have already been informed of my arrival; I am from Barcelona, and you should have received a letter from my father announcing to you—.

*Deog.*—Of course, not another word; of course I have; by the

next to the last mail. Bernardo! Shake hands, friend, although I don't know you; however, your father's friendship is very dear to me; and anyway, the object of your trip makes you welcome.

*Bern.*—Senor Don Deogracias—.

*Deog.*—But, man, how good-looking you are! And what a fine face and what—! come, come; turn around; good; Yes sir, very good! And what a fine build! And what kind of a trip did you have?

*Bern.*—Very good; I came with two monks, jolly good fellows, an Andalucian, who lied like a trooper, and a good old fellow who was coming to take treatments at the Molar springs; the fact is that he was always complaining, but—

*Deog.*—Well, I'm glad; and no accidents, nor thieves?

*Bern.*—Thieves—Well, we did have some scares, and in one inn; you know there are some faces that are enough to frighten one, but thank God, they didn't get anything from us.

*Deog.*—Well, I'm certainly glad to hear it; when did you get here? Have you been to lunch?

*Bern.*—Yes, thank you; I have been here several days—.

*Deog.*—All right then; and your father, how in the world is he?

*Bern.*—So, so; if it wasn't for his rheumatism all over his body, and the gout, and that trouble with his eye—.

*Deog.*—Of course; but he depends on those surgeons. I used to be always telling him; "See here, Benedicto, those men are going to kill you, don't you trust them." But he wouldn't pay any attention to me; he was going to be cured and get well, come what may. Of course, he's right about it, but what I mean is that when a man gets to be sixty years old, what good do surgeons and drugs do?

*Bern.*—You are right.

*Deog.*—Of course I am; he is sixty years old; and don't you see that it is a disease that keeps getting worse every day, and that will keep on devouring him until it gets him down. Have a seat; (*closes the door which leads to the store.*) take off your hat, for if you are to be my son-in-law, we must lay aside formalities.

*Bern.*—As you wish; I'm not much of a hand for monkey-shines myself, although I do have to submit to them sometimes, I'm sorry to say, because we have to live with everybody. That's the very reason I didn't come here first, because I wanted to come as I pleased, and I had to get my visits off my hands first. You

know my uncle, the canon here, the one who can't be persuaded to go to his cathedral by any human power—.

*Deog.*—Yes, yes, I know.

*Bern.*—Well, as I went to stay at his house, and as he likes me pretty well, he had to introduce me at several places where he had spoken very well of me; really stylish houses, where he plays his game of cards with the old people and the married folks, while we young people dance, or stand around with our hats in our hands; that is why he insisted that I should have a whole swell outfit made as soon as I got here, two frock coats, a Prince Albert an overcoat—I don't know what all. He takes me everywhere.

*Deog.*—Aha! So he has already made you acquainted with some people.

*Bern.*—Yes sir; the first day I was embarrassed, I couldn't move; but since I was so well dressed, you can't imagine the friends that I made; and since besides, I had plenty of money for coffee and other foolishness—. But, what of it, if after I get dressed, I never saw anything so ridiculous? The first time that I saw myself in the mirror I didn't recognize myself; hips, waist— In a word such an appearance that I wanted to come here to get rid of it.

*Deog.*—Well, you did exactly the wrong thing. Do you know what you have done?

*Bern.*—What? Why, didn't you just say that—?

*Deog.*—Yes, and I will explain. I am the most unfortunate of all husbands. You must know that my wife is mad, but with a form of insanity very well received in society; she has taken a notion in her head to shine, to play at being a marchioness; I have just this minute had a row with her about this marriage; she is trying to ruin my daughter; but that isn't surprising if at my age and here as you see me, and in spite of my good sense, she makes me gamble and dance and go everywhere with her—. And don't fool yourself, as sure as you introduce yourself as you are now, you can be sure of getting the mitten.

*Bern.*—Well, I declare! But then, if she has that mania she won't want to marry her daughter to a merchant; and it's perfectly clear that if I were dressed like a general, I should never be anything but Bernardo.

*Deog.*—Yes, that's right; but anyway, who knows but that the first impression—. Anyway, you must go dress up and come back making a lot of gestures and contortions and fool motions; talking a little French, and a little Italian, and a very little

Spanish, and that very poorly, and always without any sense, and you will have to dance, and carry a Breguet watch, and talk about the opera and Paris, and if possible, of London; and have a lot of debts, and—,but you understand me?

*Bern.*—Only too well, and fortunately it won't be hard for me, provided that the farce only lasts a short while.

*Deog.*—Have you eye-glasses and a monocle?

*Bern.*—No, Sir.

*Deog.*—Well, buy yourself some; come, hurry.

*Bern.*—But why, sir? I don't need them, I can see well enough.

*Deog.*—That doesn't make any difference. And whip and spurs?

*Bern.*—No, sir, but I haven't any horse either.

*Deog.*—That doesn't make any difference; in case of emergencies—.

*Bern.*—But, sir—.

*Deog.*—Buy them.

*Bern.*—But, sir, it seems to me—. How much better it would be for you as head of the house to simply make your wishes known, your decision.

*Deog.*—It's easy to see that you are not married; in the first place I don't dare to start anything with my wife; and in the second place what good would it do you for me to get my eyes scratched out? If we tried force, the child, who has almost exactly the same opinions as her mother, would get to hate you and it would be worse. How much better it is to get them to like you! And then we shall see; God only knows whether we shall be able to make them mind, and bring them to reason; leave it to me, let me tell you what to do; but let me see—. I hear somebody—. They mustn't come and—. (*Look all around and closes the door.*)

*Bern.* (*And that pretty girl I met—. I've put off coming here as long as possible; but she doesn't know me either; let's have courage, and give it up. This marriage is what my interests dictate, and what my father wishes.*)

*Deog.*—What are you thinking about?

*Bern.*—Nothing.

*Deog.*—Well, let's make good use of our time; no one has seen you; hurry and get dressed, and come back within an hour; leave it to me.

*Bern.*—All right, I'll agree and be glad of the chance; so long.



## SCENE V

DON DEOGRACIAS, *opening the door again*

It's risky—. And I who never saw a worse mess, starting a plot, and a plot to marry my daughter, and the Lord knows how I'll get out of it; it's all the harder, because fathers hardly ever concern themselves with that part of the family affairs; however, it will save me a quarrel with my wife, and that isn't any despicable saving; but here she comes; it will be best to leave the field to her.

## SCENE VI

DONA BIBANA, JULIA

*Bib.*—Thank God, they have let us alone for a minute. Julia!

*Julia.*—Mama—.

*Bib.*—Tell me, that sport who was whispering in your ear all evening there in Valverde Street, it seemed to me that he was inclined—. Haven't you seen him since? He must have been a gentleman, and you, I suppose, were too slow to do your best to show him—.

*Julia* (*Oh! she doesn't know what I would do for him!*)

*Bib.*—Answer me; didn't you find out who he was? Didn't he follow you any more?

*Julia.*—I couldn't find out who he was; I asked several of my friends, but they said that he had just been presented that night, and that they only knew that he had just come to town; and I believe that they were right.

*Bib.*—He must have gone by accident; the place wasn't stylish enough for him; what I am sorry for is that he saw us there, and not at the marchioness' house.

*Julia.*—Sunday, when we went to mass, he was right beside the Buen-Suceso; I saw him out of the corner of my eye. As soon as he caught sight of us, you ought to have seen him push through the crowd to get to us; as we went up he steps he took my hand—.

*Bib.*—And did he squeeze it?

*Julia.*—Yes, ma'am; but I acted as if I were afraid of you, and didn't like it, and took it away. In spite of that, he kept looking at me all through mass; I was acting as if I didn't see him, and nudging you with my foot, but you thought I was stepping on you and I had to quit. Afterwards he followed us and must have lost us when we turned the corner, for I didn't see him again; and he probably doesn't know where we live.

*Bib.*—Of course, and I don't suppose you tried to tell him.

*Julia.*—I? How do you expect me to let him know?

*Bib.*—Yes, indeed, there are ways to tell things; for example, you can say; "I am so tired; we have been to the Prado, and it's so far from our house, the last one on Mayor Street, you know, Number So-and-so, to be exact." Do you see?

*Julia.*—Yes, ma'am.

*Bib.*—Well, you know it now for the next time. And now you can get out your new silk dress and the corset-cover that you have just finished; we are to go back tonight—. He might be there. And under such circumstances you are to marry Bernardo? I think not, or there will be things happen in this house that your father won't want to hear.

## ACT II

### SCENE I

DON DEOGRACIAS, *writing, speaks at intervals*

Count del Verde Sauco, asking my daughter in marriage—; by George—, it's queer; it isn't any time since he was in Paris but I've heard of him; without going any farther, there is Pascasio, my gardener, who was a servant of his; he is a wild one, and he is completely ruined. What a sorry marriage it would be! No, no, there's nothing doing; those marriages only bring misfortune to those who go into them; the husband is always throwing it up to his wife that she is a plebeian—, no sir, nothing doing. I wonder why he wants to see me? I don't want to see him, I'll put him off with an excuse; I'll tell him that I'm going hunting this very day. Here, boy!

### SCENE II

DON DEOGRACIAS, A JOCKEY

*Deog.*—Say, does he expect an answer?

*Jock.*—As you please; but I understand that my master is going to leave this morning; I am going to get him right now in the tilbury and take him to the French coach; he is going to a country house that he has near Buitrago for eight or ten days.

*Deog.*—(*What a scheme that makes me think of! A little risky to be sure*). Did you say that your master is to be gone for eight or ten days?

*Jock.*—That's what he said.

*Deog.*—(Good! My wife and daughter only know him by hearsay; they are crazy about him; no sooner said than done; in a week there is plenty of time to turn the head of a sixteen-year-old girl.)

*Jock.* (This man certainly is taking his own time.)

*Deog.*—Well, then, you will give this letter to the Count right away? (Gives him the letter.)

*Jock.*—Of course.

*Deog.*—And then you'll see him safely into his French coach?

*Jock.*—Exactly.

*Deog.*—And then—eh?

*Jock.* (Must be some of his business).—Then well, then, I'll be free, and I don't know exactly what I shall do.

*Deog.*—I know that my questions must seem mysterious to you; I shall explain. You strike me as being a good fellow, safe and able to keep your mouth shut.

*Jock.*—Sir—, my master has no right to complain of me.

*Deog.*—Well, I have an idea that you might be useful to me today.

*Jock.*—In as far as it doesn't interfere with the good service to my master the Count.

*Deog.*—Nothing of the sort; and last of all, I am grateful to the tune of a dollar an hour, all day long; here is the first installment.

*Jock.*—At that price just give your orders and you won't have any reason to complain of the way I do my work. What is there to do?

*Deog.*—Come back here with the tilbury as soon as you have left your master; if they miss you at the house—.

*Jock.*—That will be my affair; what else?

*Deog.*—Well, afterwards—, but hush, it is my wife, keep still.

### SCENE III

DONA BIBIANA, DON DEOGRACIAS, and the JOCKEY, talking aside in a low tone.

*Bib.*—Great heavens! what a fright of a store! It seems to me that all the bores in Madrid have been summoned today to come here to buy something; and that little hump-back with the wife big enough for three of him; (mocking them.); "Let's see the Spanish taffeta—. Not that—, a little heavier—, the French—, no, no,—, it hasn't a fast color—, a little more body—, let's see

the *gros de Naples*." Well, you turn the whole store upside down and then the bums go off without buying anything. It's a rotten shame for anybody that's got the cash like us to be worried to death trying to please a lot of nobodies who, besides not having a cent, still have the nerve to try to put on airs parading in and out of stores with their; "Let's see this, and I don't like that and the other is ugly;" and finally; "Good day" and "Put it all back again" and—, it just simply wears me out.

*Jock.* (To DON DEOGRACIAS).—All right, I understand. Don't worry, I shall do it exactly.

## SCENE IV

## DON DEOGRACIAS, DONA BIBIANA

*Bib.*—See here, you've taken a notion to worry me too; aren't we going to eat lunch at all?

*Deog.*—Wife, (*Courage and let's start the big deal.*) I was answering the servant of the Count del Verde Sauco, as was most proper.

*Bib.*—The Count del Verde Sauco? Has he come back from Paris? What sort of business could he have with you?

*Deog.*—Yes, ma'am, he has come back; I should say he has, for he is coming here himself—.

*Bib.*—To our house?

*Deog.*—To our house; he has just written me that, attracted by the fame of our Julia, he has met her, and loves her—.

*Bib.*—What are you saying?

*Deog.*—I should say he does love her; he is asking for her hand in marriage. Well, what do you think?

*Bib.*—Is it possible? Great heavens! I believe I am going to faint; my daughter Countess del Verde Sauco? And you wanted to marry her to that tapestry merchant! Now talk if you feel like it.

*Deog.*—But who could have imagined—.

*Bib.*—I'll tell you; who? I. Now talk for Bernardo.

*Deog.*—Really, wife, (*Let's put on a bold face*), in view of these developments I have almost come to agree with you; anyway I wrote him that he might come.

*Bib.*—Very well done; what should you have told him? And I was so anxious to meet him; the first sport in Madrid, so to speak. Julia! Julia! Francisco! Pascasio! Here, servants!

*Deog.*—(*Bait, hook, and sinker.*)

## SCENE V

DON DEOGRACIAS, DONA BIBIANA, FRANCISCO

*Franc.*—Madam, lunch has been ready since ten o'clock, and it is just about twelve now.

*Bib.*—Don't bother me about lunch; who wants to eat now?

*Franc.*—Why, madam, I don't know—, you said—.

*Bib.*—Don't you think that we have anything to do but eat, fool? You'll see that we won't have time to eat all day long; arrange those chairs, dust them.

*Franc.*—Why, they're already clean.

*Bib.*—That doesn't make any difference, idiot; get out those flower vases. Here, come here first; we are expecting a visit right away from a very elegant young man; as soon as he starts to come in, you come in front of him, open the door and announce him—, just as they do everywhere.

*Franc.*—Yes, madam, but what am I to say?

*Bib.*—Didn't you hear what I said? "My lord, the Count del Verde Sauco."

*Deog.* (*It's a good thing that she thought about that; I didn't have time to warn BERNARDO; this way he'll hear himself announced, and know who he is.*)

*Bib.*—Listen here, put on your blue coat with the red border.

*Franc.*—Very well, madam.

*Bib.*—Julia! the dear child—. Really, I won't have time to change my dress.

*Deog.*—That's all right; as you yourself say, you are wearing a pleasing *negligée*. (*FRANCISCO goes out after having dusted the chairs and arranged the flower vases.*)

## SCENE VI

*Bib.*—Hurry, daughter; the Count del Verde Sauco, the one that we were so anxious to know, the one who spends so much money, who gambles, who has fought so many many duels, is coming to see you right away.

*Julia.*— To see me, mama?

*Bib.*—He has just written to your father asking your hand; don't you see, daughter? aren't you glad? And finally, I have got your father to change his mind, and he has agreed that this marriage will be better than the other one. Come, what do you say?

*Julia.*—(*My goodness*) Yes, mama, I'm glad; I'll go dress.

## SCENE VII

DONA BIBIANA, DON DEOGRACIAS, JULIA, FRANCISCO, and BERNARDO, *splendidly dressed*.

*Franc.* (*Announcing*).—The Count del Verde Sauco.

*Deog.* (*Goes up, takes his hands, trying now to keep him from talking, now to instruct him in a low tone*).—My Lord, Count del Verde Sauco!

*Bern.*—(*What is this? I a Count?*)

*Deog.*—Count! (*In a low voice.*) Let me manage it, yes, count, count. (*Aloud.*) You are honoring me so—. Really I consider myself very fortunate at receiving in my house the most fashionable man in Madrid. (*In a low voice.*) Say something.

*Bib.*—Count—.

*Bern.*—Madam, I am not—.

*Deog.* (*In a low tone*).—Yes, put on style, lots of antics. Yes, sir; here, get a chair for the Count. I have the honor of presenting to you the Count del Verde Sauco from whom we just got a letter, asking our daughter in marriage. (*In a low tone.*) Man, keep still, and go ahead.

*Bib.*—Count—.

*Bern.*—But, madam, I am not—. (*This frame-up irritates me.*)

*Deog.* (*In a low tone*).—Yes, you are.

*Bern.*—(*All right*) Madam, I am not—the least honored under such circumstances.

*Bib.*—I thank the Count very much for the kind attentions that we owe him, and I am sure that my daughter—, come Julia—, will share my feelings.

*Bern.*—Madam—(*JULIA raises her head and they see each other.*)

*Julia.*—(*Heavens! It is he!*)

*Bern.*—(*My land! The girl I saw—! what luck!*)

*Bib.*—Come, daughter, what's the matter?

*Julia.*—Nothing, mama.

*Bib.*—Speak to the Count.

*Bern.*—I hope that the young lady will pardon me for having taken the liberty of coming so soon, and without having asked her permission first.

*Julia.*—Oh, to be sure I shall pardon you.

*Bib.*—But the gentleman, if I am not mistaken, is the one who, (*Aside to JULIA*) followed us in Valverde Street the other night.

*Julia (Aside to DONA BIBIANA).*—Yes, mama. Yes—, know the Count.

*Bern.*—Indeed, madam, this is not the first time that we have met; in fact, how else could I have learned of this young lady's charms, and—?

*Bib.*—Yes, several nights ago; at that little dance—I suppose you were there incognito—, Friday.

*Bern.*—Yes, Friday; in Valverde Street, second flat, not much of a dance; I had never been there; but I had just got to town, I didn't know how to spend the evening, a friend insisted on taking me, and I for one, am not sorry, for I had the opportunity of meeting you. But, what a dance! There were only two good-looking women there to talk to; so that I spent the entire evening with them.

*Julia (Aside to her mother, while BERNARDO and DON DEOGRACIAS talk together).*—Ah, mama, how handsome, and what a gentleman he is!

*Bib.*—Oh, you can tell those that are to the manner born a mile away! You can't be mistaken about them.

*Deog.*—I'll say that was a lucky chance; (*To BERNARDO*) so you saw them without knowing who they were.

*Bern.*—That's right. (*Turns to talk to DONA BIBIANA.*)

*Deog.*—(*Just look.*)

*Bib.*—Well, our going was purely accidental, too, but my Deogracias was indebted for certain favors to the husband of the older daughter, the little rattlebrain who danced and flirted all evening with the life-guard, and—.

*Bern.*—Yes.

*Bib.*—And that's why we went; but what an evening!

*Deog.*—I hope, Count, that you will take lunch with us.

*Bern.*—Haven't you had lunch yet? Oh, you are just in style; exactly like me.

*Bib.*—We lunch late, very late.

*Deog.*—Oh, I suppose the Count lunches in the evening, so to speak.

*Bern.*—Yes, sir, I don't like to get up in the morning; I eat a beef-steak or roast beef, English style, for lunch; I dine at night in the French style—.

*Bib.*—Don't you ever eat Spanish stew?

*Bern.*—Why, Madam—, stew? Never; and I eat supper—.

*Deog.*—In the morning, eh?

*Bern.*—Yes, sir.

*Bib.*—How I should like such an arrangement!

*Deog.*—So, then you will lunch with us?

*Bern.*—With the greatest pleasure.

*Bib.* (*To DEOGRACIAS*).—What are you doing? You know we haven't anybody to serve us.

*Deog.*—What's the difference? I suppose the Count has his servants.

*Bern.*—My servants—, to be sure, I have them. (*This man!*)

*Deog.*—Francisco, the lunch, and tell the Count's jockey to come in.

*Bern.* (*Jockey!*)

### SCENE VIII

DONA BIBIANA, DON DEOGRACIAS, JULIA, BERNARDO; FRANCISCO, *who is serving the lunch*; the JOCKEY.

*Jockey* (*To BERNARDO*).—I have come to get your lordship's orders.

*Bern.* (*Well, sir, it's clear that the only thing to do is to drift with the current.*)

*Deog.* (*Approaching him, while the ladies look at themselves in the glass and arrange their hair.*)—Bernardo, by the Lord, you are the Count del Verde Sauco to the last ditch or you don't marry my daughter.

*Jock.*—Sir, whatever your lordship wishes.

*Bern.*—I think you might go; or rather you might stay here.

*Julia* (*Looking out the window*).—Oh, what a pretty tilbury!

*Jock.*—It belongs to my master, the Count.

*Julia.*—Oh, how pretty! Mama, look!

*Bern.* (*To DEOGRACIAS*).—A tilbury, too? How will we ever get out of this?

*Deog.*—What do you care? Come, Count, have a seat.

*Bern.*—With your permission, ladies. (*Trying to think up a name.*) (*SIMON, PEDRO—.*) *Jockey, Rodolfo, serve us.*

*Bib.*—The Count will give us some news of Paris.

*Bern.*—(*This is a different proposition.*)

*Bib.*—How did you leave Paris?

*Bern.*—Oh, there's nothing particular; you know, Paris—.

*Bib.*—Oh, yes, indeed; what new opera were they singing when you came away?

*Bern.*—Why, when I came away—. Oh, a very beautiful one.



*Bib.*—What was it called?

*Bern.*—The—, the—, the, the, the, how vexatious! Not to be able to remember it now; and I'm humming it all day long. (I'll be—.) Well, anyhow, very pretty.

*Bib.*—Oh, Paris—. It must be a great crowd.

*Bern.*—And how goes the opera here?

*Bib.*—I say, it must be a great crowd.

*Bern.* (*Again*).—Madam, it's a jam; you can't take a step; in a word, it's a mob. And the opera here?

*Bib.*—Tell me, what sort of clothes are the ladies wearing at the dances?

*Bern.*—(*The Devil*). Madam, I didn't pay much attention; but—, anyway they are very beautiful.

*Bib.*—I should say so; what cloth is the most popular?

*Bern.*—Yes, madam, of many different kinds of cloth. (*I'm ruined.*)

*Bib.* (*To JULIA*).—Daughter, absent-minded, like all those gentlemen.

*Bern.* (*To DON DEOGRACIAS*).—And the opera here?

*Deog.*—Good, very good; but the choruses can't keep in tune.

*Bib.*—That couldn't happen in Paris; could it, Count?

*Bern.*—What! No, madam; you see—.

*Bib.*—I know, there—, while here in Spain, we are so—, so—.

*Julia.*—I suppose that the Count likes to talk about Paris very much, he is so kind—.

*Bern.*—Yes, ma'am, very much. So, the opera here?

*Deog.*—I don't suppose that you ever miss?

*Bern.*—No, they keep a ticket reserved for me; it costs more that way; but one mustn't be fooled, you can't escape the ticket-hawkers. And you, Don Deogracias, are you very fond of the opera?

*Bib.*—(*See if he doesn't say something crazy.*) (*Pinches him.*)

*Deog.*—Yes, sir, very much; but as for music—, woman, you're killing me—, I don't understand a single note; I'd rather go to Quintana's *Pelayo*, or Moratin's *Viejoy la Nina* than to the opera.

*Bib.*—Didn't I say so? Don't pay any attention to him, Count; my husband is not in style; he is a very Spanish Spaniard, and nothing more. (*To DON DEOGRACIAS.*) Fool! you put me to shame everywhere.

*Deog.*—But, wife—. Anyway, do you like the Count?

*Bib.*—How refined! You can see that he's from Paris! What manners! If he were any one else—.

## SCENE IX

*The same, THE TAILOR, BORDERO.*

*Bord.*—Good morning, Don Deogracias. Hello, are you dining already? Are you going to the bull-fight? Hello, Dona Bibiana. (*Slaps her on the shoulder.*)

*Bib.*—Sir, what liberty! Have the kindness to behave yourself; for the first time that you have ever seen me, you certainly have a lot of nerve; if you want to see my husband—, come, man, give the gentleman what he wants.

*Bord.*—The first time that I ever saw you—. Ha, ha, ha! ma'am, pardon me; I thought that the tailor Bordero, as an old customer—.

*Bib.*—Deogracias, what impertinence! Will you excuse us, Count?

*Bern.*—Madam!

*Bord.*—Count! Hello, this place is rising like foam.

*Deog.* (*Taking him off to one side.*)—Don't pay any attention to my wife.

*Bord.*—No, it's not worth the trouble. I've come for the pearl gray velvet, and I must—.

*Deog.*—Man, couldn't you come back—, for—, to tell the truth, we are just now entertaining the Count del Verde Sauco at lunch.

*Bord.*—Count del Verde Sauco? Has he come yet? Which is he? That one?

*Deog.*—Yes, but don't stare so; come back some other time.

*Bord.*—What luck! I was just hunting for him every where, because when he went to Paris, he left me an unpaid bill of two hundred dollars for an overcoat, a hunting suit and a corset.

*Deog.*—Man, in my house! We're in for it! (*This is something I hadn't counted on.*)

*Bord.*—Let me alone, I'll show you. Count, Count del Verde Sauco!

*Bern.*—(*The deuce! Just the minute I take possession of the title everybody knows me*) What do you want?

*Bib.*—What insolence!

*Bord.*—Your lordship is the Count del Verde Sauco?

*Bern.*—Yes, of course, come now, get through.

*Bord.*—Sir, I am the tailor Bordero, I have been several times to the inn where your lordship is lodging.

*Bern.*—*At the inn? This is something of the father's doing; good.*)

*Bord.*—And this same servant of your lordship's has sent me away every time; your lordship was busy, that, this, that, and the other—

*Jock.*—The orders of his lordship.

*Bern.*—Well, all right; you keep still; what about it?

*Bord.*—I respected your orders; but anyway, I have a note accepted and signed by your lordship in favor of me, which has matured.

*Deog.*—*(By Saint Elmo, we have made a mess of it!)* Senor Bordero, the Count is in my house now, and—

*Bern.*—*(How well they act their parts)* All right—this note—let's see it. *(Looks at it, and says aside.) (This is a scheme of the father; fashionable people always have debts, and he has scared one up at a minute's notice.)* Well, certainly; but what business is it of mine? It is true that I contracted the debt, but do you expect me to pay it too? Have I got to do it all? See my agent; men of my class are not accustomed to pay our debts ourselves; or do you think that I am just anybody?

*Bord.*—Oh, I know that there is a lot of difference; but I have turned it in at the court of commerce, and I should be very sorry to see your lordship arrested on account of an affair of this sort—

*Deog.*—*(The devil, they'll discover the whole thing.)*

*Bord.*—And jailed by the court—

*Bib. and Julia.*—Jailed!

*Bern.*—Ladies, this man is crazy; arrest me? It isn't possible. What does it amount to, a thousand dollars or so?

*Bord.*—Oh, nothing of that sort; just a trifling two hundred dollars.

*Bern.*—And you worry the life out of me for that? Of all the insolence!

*Bord.*—Sir, it is true; but your lordship owes it.

*Bern.*—I do you too much honor in remembering you when I need your services, and in owing you money, and—, in a word that is a mere trifle; here is Senor Deogracias; I have an open account with him; he will give it to you. What were we saying, ladies?

*Deog.*—What? Me! two hundred dollars?

*Bib.*—Yes, man. You couldn't refuse anything to the Count.

What do you know about such things as this, and style and etiquette? Give it to him.

*Bern.*—Really, it is such a little thing that I, in a similar case, would do for you—.

*Deog.*—Yes, but you think that it is a joke, while as a matter of fact I am in such a critical situation at this very moment—.  
(*But to give up such a scheme when it is going so well—perhaps I can collect it from the real count—, at least—*(Senor Bordero come with me.

*Bord.*—See here, while I am here, I'll have to take that watered silk with me.

*Deog.*—My wife will give it to you. (*To BERNARDO.*) I am going to leave you alone with her, I'll have my wife called out of the room.

*Bern.*—All right, and charge it to me.

#### SCENE X

DONA BIBIANA, JULIA, BERNARDO, *the JOCKEY*

*Bern.*—Those scoundrels think that a person has nothing to do but attend to their impertinence.

*Bib.*—Count, what can you expect? They have no principles nor education—a tailor—as you said you do them too much honor in looking at them, and much more in letting them call themselves your creditors.

*Bern.*—Of course! They are only an unknown lot of ragamuffins, and—.

#### SCENE XI

*The same*, FRANCISCO

*Franc.*—Madam, my master calls you for a moment.

*Bib.*—My Lord, what a man! Must I leave the Count?

*Bern.*—Madam, I know what business is like; it would hurt my feelings if you failed to do what you feel is your duty on my account.

*Julia.*—(*They are leaving me alone with him.*)

*Bern.*—(*The moment has come, I mustn't lose this chance.*)  
Rodolfo, go and see about the tilbury.

#### SCENE XII

JULIA, BERNARDO

*Bern* (*Catching her hands, and coming down stage.*)—Julia,

what a lucky opportunity, and what happiness is mine at being able to offer you my love! Are you sad? To be sure; what is the matter? Are you displeased at what I am doing? (*How I hate to deceive her, too! Ah! she's attracted by my title!*) Aren't you going to answer me?

*Julia.*—Count, you do us so much honor, that I can do no less than be grateful, to like you—.

*Bern.*—Honor? Gratitude? That means that you do not love me; if you loved me—, lovers don't do each other any favor in loving; rank means nothing to them.

*Julia.*—And you you think that it means anything to me? Tell me, when you followed me, did I know that you were a Count, and didn't my eyes tell you that you were not indifferent to me?

*Bern.*—What are you saying? That means that even if I were not the Count del Verde Sauco you would love me?

*Julia.*—Count, I have already said more than woman has the right to say; but since even before we had spoken to one another, I had given you some indications of my regard, I should go on. If you had never given me such a test of love as this, you would believe, like every one else, that I have the same ideas as my mother, that I appreciate only the glitter; but, oh! you don't know how it hurt me when my mother told me that the Count del Verde Sauco was asking my hand; my heart sank; but I put on a bold face, but remembering my unknown admirer, and determined to make the Count the object of my scorn, I hated his rank, my mother's pet hobby—, and only when I recognized in you the same one whom my heart esteemed secretly, did I regain the peace of mind which I thought I had lost forever.

*Bern.*—Julia, can it be possible? (*And must I be a trickster, a crazy fool, in her eyes? No!*) Julia, you must know—.

*Julia.*—Oh! get up; for heaven's sake, my father is coming.

*Bern.*—Julia, if you love me—.

*Julia.*—Yes, yes, depend on my love, but get up.

*Bern.*—(*Darn her father, what does he want now? She should have known who I am, and that I haven't any debts.*)

### SCENE XIII

JULIA, BERNARDO, DON DEOGRACIAS

*Deog.*—Count, I have the pleasure of telling you that the account is paid, and here is the receipt.

*Bern.*—Keep it for me; we shall settle all that later.

*Julia.*—Papa, you are going to talk business, I'll go to mama.

*Bern.*—Julia, you couldn't disturb us.

*Julia.*—It's all right; goodby, Count.

*Bern.*—Goodby, dear Julia.

*Deog.*—Well, run along, we'll soon be there. (*I'll get a chance to tell him about the note; he thinks it's a part of the plan, and I'm desperate.*)

## SCENE XIV

DON DEOGRACIAS, BERNARDO

*Deog.*—Friend Bernardo, this—

*Bern.*—This is working out fine; congratulate me and give me your blessing, my friend; I haven't lost any time; but how well you have arranged everything even thinking up the creditor and the note—

*Deog.*—Easy, there, Bernardo; I'll tell you—

*Bern.*—Yes, yes, I understand; you are a prodigy of skill.

*Deog.*—But I'm not—

*Bern.*—Of course you are; if you weren't, you couldn't do things in such a way. They would have suspected.

*Deog.*—No, sir—

*Bern.*—No; as it is, how could they get onto it? Well sir, you may be smart, but you'll have to confess that I'm not so slow; I've spoken to the girl and not only have I found out that she loves me, but I have tested her out and found that she doesn't think like her mother, that she doesn't love me because I am a count; even if I wasn't one she would love me; she herself told me so, here, just now, as you were coming—, and that air of frankness—, No, no, she is not deceiving me; and you were certainly unaccommodating to come so soon.

*Deog.*—What, unaccommodating after digging up two hundred dollars?

*Bern.*—Let's leave off the jokes; yes, sir; and I can't keep up the farce any longer; your daughter is a jewel, and if she isn't to be carried away by the glamour of a title, we must tell her everything, and I'm going right now while I'm so happy—

*Deog.* (*Holding him back*).—Man, come here; he won't let me talk, and he's going to ruin everything. The girl may be all that you want her to be, and she may love you without your being a count; but not her mother; man, look out what you are doing, in the name of the eleven thousand virgins and all the un-numbered martyrs of Saragossa.

*Bern.*—That doesn't make any difference, the girl shall be mine.

*Deog.*—Man, I'm going to lose my two hundred dollars and my son-in-law too; come here, you raving lunatic, for the whole thing is ruined, unless—.

*Bern.*—But if you and the girl want it that way—.

*Deog.*—Even if all the girls in this quarter of the city wanted it that way, and if my wife didn't want it that way, you and I, and the girl and the whole quarter would wind up, scratched, and mad, and ruined, and without eyes in our heads. Take it easy, play your part, for my plan isn't over yet; come with me, they might come back here and hear us; in my room, I'll finish telling you how this disguise happened to offer itself, and what it's all about, and what has happened, anyway, come to my room.

### ACT III

#### SCENE I

DON DEOGRACIAZ, *later*, PASCASIO

*Deog.*—It will have to be done, yes; my wife is the devil incarnate. Pascasio, Pascasio—. That boy might betray the whole thing.

*Pasc.*—Sir.

*Deog.*—See here, you were a servant to the Count del Verde Sauco?

*Pasc.*—Yes, sir; you know that I came here from his house, that I left because I never saw a cent of my wages, because he kept me running from one place to another all day long; to the tailor's; to his creditors' to keep up their hope; to the money-lender's and the pawn-shop whenever his lordship was in some financial difficulty and had to get out at all costs.

*Deog.*—Well, well, you have already told me all that.

*Pasc.*—But after all, I think a great deal of him as I do of all my masters; that is a different matter, and if I could be of any service to him that wasn't—.

*Deog.*—All right, all right; see here, Pascasio, you are a shrewd fellow.

*Pasc.*—Sir, since I have been your gardener, I hope—.

*Deog.*—No, you haven't given me any cause to regret it, I'm satisfied; but come to my room; it is necessary, since you know the Count, that you don't give away a plan that I am working on.

*Pasc.*—Sir, you know that I—.

## SCENE II

COUNT DEL VERDE SAUCO, SIMÓN, FRANCISCO

*Franc.*—(*Opening the door for them.*) They may be a little longer, they are dressing their hair; but come in.

*Count.*—We'll be better off here than in that damned waiting room.

*Simón.*—But, sir, the Count del Verde Sauco himself in these disguises and mysteries? Is it possible that you are so in love that you do not know that you are liable to make yourself ridiculous?

*Count.*—Ha, ha, ha! You don't understand.

*Simón.*—Your lordship laughs? Well, it certainly is a laughing matter.

*Count.*—Why shouldn't I laugh? You don't know half of the story? Love, did you say? Have you ever seen me in love since you have been my valet? That's very old-fashioned, very plebeian.

*Simón.*—Well, sir, I can't imagine what object your lordship can have in coming thus to the house of a simple merchant, waiting until the man of the house is away, sending word to the mistress, and waiting here in an uncomfortable waiting-room, a place that your lordship wouldn't let any—

*Count.*—That's right; see here, since you are with me in this intrigue, and know already that my departure is fictitious, I'm going to confide in you. You know something about how my affairs are going?

*Simón.*—Yes, sir, I know.

*Count.*—That my only hope is in my aunt, who is dying, but who will probably come out of this attack as she has come out of so many others, and will live a long time yet?

*Simón.*—Yes, sir.

*Count.*—That I am over-run with debts, that I was even before I went to Paris and that I completely ruined myself there? You see, that infernal Josephine flayed me alive; but how can you help it? For a man of my class, it is absolutely necessary to have horses, lots of style, a good table, servants, a box at the opera, clothes made by the best tailor, have the best shoemaker, live in an expensive establishment—, then those girls aren't satisfied if you don't give them every day a bracelet set with diamonds, a set of jewelry, a watch, and I couldn't find any stopping-place; in a word, you know women, and you know as well as I do that in order to be loved—.



*Simón.*—Yes, sir, yes, sir.

*Count.*—Then you have to go to social affairs, and being there you have to play, and playing, you have to lose, and losing, you know what happens; so that I, who used to need very little, had to come back when my factor, who speaking here between the two of us is a down-right rascal—.

*Simón.*—Yes, sir.

*Count.*—But a rascal that I can't very well discharge, because, since it isn't the style for a man to keep his own accounts, he is smart enough, after having robbed me, to prove to me that I still owe him money and favors; well, sir, I had to come back here when this rascal wrote me that I had no more funds; that the greater part of my property was mortgaged; that the only thing I had left free was a little young vineyard that doesn't yield enough wine to fill a bottle, and that my creditors were driving him wild, and I must—.

*Simón.*—Yes, yes, I see.

*Count.*—Then the vexatious fact that a man can't do anything without the whole world's knowing about it, has caused the report of my ruin to precede me everywhere; so that the only remedy that remained to avert a shameful smash-up, that is, to marry some one of my own class to re-establish my fortunes, is out of the question. I've gone over my affairs, and I find that I'm getting worse involved all the time. What with not having a house in Madrid, and pretending to have one, I have to live in an inn. I saw that it was up to me to take an extraordinary step to save my honor; I have tried out everything; these people are rich merchants; the mother is crazy about shining in society, and she can do anything with her daughter like all mothers; the father is a different proposition, but we all know about what influence most fathers have in their own homes—.

*Simón.*—Yes, yes; and would your lordship try to marry—?

*Count.*—And why not? It seems to me that I'm not the first of my class—.

*Simón.*—Oh, to be sure; if your lordship does it, it is well done. But then, the only thing to do is to present yourself face to face, for those who have money and are plebeian will give their whole fortunes for a title more or less; they are all fools, and couldn't refuse—.

*Count.*—The women couldn't; but I've already told you that the father is different; I thought just as you do, and I wrote him, asking his daughter's hand in marriage—.

*Simón.*—I say! That's quick work. And what did he answer?

*Count.*—What I wasn't looking for; that it is impossible for him to accede to my wishes, because he was negotiating with a certain Bernardo, son of his friend Benedicto Pujavante, from Barcelona, and that even though they don't know him, the girl is entirely in favor of him, because of the reports of his good qualities, and that he couldn't see me because he was going hunting.

*Simón.*—To think that your lordship should suffer this insult! And now, why should your lordship come here and come in, if the girl has a suitor, and if the father is against you—?

*Count.*—I must change my plan; tell me, do you remember that fat man who complained so much about his gout and his eye, who came to see me twice in Barcelona, as I was returning from Paris?

*Simón.*—Yes, sir, yes; how could I forget him?

*Count.*—Well, that is the said Benedict, a tapestry dealer, whom I have had some business dealings with, and I know him and his whole family, and have known them all my life; I know something about his son Bernardo; he is about my height. He stayed in Barcelona when we came away; it would be a strange thing if he came here now.

*Simón.*—You don't say? Is it possible?

*Count.*—And very possible, you heard me. You see, Don Deogracias won't be at home for three days at least; he is hunting, as he himself says. I come, I ask for the ladies; I introduce myself as Bernardo; don't worry, I won't betray myself; they are already prejudiced in my favor, especially the girl. They will treat me like a suitor, a frankness that should help some itself; I'm not to be despised, and I can depend on my powers. Let me get thirty minutes to myself and I will turn the girl's head; it won't be my first conquest. If the father shows up, I'll declare myself to the mother a moment beforehand; she's crazy, and that is her weak side; when she sees that I'm a Count, I don't like to think about the row that will take place in this house. Besides, if the girl loves me as Bernardo, why shouldn't she adore me as the Count? It's the most natural thing in the world; the father will growl, and say—. But when he sees that it's all over, what can he do? Give up and shell out the dowry.

*Simón.*—I declare, the scheme isn't a bad one; but what has all this to do with the story about your going away and hiding even from the servants?

*Count.*—Well, my creditors are driving me crazy; in the week that I have been back, I have scarcely gone anywhere; they would have overwhelmed me; and until I see the end of this scheme I think it better to stay hidden. If it turns out all right, I'll begin to make a few payments, and then everything will be all right; if not, I'll think up something else. In the meantime, even the Jockey who left me in San Bernardo Street, has believed it.

*Simón.*—Good, good; that's quite different; but I think some one's coming—.

*Count.*—Go on away, then; leave us alone.

### SCENE III

THE COUNT, DONA BIBIANA, JULIA

*Bib.*—Well, he has very bad taste; every gentleman ought to have some debts. Sir, good evening. (*Aside.*) Julia, what a figure of a man! What a common-looking figure.

*Count.*—Ladies, at your feet. (*What a face!*)

*Bib.*—(*At your feet, what an old-fashioned common-place!*) What is it you wish?

*Count.*—(*I don't know how to begin.*) Madam, I believe that you must be Dona Bibiana.

*Bib.*—What's the big idea? Dona Bibiana? I'm not Dona Bibiana, nor—.

*Count.*—(*Hum! I wonder if I could be mistaken in the house: I don't think so.*)

Madam, doesn't Don Deogracias de la Plantilla live here?

*Bib.*—Yes, sir, and what of it?

*Count.*—Well, then, I suppose you are his wife, Dona Bibiana.

*Bib.*—There you go saying Dona Bibiana again; what rudeness! Haven't I told you that my name isn't Bibiana? My name is Concha, and you are very much behind the times—.

*Count.*—(*Bad! a vexatious mistake; however.*) Concha, to be sure, madam, pardon me; I have just arrived, I have several letters of recommendation, one of them a very interesting one for a certain Dona Bibiana, and I was thinking about that name. But what a foolish mistake! You shall see whether I should know your name; I am Bernardo Pujavante and I have just arrived from Barcelona. (*What a cold reception!*)

*Bib.*—Are you Don Bernardo?

*Count.*—Yes, madam.

*Bib.*—(To JULIA.) Julia, what a bad time for him to come!

*Julia.*—Oh, mama!

*Count.*—And wishing to introduce myself to you although I know that Don Deogracias—. (*They are not listening to me.*)

*Bib.*—(To JULIA.) If we could get rid of him, so that Deogracias couldn't see him—. Who knows but that he might change his mind? I'm going to tell him that he isn't at home.

*Count.*—(*Great heavens, what a reception!*) So Don Deogracias is—.

*Bib.*—Sir, my husband is not at home, and I am not accustomed to take charge of his affairs; you might come back day after tomorrow or the next day—. Indeed, I have heard my husband talk of a certain Bernardo, from Barcelona, but I don't know what sort of business he might have with him, and I can not, in his absence, interfere in things that—.

*Count.*—(*Very bad.*) Madam, I certainly did not expect such a reception; nor do I believe that you are ignorant of your husband's plans; besides, I have not yet secured lodgings in Madrid, because I was depending on staying here, as one who comes to be the son-in-law of Don Deogracias.

*Bib.*—Who? You? Marry my daughter? Sir, you are mad; the son of a tapestry dealer? I must say that that is impudence; I have often talked with my husband about the matter, and he certainly never told me any thing about such a plan; and it isn't possible for a marriage of that sort—. And anyway, as far as your staying here is concerned, while my husband is not at home, I can not receive any one. (*That will start him off right away; I'm on needles and pins.*)

*Count.*—For God's sake! Madam, I'll talk to Don Deogracias; we shall see whether I know what I am talking about. And I shall acquaint my father with the insulting treatment that you have accorded me.

*Bib.*—What rudeness! To insult the mother of the girl he wants to marry, besides every thing else; come Julia, let us leave this man here. What manners! What difference there is between this fellow and the Count! Well, anyway he is the son of a tapestry dealer.

#### SCENE IV

#### THE COUNT, JULIA

*Count.*—(*What a mess! If I could talk to the girl.*) Senorita, senorita—. You too?

*Julia.*—(*I don't like him at all but I am sorry for him.*) Sir, mother has a rather quick temper, pardon her for her impetuous words.

*Count.*—Ah, Julia; the report that came to Barcelona about your charms was true, and certainly no one could see you without falling in love with you.

*Julia.*—Leave me. (*Great heavens, if the COUNT should come.*) Let me go, mama is waiting.

*Count.*—Well, what am I to do? You will realize the embarrassing situation I am in.

*Julia.*—My goodness! Of course, but let me go! I—, see here—, I don't understand. What should I say to you? Don't you hear? She is calling me. Oh! I'm coming.

*Count.*—Julia, a moment longer; where can I see you? Speak to your mother. A moment. (*Holding her back.*)

*Julia.*—I can not; we have a distinguished visitor; the Count del Verde Sauco is here. Goodby.

*Count.*—What? The Count del Verde Sauco did you say? Julia, Julia!

#### SCENE V

Great heavens! To think that such a thing should happen to me! I'll swear I have been made a fool of; well, the said Bernardo has the field in his favor. This fellow was deceiving me, that was only a subterfuge. Damn me! what shall I do? Goodby, hopes and dowry. But this Count del Verde Sauco? I'm curious—, but there's some one coming; I'd better hide; maybe I'll hear what I want to know.

#### SCENE VI

DON DEOGRACIAS, BERNARDO, PASCASIO; *the COUNT hidden in the garden.*

*Deog.*—(*To PASCASIO.*) Hurry up now, the tobacco house will be closed. I'm out of snuff, see that you get the best kind, and take it to Don Pedro's house; I'll wait for you there; and not a word about the other.

*Pasc.*—All right, sir.

#### SCENE VII

*The same, except PASCASIO*

*Bern.*—Is it possible? Then it wasn't made up? Ha, ha, ha!

*Deog.*—What did you think it was? No, sir, dollar by dollar; you see that we have begun by paying a pretty rent on the new character.

*Bern.*—With good luck Count del Verde Saucó himself will pay it.

*Count.*—(*They are talking of me.*)

*Deog.*—You think he'll pay it?

*Bern.*—Why shouldn't he pay it? As soon as this is over, either way it turns out, I'll hunt him up, make him acknowledge his debt, and—

*Count.*—(*What debt is that?*)

*Deog.*—No, sir, no; not even if you got him by the back of the neck.

*Count.*—(*To be discovered in this house!*)

*Deog.*—Don't you see that he is a ruined man, a madcap—?

*Count.*—(*Bravo!*)

*Deog.*—In fact, it's absolutely certain that he won't pay it; I wouldn't care either, if we succeed in our object; but if after all, my wife won't give up, if my daughter Julia—

*Count.*—(*Is he the father? Well, that's not a bad way to be hunting; what a lot of deceptions!*)

*Bern.*—But, man, haven't I told you that your daughter loves me?

*Count.*—(*What is he saying?*)

*Deog.*—Yes, sir, I have no doubt that she loves you very much—

*Bern.*—Well, whether she loves me or not, I'm going to clear this thing up with her; I'm not going to pass in her eyes for what I am not—

*Count.*—(*Aha!*)

*Deog.*—Still harping on the same string?

*Bern.*—But, my dear Don Deogracias, for how long am I not to be the one I have been all my life?

*Deog.*—Until tomorrow; that's all the time I ask.

*Bern.*—But what do you intend to do, now?

*Deog.*—Yes, sir, I still have some intentions that I mean to carry out. See here, come here, man alive, don't let them hear us. Tonight my wife and my daughter won't fail to go to their social function; you know I told you how my wife has made me, too, play, lose, in a word, be a sport.

*Bern.*—Yes, go on.

*Deog.*—Well, tonight, I'll pretend to go with some friends,

with the Baron del Tahurete, that scoundrel—.

*Bern.*—Yes, sir.

*Deog.*—But, I forgot; in the first place you can't go to that party still trying to pass for him.

*Bern.*—Well?

*Deog.*—You see that it is impossible; in a little while, you say goodby, go anywhere you please—.

*Bern.*—All right, go on. What will you do?

*Deog.*—Well, I, as I told you—.

*Count.*—(*Just listen.*)

*Deog.*—I'll pretend to go with these fellows; I won't come back for them, and when they are least expecting it—. That will be the real blow, you'll see whether it won't produce an effect on them.

*Bern.*—For heaven's sake, go ahead.

*Deog.*—Just wait, for that is the soul of the whole plan, it will be the last blow.

*Bern.*—Great Scot! hurry up.

*Deog.*—Easy there; isn't any body listening?

*Bern.*—How could they? no, sir, not a soul.

*Deog.*—Well, sir—, but look out there comes my daughter.

*Bern.*—To hell with the plan—.

*Deog.*—You see how wise I was to go easy; I'm going after my cash box while you—.

*Bern.*—Don Deogracias—.

*Deog.*—Why, I'll be back.

## SCENE VIII

BERNARDO, *the* COUNT, *later*, JULIA

*Count.*—(*I'll swear that I've got my affairs into a pretty mess; and it won't be easy for me to get out of here.*)

*Julia.*—Count.

*Count.*—(*Count Good!*)

*Bern.*—Oh, Julia, I'm so happy; I think for the first day that we have known each other we have certainly enjoyed the pleasure of being together.

*Julia.*—Oh, if I could only believe that the Count del Verde Sauco loved me as sincerely as he says he does—.

*Count.*—(*What's that? COUNT DEL VERDE SAUCO?*)

*Bern.*—Julia, can you doubt my love?

*Count.*—(*Shall I put up with this?*)

*Julia.*—No; not doubt. But, oh, everything; out in the world, in the entanglements of high society, what time have you to dedicate to the memory of your beloved.

*Bern.*—It is true; the world has many attractions; but believe me, my Julia, since I have loved you, there is nothing else that can appeal to me.

*Julia.*—Yes, I believe you; but I have one worry; they say that you are brave, have you fought many duels?

*Bern.*—Madam, there are certain inevitable obligations; a man of my rank—

*Julia.*—Inevitable! Tell me, if you had a sweetheart—

*Bern.*—Why be so cruel as to suppose it, when you can be sure of it? Haven't I one now?

*Julia.*—Well, so be it; tell me, in that case would you have the courage—?

*Bern.*—Who doubts it? My honor—

*Julia.*—To go and be killed?

*Bern.*—My honor—

*Julia.*—Your honor! And to defend your honor, must you be a cruel barbarian? And you say you love me?

*Bern.*—But my Julia, you yourself would despise me if you saw that I was capable of refusing a challenge, would you not?

*Count.*—(*I can't stand any more of this: I'm going to challenge him. I made an ass of myself when I changed my name.*) (*Takes a notebook out of his pocket, and writes with a pencil on a leaf that he then tears out; he forgets the notebook, and leaves it on the bench after finishing the note, and slips out the door.*)

*Bern.*—Aren't you going to answer me?

*Julia.*—You don't love me.

*Bern.*—My Julia!

*Julia.*—Mama is coming.

## SCENE IX

BERNARDO, JULIA, DONA BIBIANA

*Bib.*—Just go on; it seems that the Count is as kind as they say he is.

*Julia.*—Mama, I don't know why you say that.

*Bern.*—Your mama is always very indulgent.

*Bib.*—And may I take part in your conversation?

*Julia.*—Yes, of course; I was saying to the Count that I do not like some customs, such as duelling.



*Bib.*—Julia, I don't think that I have educated you to have any such notions. Don't pay any attention to her, Count; she is only a child.

*Bern.*—Madam, she is quite right. (*What a shame! to play this part in her eyes!*)

*Julia.*—But, mama, duelling—. Here is papa, you shall see that he agrees with me.

## SCENE X

*The same, DON DEOGRACIAS*

*Julia.*—Papa, you are just in time.

*Deog.*—For what, my child?

*Julia.*—Tell me, if you had a sweetheart, and you received a challenge, would you have the courage to leave her?

*Bib.*—(*Aside to DEOGRACIAS.*) You big boob! Don't you go and say something foolish. Remember the Count is here.

*Bern.*—The truth, Don Deogracias.

*Deog.*—(*I'll have to pretend.*)

*Julia.*—Papa, do you think so?

*Deog.*—Daughter, I'll tell you, a gentleman, of high birth, can not refuse these affairs of honor, and better die than be shamed; I believe that the Count will agree with me.

*Bib.*—(*He's beginning to get civilized.*)

*Julia.*—Do you really think so?

*Deog.*—Why not? A man of birth—.

*Julia.*—Plague on his birth!

## SCENE XI

*The same, SIMON with a note*

*Deog.*—Whom are you looking for?

*Simón.*—Is the Count del Verde Sauco here?

*Bern.*—(*What new piece of deviltry! DON DEOGRACIAS—.*)

*Deog.*—(*Aside to BERNARDO.*) Answer. (*If it should be another tailor.*)

*Bern.*—What can I do for you?

*Simón.*—Are you he?

*Bern.*—Yes; don't you see me?

*Simón.*—Yes, to be sure. This note was just handed to me, to be given into your own hand, and as quickly as possible.

*Bern.*—(*Takes it.*) Of course; "To the Count del Verde

Sauco." (*Some trick of papa's.*) (*To DON DEOGRACIAS, in a low tone.*) This is part of the plan, too?

*Deog.*—Maybe. (*I declare, the boy's helping me, and without saying anything about it.*)

*Julia.*—My God! My heart! Count, will you permit me to read it to you?

*Bib.*—Julia! Why, child! Did you ever see such rudeness? Did you ever—?

*Julia.*—Just a favor, mama; nothing more; I beg of you.

*Bern.*—Let her alone; I can not deny you anything. (*No matter what it is.*)

*Julia.*—Oh, it is easy to see that it was written in a hurry! And in pencil! (*Reads.*) "Count, I suppose that you are a gentleman; in this understanding, another gentleman, whom you have insulted, demands satisfaction." My God! My heart told me so! (*Leans on her mother's shoulder, crying.*)

*Bern.*—Satisfaction? Give it to me; of course; and in the Cafe de—, at—; I?

*Deog.*—(*Good! I had forgotten. A duel! It was indispensable. That's why he turned the conversation to the subject.*)

*Bern.*—(*To SIMON.*) Who sent you? This signature—?

*Simón.*—Sir, I don't know.

*Bern.*—(*Bah, bah, bah!*) (*Aside to DON DEOGRACIAS.*) Don Deogracias, this accursed interruption of our plan—. But now we are at the end of the lane, eh?

*Deog.*—(*Indeed, I should never have thought of it; well, I must say the boy's slow.*)

*Bern.*—(*DON DEOGRACIAS is pretty smooth.*) But, great heavens, Julia!

*Julia.*—Leave me alone—. Since we have been speaking it seems to me that God has touched my heart.

*Bib.*—My daughter—.

*Bern.*—Why, this is nothing; I am very much used to these affairs; this is only a trifle, a scratch, an eye missing.

*Julia.*—An eye!

*Bern.*—Well, an eye and a few bottles. (*To SIMON.*) Well, all right; tell the fellow that I'll be there.

*Julia.*—So you dare to do this thing? Papa, are you going to desert me?

*Deog.*—Daughter, we must let things take their course; you shall marry the gentleman, but first he must go and break heads

with the man he insulted. The laws of honor, every thing demands it; the Count isn't just anybody.

*Bern.*—Julia, believe me, this is nothing; I'm not a coward.

*Deog.*—Indeed, Count, and it would look very badly, for you to let your peers hiss at you on account of a girl; I don't say that you should let your head be broken, but a thousand heads if you had them; it is a very reasonable custom; and perhaps because you shoved him off the sidewalk. Oh, yes, indeed, in that case, how could you avoid the duel? And if I weren't in a hurry, I would be your second, but I'm already late.

*Bern.*—But you are going?

*Julia.*—Papa!

*Deog.*—But what do you want me to do? I'll be back right away to dine and to learn the result.

*Julia.*—Stop him! Is it possible that I can be so unhappy? Curse honor!

*Bern.*—Don Deogracias, Don Deogracias—. It's too late; he is running like a boy. But Julia, don't worry so, perhaps it won't take place; if it is a barbarous custom, those who keep it up, try to soften it; these things are not so serious as they seem. (*To DONA BIBIANA.*) Madam, I leave you with this sacred trust, and go to my duty.

*Julia.*—Mama! Oh, he is going and they have all let him go! My God, what will happen to him!

*Bib.*—Come, child; what do you think is going to happen to him? You are becoming very imprudent; of course he has to go to a duel; is there anything more reasonable? Why, if the Count has insulted the other fellow, shouldn't he break his head to pacify him and make amends for it? Come, lie down awhile. Francisco! Girls! Come, daughter; quiet down; drink a little water. This is nothing. A duel is like his daily bread to a sport.

## ACT IV

### SCENE I

#### BERNARDO, FRANCISCO

*Bern.*—Here, Francisco!

*Franc.*—Sir?

*Bern.*—Has Don Deogracias come back yet?

*Franc.*—Yes, and has gone off again.

*Bern.*—Will he be back soon?

*Franc.*—I don't think so, for as he went away he said that he

was going to the wholesale importer's, and you know, in a place like that—, an hour at least.

*Bern.*—What a man! He certainly is calm about it. And the ladies?

*Franc.*—The young lady is better. When you went away, she lay down, and wouldn't eat; but afterwards, her mother said so much her to that she had to get up and get ready—, and they are in the boudoir getting ready for tonight.

*Bern.*—All right, go ahead; when Don Deogracias comes, if he doesn't come in here, let me know.

*Franc.*—All right.

## SCENE II

### BERNARDO

Don Deogracias is a wonder; just think, and he looks like a nobody. Who would have thought that he was so ingenious? For the idea of thinking up a duel is certainly an excellent one. It's going to cost me some trouble to play my part with that angel; her tears break my heart, for, although I am a man of honor and no coward, I don't see the necessity for killing each other over a trifle. But who is that?

## SCENE III

### BERNARDO, *the* COUNT.

*Count.*—(*Enters.*) (*Here is my man!*)

*Bern.*—(*I am so excited about the remaining part of the plan that I imagine everything is a new trick.*)

*Count.*—Sir, one word

*Bern.*—(*What a devil of a man!*)

*Count.*—You are the Count del Verde Sauco?

*Bern.*—(*Great Scot! I'm through; I'll not play this part anywhere else; it's something of DON DEOGRACIAS'; he should have warned me.*)

*Count.*—Sir, did you hear me talking to you?

*Bern.*—Ah, yes. Pardon me, I am absent-minded.

*Count.*—I asked if I have the honor of speaking to his lordship, the Count del Verde Sauco?

*Bern.*—Yes, sir, I am he.

*Count.*—My dear sir; (*I'll scare him.*)—in that case we can talk. I suppose you have received a note?

*Bern.*—Yes, sir. (*This doesn't look good to me; if it's a joke, why keep it up?*)

*Count.*—Well?

*Bern.*—What?

*Count.*—You were challenged. (*He's a coward, and I can bully him.*)

*Bern.*—Yes, sir.

*Count.*—(*He's scared to death.*) Well?

*Bern.*—What?

*Count.*—You didn't show up.

*Bern.*—That is so.

*Count.*—And among men of honor, you must know, eh?

*Bern.*—(*The deuce!*) Certainly, but an engagement—, if you wish, we can—.

*Count.*—No, sir. Why? I'm an unprejudiced man; I'll fight anywhere; I should say that this garden—. (*That way, they'll hear it in the house, we won't have to fight and I'll expose him.*)

*Bern.*—What, man! This isn't my house.

*Count.*—Yes, sir, here; it's the same distance from every place to the next world. Come!

*Bern.*—Sir—.

*Count.*—(*The very calves of his legs are trembling.*)

*Bern.*—(*Rises.*) This insistence on its taking place here—. (*Come, this is a joke; the pistols are only loaded with powder; Don DEOGRACIAS wants to make it life-like so that they can hear it.*)

*Count.*—I am surprised that such a man as you should harbor such cowardly sentiments.

*Bern.*—I? Cowardly sentiments?

*Count.*—Well, come; the longer you think it over the worse it will appear to you.

*Bern.*—But come here; for indeed, I don't believe that Don Deogracias has paid you to—, and as far as our plan is concerned, although I know they are only loaded with powder, well, you see, since they don't know about it—.

*Count.*—(*He's giving up now.*) What are you talking about? I paid? That is an insult; Count, defend yourself.

*Bern.*—(*By heaven, it's a duel; this isn't a joke; this is an affair of the real Count; it will be best to tell him that I'm not the Count.*)

*Count.*—Come, let's fight.

*Bern.*—Well, sir, you are under a false impression.

*Count.*—(*He's going to make a clean breast of it, but it won't do*

him any good; *I'm going to expose him.*) What?

*Bern.*—Yes, sir; I don't want them to hear it; I'm not the Count, nor—

*Count.*—Count, who would have thought it of you? To add to your cowardice, the vileness of denying your name? Your fear—

*Bern.*—Fear? I don't know what it is; but talk lower; I'm not he; I have certain reasons—. At any rate, come back here tomorrow at this time and I will tell you—

*Count.*—What? are you trying to escape? We shall see whether you are the Count. They know you here in this house; we shall see whether you will still maintain in their presence—

*Bern.*—(*What is he going to do?*) (*The COUNT starts to call.*) (*This fellow is going to expose me.*) (*Goes to the COUNT, stops him, and changes his tone, threatening and holding him.*) Come here; I am the Count; yes, sir, we shall fight, and most especially, talk lower, or—

*Count.*—What, you?

*Bern.*—Hush! Lower your voice. If, for private reasons, I have seemed like a coward to you, you are going to learn that I am not; we shall fight, but first we are going to find out with whom.

*Count.*—(*Bad.*) Sir, that isn't necessary.

*Bern.*—Absolutely, and quickly.

*Count.*—(*I must pretend, for my debt—, and this man has changed somehow.*)

*Bern.*—Eh? Come!

*Count.*—(*What's the difference? BERNARDO or not, it's all the same to him.*)

*Bern.*—Come.

*Count.*—Well, sir, you probably don't know me; but I am from Barcelona, my name is Bernardo Pujavante.

*Bern.*—What's that? You Bernardo Pujavante? (*What's that! Ha, ha, ha!*) (*Coldly.*) So you are Bernardo?

*Bern.*—Look out what you are saying; I know the said Bernardo—

*Count.*—You?

*Bern.*—I, and you don't resemble him in the least.

*Count.*—Good!

*Bern.*—This Bernardo isn't a sport, he doesn't fight duels, he can't play with a fencing-foil; but he is a man that won't let himself be insulted by any one, either.

*Count.*—Do you dare?

*Bern.*—Yes, sir, and to you; and why? Right this minute I am going to know who you are, right now, or you are going to tell it where—.

*Count.*—(*I've made a mess of it; he looks scared!*)

*Bern.*—Hurry up, or—.

*Count.*—Sir, as a matter of fact; let us be plain, I am not Bernardo; but be reasonable, for I'm inclined to believe that you are not who you say you are, either, and then—.

*Bern.*—That doesn't make any difference.

*Count.*—But, indeed—.

*Bern.*—Tell me who you are and be quick about it; I am the Count del Verde Sauco.

*Count.*—Well, sir, if you are not going to let me be Bernardo, I am nobody.

*Bern.*—What?

*Count.*—In fact, I am not Bernardo, but I have always thought that I was the Count del Verde Sauco; excuse me.

*Bern.*—Who, you?

*Count.*—Sir, if you won't—. But here are some papers that—!

*Bern.*—Ha, ha, ha! Well, sir, it's funny.

*Count.*—Indeed, I must confess that it is a funny incident.

*Bern.*—But what is your object in assuming the name of Bernardo? I must know it.

*Count.*—Ha, ha, ha! We have only to make a mutual confession; that and a few bottles—.

*Bern.*—I'm not thinking of any such thing, for I need to be the Count for some time longer, at least in this house, and I'll never tell you any thing more than that.

*Count.*—What a crazy notion! I'm a friend of yours.

*Bern.*—Well, I'm not a friend of yours, for I don't see any reason why I should be.

*Count.*—Come, come, it's better to consider it a joke and own up—.

*Bern.*—Sir, you will do as I say, but there is some one coming; keep still, and be careful not to say a word here, and especially not to act the part of the Count until I say so.

*Count.*—But, sir, this—.

*Bern.*—And tomorrow morning at six o'clock sharp, in the Puerta del Sol; there are some things that I intend to find out from you. Goodby.

Count.—And to think that I would let him insult me! I've made a fool of myself.

## SCENE IV

BERNARDO, JULIA. *It has just got dark*

Julia.—(*With a small candle-stick.*) Oh, I've forgotten my handkerchief and my gloves here; to be sure, here they are. I didn't expect to find them. But who is that?

Bern.—(*JULIA; she'll ask me now, and I am tired of pretending.*)

Julia.—Oh! Is it you, Count? Tell me, how did it turn out? I was so frightened.

Bern.—(*What shall I say?*) Nothing, my dear Julia; just as I said. They drew lots, and it fell to my opponent to fire first; but, fortunately, the shot didn't go off, and the flint flew out of his pistol; I wouldn't fire, and the seconds interfered.

Julia.—What joy! And could you frighten me and make me cry? You are cruel.

Bern.—Julia, forgive me if—.

Julia.—Yes, I will forgive you—, but only on two conditions; but you must swear to fulfil them.

Bern.—And do you doubt me?

Julia.—Swear it.

Bern.—Well, I swear.

Julia.—You must tell me first who the challenger was; second, why.

Bern.—Great heavens!

Julia.—I am listening; aren't you going to tell me?

Bern.—I should like to; but it is impossible.

Julia.—Impossible?

Bern.—Men of my rank often have five or six of these affairs waiting at one time and can't know—.

Julia.—Five or six? Count, when I am your wife, will you go on like this?

Bern.—I shall always be the same and I can not—.

Julia.—And you can't quit? Give up your title or don't depend on my love.

Bern.—(*Heavens, what a chance!*) Julia, believe what I am going to tell you, and forgive me if I have kept hidden from you up till now—.

Julia.—I understand now; don't say anything more; you



kept the cause of this duel hidden from me; no doubt, some other passion, traitor!

*Bern.*—I a traitor? another passion?

*Julia.*—Well, tell me then.

*Bern.*—Julia, another passion! I would come nearer believing that it was some lover of yours, who had been offended; yes, there isn't any doubt about it.

*Julia.*—What did you say? What did he look like?

*Bern.*—(*Hello!*) About my size, a little taller, black eyes, big side-whiskers.

*Julia.*—Colored frock coat, rather well worn, green gloves.

*Bern.*—Yes, the very same; and with spurs on his boots.

*Julia.*—That's he, that's the one.

*Bern.*—Do you know him Julia? Who is he?

*Julia.*—You must not be angry with me—.

*Bern.*—I, Julia, with you? Go on, tell me?

*Julia.*—Count, this was a young man with whom father had my marriage arranged before we knew you; you came and it was dropped. He was out of town; we didn't even know him, but he arrived this morning in the hope of winning my hand; he introduced himself to mama, so that papa wouldn't see him, but she sent him packing, he complained to me, caught my hand, spoke to me—.

*Bern.*—Hurry up; what was his name?

*Julia.*—Bernardo Pujavante.

*Bern.*—Bernardo! (*I understand now: the scoundrel!*)

*Julia.*—What, are you excited? He spoke to me, but I swear to you, I despise him; he is crude, common; how much difference there is between you and Bernardo? In a word, if Bernardo came a hundred times to ask my hand, if papa insisted, if everybody took his part, I would still deny him my hand, I would die a thousand deaths rather than fail in the faith that I owe to the Count del Verde Saucó. Won't you believe me?

*Bern.*—(*Absently.*) (*He loves her; he has assumed my name just as I did his; but how did he learn that I—.*)

*Julia.*—Believe me, yes; I myself scorned him, I left him alone; and he must have found it out later; he must have seen you coming in or going out—.

*Bern.*—Yes, no doubt; I am mad, Julia, mad; I am going to see Don Deogracias; Julia, have pity on me.

*Julia.*—What in the world? What's the matter? I am such a fool! What have I told him? Is it possible?

*Bern.*—Julia, goodby; I shall return, but, I swear it, in a far different way. (*Exit.*)

*Julia.*—In a different way! My heavens! Count! What have I done? (*Throws herself down on the bank of turf, and sees the notebook which the Count left.*) What is this? A note-book—of the Count's, yes; but mama is coming, I must hide it.

## SCENE V

## DONA BIBIANA, JULIA

*Bib.*—Why, daughter, does it take you so long to find your gloves? My goodness! What's the matter? Are you crying? What has happened?

*Julia.*—Ah, mama, don't you know?

*Bib.*—What? Have you heard from the duel? Was he killed? Was he wounded? Oh, my God! What a horrible fashion! What a horrible custom! Oh, my poor daughter!

*Julia.*—Mama, be quiet; it isn't that, he came out all right.

*Bib.*—What? I can breathe again; I didn't have a drop of blood left in my body; just think, a marriage like that; with the finest sport in Madrid, I should think I would be scared. But, say, what is it; did he try to deceive you, is he a scoundrel?

*Julia.*—Mama—.

*Bib.*—Is he trying to back out? Doesn't he want to marry you now? Oh, my goodness!

*Julia.*—But, mama, why—.

*Bib.*—Was there ever such a rascal! To back out after he asked your hand! But why, why did it all happen? You are a fool; you probably lost him; well, it means that he has deceived us?

*Julia.*—But, mama, for goodness sake, let me talk; that isn't it; why do you keep talking about his deceiving me? That isn't it.

*Bib.*—Daughter, you see what happens to others; you have to be a little careful. Come, what was it?

*Julia.*—Mama, Bernardo, Bernardo—.

*Bib.*—Where is he? What has he done?

*Julia.*—He is the one who challenged—.

*Bib.*—Of all the nerve! The Count?

*Julia.*—Yes, ma'am, and I was so imprudent as to tell the Count what had happened, and he must have thought that I cared for him.

*Bib.*—You told him?

*Julia.*—I had to; and if you could have seen how he acted, raging, mad; and he went away saying that he was going to papa—

*Bib.*—To your father? I'll bet he knows it right now—. If I could head him off—. Yes, I'll tell him what is going on; I'll explain to the Count myself; there'll be the deuce to pay in this house, I tell you; my husband probably knows it now, and is keeping still about it; perhaps he is protecting him himself; here he comes; go into the store, leave me alone with him.

## SCENE VI

## DON DEOGRACIAS, DONA BIBIANA

*Bib.*—Come here, come here; what's going on here in this house? You are trying to deceive me, but you won't succeed; get that idea out of your head, you're not going to have your way; why are you keeping still? I'm listening, speak up.

*Deog.*—I picked the wrong time to come; but, wife, what is it? I deceive you?

*Bib.*—Yes, sir, you; so, Bernardo is here?

*Deog.*—(*What's this? She knows that he is Bernardo!*) But, wife, how? (*Goodby, plan.*)

*Bib.*—What, did you think that I don't know anything? And you knew it, too; deny it, if you dare.

*Deog.*—(*The poor fellow has betrayed himself, surely.*) It is true that I knew it, but—.

*Bib.*—Didn't I say so? Look here, Deogracias, let's get things straight; the way he acts, coming here—, with all that nerve.

*Deog.*—(*Didn't I say he has given himself away?*)

*Bib.*—Insulting everybody; that's past being a joke.

*Deog.*—(*We'll just have to be patient.*) But, wife, is it such a crime—. If he didn't love the girl he wouldn't have acted this way. Don't you see that it was his love that prompted him to do all this?

*Bib.*—You still excuse him; it's easy to see that we shall never agree on this point; what's the use of deceiving me and making me believe—? Look here, make up your mind; either get rid of Bernardo, right now, or give up your wife and your daughter; she hates him more than ever; she has scorned him to his face.

*Deog.*—To his face? Poor boy!

*Bib.*—Yes, to his face. So, do as you please; but you'll

never get your daughter to marry this man, no matter how many schemes and plots you think up. (*Exit.*)

*Deog.*—Bibiana! That can't be helped, she's gone. She's wild. I should like to get mad, but I don't count.

## SCENE VII

## DON DEOGRACIAZ

We've made a pretty mess of it; my plan all shot to pieces, and my wife spending money and lording it over me. Well, the rest of my scheme is going through; I don't want to be found from one night till the next morning without a cent, with my money all gone, no sir. I'll keep my money, and set my house in order; even if the marriage with the poor boy is all off, at least everything shan't be lost. But how did the scatter-brain do it? I told him, but he wouldn't listen to me, he was set on telling who he was; but here comes my daughter; it hurts me to see her; I am going to find him. He will tell me. At least I will console him. He must be feeling pretty badly.

## SCENE VIII

## JULIA

There isn't anybody here; there are so many people in that old shop. And I want so to see my notebook. It is the Count's. How pretty! Let's see. (*Reads.*) "A thousand dollars for the tilbury, that I can't pay yet." Another debt. And he owes for the tilbury yet; I don't like that sort of thing. If I marry him, I'll correct that. "Four hundred dollars at the inn." More debts! My goodness! A letter! What is this? "Dear Josephine." Heavens! Can he be deceiving me? It is dated today. "Dear Josephine, forget your suspicions; they are unfounded; it is true that I have confessed to you my plan for marrying Julia, and that I have asked for her hand; but there isn't any love in that, not even any inclination, only a matter of business. My affairs demand it; her dowry is large. In a word, don't be deceived and give me back your love; when I am married and you see me with you more constantly than ever—" Scoundrel! (*Falls into the chair.*)

## ACT V

## SCENE I

## PAZCASIO

What an errand! Here my old master, the Count del Verde Sauco is sending me word to look for a note-book. He says it's around here somewhere; well, it isn't here. And to give this note to my master; and a lot of other news, that he doesn't have to marry now, that his aunt has just died, that he has inherited, I don't know how much, and then that my master Don Deogracias has ruined himself gambling. Great Lord! What a lot of schemes and plots! Anyway, it is about six o'clock and my master and mistress haven't come home yet; they never have done this before—, but here they are.

## SCENE II

DON DEOGRACIAS, *later* PASCASIO

*Deog.*—I declare, this place looks like a lunatic asylum; what a mess, everything unlocked, nobody in bed at daylight, and not a soul in here. Lord, Lord, if we could only get done with it; where is that Bernardo? I've sent for him but I can't locate him since yesterday evening; I'll absolutely have to tell him about all this. What do you want?

*Pasc.*—Sir, I was just handed this letter for you.

*Deog.*—All right, get along; open and sweep the shop; the correspondence is beginning early this morning. "To Don Deogracias, etc.—, Count del Verde Sauco." Another one. The said Count is certainly persistent; he is even insisting again; well, I talked clearly enough in mine! Well, I'll read it later, I haven't any time to lose now. Francisco, Francisco!

## SCENE III

## DON DEOGRACIAS, FRANCISCO

*Franc.*—Sir.

*Deog.*—Have my wife and daughter returned yet?

*Franc.*—No, sir. The young gentleman who ate lunch here yesterday, the one who was so swell, was here, a moment ago.

*Deog.*—Yes, and then?

*Franc.*—He was mightily put out at not finding you at home;

he said he had been hunting you all night; and that he had heard don't know what all about losses and ruin and gambling, and—, he was scared.

*Deog.*—(*What, he believed it too?*) And did he leave?

*Franc.*—He said that he had an appointment at six with a count or a marquis, or something, but that he would be back in a little while.

*Deog.*—Good! Well, the thing that you want to do right away is to find the ladies; I am going to see if they are still at the house of the Baron de la Palma, who it seems, took them off to console them. We shall see how they took the news of my ruin. But there they come, go on; they don't look happy.

#### SCENE IV

DON DEOGRACIAS, DONA BIBIANA, JULIA

(*They enter through the store; FRANCESCO opens the door for them.*)

*Bib.*—My Lord, my Lord, what a night! It seems to me that all the deuces in the deck conspired against my pocket-book. But is it possible that you too—. Why, when you saw that I wasn't having any luck, did you want to go and play too?

*Deog.*—This fault-finding isn't very much to the point, and it's too late; you know yourself that I had never picked up a card; with this damned mania of yours you have brought me to the brink of the precipice, for it was a sports' game; you have ruined me in a thousand ways; the servants, the livery, the carriage to go anywhere and everywhere, dresses, diamonds, printed notes even to let people know when we were taking a walk, invitations, dances, spreads, to make all Madrid laugh at us; in a word, everything that could bring us along with our ruin, the contempt of our equals, the indignation of our superiors, and the scorn and the gossip of the whole town. It's too late to be helped now, we'll have to begin again now at fifty years, if the ridicule that we have brought on ourselves doesn't make us die of shame.

*Bib.*—What! Are we entirely ruined? It isn't possible.

*Deog.*—I've already told you, even the store; in a word, we haven't anything left but our vanity.

*Julia.*—Oh, mama, how many times have I begged you not to gamble!

*Bib.*—What! You didn't want me to play? What's the difference? You haven't done anything and you won't do anything. As soon as I saw the situation, I went to the house of the

Baron del Palma, and there I wrote three letters describing our condition to the Marchioness del Clavel, the Baron de Baraundi, and to the Duke del Trmino, and I am sure that they will help us—, I know their friendship too well, and if we lost yesterday, we shall win tomorrow.

*Deog.*—That's the way dead beats always begin.

*Bib.*—Let's see if the Marchioness' lackey that we sent with the notes, has returned.

#### SCENE V

##### DON DEOGRACIAS

You'll see what kind of an answer those marquises will send you; but talking of big-bugs, what could the honorable Count want of me in this other letter? Let's see.

"DON DEOGRACIAS

I must confess that I have had a lot of fun at your expense; so then, you believed that a man of my class would humiliate himself by forming an alliance with one of yours? Circumstances have changed and I am in a position to despise you rather than to solicit your friendship. Take care of your packages—, etc., etc."

Ha, ha, ha! It certainly hurts me for the Count to despise me; but now that I think of it, if poor Bernardo hadn't betrayed himself, oh, what a chance! What a letter! I should lay it onto him, as having been written after he heard about our ruin; oh, how I would curse him, and then, what an opportunity to tell them about Bernardo! But here they are.

#### SCENE VI

##### DONA BIBIANA, DON DEOGRACIAS, JULIA

*Bib.*—Who would have thought it of such a friendship?

*Deog.*—What! Have your friends answered you?

*Bib.*—Oh, if I had only never written them; see here, the Marchioness del Clavel calling me the merchant's wife, and the Duke tel Termino; "Tell the shopkeeper" and that they are very sorry; they didn't even condescend to answer me. Oh, my Lord, what a disgrace!

*Deog.*—I had already imagined that. (*This couldn't be beat.*)

*Bib.*—Wretches!

*Julia.*—What has happened to us?

*Bib.*—We still have one hope left.

*Deog.*—What? Oh, yes, I understand; thanks to this lesson you are using a little sense, now. Bernardo, I suppose.

*Bib.*—Who? Bernardo? Are you still harping on that string? No sir, there is nothing doing. The Count del Verde Sauco; he really loves my daughter, in spite of you; he will get us out of this trouble.

*Deog.*—Who? The Count del Verde Sauco?

*Julia.*—(My goodness, now? I hate him.)

*Bib.*—He is the only one—.

*Deog.*—(What is that? Could they have seen the real COUNT? He loved her, that's a fact; I wasn't with them last night, and as they had already found out about BERNARDO, they probably accepted him; he flattered them; and he must have written this last letter after hearing about my ruin. At any rate, I don't risk anything in showing it to them.)

*Bib.*—What do you think? What are you saying?

*Deog.*—Wife, I didn't want to tell you about it; but here is a letter which I have received from the Count. (It can't be helped; they met him last night; he surely didn't leave; of course not, when he writes to me.)

*Julia.*—Oh, dear me! A scoundrel as well as a traitor!

*Bib.*—There isn't any hope now.

*Deog.*—(I am sorry for them; but let's give the last blow.) Well, it seems to me that Bernardo is our last hope; he is generous, he is in love, and when he learns of our situation—.

*Julia.*—Oh, papa, never, never! After the slight that the Count put upon Bernardo, his generosity would kill me; I have been deceived, I confess it; but this situation in which we are now, has left too deep a wound in my heart, and I shall be doing pretty well if I am able to forget a love foolishly given to man unworthy of being loved or of loving.

*Deog.*—Daughter, when did this love take place? Since when? Or am I crazy?

*Julia.*—Papa, a few hours were enough; but don't make my torment greater by reminding me of my folly.

*Deog.*—Poor thing! (But there comes BERNARDO: at the worst time in the world.)

## SCENE VII

DON DEOGRACIAS, DONA BIBIANA, JULIA, BERNARDO

*Bern.*—Unfortunate family, dear Julia—.



*Julia.*—Leave me, do you still dare—?

*Bern.*—Julia, why this changs?

*Julia.*—Here, take the proofs of your love—. (*Gives him the notebook and the letter.*)

*Deog.*—(*She is mad; poor girl! She is giving BERNARDO the COUNT's letter.*)

*Bern.*—Julia, this is enough make-believe; this isn't mine.

*Julia.*—It isn't yours?

*Bern.*—I am not the Count del Verde Saucó, and I never was.

*Bib.*—What did he say?

*Julia.*—You are not?

*Bern.*—As a matter of fact, the real Count del Verde Saucó is the owner of this notebook.

*Julia.*—Who?

*Bern.*—The one who came here claiming to be Bernardo.

*Julia.*—Papa! And who are you?

*Bern.*—I am the real Bernardo.

*Julia.*—You?

*Bib.*—You? Man, what are you saying?

*Deog.*—Yes, he is the one; but, didn't you know it already? Why, didn't you tell me that you knew that Bernardo was here? I thought you had discovered that this gentleman was Bernardo, and not the Count, as we had supposed.

*Bib.*—My, God, my God! I am dreaming.

*Bern.*—Madam, it is the truth; and in a few words I promise you to clear up any doubt that may remain. Let it suffice for the present that I am Bernardo Pujavante. I have just had an interview with the Count, whom I had agreed to meet this morning; we have mutually made a clean breast of the matter, and everything is all right. It only remains, Julia, for you to pardon me for this trifling deceit.

*Julia.*—But, why did you use it against me?

*Bern.*—I made a mistake; now I know that you did not deserve such a deceptiou. But I come to make amends for my mistake by offering you in my possessions a recompense for the bad treatment of fate.

*Bib.*—What generosity! And what shame for me!

*Bern.*—I only hope that your mother—.

*Bib.*—Come to my arms, noble young man, even if I am not worthy of it; I am cured of my folly.

*Julia.*—So, you won't have any more duels nor intrigues, nor—?

*Bern.*—Never, Julia; love and virtue and an honorable middle-class position will make us happy, and work and economy will put you back on your feet.

*Deog.*—It won't be necessary, Bernardo, my son; the time has come to tell the rest of my plan; my ruin was fictitious.

*Bib.*—What are you saying?

*Julia.*—Papa!

*Bern.*—Fictitious!

*Deog.*—Yes, children; I wanted to apply this last corrective to the madness of my wife; it has produced the desired effect; and I will be satisfied if she realizes what one exposes himself to, who tries to get out of his sphere.

*Bib.*—Oh, my husband pardon me.

*Deog.*—I shall be more than satisfied if I can find my future happiness on your reform; from today on you shall be called Bibiana and in spite of style and good taste, I shall continue to rule my own house. Our daughter shall marry, and we shall be honored by our work; for if there is anything shameful in life, it isn't earning your living, making yourself useful to society, but being ashamed of an honorable profession.

CURTAIN

## REGENERATION

BY BARBARA HOLLIS

I thought I had lost them—faith and hope—  
And I slowly lulled my soul to sleep  
With the droning song of a love gone wrong  
And the solemn echoes of those who weep.

I thought I had lost them—love—and life—  
And I even wondered if death could be  
Another lure, but they all endure  
In the eyes of a child who smiled at me.

# ABRAHAM RAISEN

BY CHARLES A. MADISON

## I

Lithuania is a meager land. Marshy, beforested, badly cultivated, it yields but little to its large population. Of this little the great landlords appropriated a large share; the stolid peasantry managed to appease their physical want; the Jews received the bare leavings. Few Jews were producers. The Czar's government did not permit them to own land, and hindered them in many other ways from sowing the bread they would eat. Some Jews worked at the few necessary trades; many eked out their existence by trading with the produce of the land; many others could not even get together the few roubles with which to trade. Their life was an unceasing struggle with hunger and privation. The bleak, murky towns they inhabited reflected only too obviously the abject circumstances in which they found themselves.

Their poverty, their Hebraic stiff-neckness, and their mediocrally orthodox environment tended to sharpen their wits and make keen their desire to escape from the world of reality into that of the spirit. Unlike their Polish and Ukrainean coreligionists, however, they would not accept the tenets of Chassidism; the emotional ecstasy of the Chassid appeared to their sober reason the practice of a fanatic. Instead they found relief in the sophisticated intellectualism of the Talmud, and many of them became renowned Talmudic scholiasts. Within the confines of the synagogue, where learning was the measure of reputability, they were often audacious and peremptory; when faced by dire reality they grew cunningly meek. And the more oppressive their environment, the more fatalistic became their attitude to life. Without hope of ever improving their material welfare, they placed their complete faith in their spiritual well-being: if their brief life in this world was fraught with misery, they shall at least gain the life everlasting. They confided implicitly in the favor of Jehovah. They made more and more cumbersome the rigid and rigorous Hebraic code they adhered to, and suffered hunger with as much equanimity as their entrails permitted them.

The Lithuanian Jews continued to live in this manner until

they were overtaken by the industrial revolution. In the second half of the nineteenth century it began to send forth its begrimed minions over the urban centers of Eastern Europe, and the life of the people underwent the inevitable transition. In the process, the *weltanschauung* of the orthodox Jews became punctured. Doubt and disappointment gave birth to the Haskolah movement. Orthodoxy was attacked on all sides; worldly knowledge came to be used with the timidity and eagerness of a new discovery. In the eighties and nineties the energetic evidence of a new life was everywhere manifest. Youths by the thousands were migrating to the larger cities where they might study and live without parental hindrance. These young men and women quaffed their freedom with great rejoicing, but their stomachs called for more substantial food. As they were without trade or profession, and to work as laborers many of them neither would nor could, their change of environment did not in the least improve their economic condition. In time a considerable number joined either the proletariat or the professional class; of the others some became tutors, some clerks, and some were without work of any kind. But if they suffered want with the same severity as their fathers, their lack of religiosity, their carefree existence, and their unbridled youth made their life a Bohemian adventure.

Abraham Raisen was such a young man. He was born in 1875 in a small town in Lithuania. His father was a poor trader in wheat and flax; he was already affected by the Haskolah movement, and even wrote Hebrew verse on occasion. Raisen received a traditional schooling in Hebrew lore. Later he also studied Russian, and German. At the age of fourteen he regarded himself full-grown, and became a tutor in order to contribute to the meager earnings of his father. His reading at this time was wide but desultory, and he was already writing rhyming verses and thrilling stories in imitation of what he read. At the age of eighteen he suffered a severe emotional upheaval in the death of his mother. In the winter of the same year he went to the nearest large city, Minsk, and there he was often without food and shelter. In 1894 he was drafted into the Russian army, and for four years he lived the strenuous and harrassing life of the soldier. Since then he has depended on his writing not only for his livelihood but also for the launching of numerous short-lived literary enterprises. He therefore was compelled to live in unmitigated poverty and to write with dissatisfying regularity. For a time he lived in Warsaw, where he was under the excellent

guidance of Peretz; he also sojourned in most of the European capitals, and visited New York twice before he finally became one of its residents at the outbreak of the World War.

In appearance, manners, attitude, interests, Raisen represents the composite village intellectual. Though a cosmopolitan by experience he is in truth a typically rusticated Jew. The mental trappings and the naive shrewdness of the Lithuanian Jew still cling to him as when he first left his native town. Only in addition he is also the poet. With an intuitive perspicacity he sees what is opaque to the merely cultivated intellect. He rides the crest of emotional experience with the same natural ease that he touches the trough of artless humility. In song and in story he gives artistic expression to that phase of Jewish life of which he is an integral part.

## II

Raisen has written almost as great an amount of poetry as he has of short stories. Similar themes run through both, those of poverty, love, and nostalgia being evident most often. In both forms he is now the most popular of living Yiddish writers. Some of his lyrics, having been set to music, are known almost to all acquainted with the Yiddish language; and they are sung with the frequency and spontaneity of the folksong. Lyric poetry is difficult to translate, especially when the mold into which it is to be transformed is so alien to the original as English is to Yiddish. Raisen, however, has expressed a similar spirit in song and story, and it will be most advantageous to direct one's detailed attention to his prose writings.

Raisen's poetry has genuine simplicity. He began to write when he was very young, at a time when poetry meant to him merely the rhyming of couplets. He wrote poetry because he was a poet: feeling stimulated him with keen quickness, and his emotional overflow became crystallized in tender lyrics. In time, incited by Peretz, he learned the technique of versification. But always poetic form is to him of minor significance; he expresses his clarified feeling and emotional thought in what form he finds most convenient; and not being of an inventive turn of mind, his choice of form is limited. When he writes of his own and of Jewish life in their penurious nakedness, his very soul is heard singing in wistful solitude. His clear, tender reflections, his impressionable melancholy, his quiet jollity, his pensive yearning, his most immediate pain even, are made poignant with gentle lyric spon-

taneity. Always in his poetry he is dressed in homely holiday garb. He lingers unobtrusively along the lanes of emotion, and expresses himself modestly in the presence of nature, love, and human vicissitude. Sometimes sorrow affects him unto tears, or love lifts him into blissful ecstasy; the melancholy plaint reverberates in both alike. Even when on the wing of sheer gladness, the thread of his personal and environmental indigence trails after. At times he sees life as a drab design, unvariegated even by the brightness of self-delusion. Then he wants to forget. . .

At best his poetic voice is soft and still; without a false note, simple and unpretentious. Sometimes there may be detected in it an enthusiasm, a positiveness, a rebelliousness not heard in his prose, but these notes are pitched in a minor key. His lyrical response to the crosscurrents of life is also more immediate, and seldom does an occurrence affecting the Jews leave his poetic pen unmoved. The scope of his poetry is thus more inclusive as well as more intensive. The nostalgic note—the longing not so much for home as for the things that were but are no more—is again more manifest in his verse. The memories of his spiritual childhood and of the inner wholesomeness of the European Jews loom before him in an idealized perspective. The life that is long gone, or is extenuated and purified in recollected tranquility, he extolls with love and longing and lenity. Of late he has made attempts at philosophizing. But the thoughts he expresses are as such hoary and of scant value; he avoids in these instances mere verbosity by the emotional earnestness of his reasoning; without being aware of it he writes not verse of power but of beauty. On the whole, the simplicity, the inclusiveness, the salutary sadness, and the lyric intimacy of his poetry make Raisen the most appreciated of Yiddish poets.

### III

In his short stories and one act plays Raisen is more the humorist. His humor, however, is quiet, saturated with pathos, made severe by inner poignancy. He is a true realist as well, and especially so in the stories that treat with poverty. No writer has described the pathos of poverty with such fidelity to life as has Raisen. Others have written of the subject in an attitude of either pity or rebellion; Raisen depicts it as it is, without any ulterior motive. He accepts it as he accepts life itself: with complacent matter-of-factness. Yet he feels the resulting suffering very keenly, and he portrays its victims with much artistic sym-

pathy. For he too has suffered as they suffer; and they appear in his own image despite the obvious detachment of his method. In these stories not incident but character is emphasized, and the manner in which shows these characters being intimidated by poverty into humble, docile, and dispirited creatures constitutes the essence of his art.

In *Flax*, Zalmon, a young, learned Jew, being compelled to provide for his family, trades first in wheat and then in flax, and in the end is ruined because both products are monopolized by wealthy brokers. Zalmon is drawn with short, sharp strokes. The inept man is a scholar and a believer in the written word. When he begins trading in wheat he buys according to the quotations in the *Hamelitz*, a Hebrew weekly. He feels very proud of this fact; he is the sole reader of the periodical in the whole town, and he believes his prestige being thereby augmented over his fellow traders. Only it happens that the prices paid by the wheat merchant range almost in the exact opposite, and he soon loses half of his original capital. Then Zalmon decides to trade in flax. "He could not reconcile himself to the fact of doing business together like all other traders. If he could not trade according to the quotations of the *Hamelitz*, a means of enhancing him in the eyes of his colleagues, he must deal with a product superior to all other products and to which one must have some special aptitude. . . . Since Zalmon became a trader he was attracted to flax. Flax is fair to the eye, refined, and requires much good judgment. And Zalmon believed that he was especially fitted to deal in flax."

In time flax becomes to Zalmon not merely a means of gaining a livelihood but an obsession. He putters about the bundles of flax as a miser amidst his hoard. He loses count of his debts. Years pass. The business appears to him a game: how too utwit the rich merchant. He knows that he cannot do it; that he has neither the means nor the shrewdness with which to compete; but he cannot nevertheless let go of the accumulated flax at the loss he must. At last his creditors begin to insist that he sell out and pay them their money. And one warns him that the flax may catch fire and all would be lost. The mention of fire causes something to snap in his brain. An idea born of despair takes hold of him. "He went into the barn as usual, with the intention of sorting out anew the precious bundles of flax. This time he sorted them with special tenderness. The most beautiful bundles, known as crown flax, he took in his arms, played with

their long, blond locks and caressed their bound heads . . . Then he lit a cigarette . . . The faces of his creditors passed one after the other before his eyes, and the face of the rich merchant lingered longest—the face that wanted to cheat him of his crown flax!” He drops the lighted match and leaves the barn. The flax has in the meantime caught fire. When he sees upon his hurried return how the voluntary firemen are pouring buckets of water upon the flaming ashes, he is seized with genuine anguish; but the sight of several of his most urgent creditors among them suddenly strikes him so amusing that he has to contain himself from laughing.

Zalmon is one of Raisen’s most artistic creations. He is a luckless, well-intentioned man unable to cope with the competitive circumstances in which he finds himself. His enterprise goes amiss because he is an inept man of business. He buys unwisely, and his pride does not permit him to sell below cost. His setting fire to the flax is the suicidal act of a despondent man; he would rather lose all than have the rich merchant gain at his expense. Ordinarily one becomes impatient with such a character. As the story proceeds, however, Zalmon rouses the sympathy of the reader. He is shown as a man of sterling worth, lofty of view, and capable of great sorrow; a man not fitted for the economic competition of his environment, but fitted nevertheless for an environment of a much higher order. And the lambent humor with which he is depicted humanizes and deepens his life-likeness. The reader, it is true, smiles at his naivete and his misadventures, but the smile is one of sympathy and understanding. He comes to appear not only a poor individual Jew but also to represent the thousands of Jews of his generation whose plight was similar to his.

If Zalmon showed a rebellious spirit, be it ever so infinitesimal, he is in this respect the superior of many other of Raisen’s Jews. He towers in comparison. The lowliness of some is extreme. Not because they are without conceit or pride; on the contrary, self-esteem, in the struggle against dire circumstances, crushes their very souls; and while their mangled souls lie in a swoon they appear spiritless and without potency. *A Pinch of Snuff*, *The Loan*, and *The Last Hope* exemplify such characters. In the first story Gronem, a Hebrew teacher, is a very timid man. The fact that he has to depend upon the good-will of his townsmen for his pitiful existence so affects his inflated vanity that he is in time squeezed dry of what self-esteem he once had. He comes to



regard himself at once proud and lowly. "He would have given half of his life to speak but one word with the town's richest man. It would have rejuvenated him. He dared not attempt it, however. The man's appearance, his height, his stomach did not permit him; he was frightened by the clear full face, by the severe stare. He wondered at the Butcher's daring, who was not afraid to stand near the rich man, and sometimes even to engage him in conversation. He thought: 'One must have the strength of a butcher to dare do this; I cannot.'" One day Gronem decides to ask the rich merchant to be permitted to tutor his grandchild. The decision comes only after long effort. He begins to prepare himself for the task. He memorizes the exact words he is going to say, rehearses his speech time and again, and awaits his opportunity. One morning in the synagogue he believes the time opportune. To lessen his self-consciousness he takes a pinch of snuff. He approaches the man, bids him "good morning" in all boldness, and is about to deliver his request when epch—ch—ch—he sneezes straight into his face. Humiliation is the consequence. The *denouement* of this story ordinarily fits more the story of bathos than that of pathos. Yet so deftly does Raisen prepare the reader for what is to come that the result helps instead to put into relief the creation of a fine character. Gronem is a very meek man; his feeling of inferiority overwhelms him. Yet he struggles to retain at least a semblance of self-respect. He fills his nose with the irritating powder as another would fill himself with liquor—to bolster his wee bit of courage. When this act causes his undoing the laughter that such an incident inevitably calls forth metamorphoses into a smile of genuine sympathy.

In *The Loan*, Chaïm, a wheat broker, is very much in need of money with which to do business at the annual fair. His friends cannot loan him any, for the approaching fair affects them in like manner. His only hope is a wealthy neighbour, who is a lumber dealer and not concerned with the fair. He dreads being refused, however. Necessity at last compels him to seek his neighbour's aid. He finds him at tea, and is invited to join him. Chaïm is determined to speak not as a poor man in need of help but as a business man in need of a temporary favor. When he is asked how he is getting on, he begins, however, actually to boast of good business. He realizes that he is overstepping the mark, but he is no longer in control of his tongue. During the conversation he is asked: "Do you not sometimes find yourself in a

pinch?" "God be praised," Chaïm answers proudly. "I am never lacking in money." And the very moment he thus boasts he is being tormented by his conscience: "What am I saying? Woe is me!" Chaïm is frightened by his own words. How can he now ask for a loan?" And he goes away without asking for the loan he is so much in need of.

The same subject takes another turn in *The Last Hope*. Here the poor man believes that his rich neighbour, with whom he grew up in friendship, will loan him what money he may ask for. But he is too proud actually to ask for a loan. The very fact that his friend will feel obliged to help him when asked keeps him from turning to him when in need. In time this reluctance becomes a last hope which he cherishes with all his might. He feels that in having this wealthy friend he need never despair. Time and again poverty pinches him blue, but he suffers patiently in order not to blast his last hope. There comes a time, however, when he can no longer withstand adversity, and he goes to ask his rich friend for help. But as he slowly wends his steps to his neighbour's house he walks like a man doomed to everlasting hopelessness.

The ambitiousness of these Jews is commensurate with their vanity. Their most dear desire appears at the bottom of the scale of human ambition. They want most of all to appease their stomachs and to be permitted to live in quiet—like a dog in his corner. *The Three Notes* gives a typical description of this kind of ambitiousness. Chaïm, the character in the story, is an unobtrusive youth. He is always kept in the background. His employer will in no way depend upon him. Even in the army, where all recruits are presumably on an equal level, he is made to feel of no account. Then comes a change of great significance to him. Because of his full, thick lips he is chosen to play the horn in the regimental band. A full year he practices his few notes without actually mastering them. After a time, however, the senior horn player is discharged, and Chaïm is given the charge of playing a three note solo in one of the marches. The thought of himself as a soloist makes him very happy: he is now an individual in his own right—even if only for the length of three notes. But for a moment the change appears a mere mirage. The junior horn player, a young Russian, realizing Chaïm's timidity, informs him that he intended to accompany him during the three note period. Chaïm becomes panicky; he does not even realize that the bandmaster would prohibit the solo from being turned

into a duet. So he buys his junior's good will by promising to keep his horn in good polish.

The timidity, one might almost say the supination of these men is pitiful. One sees sensitive souls made humble by unceasing spiritual torture. These men come to feel insignificant, mere nonentities. This inferiority complex pervades most of Raisen's characters, a disease from which he himself is an acute sufferer. It comes from extreme penury, and manifests itself in an exaggerated awe of abundance. These Jews, being always on the verge of starvation, see wealth—the assurance against hunger and nothing more—in the form of a wondrous mirage. The pathos through which they are envisaged becomes quickened when it is realized that they regard wealthy whoever is not in circumstances as dire as theirs, and that therefore some are reduced to act the fool, others the braggart, and still others to fall in genuflection. The psychology of this human lowliness, the manifestation of shriveled pride streaked with extreme inferiority, present among the Jews of the past generation and to be found among them even now in the war-ridden regions, is described by Raisen with warm sympathy and humor. What distinguishes these characters from the poor of other writers is their intuitively realistic conception of life. They accept life as it is and try in every possible way to prolong their own existence in it. Having chosen for his characterization such people as these, Raisen instilled them with feelings and attitudes that essentially are his own. For that reason they in a sense appear as replicas of himself: all have the same traits and type of mind; but in a truer sense they are unique: for each of them is an artistic creation and quick with the breath of life. Only they are etchings and not portraits in oil.

#### IV

The setting in the aforementioned stories is the small town in the throes of renascence. The Jews living in these Lithuanian towns were just beginning to feel the surging onrush of a new life. There was much activity. The assault on orthodoxy was of greatest moment to all Jews. The dying generation was fearful and indignant: it had staked its all upon the life hereafter and would not relinquish its beliefs and traditions; the men and women in their middle age, bent and made crooked by the weight of poverty, could not keep doubt from their hearts, but were too enervated to feel cheered by the new vision; but their children

were in the turmoil of a young world,—a world called into being by the Czar's knout and by the rumbling of machinery. Yes, there was much activity in these small towns. Diverse fanciful visions were formed and destroyed. All forms of socialism, skepticism, and economic adjustment were being discussed; human institutions that were in existence since time unknown were first questioned and then discarded. Many tragedies, pitched in major and minor keys, lacerated the hearts of men and women; much also that was grotesque and outlandish could have been observed. Raisen ignored most of this activity. He wrote of the worker and of the incipient revolutionary in only a casual manner. Instead he chose those incidents the essence of which struck a cord in his own compassionate heart.

The youths in the city were interested chiefly in social revolution. They were at once attracted and perplexed by modern life and manners. They severed all connections with the life of their childhood and were bent on creating a new and better world. Hope and enthusiasm surcharged their beings. They went about hatching conspiracies with childlike make-believe. They were more occupied with reading and dreaming and propagandizing than with satisfying their economic wants. They believed that a better world was at hand with the same intensity that their grandfathers believed in the reality of the garden of Eden. Raisen was little concerned with all this. It is true, he himself flirted with socialistic ideas; but this attitude was only an intellectual effort. In his heart of hearts skepticism, socialism, and revolution found no haven. His scope was therefore circumscribed by what might be the vicarious emotional expression of his own self. In his city stories he wrote chiefly of the young men and women who were the offspring of the Jews he described in his small town settings. They possessed three-note-solo attitudes. Though they appeared impulsive they were incapable of great permanent enthusiasms. They were almost always too hungry for bread and love to give their minds to other things: life to them was the activity of the heart and stomach, and occasionally the writing of a story or poem. The idea and ideals that pervaded the conscious proletariat as well as the liberal intelligentsia interested them only superficially.

His private tutors are with few or no lessons, always but a step from starvation, ragged and without the comfort of a home. One of them loses the bottoms from his shoes while walking to his only lesson, and is very much frightened for a while because

no echo followed his footsteps. Another, very hungry and without money, enters a restaurant he frequented on occasion in the hope of finding some one to buy him a meal. He finds no one. But the waitress announces such tempting dishes that he cannot answer her in the negative; then he is compelled to sit around until late in the evening when an acquaintance finally appears. Still another is in possession of a counterfeit quarter; but he cannot cheat a little girl clerk who waits on him and remains hungry. For a long time it was the ambition of yet another to have in his room a couch in addition to a bed. One day he succeeded in renting a room with both articles of furniture. He naturally boasts of this to a less fortunate friend of his. The latter is without even a bed, and he makes the couch his sleeping quarters, thus thwarting the luxurious ambition of his host.

Of such stories there are a number. In no case do these young men actually become despondent; all make as light of their poverty as if it were a natural condition. When in possession of a few coins they are happy and carefree; when hunger gnaws at their entrails they quiet it with either food or the smoke of a cigarette. The spirit of dissatisfaction is absent in them. The desire to rebel against a society that keeps them in a state of precariousness never possesses them. They are harmless and meek, living only for the present and interested only in their docile selves. Yet all about them revolution and assassination were perpetrated, and all intelligent people were possessed of an active social consciousness. They lived in a world apart. Raisen described them with broad and tender humor. He saw in them—what he himself was—Yeshivah students cut off from their natural environment. In the city they could not quibble about the moot points of the Talmud, so they daydreamed about worldly knowledge and matters of mundane conundrums. Their pitiful economic condition did not much trouble them; that was the kind of life in which a Talmudic student is presumed to thrive.

This Yeshivah spirit appears in an accentuated form in *A Summer Coat*, a dialogue. The young man in this story is compelled to wear his summer coat during the winter cold. He is very self-conscious about it. The stare of passers-by makes him very uncomfortable. The need of a *raison d'être* stimulates his imagination to mild acerbity. He even appears to rebel, but only seemingly and in a spirit of bravado. "Did you ever wear a summer coat in the winter time? No? You put on a winter

coat at the first sign of frost, hey? Oh, you shiver with cold, you frozen souls! On your account are shattered my heart, my life, my youth, my hopes, my happiness . . . On your account! For if you were not so fearful of the cold, and did not befur yourself with warm coats, I would not have become sick. For I became sick not from cold but from shame—I was ashamed . . .” He tries to prove that one may easily become inured to the cold, that warm clothes are not essential even in the coldest weather, that one should not be laughed at for wearing light clothes. The argument stimulates his fancy and he waxes eloquent. “I swear to you in all seriousness that I have not the least fear of the cold. On the contrary, I like the cold: the cold embraces me and caresses me and kisses me. . . . What have people against me? Why do they look at me so? Do they pity me? I do not need their pity; I am better off than they. I laugh at their clothes! I carry fire in my heart and am warm. . . . Things are somehow not right. What is wrong I do not know myself. I am a fool. One that is wise, especially one that is strong, would spit at these little men with their puny minds and say, ‘I am above you, I am above cold!’” The situation here is pitiful indeed. The young man is very sick, and his sickness is aggravated by his poverty. His attitude is purely personal. One feels all the while that his argument is the concoction of his feverish brain; that he is not sincere and speaks contrarywise not in defiance but to give some satisfaction to his injured vanity; that his sophisticated reasoning is the fruit of a Yeshivah training.

## V

Of the subjects Raisen treats most often in the stories having their setting in the city, unsatisfied love ranks next to poverty. Here again the reason is to be found in Raisen’s own life. He was a bachelor until his early forties. But he is markedly, if mildly, nympholeptic. His pliable and impulsive heart finds in woman all that he craves of beauty and fineness. The sight of a beautiful woman thrills him as nothing else does; in her presence he oftens acts as if bewitched. He is therefore in a state of infatuation as often as he makes the acquaintance of a charming girl. It goes without saying, of course, that many a time disappointment is the only result. Then his heart aches sorely, and he expresses his pain in tender, wistful lyrics and in humorously pathetic stories.

He writes mostly of young men who long for the love of

woman and are unrequited. Their poverty and point of view excludes them from conjugality; so they seek to satisfy their sexual hunger in a less approved manner. They flirt. But although the girls they meet are not averse to a flirtation with young intellectuals, they seldom are imprudent enough to go further; they marry instead the men who are able to provide them with a home. They also patronize the prostitute. Yet the fact that their gratification is a business transaction galls their poetic souls. So they fluctuate between the unrealized hopes of love and the depressing reality of the brothel, and always the pangs of unfulfilment and self-shame torment their sick hearts. Even when love comes to them it appears in disguise and sad, as if ashamed of its actuality.

The aches and longings of these young men are described with sympathetic fidelity. One is the favorite of a young girl until a workman wins her by the offer of an engagement ring. Another sits himself near a young woman on a park bench in the hope of making her acquaintance; he does, only to find the coldness of her hand to be that of a prostitute. Still another is interested only in the unusual sort of woman; when he finally meets one to his liking, he finds the address she gave him illegible. Yet another hires a prostitute to accompany him for a day in the country; but she is more interested in the grass and flowers than in his caresses. Again another has a young woman come to him of her own free will; but he is too shy and she leaves as she came.

*Iron* is the most popular of this group of stories. It tells of a young man who became infatuated with the clerk of a hardware store, and who bought some article almost daily in order to look into her cold but luminous black eyes. It is told very skilfully. To avoid the sentimental tinge that must color it if told directly, it is related in the form of a reminiscence; and to keep the reader from laughing at the narrator, the latter laughs first. He begins thus: "Do not expect anything unusual. It is a foolish story, or better—no story at all. It happened five years ago. I was then five and twenty, twice in love and both times foolishly disappointed. But again I wanted to love and to be fooled, and I sought love in the long streets of the large city. . . . I knew, of course, that love cannot be found when sought. The other two affairs came unexpectedly and went as suddenly as they came. But one does not stop to reason when the heart yearns; one seeks . . . " One day he saw two large, black but very cold eyes of a girl who stood at the door of a hardware store. They

fascinated him and he approached them. The girl asked him coldly his desire. He wanted to tell her how her eyes have attracted him—and instead bought a hammer. Daily he came to the store, and each time he bought another piece of hardware. The girl appeared as aloof and as cold as the iron articles she sold, and she thwarted his every advance. But the more indifferent she appeared the more she fascinated him. He came one evening, for he could gather courage to come only in the evening, to speak his heart to her. “The girl stood as if cast of iron; only the two black eyes were alive and observing me quietly and shrewdly. ‘What do you want?’ ‘I need a lock.’ ‘This I can give you . . .’ ‘Please,’ I cried almost tearfully. ‘You have such wonderful eyes . . . and if something other than a lock . . .’ She looked at me coldly and asked, ‘Do you wish a large lock or a small one?’” Thus ended almost each visit. He concludes: “The whole world then appeared to me as hard and cold and dry as iron. And even today I retain a great interest in iron . . .”

Here, as in the other stories, the young man is meek and shy. He feels urged to seek gratification, but he has only the bashfulness and not the boldness of the lover. He cannot speak out; he only wags his tongue. He does not feel himself worthy of the girl, and his advances are more of the beggar than the braggart. But within him expands a great and fine and aching emotion, and he, knowing that it is unable to express itself as it would, permits it to die with a pensive and wistful sigh. In this story the articles of iron, the cold eyes of the girl, her aloof attitude, the oppressive atmosphere of the hardware store, all contribute to convey the feeling of frigidity, of indifference, of death—the death of a frail emotion. In other stories similar incidents and emotions are described with almost equal power. The characters live and suffer and smile, and many of them befriend the reader with singular warmth.

## VI

Raisen came to New York when he was one year short of forty. His *weltanschauung* was becoming somewhat less subjective. In his observation he grew more detached. His attitude to his art became more impersonal; he began to express his reflective experience with increasing frequency. His economic demands increased in number, and his desire to satisfy them became stronger—this being due in great part to his new environment.



He began to contribute regularly to a Yiddish newspaper, and his short stories and poems had to be sent in with mechanical promptness. His earnings, though not adequate, kept him from actual want. Without knowing it he was slowly increasing his scope and his interests. He gradually grew less concerned with his own emotional self and began to interest himself more with the life of the people about him. Regular employment and a satisfactory marriage took from him the two subjects he wrote about most. In their place, however, he found a new world.

He discovered that a few years' residence in America cause a marked spiritual vicissitude in the life of the Jews he knew most intimately; so much so that he was able to recognize them only with effort. No longer are they in the grip of abject poverty; they are now ever permitting themselves luxuries unknown to them in Europe. But they have to pay dearly for these flesh-pots. They must work very hard, and strenuous hours in the shop and store sap their vitality more quickly than did poverty. They are bereft of their former ease, their sabbatic spirit, their faith in man and God. This saddens Raisen not a little, and he expresses his protest at this mechanization of the spirit; not forcefully, but in his meek and melancholy manner. In his poetic moods he grows sentimental. He sings with much affection for these men and women. The tired shop girls he visualizes as princesses in bondage, the "boss" as a heartless exploiter, and the wealthy as vulgar parvenus. His interests, now wide and varied, find him themes for story and poem in casual incidents, in current happenings, in matters important and trivial. He writes now most often of the proletariat and the artist, although he gives frequent attention to other classes of Jews. His writing is now louder and balder. His style is sometimes less tender. He has also become reminiscent. In the afterglow, his youthful impressions come to him enhanced and made vivid by a sympathetic imagination. He visualizes the life of the small town in idealized and idyllic terms. He is more generous in his treatment of character, and is willing to overlook what formerly would have provided him with an ironic phrase. Many of his recent stories have therefore neither the intimacy nor the reality of his earlier work.

The stories having their setting in America touch only the skimmed surface. *The Business Man* depicts a Jew who desires to take advantage of his linguistic accomplishments by suiting his businesses to the neighbourhoods where he may put to use the

few foreign words he has acquired. In *Men* a group of intellectuals are shown to prefer an ignorant but pretty girl to an intellectual hostess. In *Enstranged* a man, very friendly by nature, feels guilty towards his neighbours because he alone is able to send his family to the country for the summer. *Mother goes to the Library* tells of girl of twelve who regarded herself an American because she went to school and patronized the library, being at first ashamed of her mother because she did neither and then respectful towards her when the latter learns that she may procure Yiddish books from the library and does so. Hardly two stories are alike in theme,—this in contrast to his earlier work. Their character is more of the hasty impression than of the subtle study. Raisen is frequently amused as well as puzzled at the obliqueness of these incidental angles; he feels himself not quite oriented in his new world; the people in it do not concern him as vitally as did those in his earlier stories.

Raisen finds poverty in America also. The uncertainty of employment, the inadequacy of the wages received, and the physically detrimental effect the shop has on the worker are described in not a few stories. The *Automobile* is a fair example. Here a girl succeeds in learning the trade of drapery. An unusually long 'slack' period comes along, and she is slowly reduced to a penniless condition. One day a dentist advertises for an attendant. She starts out to his office on foot, not having even a nickel for carfare. On the way she accepts an automobile ride from an obliging chauffeur. When she reaches her destination, the dentist happens to see her alight from the automobile and refuses to employ what appeared to him a wealthy girl. This story is written with emphasis as much on incident as on character, and its effectiveness is lost. It illustrates, however, the precariousness of employment as seen by Raisen.

*The first Photograph* is a much better story on a similar theme. Zelda, a girl of eighteen, was very much annoyed by the unevenness of the large house mirror, an article not often to be found in the home of a small town Jew. "She wanted to know in truth whether or not she was beautiful. But the mirror would not disclose the truth. Zelda could only see that she had black eyes and black hair, but of the appearance of her face she could get no idea for she knew that the mirror was false." So she decided to be photographed, and after much pleading her father permitted her to do so. "Only then did she realize who she was. Until then she did not know herself. She was beautiful. And

what goodness was in her face! With such a face one need no longer remain at home and await a bridegroom. . . . The world was open to her . . . America! . . . "After some time in New York she grew accustomed to a number of things that at first seemed either strange or ridiculous. She managed to work "steady," lived with a "missus," and attended the "movies." But she became again apprehensive of her mirror. True, she now had one of good quality, but she could not see in it the face that she saw in her first photograph. As she no longer possessed an original picture, she decided to be photographed again. "But in America photographers are peculiar. Instead of dimples they make wrinkles, and in place of geniality they show anger and seriousness." Six months later she was photographed again, this time at an expensive studio. The result was no more satisfactory. "It was truly exasperating. These pictures too were unlike the first, those she took in her native town. It seemed that in this country photographers were bunglers . . ." Thus indirectly, qualifying the truth with soft irony, Raisen describes the effect of long hours in a clothing factory. The point he makes in this group of stories is that the apparent material well-being of these Jews is bought at a price that is often excessive.

The obviously undigested and haphazard life of the Jews is described in a number of stories. To Raisen's European mind many of their traits and customs appear vulgar and grotesque. Sometimes he expresses himself in mockery, sometimes in satire. The desire to emulate one another and to conform to a regulated standard he depicts in *A Greenhorn Destroys a Temple*. The several Jewish residents of a country town desire to appear as respectable as their Gentile neighbours. One criterion of respectability is religious attendance. So they build themselves a temple and conduct their services in the reformed manner. One day an immigrant Jew settles among them. He begins attending services, and prays in the loud chant of the orthodox. The older residents try to dissuade him from this old fashioned form of prayer, but he persists. Gradually his chanting affects the others, and it is not long before the entire congregation prays in the manner of their fathers. Their acquired sense of reform is yet too weak.

It is only seldom, however, that the old form of life prevails. In most instances the more prosperous Americanized Jew is the victor. *New Employers* tells of an old rabbi being engaged by an

Americanized congregation upon his arrival to this country. His first sermon, with which he wished to impress his hearers, is a failure. The learned allusions and Hebrew phrases have no significance for them, and the president asks instead racy platitudes. The first impulse of the rabbi is to resign. He had all his life been accustomed to advise and he would not now be advised. But he is a true Raisen type. He consults at once with reality, and decides to obey. He assuages his outraged dignity by the argument that his family is dependent upon his earnings, that his flock is ignorant of Hebrew lore, and that it is better to preach popularly than not to preach at all. So he resigns himself to his fate, and attempts to preach in the American fashion. But his conscience is not to be reconciled; deep within him he knows that he would never have yielded were he not now in America.

Without being fully aware of it himself, Raisen tries to convey the idea that our high industrial development tends to engender only spiritual dwarfs. Material prosperity seems to him to tarnish the human soul. The proletariat earn fair wages, are active members of unions, frequent the cinemas and the lecture halls, and appear on the whole to lead full and satisfying lives; but that intangible fineness, that undefinable something the presence of which results in human wholeness, he finds gone from their lives. Among the rich Jews the situation is more aggravated because wealth is so often the producer of vulgarity.

*The Guest* presents another view of the inevitable evanescence of idealism. A young girl comes from war-and-pogrom-ridden Russia to an older sister. She brings with her youthful enthusiasms about literature, socialism, and kindred subjects in which the older sister was wrapt when of a like age. What tender and dear memories the young girl calls forth in the older woman! How eagerly she questions the new arrival about the life that was once her life but is hers no more! The least detail, the merest remark makes the older sister reminiscent, and she hangs upon the girl's every word. For the time being she revives in her breast the lofty dreams which the intervening years have long since dissipated. Then the newness and the sentiment begin to evaporate. Grayness sets in once more in the life of the household, and the younger woman joins the ranks of the shop workers.

*The Guest* exemplifies the dormancy of spirit that exists among some of the Jews. In *The Revolutionary* the implication is made that among others it is already replaced by a fat gross-

ness. The story tells of an elderly man who had to escape from Soviet Russia because of his belief in the sacredness of private property. He was telling his story to a group of listeners in a cafe. "Where do you find yourself here?" he was asked. 'Ha, ha, ha,' he laughed with bitterness. 'I live with a son . . . Another revolutionary . . .' 'Did he come together with you?' 'No,' the old man answered with a smile. 'He is here about fifteen years. He belongs to the period of the Czar. . . . He ran away from the government of Nicholas and I from that of Trotsky . . . you understand?' Just then there entered a man of about forty, with the appearance of an American *allrightnick*. He looked about. When he noticed the old man he came up to him and said in a somewhat displeased tone, 'Father, what are you doing here?' In the conversation that ensues the old man tried to prove to his son that his cause was of greater worth than the one once upheld by the younger man. "After all, it is not the same. I fought for something respectable, for property . . . And what did you fight for?' The son, who was now in possession of much wealth and who had long driven all childish ideals from his mind, smiled and admitted, 'Yes, father; your fight is just . . . I admit.'" The fact that Raisen permits the sprite of jocosity to blend with the obvious sarcasm does not diminish the verity of his portrayal.

Raisen's approach to the characters he delineated was purely personal at a time when most other Yiddish writers wished also to function as social reformers. He wrote in a lyrical manner, and his subjectivity compelled him to interest himself only with the vicissitude of individual character. He wrote on the theme of poverty because he himself was stung by want; and he described unrequited love because his feelings have also been affected by such disappointment. The fact that he interested himself so little with the problems that in life perturbed the very people he wished to describe often proved the weakening of his artistic effect. But in this country he found himself tending to write in the manner of his confrères. He was irritated as well as astonished by what he saw sufficiently to want to convey this irritation and astonishment in story and in poem. He wrote often with the view of revealing social wrongs. He began to seek in the American Jew what he denied to his earlier characters. This change of attitude was not beneficial to his work. What he did was to describe Europeanized Jews in Americanized settings. The result was not always happy. It only revealed that he did

not yet adequately understand the profound influence American life has upon the Jews. His American stories contain therefore neither the lyric simplicity of his earlier stories nor the intensity of the truly social writer.

## VII

Abraham Raisen's genre is the short story and short poem. The form of his poetry is characterized by the genuineness and the simplicity of the folksong. His meters, rhymes and rhythms suffer from monotony. When variation does appear, one easily feels the rasp of conscious effort. This poverty of form is in part the result of emotional sameness. Certain similar experiences call forth in him like emotions, and these are sung again and again. Yet no matter how unvaried and even tedious the form and theme of his songs appear to be, they express fittingly simple and fundamental feelings. Likewise, his language is bare and meager; but the smallness of his vocabulary very often contains the essence of pure word music. Thus his poetry when read at a stretch appears repetitious and artless, yet most of his individual poems impress one as the subdued outcry of a feelingful heart.

The brevity of some of his stories causes them often to read like anecdotes. But even in the least significant of them he appears the gifted *conteur*. From the first word to the last he is in conscious control of the pattern he is designing, and seldom does he mar it even with one awkward phrase. His stories are in fact like so many etchings. Each is drawn simply, carefully, economically. He knows exactly what effect he is after, and he achieves it directly and straightforwardly. His style is short of breath and without the brilliance of imagery and opulence of metaphor; it truly expresses the meagerness of the man; but it never halts, and its clarity is like the ring of a silver bell; and, as in his poetry, the limitedness of his vocabulary fits exactly the narrowness of his thematic structure. Character and incident not infrequently act on one another to bring about an artificially climactic situation; the *tour de force* sometimes enters to make incident appear like accident; to bring out a certain effect he occasionally even strays from the limits of probability. But these blemishes are rarely visible and occur only seldom. The appearance of the same theme in slightly varied form in a large group of stories is more damaging to the body of his work; yet this repetition is the result as much of fertility as of fatigue.

Bare and circumscribed as is the form of Raisen's work, within its limits he has succeeded in creating a surprisingly large number of living characters. Starving Jews and Jewesses, hungry dreamers, painted prostitutes, fatigued shop girls, vulgar parvenus, Bohemians of all ages and stations appear in his writings with the magic of a phrase. Rarely are they in full flesh, for his medium does not include portraiture; but always they act as soon as they appear, and their actions are usually humanly convincing. One reason for this is that he succeeds in describing the psychological effects of poverty—the motivating stimulus of much of his work—with unusual acumen. He knows poverty as he knows himself: often it was his most insistent companion. In his childhood and in his young manhood it loomed large and ominous before him. He knows how it affected him, and he observed how and in what devious ways it has influenced others. His soft humor is another reason. He thinks never abstractly but always in terms of human values. These values he knows to be relative, and at first he tends to smile as he sees circumstance distending and distorting them; but his smile turns into sympathy because he realizes immediately after that men accept these values not as they are but as they appear. His heart, also, is tuned with keen fineness to human suffering, and its cords vibrate in compassion at the first evidence of pain. His sympathy is thus made to flow warm and tender. As a result his humor is so artistically tempered that it prevents all exaggeration and tends to produce lifelike human beings.

After all, however, Raisen cannot be said to be a great writer. As a poet he excels only because he has composed some of the most tender and the most feelingful lyrics in the Yiddish language; but among the poets of the world he becomes dwarfed. As a writer of short stories he has neither the thematic inclusiveness nor the artistic breadth of a de Maupassant. In the last analysis a writer is esteemed in accordance with the world which he as an artist has envisioned and encompassed. Raisen's world is penurious, circumscribed, and lowly. Its people are mostly humble and trivial, and their hopes and dreams are of no great import; of great visions, of keen suffering, of lofty aspirations, they seem to be unaware; their blood is thin and their life is without intensity. Their point of view is often blurred, and their attitude to life is passive and meek. Even their penury, the subject that concerns them most, and in the descriptions of which is to be found Raisen's greatest efforts, concerns them only

in passing, and only in so far as hunger makes them aware of it; the desire to rebel against a life that treats them with so much unfairness and cruelty never perturbs their meek minds. Even in his New York settings, where hunger ceases to be their main theme, and where their life broadens and becomes more varied, one finds the same timid Jews overwhelmed by their environment. They interest themselves, as one might have expected, not with problems of dominant intellectual and social importance, but with matters of commonplace and idiosyncratic significance, they are prosaic nonentities and spiritual dwarfs; they live it is true, but their life is a grovelling existence. Not only do they not aspire in the manner of truly great artistic humans, but they do not even hold their heads at the level of real humans. Many of them arouse one's sympathy, but one cannot identify oneself with them as one does with more representative characters. Even now the reader can recognize them only with an effort; for many of them belong to a generation that is very different from the modern Jew. If one were therefore to accept Raisen's world as the representative Jewish world—in the last analysis the criterion of true art—one would receive an incomplete and distorted picture. Nevertheless, limited in scope and scarred with wide gaps and imaginatively plebeian in attitude as the World of Raisen undeniably is, its living parts are concretely visualized and artistically constructed. Because of these living parts he will be remembered.

## SILENT LISTENERS

BY MELBA WILLIAMS

These be the things that waken once again  
 The strange old stir of longing and of pain:  
 The frosty nights within a dark lagoon;  
 The wind-swept skies, the mystery of the moon.

These be the things that give me peace. The hill  
 Where last we kissed, e'er your glad lips were still;  
 The clover beds that touched you as we passed.  
 These be the things that give me peace at last.



# TWO CAROLINA FOLK PLAYS

BY PAUL GREEN

## THE PRAYER-MEETING\*

A PLAY FOR THE NEGRO THEATRE  
IN ONE ACT

### CHARACTERS

GRANDMUH BOLING, *An old negro woman, once a slave.*

LORINA, } *Her grand-daughters.*  
ILA, }

ANGIE, *Her grandson.*

SLICK MESSER, *A young sport.*

JOE DAY, *A sort of preacher among the negroes.*

UNCLE JED, *The leader of the music.*

AUNT BELLA, *His wife.*

MAISIE, } *Courting Couples attending the prayer-meeting.*  
PETE, }  
MAMIE, }  
ARTHUR, }

TIME: *The Present.*

PLACE: *Eastern North Carolina.*

### SCENE

*A room in the BOLING home. At the right front is a dilapidated dresser with a cracked mirror. A bed stands in the right corner. A door at the right to the back leads into the "entry" and kitchen. In the center of the rear wall a door leads into a narrow hall. To the left of this door is a large chest, above which hang several dresses, a cloak or two, and some women's hats, cheaply trimmed. A wooden trunk at the left center. Near the left front a door leads outside. A graphophone is on a small table in the left corner, a lighted lamp on a table in the center of the room. Several splint-bottomed chairs are scattered around. The room is unceiled, and the walls planked up and down. It is a typical dwelling of the better negro class.*

*As the curtain rises, LORINA and ILA BOLING are putting the*

\*For permission to produce, address the author at Chapel Hill, N. C.

*finishing touches to their toilette. LORINA is dressed in a dark-colored georgette waist and dark skirt, tolerably decent shoes and white stockings. ILA, whose dress is similar except for a pink waist, is sitting on the bed lacing her shoes. Raising her head, she sits staring before her for a moment. She is stouter than the gay LORINA, her face less intelligent, but more honest.*

LORINA (*Impatiently*).—What 'n the name o' God ails you, a-settin' there like the dead lice was droppin' off you! (ILA makes no answer.) Don't you know it's about time they was all here? (She takes a can of powder and sprinkles her neck and shoulders. Then by catching hold of her waist, she shakes the powder down over her body.)

ILA (*Lacing her shoes and speaking in a lazy, mellow voice*).—You must got a idee to charm Slick, a-puttin' all them sweet powders on you.

LORINA.—Never you mind. 'Tain't for me to hoe cotton all the week and not make use of Sad'd'y night for a good time when it does come. Yeh, charm Slick or not charm him. (She begins singing in a high clear voice.)

O mister engineer,  
I'm a-goin away from here . . .  
Goin' down to Alabam,  
Goin' to see my man.  
And the engineer, he says . . ."

(She whirls on her toes towards ILA.) Here, is my placket so it don't show?

ILA.—Yeh. You looks all right—and you gits around powerful sry. (*Gloomily*.) How come you can be so prancy-like, and you a-knowin' it's lak stirrin' up the wrath o' God to have this here prayer-meetin'?

LORINA (*Ironically*).—Just listen at her!

ILA.—She's warned us time and ag'in about it. And when she finds it out this time, you and me's goin' to be sorry. (She goes over to the dresser and powders her face and begins arranging her hair.)

LORINA.—Sorry? I'd like to know why.

ILA (*Turning on her quickly*).—You'll know why when it's too late. Let her put her curse on us, and then . . .

LORINA (*Polishing her shoes*).—Keep on with your foolish whine and jawin'! Who's a-scared o' her and her talk about devils! Not me, you can bet.

ILA.—It's all right to brag and be uppy now. But we'll feel

different if she gets onto it and comes down with one o' her 'ligious spells and ravin's.

*Lorina.*—"Twon't matter then. We'll done had our fun.

*Ila.*—But—

*Lorina (Hotly).*—Shut up your cheepin' won't you? She ain't goin' to git onto what we're doin'. Who's goin' to tell her, anyhow?

*Ila.*—I know. But we sorter promised to do better. And she's s'picionin' us a-makin' free with the men. I dunno . . . I don't lak to hurt her no more . . . her with her proud white folks' notions 'bout 'spectibility, and she gittin' old and childish now.

*Lorina (Angrily).*—You allus startin' up that bull. Folks'd think you and Brother Joe Day hadn't never been cohortin' with each other. And if he is a preacher plenty of 'em knows how he is with the women.

*Ila.*—Well, what's he to Slick Messer and his car and liquor? (*LORINA grins and goes to the mirror.*) He's the worst nigger in the country, and she hates him worse'n a coach-whup.

*Lorina.*—No matter. She ain't got no call to be lookin' down on him 'cause he's a fast nigger. Things is changed. Young folks is goin' to have pleasure this day and time.

*Ila.*—Mebbe some don't get as much pleasure out of it as you mought think.

*Lorina (Looking at her keenly and shrugging her shoulders).*—Huh! The next thing I know you'll be a moanin' Jesus . . . though how could you do it now, I don't know.

*Ila (Soberly).*—I reckon it'll never happen at none o' our prayer-meetin's.

*Lorina.*—You'll be gettin' like Gran'muh—traipsin' after the white folks' ways. I wish she'd leave us and stay up to Mr. Archie's the rest of her life, let alone this week.

*Ila.*—So us could carry on lak we please, uh?

*Lorina.*—She waits on them gods of the earth up there same as if she was still a slave. And what thanks does she get?—they allus lookin' down on you.

*Ila.*—She won't leave us though, as long as Angie hangs 'bout here.

*Lorina (After a moment).*—Where's he?

*Ila (Absently rubbing her face).*—Who?

*Lorina.*—Who! Angie, of course. Is your brains mouldy?

*Ila.*—I dunno where he is. 'Bout two hours ago he put on his

clean clothes and went down the road—said he'd be back after while.

*Lorina.*—Apt as not into some devilment. (*Looking at the alarm clock on the dresser.*) Time them folks was comin'. We'd better straighten up a little. I'll put a light in the hall. (*She winds the graphophone and sets it playing "The Preacher and the Bear." Then she lights a lamp and takes it into the hall. ILA picks up their dirty clothes and puts them in the chest. She kicks their working shoes under the bed. LORINA comes back in with two or three sprays of flowers. She begins dressing up a vase on the center table.*)

*Lorina.*—Thought I'd run out and crap a few o' these to add a little life to the room.

*Ila* (*Stopping the graphophone.*)—You better let Gran'muh's burnin' bush alone. She don't lak to have it broke up.

*Lorina.*—We want to have things lookin' a little nice for the crowd, don't we? (*There is a noise outside.*) Wait. There's some of them now. I hear a buggy.

*She runs and takes a final look in the mirror, then goes out through the hall. ILA hurriedly finishes sweeping and puts the broom in the corner. The door at the left opens and ANGIE enters. He stops just inside the door and eyes ILA quizzically. He is a slight negro of twenty-one, dressed in a worn blue serge suit, army shoes and khaki shirt, black necktie and grey cap. There is something childish and irresponsible in his dark brown face. He stands unsteadily, now and then moving his feet to keep his balance.*

*Ila* (*Suspiciously.*)—Where you been, Angie? We thought you . . . (*She looks at him searchingly. He eyes her blankly.*) What you been doin', Angie? You ain't been messin' with . . .

*Angie* (*Waving his hand with an attempt at dignity, and speaking thickly.*)—No I ain't! No, I ain't! Charlie'n me—(*He jerks his thumb behind him.*)—we's just goin' out for a little . . . and a tech won't hurt . . . just a little, you know. (*Blinking his eyes.*)

*Ila.*—Just a little! You's drunk.

*Angie* (*Cunningly.*)—That's all right! That's all right! You dunno . . . you dunno. (*Looking around the room.*) When's Gran'muh comin' home?

*Lorina* (*Coming in at the rear and staring at him wrathfully.*) Not till Monday night. And it's a caution she ain't—for your good. You been drinkin' again after all your promising. (*Sardonically.*) Poor little Angie! Gran'muh's pet! Can't he let a Sad'd'y night go by without gettin' drunk? (*Laughing at him in*

scorn.) She'll get onto you—you-a-foolin' her with smooth talk.

Angie (*Hotly*).—What you mean! You . . . and . . .  
. . . and . . . Ila—you ain't the kin . . . n . . . d to go  
preachin' to me—you and Slick Messer and Joe Day—and you all  
a-fixin' up for dirty doin's. I reckon you won't tell on me, and I  
won't tell on you. (*He laughs unsteadily. A note of tenderness  
comes into his voice.*) I'm a-goin' over to the sto-er-e—(*Waving  
his hand indefinitely in the direction of the road.*)—and git her some  
snuff. I'm goin' to git her a whole pound o' Sweet Scotch.

Ila (*Turning from the dresser and speaking half-pleadingly*).—  
Angie, you stay away from that there store. You'll git into  
trouble with them fellows. They's a crowd o' drunks there every  
Sad'd'y night.

Angie (*Pompously*).—Oh—I'm just goin' over for a little  
while. And I'll git her a bladder that big. (*He measures with his  
hands.*) (*There is a pause and he shifts his weight from one foot to  
the other.*)

Lorina (*After a moment*).—Well, what you want?

Angie (*Embarrassed*).—Nothin' (*Then quickly as if he has  
thought of something.*) Yeh, I wants to git some change out'n  
my overalls. (*He goes carefully across the room and into the entry.*)

Lorina (*Sticking a rose in her hair*).—What a fool he is! He's  
goin' to the devil as well as us. But let him go! (*She stands  
lookin' in the mirror and singing.*)

“John Henry had a purty little wife,  
The dress she wore was red.  
She got upon the railroad track  
And never did look back,  
Said, ‘I’m goin’ where my man fell dead—  
Goin’ where my man fell dead”—

Oh, hell, what a song! . . . Why don't they come on! (*She  
starts the graphophone softly playing “Negro Blues.” ANGIE  
comes in with his hand in his coat pocket. He walks stealthily past  
ILA without looking at her.*)

Ila.—What you up to, Angie? (*She catches him by the coat.*)  
You go put it back.

Angie (*Jerking away from her*).—Shet you mouth! Don't a  
man need a little 'tection on the roads these nights? (*An im-  
patient voice calls from the outside.*)

Voice.—Heigh, Angie! Won't the old woman let you go!

Angie.—That's Charlie, tired o' waitin' for me. Damn him!  
Callin' her the “old woman”!

*Lorina.*—Let him alone, Ila. Let him tote his gun. First thing he knows, he'll land in jail. And what'll she say to him then—him she sets such a store by?

*Angie (Turning to her angrily).*—Yeh, yeh, you two's a sight to be poutin' soft Godly talkin' at me! You . . . you . . . *(He blubbers with anger. Shivering and speaking in a shrill voice, he turns to ILA.)* Ila, Gus Turner's a-layin' up for me, and I ain't goin' to be no coward. I got to 'tect myself.

*Voice (From the outside).*—Whoa, can't you, Angie, if you a-goin', come on!

*Angie (Going out, stops and blinks uncomprehendingly at LORINA. He smiles weakly, and then his eyes begin to shine with wrath. He starts towards LORINA.)*—I see what you's after. Damn you! Don't you tell her I—I been drinkin'! *(Quavering.)* You allus tryin' to git me in bad with her, tryin' to turn her agin me.

*Lorina (Disgustedly).*—Aw, go on. I ain't goin' to say nothin'. Keep on with your triffin'. She'll be done o' you some o' these days.

*Angie (Grinning, and his face clearing).*—I'm a-comin' raight back, and I'm a-goin' to bring her sumpin' nice.

*Lorina.*—Go on, I say. Git out'n here. I heard a car cross the creek bridge, and they'll be here in a few minutes. *(He stands blinking at her a moment and then lurches out the door. There is a sound of voices outside, two or three blows with a stick, and then the roar of wheels and the galloping of a mule. CHARLIE and ANGIE are heard singing, their voices growing faint and fainter.)*

“Come along, O children, come along!

While the moon shines bright,  
We'll take a boat and down the river float—  
Gwine raise a rucas tonight.”

*(The refrain floats back on the wind.)*

“Gwine raise a rucas tonight—  
Gwine raise a rucas tonight.”

*Ila (Staring before her).*—Poor Angie! What'll become o' him? *(A whippoorwill begins calling in the hollow back of the house. A mocking-bird answers with chirps in the trees near the door. ILA shivers and looks around the room.)*

*Lorina.*—Git up, Ila, and finish fixin' yourself. You ain't even shined your shoes. God help me, you're a sight for speed!

*Ila (Abstractedly).*—Gran'muh says they's signs in whippoorwills callin' close to the house.

*Lorina.*—Christ a'mighty! You're too big a fool to 'sociate with the men. Why ain't they signs in that mockin'-bird, then? (*A Ford drives up outside.*) Hurry up. There's some of 'em now. (*LORINA stops the graphophone and goes out into the hall. ILA begins brushing her shoes with a dirty rag. Voices are heard in the hall.*)

*Lorina.*—Good evenin', Slick. Good evenin', Brother Day. (*Laughing.*) Here you are with your Bible. And Slick's brought his box.

*Slick* (*In a strong laughing voice.*)—Hello, Reeny. Yeh, we wants a liddle ral music this time. Lord, look at them flowers! Ain't she a show, Brother Day? Haw! haw!

*Brother Day* (*In a deep smooth voice.*)—Good evenin', Sister Reeny. How you come on? (*ILA finishes rubbing her shoes and throws the rag under the bed. BROTHER DAY, SLICK, and LORINA come to the rear door.*)

*Lorina.*—Lay your things on the table here in the hall, and then come right in.

*Slick.*—We's bettin' on gittin' here 'fore dark, but we had a punchter t'other side the creek. (*Coming into the room.*) I swear you all's sot for the meetin'—uh? How you, Ila? (*He lays his guitar against the table in the left corner.*)

*Ila.*—I'm middlin'. (*BROTHER DAY comes in.*)

*Brother Day.*—Well, well, how you makin' out, Ila?

*Ila* (*Shaking hands somewhat listlessly.*)—All right, I reckon. How you been gettin' along for the last week or so?

*Brother Day* (*Looking at her kindly.*)—Fine, fine as can be!

*BROTHER DAY is a heavy-set negro of thirty or more, dressed in a dark suit, the cut of his coat being long and of the swallow-tail. He wears a celluloid collar with no tie, baggy trousers, and shoes that need repairing. His forehead is low, his small eyes deep-set and close together. His whole appearance denotes a pious sensuality and cupidity. He is a lover of chicken dinners and plump hostesses.*

*SLICK is a tall, lithe young negro of about twenty-two or three, black and greasy looking, with something of the "sport" about him. He wears a light checkered suit pink socks, tan shoes, a flowing red tie and white collar. A large pink rose is stuck in the lapel of his coat. His hair is cropped close, and his pop-eyes are bold and daring.*

*Slick* (*Looking around the room as he smiles and rubs his hands.*)—Well, heah we is.

*Lorina.*—Yeh, I thought you'd never be comin'!

*Brother Day*.—Why, we's early. Some time 'fore de rest of de crowd'll come.

*Slick (Coming over to Lorina and laying his arm around her shoulder)*.—Was you anxious for us to git heah?

*Lorina (Slipping from under his arm, laughing)*.—Mebbe so and mebbe not. (*Turning to BROTHER DAY*.) We got some pickles and cake fixed for you all. And I reckon we can eat 'em now before the rest of the folks come. I'll go get 'em.

*Slick*.—Yeh, come on, Reeny, lessus git de grub. (*As they cross the room to the door at the right, SLICK puts his arm around LORINA and bends over her.*) Oh! huh! Honey, you sho' smells lak the bre'f of spring. (*She slaps him playfully on the cheek. They go out. BROTHER DAY comes over and sits on the bed beside ILA.*)

*Brother Day (Catching ILA by the chin and turning her face towards him)*.—Now look heah, honey, what's de trouble wid you? What makes you act so distant? Ah come on. You ain't even seemed glad to see me. (*He tries to draw her to him, but she pushes him back, her face turned away.*)

*Ila*.—I don't lak for you to do that-a-way.

*Brother Day (In surprise)*.—You don't? What's gut into you? Now, honey babe! (*He pats her softly on the cheek.*)

*Ila*.—They ain't nothin' got into me' ceptin' I'm tired of all this. I wants to know when we's goin' to git married.

*Brother Day*.—Married? I—I—

*Ila*.—Yeh, married. I got enough o' these here carryin'-ons. I wants to be 'spectable lak other folks, and you promised me time and ag'in.

*Brother Day (Slowly)*.—Yeh, I knows I promised—leastwise we mentioned it some. (*He goes and sits at the table again. After a moment he continues.*) Heah, I tell you, we'll come to some agreement tonight after de meetin. Yeh, we'll fix it. (*Sullenly.*) The old woman's been adder you ag'in, ain't she?

*Ila*.—Never you mind 'bout her. If she did, I reckon she had a right to (*Earnestly.*) Joe, I'm tired o' this messin' 'round and havin' folks talkin' 'bout me. Today down in the cotton-patch some o' the girls mentioned your name, and then all o' them 'gun to look at me and snigger.

*Brother Day (Angrily)*.—They did—hah? Well, never you mind 'em. They's the ungodly, they is. We'll fix it tonight, honey, we'll talk it over.

*Ila (Bowing her head and speaking bitterly)*.—Yeh, talk it over! That and you know what is all you ever wants to do.



*Brother Day* (Coming again to the bed and putting his arm around her).—Talk is right, chile, talk is right. It's a question dat needs consideration. (*Gallantly.*) Le's fohgit it right now. Sugar, you sho' looks unctious in dis heah new waist. Everything you wears seems just made foh you. (*Gradually she lets her head rest on his shoulder. He strokes her hair gently. LORINA is heard talking in a high laughing voice in the kitchen.*)

*Lorina*.—Wait a while, cain't you? You got to wait. (*There is the resounding of a slap. The door to the right opens, and LORINA comes tripping in, carrying a jar of pickles and cake on a waiter. SLICK follows somewhat sheepishly. LORINA sets the waiter on the table.*)

*Brother Day*.—She punched you on de jaw, huh? Haw, haw, haw! (*He laughs loud and long and slowly takes his arm from around ILA.*)

*Slick*.—Put a brake on dat laugh, damn you. (*He strides over to LORINA and sweeps her from the floor into his arms. Holding her tightly to him, he kisses her several times and then throws her into the rocking-chair beside the table. He smooths his coat and adjusts his tie.*) Now, 'y God, who's been kissed enough foh onct!

*Lorina* (*Half angry and yet pleased at his show of strength.*).—*Slick*, you shure are a hog when it comes to some things.

*Slick* (*Cutting himself a piece of cake and taking a pickle.*).—I's just a man what is a man, and it's time you was a-finding it out. (*He sits down.*)

*Lorina* (*Getting up.*).—Let me pass the eats, and forget the rowin. (*She cuts cake and passes the food around as the talk goes on.*)

*Brother Day* (*With a mouthful of cake.*).—Seems lak you two's got to cutting up raght off bat. Don't be in such a hurry. We can have our good times on the ride tonight. *Slick's* going to take us over the river foh some ice-cream.

*Lorina*.—Ain't that the stuff though?

*Ila*.—I ain't going nowhere with *Slick* and he been drinking—liable to kill somebody.

*Slick* (*Rolling his eyes as he swallows a hunk of cake.*).—Well, if you's scared to ride faster'n any storm, you'd better stay out'n my car tonight, foh I'm goin' to pour it in her till she's gagged.

*Brother Day*.—Never mind, *Ila*, he's safe as a cellar. He ain't got enough in him to hurt. (*They eat in silence a moment. Finally BROTHER DAY takes a fork and fishes in the jar for the last pickle.*)

*Lorina.*—Are they all gone, Brother Day? Mebbe you'd like some more.

*Brother Day (Licking his lips).*—Well, dey's mighty good. Who made 'em?

*Ila.*—Grandmuh put 'em up. Lak as not we'll git into trouble for eating 'em, too.

*Brother Day (Regretfully).*—I reckon den we'd better not bother no more of 'em. (*With a touch of uneasiness in his voice.*) You sho' she wont come back heah tonight?

*Lorina.*—She's up helping 'em cook over Sunday. What call's she got to be coming back?

*Slick (Lighting a cigarette and blowing the smoke through his nostrils in great clouds).*—Who minds de old woman! She ain't right in her head nohow. She don't f'aze me none when I's out foh a good time. (*Sounds of voices and a rattling wagon come from the outside.*)

*Lorina.*—That's the rest of 'em, I reckon.

*Brother Day.*—Well, dey's come quicker'n I thought. (*He reaches quickly for the last piece of cake.*)

*Ila.*—You see 'em in, Reeny, and I'll take out the leavings. (*She gathers the things up and takes them to the kitchen. LORINA goes out at the rear as the other members of the prayer meeting shuffle into the hall.*)

*Slick.*—Hurry and git your cake swallowed, Brother Day. We wants to slide right into the music and git th'ough de meeting—and then foh our liddle ride.

*Brother Day.*—Yeh, yeh, you's talking my way. (*A medley of greetings is heard in the hall:—"Hellow, Reeny." "How you, Uncle Jed?" "Hy, Pete. And here's Aunt Bella. You all lay your capes and things on the table and come right in. We been waitin' for you. (SLICK and BROTHER DAY get up and shake hands with UNCLE JED, AUNT BELLA, MAISIE, MAMIE, PETE, and ARTHUR as they come into the room. ILA comes back in at the right. A general hand-shaking and howdy-doing goes on.) "Howdy, Brother Day." "Glad to see you, Brother Arthur? An' how do our li'l' Sister Maisie git on?" "Heigho, Ila." "All right, how you, Maisie? See you got Pete still a-polin' after you." "You sho's fixed up, Reeny." "You needn't say nothin', Pete, look at Maisie with them new slippers." "How goes it, Slick?" "How's de boy, Arth?" "You all git seats an' make yourself at home." (They seat themselves here and there about the room, in chairs, on the*

bed, the chest, and in different places. BROTHER DAY sits near the table.)

*Brother Day (Looking at UNCLE JED who sits near the left front).*—Well, Uncle Jed, seems lak you an' Aunt Bella's all the married folks we gut wid us tonight.

*Uncle Jed (A dark, wrinkled little man with a mighty voice).*—Sho' is, Brother Day. But some o' dese heah mought be married wid no harm done. (MAISIE snickers audibly. BROTHER DAY drums in embarrassment on the table. UNCLE JED puts on his specs and gazes around the room.) Yeh, dis is a sweet-heartin' crowd aw ra't. Look at 'em all a-pairin' off—Maisie'n Pete on de bed, an' Mamie an' Arth on de chist, an' Reeny an' Slick settin' side by side next de graffyom. (To ILA who is sitting on the bed.) Ila, you'd bedder come over heah an' set by Bruvver Day.

*Ila.*—I'm fixed heah.

*Uncle Jed.*—Unh-hunh, suit yo'se'f. An', Bella, you mought as well hitch yo' cheer clost to mine, chile.

*Aunt Bella (Settling her two hundred pounds in a chair near the rear door).*—I reckons a liddle distance f'om you'll do me good, seein' as I's allus tied to you. (SLICK throws back his head and laughs with great he-haws. The others burst into low chuckles and shrill cackles.)

*Brother Day.*—A good un on you, Uncle Jed.

*Uncle Jed.*—Hah, how 'bout you an' Ila? (BROTHER DAY moves in his chair.)

*Lorina.*—Ain't nobody else comin' from over in Shaw Town, Mamie?

*Mamie (A thin mulatto of twenty).*—I dunno, I think they ain't.

*Pete (A tall fellow of twenty-five).*—Naw, they ain't none of 'em a-comin'. Adder we gut the hay-ride all fixed, they backed down on us. Just us six rid in a big two-hoss wagon. Ain't much of a hay-ride in that.

*Arth (Small and black and slow of speech).*—I seed Jeems an' Beck an' some t'others in Lillington today, an' they said they couldn't make it out heah tonight.

*Aunt Bella (Sniffing).*—Hunh! An' I reckons we all knows why, too. Ef dey's a-skeered o' Grandmuh Bolin's talk, I knows a few whut ain't. How 'bout it, Slick?

*Slick.*—'Y God, you's spettin' a yearful, Aunt Bella. (He lays his arm carelessly around LORINA.)

*Uncle Jed.*—Don't de Book say be joyful an' sing an' enjoy you'se'f? Sho, aint it so, Bruvver Day?

*Brother Day.*—It's set down in black an' white, an a runnin' man kin read it. (*PETE lights a cigarette and gives MAISIE, his plump, mischievous partner a puff or two. She leans her head on his shoulder and coughs.*)

*Lorina.*—Look at Maisie. She's choked on a little smoke. Gimme a cigarette, Slick, I'll show 'em how to smoke in style. (*He lights a cigarette, gives it one or two draws, kisses her slyly and then sticks it between her lips. She puffs away gaily.*)

*Slick.*—Want one, Mamie?

*Mamie.*—No, Id' git the head-swim.

*Arth.*—I'll take one, Slick.

*Slick.*—An' I mought as well light up ag'in too.

*Brother Day (After SLICK and ARTHUR have settled back smoking).*—Well, brothern an' sisters, they ain't but a few of us heah tonight. But we kin have just as good time. Foh it's written, whah two or three is gathered—

*Slick.*—This crowd's big enough to natchly raise the roof a foot or two when we gits started, aw right.

*Brother Day.*—All o' you knows that we been wantin' to have a meetin' heah since a few months ago when we had sich a time. An' tonight's the fust time we've had de chanct. But it seems lak some o' our congregation has gut cold feet.

*Pete.*—'Twont keep the rest of us f'om r'arin' an' chargin' when we gits started.

*Maisie (Snuggling up to PETE).*—It sho' God won't.

*Brother Day.*—An' we wants to git th'ough a liddle early, foh me'n Slick's made arrangements with Ed Henderson over de river to 'semble dere an' have ice-cream an' soft drinks an' sich.

*Aunt Bella.*—Mought as well go down in yo' pocket, Brother Day, 'caze I's primed to eat a gallon.

*Mamie.*—An' I gut a two month's drought in me.

*Lorina.*—It's a tapeworm a mile long.

*Mamie (Hotly).*—'Tain't no sich.

*Brother Day.*—Quit dat black gyardin' one another. (*Rising and looking at his hearers.*) All o' you knows dat our havin' fun along with our religion ain't met with favor 'mong some o' our color an' kind. But they's scripture to back us up in the minglin' of pleasure an' worship. (*Looking around.*) Ain't it so?

*Uncle Jed.*—It's so ef you says so, Bruvver Day, an' it suits yo' humble servant.

*Aunt Bella.*—It hain't never gone ag'in de grain wid me to take pleasuh when she comes.

*Brother Day.*—An' brothern an' sisters, I don't believe in puttin' on sackcloth an' ashes an' livin' in a vale o' tears.

*Slick.*—Git to the p'int, we've hearn dat befo'.

*Brother Day.*—An' so—an' so I thinks we'd better git along wid de music. We's already a speck behin' time. Later we kin have de 'sperience meetin.' So, Brother Jed, you kin take charge. (*He sits down.* *UNCLE JED rises and stands facing the group.* *By this time the room has become filled with smoke from the cigarettes, and the dim lamp has grown dimmer.* *The corners and rear of the room are filled with shadow out of which shine the animated faces of the audience.*

*Uncle Jed.*—Well, whut must we start off wid?

*Pete.*—Le's open up wid a piece f'om Slick an' his box.

*Aunt Bella.*—Yeh, le's do. Dat'll limber us up a speck.

*Uncle Jed.*—Sho'. Best to wade in de shallow water fust. Go ahead, Slick, and smear yo' music. (*He sits down, and SLICK fetches his guitar from the corner and begins tuning it.*) I reckon we mought have de Dinah piece, Slick.

*Slick.*—Good enough. (*He strums a chord or two and begins singing.*)

“Gimme a piece o' corn-bread in my hand.

See Aunt Dinah!

Sop my way to the Promised Land.

See my Lawd.

(*UNCLE JED joins in, then several others.* *Finally all are singing.*)

(Chorus)

“I'm goin' away-'way,

See Aunt Dinah.

I'm goin' away-'way,

See my Lawd.”

(*SLICK takes the lead.* *The others come in on the answer and chorus.*)

*Slick.*—

“Two liddle boys one Sad'd'y night—”

*Others.*—“See Aunt Dinah.”

*Slick.*—

“Tried to go to heaven on a 'lectric light—”

*Others.*—

“See my Lawd.”

*All.*—

“I'm goin' away-'way,

See Aunt Dinah.  
I'm goin' away-'way,  
See my Lawd."

(*The singers pound on the floor with their feet and clap their hands. The song continues.*)

"The wiah she bust an' de liddle boys fell.  
See Aunt Dinah.  
An' now dey's a bakin' der hoofs in hell,  
See my Lawd.

(*Chorus*).—

"My old mistis promised me,  
See Aunt Dinah,  
When she died goin' to set me free,  
See my Lawd.

(*Chorus*).—

"She lived so long dat her head gut bald,  
See Aunt Dinah.  
Gut out'n the notion o' dyin' a tall,  
See my Lawd."

(*Chorus*) (*SLICK winds up with a display of chords, and the pounding and clapping die out. UNCLE JED looks around and grins.*)

*Uncle Jed*.—How 'bout dat, Bruvver Day?

*Brother Day*.—Dat had de glory in it, sho's you bawn.

*Uncle Jed* (*Rising to his feet*).—Now, folkses, we wants to bear r'at down on dis heah next song. Pete, you an' Arth open up dem dere bottom stops. Le's heah de bass notes growlin' down under yo' belly-ban'. An', Sister Ila, I wants to heah yo' alto soundin' out to de lam' o' God. You didn't put no heart in dat song. Whut ails you?

*Ila*.—Never you mind, I'll sing all right.

*Uncle Jed*.—Bully den! Evehbody spet on dey han's an' git ready to go to it. Whut's de next piece? Who speaks?

*Lorina*.—How 'bout the dyin' song?

*Ila* (*Nervously*).—No, no, le's don't sing that.

*Maisie*.—Come on, Ila, don't you like to have the shivers? Yeh, sing it, Uncle Jed, sing it.

*Lorina*.—Ila don't like mournful music. And she's slam scared to death when a owl hoots even. (*UNCLE JED hesitates. LORINA speaks half-sarcastically.*) Don't you like it either, Uncle Jed?

*Slick*.—Where's yo' guts, brother?

*Uncle Jed.*—Sho' we'll sing it. Evehbody ready, heah we go. (*He leads off in a low minor. With the exception of ILA the others join in. She sits on the bed swaying with the music and looking at the floor.*)

"In de mawnin', in de evenin',

*Others.*—

"Somebody called my name."

*Uncle Jed.*—

"Devil creepin', po' man sleepin',"

*Others.*—

"Somebody called my name."

*All.*—

"Heah me, Jesus!

Callin' my name.

Have muhcy, Lawd!

Callin' my name."

(*The pounding and clapping begin again.*)

"Mid-night hearse an' coffin waitin',

Somebody called my name.

Devil walkin', God's a-talkin',

Somebody called my name."

(*Chorus.*)—

"World on fiah, heaben fallin',

Somebody called my name.

Mo'ner cryin', sinner dyin',

Somebody called my name."

(*Chorus.*)—(*The song is repeated, and then the music stops. They sit silent a momeni. BROTHER DAY stands up.*)

*Lorina* (*With a forced laugh.*)—That's a mournful song all right. But what's the use o' our settin' here like people in a trance. It ain't nothin' but a song.

*Brother Day.*—Brothern an' sisters, that'll be a day to be remembered. (*ILA turns suddenly and throws herself sobbing on the bed. BROTHER DAY stirs uneasily. UNCLE JED sits down and wipes his forehead with a dirty rag which he draws from his pocket.*)

*Slick.*—(*Shrugging his shoulders and lighting another cigarette.*)—They ain't no use botherin' with Ila. Let her cry a bit, do her good. (*He strums his guitar with a weak show of confidence. BROTHER DAY goes on.*)

*Brother Day.*—It's wrote dat some dese days 'bout three o'clock, dey's goin' to be a great shakin' an' thunderin,' an' a great

smoke is goin' to rise in de west, an' de rocks'll melt an' run lak rivers o' red-hot arn. (*ILA sobs out loudly.*)

*Lorina* (*To SLICK*).—What's the matter with 'em all, actin' like scared hens an' a hawk after 'em!

*Ila* (*In a muffled voice*).—I'm a sinner, I'm a sinner! Have mercy on me!

*Lorina*.—Just listen at her ruinin' our good time!

*Slick*.—Dis heah is a quair place foh gittin' religion.

*Lorina*.—She'll be all right in a minute.

*Brother Day* (*Staring before him*).—In dat day when de sun goes down, death'll come ridin', ridin' on his great white hoss, an' we'll see him in de dark dat's over the face o' de earth.

*Aunt Bella* (*Fearfully*).—It's so, it's so, we will. It's wrote in de Book. (*UNCLE JED wipes his face with trembling hands. And the others stare about them—half afraid.*)

*Brother Day*.—An' dey'll be a sound of gnashin' teeth an' cryin' to God.

*Pete*.—Brother Day, don't say no more 'bout that. Why you want to skeer us up?

*Brother Day*.—Ah' death's goin' to call outside yo' house an' squeal out he's waitin' foh you. (*Silence for a moment. Presently BROTHER DAY shakes himself and laughs weakly.*) Well, I guess dat day's a long way off, an' le's go on with our singin'. Start up another piece, Brother Jed. (*UNCLE JED haltingly rises.*)

*Aunt Bella* (*Listening*).—Wait a minute. I hears somethin'. (*A low whining tune is heard outside the door, followed by soft sliding footsteps. The tapping of a stick on the floor comes in at the hall.*)

*Uncle Jed* (*Sitting suddenly down*).—Whut's dat?

*Ila* (*Bitterly, sitting up in bed and drying her eyes*).—It's Grand'muh come back, that's what. (*Before anyone can move from his seat, the door at the rear opens and a little old black woman, wearing a slat bonnet and carrying a stick and a bundle stands in the entrance. She pushes back her bonnet and pulls her spectacles from her white hair down to her nose and looks around the smoke-filled room. BROTHER DAY makes a movement towards the door at the left.*)

*Grandmuh* (*In a husky voice*).—Who's dis? Who's you all? Set r'at back down in yo' seat, Joe Day, I know all o' you now. (*She peers from one to the other . . . BROTHER DAY sits down again.*) I had a feelin' dey was trouble, trouble, an' I come back. (*She moves a step into the room and looks at LORINA.*) Whah's mah boy, whah's Angie? Tell me whah mah boy is.



(*Anxiously.*) He ain't—he ain't been messed up wid you all, has he?

*Lorina.*—I don't know where he is.

*Grandmuh (Joyfully).*—Thank de lawd. He's keepin' straight den. (*Wrathfully.*) Whut you doin' in my house, Joe Day? An' you, Slick Messer, tryin' to ruin my po' gals. An' you Bella an' Jed, whut you doin' heah? An' all de rest o' you trash—lak spittin' in de face o' God!

*Slick.*—Aw, we's havin' prayer-meetin' an'—

*Grandmuh (Half-screaming).*—Shet yo' mouf! You'll be struck daid wid de lies you's tellin'. An' I wanned you all 'bout blaspheming de Lawd in my house. Hain't I tried to be 'spectable an' raise mah chilluns to live ra't. An' heah all de low-down o' de neighborhood is whut dey laks to 'sociate wid. (*Coming another step into the room.*) An' I's gwine stop it. Joe Day, an' Jed an' all o' you—you knows me an' you knows I's gut power wid de Lawd. He heahs mah prayehs. An' I's gwine ax him—(*Suddenly dropping her bundle, she raises her hands above her head and cries out in a loud voice.*) Oh, Lawd God, I cusses Joe Day, wid fiah an' brimstone an' fo'ever an' ever to bu'n in hell. (*She points at him. He backs away from her, his eyes wide with fear.*)

*Brother Day (With weak braggadocia).*—Don't you do dat don't you put no curse on me.

*Grandmuh (Sobbing and speaking in a high quavering voice).*—Give him no rest by day or night. Let him die inch by inch, an' his body rot piece by piece. Make him to see visions of de debbil allus after him breavin' coals of fiah! Send de thunder an' lightnin' to bust open his grave when he dies an' strew his bones in de storms. I cuss him an' cuss him an' sets de wrapp o' God up on his soul till de end o' time, Amen! Amen! Lawd Jesus! (*BROTHER DAY hurries through the door at the left and into the night. With the exception of SLICK, LORINA and ILA, the others tumble out after him. GRANDMUH stands with lowered head mumbling to herself. ILA sits on the bed, staring dejectedly before her.*)

*Slick (Turning and twisting in his chair).*—Look heah, I reckon I bedder go too—dem damn fools runnin' lak a gang o' hens!

*Lorina.*—Yeh, you better. An' all our good time is—is shot to hell. (*SLICK picks up his guitar and rises. GRANDMUH looks up, and SLICK backs away from her.*)

*Grandmuh (Calmly).*—You needn't be afeared o' me no mo'. (*Wringing her hands together.*) Oh, I done wrong, I done wrong. I axed God to destroy his soul. (*She begins sobbing. Then she*

*sits down in a chair and rocks back and forth with her hands to her head, saying over and over.)* I done wrong, I done wrong. Mah po' chilluns, you is losin' you' souls. Oh, I done wrong to cuss him so! *(There is a confused murmur of frightened voices outside.)*

*Lorina (Quietly to SLICK).*—Come on, Slick an' I'll git the wraps and things out of the hall and take 'em out to the folks.

*Slick.*—An' le's talk over 'bout the trip. *(They go softly out at the rear and close the door behind them. A moment later their voices are heard outside in an indistinct medley of conversation with the others. GRANDMUH BOLING sits rocking and moaning to herself. She rubs her hand across her forehead.)*

*Grandmuh.*—Whah's Angie! I wants mah boy. *(Then she falls to rocking again and whining a tune that gradually rises into words.)*

“Evehbody's gut to go  
Fust place to de graveyahd,  
Den to de Judgment bah,  
Evehbody's gut to go.”

*(Her singing stops and she mumbles to herself.)* Yeh, hit's de truf. Evehbody's gut to go. An' hit's 'bout time I was a-gwine. Dey ain't no mo' pleasuh foh me below. Mr. Archie said today dat I was a-gittin' too ol' to be wukkin' so hahd. Mebbe so he's ra't. An' now I's gut down to puttin' a cuss on a man! *(She calls.)* Angie! *(Then she goes back to her rocking.)*

*Ila (Getting up from the bed and coming over to her).*—Gran'-muh!

*Grandmuh (Alarmed).*—Who's dat?

*Ila.*—'Tain't nobody but me. Don't git started on yo' troubles. Lemme git your supper.

*Grandmuh (Reaching out and clinging to her as she draws near).*—Ily, Ily, why you'n Reeny mess yo'se'f up wid dese lowdown men? Chile, you breaks me all up wid de trouble of it.

*Ila (Taking the lamp).*—I'll bring a bite in to you.

*Grandmuh.*—Whah's Angie?

*Ila.*—He's gone to the store.

*Grandmuh (Rising out of her chair).*—To de sto'! Oh, he'll git into trouble wid liquor oveh dere. *(She wrings her hands together.)*

*Ila (Somewhat ironically).*—He won't nuther. He promised you to let liquor alone.

*Grandmuh.*—Yeh, yeh, he did!

*Ila.*—An' he said he's goin' to bring you a big bladder o' snuff!

*Grandmuh* (*Joyously*).—Bless his baby heart! When he comin' back?

*Ila*.—Time he's back now. (*She goes out at the right rear.*)

*Grandmuh*.—Thank de Lawd one o' my chilluns is growin' up out o' sin. An' I'll hab somepin' to live foh in mah las' days. (*She folds her hands across her lap and sits looking out before her. When ILA goes out, the room is almost in total darkness, save for a patch of light that shines in from the entry. A moment later the door at the rear opens and LORINA comes in.*)

*Lorina* (*Looking back*).—Come on in, they've gone into the kitchen. (*SLICK enters. LORINA goes to the chest and rummages in it.*)

*Slick*.—Hurry up. Don't be playin' wid me now. Git de dough. (*There is a sound of jingling coins.*) Aw, come on!

*Lorina*.—That's all I got, I tell you.

*Slick*.—You's lousy with de jack.

*Lorina*.—I ain't got no more, and that's the truth.

*Slick*.—Neveh mind. On the ride we'll leave Brother Day an' Ila over at Ed's place and then you and me, uh?

*Lorina*.—Yeh, you and me and my money!

*Slick*.—'Y God! You's spiteful as a cat. Ain't I furnishin' de car? (*He grunts and hugs her to him.*) But how we goin' to git Ila wid us?

*Lorina*.—She'll come all right. (*Listening.*) Who's that makin' a sound?

*Slick*.—Somebody cryin' or somepin'. By Jesus, it's her heah in de room. (*ILA comes suddenly back with the light, bringing some food on a tray. She stops and looks accusingly at SLICK and LORINA. GRANDMUH sits with her back to them, crying softly.*)

*Slick*.—Why'n hell, didn't she let us know she was heah, if it was goin' to make her cry mo'!

*Ila* (*Setting the lamp and food on the table and speaking bitterly*).—Cry more! Yeh, we all needs to cry and pray or do somepin'. Hell'll ketch us all yit.

*Grandmuh*.—You needn't bring me no rations. Who kin eat when sin is destroyin' all I loves. (*Stretching out her hand.*) Go on, Reeny, an' sell yo' soul. I's done o' you. I gives you up. Tomorrow I takes Angie an' we's gwine git us anudder home an' leave you'n Ila to rot in yo' sins. Git out o' heah, all o' you!

*Ila*.—I'm goin' to do better—I—

*Grandmuh* (*Her voice flaring out bitterly*).—Bedder! You cain't. You wuz a good gal onct, but you ain't no mo'! (*She*

*stands up and turns fiercely on them.*) Git from heah, I tell you— you — couplin' lak goats! (*She raises her stick.*) Flee out o' dis house 'fore it falls on you an' scrushes you lak hit orter. (*She drives them out at the rear.*)

*Ila (At the door).*—Grandmuh, don't! You's doin' me wrong. I I—

*Grandmuh (Raising her voice and shaking her stick).*—Leave heah, leave heah, an' go on and sleep wid Joe Day somewhah on de rivah bank de way you's plannin'.

*Ila (Gloomily).*—All right, I'll go, and I'll never come back. (*GRANDMUH closes the door after her, and then comes back to her chair and sinks exhaustedly into it, rocking and mumbling to herself. A wagon is heard driving off, and a Ford rattles raucously. Suddenly she sits up and listens intently.*)

*Grandmuh (Calling).*—Angie-e-ee! (*She begins rocking, swaying and talking again, half-singing and chanting.*)

I'm a beggar, Lawd! Don't you leave me heah.

Trouble's comin' I's a-feared, O Lawd.

'Gin me a sign, Ol' Master, 'gin me a sign.

(*LORINA opens the door cautiously at the rear and then comes in. ILA follows her. They go and take their hats from the wall.*)

*ILA stands looking mournfully at the old woman.*)

*Lorina.*—Come on, Ila, let her be, with her religious spells and talking in tongues.

*Ila.*—I don't lak to leave her. (*She hesitates a moment and then as the automobile horn sounds again they both go out. They are heard driving away.*)

*Grandmuh.*—

An' I seed a light a-shinin' an' hit said to me—

An' I seed a cloud a-risin' an' hit said to me—

An' de hills dey tuk fiah—um—um—um—

(*She rises and stands looking up as if under the spell of some power.*)

An' de night come up an' de sun went down—

A sign! Lawd Jesus, a sign!

(*She remains motionless, her lips working silently and her hands clawing at her dress. The door at the left opens and ANGIE dashes in. His coat is torn and his shirt ripped open. With a cry, he stumbles towards her.*)

*Angie.*—Gran'muh! Keep 'em off'n me! keep 'em off!

*Grandmuh (Joyfully).*—I's glad you's come. I called you, an' called you. (*He throws his arms around her and pulls her down into her chair.*) We's gwine leave all dis and stay at anudder

place, jes' you'n me. (*Sadly.*) I gi'n 'em up. An' you'n me'll move out o' sin an be happy. (*She looks at him inquiringly. Then in alarm*) Whut's de trouble! Whut's de trouble? (*She strokes his forehead.*)

*Angie* (*Springing up and looking around him*).—Gran'muh, Gran'muh, they's after me. Save me, save me! I heah 'em comin'!

*Grandmuh* (*Starting up in alarm*).—Whut's dat! Whut's dat! Whut you done?

*Angie* (*Shuddering and clinging to her*).—He made at me with a knife an' I shot him. Look, there he is! (*Pointing at the entry door.*)

*Grandmuh*.—Who was it? O Lawd ha' muhcy!

*Angie*.—It was Gus Turner. I see him now with the blood squirtin' out'n him. (*He falls on his knees and buries his face against her. She sits down.*)

*Grandmuh* (*Raising her head as she runs her hand over his hair*).—Ha' muhcy, ha' muhcy!

*Angie*.—An' they's gone for the sheriff. They'll be heah for me in a minute. Don't let 'em git me. Don't you! (*He sobs wildly.*)

*Grandmuh* (*Sadly*).—Boy, I's loved you an' prayed foh you since you was a baby an' yo' pappy an' mammy died, an' hit's all come to dis—I's done whut I thought ra't all my life. An' I's tried to be 'spectable. But de Lawd's done sent his sign, an' you gut to suffeh.

*Angie*.—Stay with me, stay with me.

*Grandmuh* (*Pushing him suddenly from her*).—But you's done muddch, you's kilt a man. Git up from dat flo'. Git up. (*He slowly stands up. She points to the door at the left.*) Go back out dat do'. De sheriff man is a-waitin' foh you.

*Angie* (*Coming towards her as she stands up again*).—No, no—I can't! (*She convulsively clings to him and leans her head against his breast.*)

*Grandmuh* (*Softly*).—You hain't done nothin' wrong, has you, Angie? You's jes' mah liddle boy. (*A heavy tread comes on the porch. Then there is a loud knock on the front door. A voice calls.*)

*Voice*.—Come on out, Angie!

*Angie*.—O Lord save me!

*Grandmuh*.—Leave me now! Go on, go on. They hain't

nothin' I kin do but pray foh you lak de ol' times. Don' look at me, Boy, you's gut to pay.

*Voice.*—Come out of there or we'll shoot you out!

*Grandmuh (Pointing to the door).*—Leave me, I tell you! (*Crying out.*) Gi'n yo'self up lak a man. (*She opens the door at the rear and pushes him slowly out. Slamming the door behind him, she goes and falls in her chair twisting her hands and making no sound.*)

*Voice.*—Come on, fellows, here he is!

*Angie.*—Lemme git back to her. I cain't leave her. (*They are heard taking him off. She sits and rocks and says nothing. ANGIE is heard calling from the road.*) Grandmuh! Oh, Grandmuh. (*She goes on rocking, staring straight before her.*)

CURTAIN

# OLD WASH LUCAS\*

## CHARACTERS

WASH LUCAS, *Seventy-five years old, the stingiest man in the county.*

IDA LUCAS, *Thirty, his daughter.*

PERRY LUCAS, *Thirty-five, his son.*

TIM ADAMS, *Near the same age, a farm hand, once IDA'S beau.*

TIME: *Christmas Eve, a few years ago.*

PLACE: *The home of WASH LUCAS near the Cape Fear River, North Carolina.*

*The scene opens in the kitchen of the LUCAS home. A fire is burning dimly in the fireplace at the right front, and around the chimney are pots and pans. In the center is an oblong eating-table covered with a well-worn oil-cloth. Three or four splint-bottomed chairs are about the room. In the right rear is a cupboard, and at the center rear a door leading to the outside. A rag pillow is stuffed in a broken pane of the window at the left front. The room is lighted by a sputtering lamp.*

*IDA LUCAS is preparing supper, standing by the table stirring cornbread dough in a milk-bucket. She is a plain woman of thirty, thin-chested, tall, with a pasty bitter face. Her dark hair, slightly graying, is done in a ragged coil at the back of her head. Her clothes are poor and untidy, shoes coarse and shabby. As she stirs the dough, she takes her snuff-brush from her mouth and now and then spits into the fire.*

*A light tap sounds on the door at the left. IDA sets her bucket quickly down on the table, listens, then goes to the door at the rear and makes sure it is fastened. She crosses the room and comes to open the door at the left as TIM ADAMS enters.*

*Ida (Drawing back in surprise).—Why, Tim, where'd you come from?*

*She puts her snuff-brush in her apron pocket and wipes her mouth slyly with her sleeve. Then she goes towards TIM with a keen look of pleasure on her face which changes quickly to uncertainty and fear.*

*TIM is tall and slightly stopped. His long arms end in two*

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great battered hands. He is dressed in rough working clothes, trousers with a large patch in each knee, an old overcoat, short and ragged at the elbows, and pinned across his breast with a small wooden peg. His brogan shoes are thick with mud, and bits of cotton lint stick here and there on his clothes. As he comes in he pulls off his mis-shapen straw hat and holds it in his hands, twisting it somewhat nervously. His face is dull, rather lifeless, with prominent nose, small eyes close together, hair thin and light colored and his lips stained with tobacco juice. A light growth of beard covers his face. All in all, his appearance denotes a "good sort o' fellow" without much mental ability, one of that class of simple farm hands to be met with in North Carolina, who generally speak of their means of living as "working a hireling."

TIM stops just inside the door, rolling his chew of tobacco in his mouth, twisting his hat, and glancing inquiringly at the rear door.

Tim.—Heigho, Ida—Is Wash asleep?

Ida (Softly closing the door behind him).—Yeh. Come in to the fire, Tim. (She pauses, hesitating.) You must be cold and wet. It's shore a bad time to travel. (TIM comes over to the fire and spits, and warms his feet.)

Tim.—I was out there—(Jerking his thumb.)—half a hour 'fore I could make shore the ole man's in here or in there. Reckon—he won't hear us talk? (He looks at IDA uncertainly.)

Ida.—No, he's dead asleep now. Didn't sleep none last night, turning and a-turning in bed!—A man from the bank up there in Ashley was in there with him all yistiddy evening and—

Tim.—They was? .

Ida.—Yeh. Ever since then Pa's been worse off. But he dropped off 'bout a hour ago. Have a seat. I'm shore glad to see you.

Tim.—Wake him up or not, I had to come. What'd that bank man want with Wash?

Ida.—I don't know. They stayed shet up in there a-talking—I don't know what about.

Tim.—That's quair—him to be coming to see Wash, and then the bank to go busted today. But I don't reckon he got none of Wash's money, did he? (He twists his mouth ironically.)

Ida.—Hunh, that he didn't! You might a knowed that. Pa ain't the kind of man to keep it all locked up here in a box for twenty years and then let it out to some bank. But is the bank shore 'nough busted?

Tim.—Yeh, I was over to Ashley this evening and heard



'bout it. (*He looks out of the window at the left, then speaks bitterly.*) Yeh, let them as has money to lose, lose it. Old Stinky Wash Lucas, as they calls him, won't lose nary a cent, and—

*Ida (Timidly, touching TIM's arm).*—Don't start up that talk ag'in, Tim. I ain't seed you fer six months and le's don't start on that.

*Tim.*—Naw, 'twon't be no 'count to, but—

*Ida.*—Set down. I wa'n't expecting you, Tim. (*She smiles at him and gathers her skirt around her as if to sit down.*)

*Tim (Shifting his weight).*—Well—er—*Ida*, I didn't come to set with you none. I got to git back. And I don't want no row with Wash tonight nuther. So—

*Ida (Looking up surprised).*—What's the matter, Tim?

*Tim.*—It's 'bout Perry.

*Ida (Glancing at the rear door).*—Perry! They ain't nothing the matter with him, is they?

*Tim.*—No more'n they is with all them mill people over there in town. 'Fluenzy's everywhere, and Perry's got to have help. (*He rolls his hat against his thigh, his other hand outstretched towards the fire.*)

*Ida.*—Perry ain't got it, is he?

*Tim.*—He's terrible sick, but he won't go to bed, just waits on *Elsie*—and one of the kids is taking it.

*Ida.*—And me his own sister hadn't heard a word about it—and living right here at him!

*Tim (Lowering his voice).*—Naw, you know he's so fool proud he wouldn't ask for a cent from him in there. (*He sits down.*)

*Ida (Going to the door at the rear and listening, then coming back to the table).*—He's sleeping all right now, but 'twon't do fer him to wake up and ketch you here.

*Tim (Ironically still).*—That it won't. Lord, he ain't got no more use fer me' n a pizen snake, and I don't care much more fer him. You know *Ida*, how he—well—

*Ida (Coming up to TIM).*—Don't talk like that, Tim. Both of us knows how he is. How'd you find out 'bout Perry?

*Tim.*—I carried a load of cotton over there to *Ashley* this evenin' fer *Mr. Jones*, and there was a big crowd of folks down at the bank and some of 'em told me 'bout his sickness and hard luck lately, so I went over there, and, *Ida*, it's worse'n I thought. They're 'bout to starve.

*Ida.*—Starve! They can't be that bad off.

*Tim.*—They air, though. And him in there—(*Nodding to the rear.*) with his close-fisted dollars all piled up, dollars that Perry helped to make. Ida, I want you to try to git some money out'n Wash. That's what I come by fer. I got Mr. Jones to let me have his horse and buggy to go over there and I thought I'd come by and tell you and see if you couldn't git something out o' yer pa.

*Ida.*—Me? Tim, you know he won't help Perry. He ain't never 'lowed his name to be mentioned since he left here seven years ago. He thinks he's gitting rich over there in the mill.

*Tim.*—Yeh, yeh, he thinks. I know how he is. Ain't he kept us apart ten year? But he's got plenty of money, and Perry's got to have help.

*Ida.*—'Twon't do no good. He blames Perry fer his being tuck with that P'ralysis. He useter love Perry in that quair way of his'n, but he ain't got no use fer him now.

*Tim.*—But somebody's got to do something. There's Perry's little chil'ren 'thout enough to eat. Perry told me he couldn't buy another mouthful on credit. Here 'tis Christmas Eve, and he can't even git his kids nothing.

*Ida.*—What can we do, Tim. They ain't nothing fitten to eat in the house or I'd send 'em something.

*Tim.*—All we can do is to git some money from Wash. And he's got to have some to save Elsie. He said if he could git a specialist they could save her life. But he won't come 'thout money g'aranteed.

(*She stands for a moment undecided. TIM turns first one way and then another, warming himself. IDA sets a pot on the fire, gets a dish-cloth and wipes the table, then she sits down in a chair.*)

*Ida.*—Lord, I told Perry 'twouldn't do fer him and Elsie to marry and move to that mill. Their place was on the farm.

*Tim.*—Yeh, but who can blame him for leaving when he had sech a daddy as Old—

*Ida.*—That's all he could do, I 'spect. And now he's got down where he's got to have help, to live.

*Tim (Coming closer to the table and looking at IDA).*—He's shore in a bad fix, Ida. And they ain't nothing else to do but git the money from Wash, I tell you.

*Ida.*—Couldn't Perry borrow it?

*Tim.*—No, he's tried. Prices is bad, and they ain't no money stirring. You'll just have to try him.

*Ida (Vehemently).*—Tim, I can't ask him, I tell you.

*Tim (Pleadingly).*—Shore he won't refuse his own boy. Shore he won't.

*Ida (Turning sharply towards TIM).*—Don't you know better'n that? Didn't he let Mallie on her death bed and die just 'cause he was too stingy to git a doctor? "Kept saying 'Twa'n't nothing"—kept saying it till she died.

*Tim.*—But maybe he would help. Maybe—

*Ida.*—No! And I'm scared to ask him. He's terrible when he gits stirred up.

*(She goes to the chest at the rear and takes out a shawl. TIM stands looking in the fire. He turns and sees IDA putting the shawl around her shoulders.)*

*Tim.*—What you gonna do?

*Ida (Defiantly).*—I'm going up to Perry's. If I can't give 'em money, I can wait on 'em.

*Tim.*—You can't do that, Ida. That ain't the kind of help they need worst. You can't go proguing up there through the mud and water. And there's Wash to be looked after.

*Ida (Stands a moment looking at the floor, then throws down her shawl and comes back to the fire).*—I'd forgot him. I've allus got to tend to him. I wonder how many more years it's going to last. *(She drops into a chair by the table.)*

*Tim (Moodily).*—I'd help Perry if I could, but I ain't got nothing. Here I been working a harling for ten year, and just when I was gitting a little saved up, him in there cheats me out of it. Yeh, harling! We're all harlings, that's what! *(He runs his fingers through his thin hair, sits down beside IDA and lays his hat on the floor.)* Well, maybe they ain't no chance of gittin nothin' out of him. But I thought you'd try him, just fer Perry.

*Ida.*—I wish I could, Tim, but I'm scared of him. And he's liable to have another stroke if I stir him up 'bout Perry. I know I hate him, but I don't want to be the cause of his being tuck ag'in.

*Tim (Despondently).*—Well, I'm going over to Perry's and set up—*(He reaches for his hat and gets up. IDA sits, gazing into the fire, twisting a ring on her finger.)* Tain't right for things to be like this, Ida. People ain't made to live the way we've had to live—

*Ida (Bitterly).*—No. 'Tain't right. But they ain't nothing right in this world. All of us has been just plumb slaves, and all to put money in his old steel box. I ain't never had nothing like other women—

*Tim.*—Shore is bad! (*Looking at the fire.*) I'm sorry fer you. Sorry fer myself, too.

*Ida.*—Sometimes—sometimes I could kill him. What's any of our lives been worth 'cause of him? I reckon I hadn't ought to complain so, but I ain't seed nobody to talk to in so long that I'm 'bout plumb distracted, hearing nothing but his babbling and singing and playing that there old harp.

*Tim (Warming himself at the fire).*—He don't sing and play on that old harp the way he used to, does he?

*Ida.*—Yeh, more'n ever. He gits childisher every day. I'm just wore out with him—(*With a touch of shrillness in her voice.*)—wore out, I tell you! (*They remain silent for a moment; then TIM makes a movement to go.*)

*Tim.*—Well—I—I got to be going. But I sorter wanted to—to—

*Ida.*—You ain't going this quick, air you, Tim? You know I ain't seed you in—in six months. (*She looks at him timidly.*)

*Tim.*—Yeh, yeh, I got to git in and set up—I don't reckon we can do nothing fer Perry after all—but I thought—(*For a moment he stands as if undecided what to do. IDA rises. He notices her turning the ring on her finger.*) Well, I see you still got that ring I give you.

*Ida (With a touch of softness as she looks at him and then away).*—Yeh, it's 'bout the only thing I ever had give to me, Tim.

*Tim.*—Been a good 'un ain't it?

*Ida.*—That it has, Tim. It ain't changed a bit.

*Tim.*—That jooler man I got it from said 'twas a good 'un, said 'twould last a life time. That's been about ten year, ain't it?

*Ida.*—Ten year tonight, Tim.

*Tim (Brightly).*—Yeh, it has. I hadn't thought of that. Ten year—(*Musing.*) Ten year—'Twas Christmas time then, wa'n't it? Well, I got to go. (*He turns and then stops.*) Has the old man quit trying to git it away from you?

*Ida.*—No. He's all the time after it 'cause it's got a little gold about it. (*IDA stands with folded hands looking into the fire. She glances sideways at TIM.*) If things had been different we'd have a place of our own now, like we useter talk 'bout, wouldn't we, Tim?

*Tim (Turning away his head).*—Yeh, yeh, I reckon so! We'd a shore got along all right together, I bet, but—

*Ida.*—I always been hoping that things would change—and

I believe they will, Tim. That's all I been looking to—But you've stayed away a long time—six months.

*Tim (Clearing his throat and looking off).*—Yeh—but Wash—you know how he is—

*Ida (Brushing her hand across her face).*—I know. But you used to come when you got a chance.

*Tim.*—I did, Ida. But—(*With fumbling decisiveness.*) I—been wanting to tell you 'bout me and Josie.

*Ida (Looking up quickly).*—'Bout you—'bout you and Josie?

*Tim (Embarrassed).*—Well, we've sorter fixed it up. (*IDA remains silent.*) We've got it all planned out fer next Saturday night. (*He stops for a moment.*) I thought a lot of you, Ida. But ten year is a long time to wait, with no sign of things changing.

*Ida (Quietly).*—I hadn't heard 'bout it, Tim.

*Tim.*—We sorter kept it quiet. But I kinder thought I ought to tell you.

*Ida.*—I reckon it was right fer you to tell me.

*Tim (More boldly).*—We got it all planned out. I got a house rented over in Ashley and we've going to move in right away.

*Ida.*—Going to move to Ashley?

*Tim.*—I didn't much want to go, but Josie said we couldn't make nothing starting as tenants, not with prices so low. And maybe we can save enough to buy us a piece of land 'fore long.

*Ida.*—Look here, Tim, that's the way Perry used to talk.

*Tim.*—I know, but it's different with us. It won't take much fer us to live on.

*Ida.*—Tim, you ain't made for that mill life.

*Tim.*—I know, I like the farm—fresh air, growing crops, and sich like, but Josie wants to go to town, and I reckon we can do all right—Why, what you mean? (*As IDA hands him the ring.*)

*Ida (Looking away).*—You can take it back now, Tim. It don't mean nothing.

*Tim.*—Why, why, it's yourn.

*Ida.*—Hurry and take it.

*Tim.*—Naw, I can't do that, Ida. You got to keep it. I think a lot of you, and I'm sorry fer you yet—Naw, you keep it.

*Ida (Speaking loudly and with sudden bitterness).*—Take it! I'm going to wake him up and try to git that money fer Perry. (*At this point old WASH's voice is heard in the next room, shrill and high. TIM slips across the room, calling to IDA in a low voice.*)

*Tim.*—Try and git it then, Ida, and I'll come back from Perry's fer it. (*He goes out, closing the door behind him.*)

*Wash* (*Calling again from the next room.*)—Ida! Ida! (*For a moment IDA stands motionless, looking at the ring. Suddenly she takes it off and throws it towards the fire. It rolls on the hearth. She runs, picks it up, and slips it back on her finger.*)

*Wash.*—Ida! Ida! (*The sound of a mouth harp is heard. IDA wipes her eyes with her apron, hurriedly stirs the fire, and goes out through the door at the rear. The shrill voice of the old man is heard.*)

*Wash.*—I heard somebody talking! I heard somebody talking! Roll me in there fer my supper. It's cold in here. (*There is a medley of incoherent babbling, punctuated by IDA's sharp weary voice. A moment later she comes in rolling old WASH in a wheel chair.*) (*There is little of him visible except his head, large and bullet-shaped. His hair is thin and grey, his eyes quick and sharp, hawk-like. His nose is large, his mouth drawn far to the right from paralysis. A thin growth of white beard covers his face. There is something snake-like in the way his enormous head raises itself above the folds of quilts and old coats wrapped around him. His legs and left arm are paralyzed, and his head has a doddering movement like that of a very young infant.*)

*Wash.*—I thought I heared somebody talking. Hah! Didn't I? (*IDA wheels him up to the table, facing front. He begins playing with the table cloth, hs right hand never still.*) Say, gal, wan'n't that somebody talking?

*Ida* (*Putting the bread on the fire.*)—No, it wa'n't nobody.

*Wash* (*Slapping at a fly.*)—I thought I heared somebody say something.

*Ida.*—I tell you 'twa'n't nothing—nobody but me. I was just—singing a little to myself.

*Wash* (*Turning with a bird-like motion of his head, and looking at her.*)—Singing? You ain't sung nothing in years. You got too old to sing. Singing? Hah! Hah! Hah! I like music. Now sing it fer me. I'd like to hear you. Heh! heh! heh! (*He tries to scratch the back of his neck.*)

*Ida* (*Busy with the supper.*)—I can't—I—

*Wash.*—Hah? Can't? What ails yer eyes? Been crying? Hah! Singing and crying. What you been crying 'bout?

*Ida.*—Nothing. (*She goes to the cupboard, and takes out a jar of milk. She pours out a bowlful, then crumbles bread into it.*)

*Wash* (*Slapping the side of his face.*)—That you have. You been crying! Heh! heh! heh!

*Ida.*—I ain't been crying. I wish I could cry. Who wouldn't cry—fixed like me? Oh, Lord!

*Wash.*—I knowed you'd been a-crying. You think yer old daddy's too hard on you, that's what you think. You think he won't never die and leave you his money. But I'm good fer many a year yit, many a year.

*Ida.*—What makes you talk like that? I hate yer money, and—

*Wash.*—I know you. You think I'm too hard on you. But you're having a 'easy time to what I had. Hah, when I growed up I was sent to work barefooted in the winter, beat and cuffed about, beat and cuffed. Didn't know what 'twas to have 'nough to eat. But I said I'd git started some day and pay the whole damned world back fer the way I'd been treated, and I have, I have. I've made money, plenty of it, and I've made 'em suffer, suffer! Hah! hah! hah! (*Ironically.*) Sing me that song.

*Ida.*—Here, eat your supper. (*She sets the bowl down on the table before him.*)

*Wash.*—Heigh! Put the kittle on the fire. I want you to shave me.

*Ida.*—I done put it on.

*Wash.*—Well, if you won't sing, I'll sing. I like singing. When I was young, yer mammy said I was a good songster. Heh! heh! heh! (*He sings.*)

“Jesus, lover of my soul,  
Let me to thy bosom fly,  
While the nearer waters roll,  
While the tempest still is high.”

Hah! hah! hah! That's a good 'un, but they ain't a damn word of truth in it, not nary 'un. (*He slaps at a fly and knocks over his mush, then stops and looks at it stupidly.*) Now who done that? (*He knits his brows as if trying to remember.*) Say, Ida, who'n the devil knocked over my bowl? (*He begins slapping the mush with his hand and eating it.*) (*IDA patiently gets more milk and bread, takes a dishcloth and wipes the table clean in front of him, then gives him his bowl and spoon. As she sets the bowl before him, he reaches out with a quick movement and catches her by the wrist.*) Still a-wearing Tim's ring, hah? When you going to quit it? You ain't never going to git married.

*Ida.*—Oh, turn me loose!

*Wash.*—Gimme that ring. I been axing you fer it a long time. You ain't got no use fer it. (*IDA pulls the ring from her*

*finger and throws it in his lap. He puts it on, cackling with delight.)* Hah! hah! hah! (*He begins eating with a disgusting sucking noise, looking now and then at the ring, and rubbing it against the quilt.*) Didn't know you'd give it up so easy. Something must a-happened. (*IDA sits down and rests her head in her hand. He speaks after a moment.*) How long I been asleep? Hah?

*Ida (Wearily).*—Not long. (*WASH goes on with his eating, after eyeing IDA suspiciously, as if trying to find out what the trouble is.*)

*Wash.*—This is Christmas Eve, ain't it?

*Ida.*—Yeh, it's Christmas time.

*Wash (Stops his eating and looks straight before him).*—Heh! heh! heh! Christmas time! Who'd a thought it! Well, I reckon they'll be some as won't have enough money to buy they kids nothing. But they ought to take care of they money like me, and—

*Ida (Turning quickly).*—Yes, and if they all was like you—!

*Wash (Snapping his head to one side).*—Hah! What you saying, gal?

*Ida (Turning back to the fire).*—Nothing, nothing. (*WASH goes on with his eating. He stops, lays down his spoon, and clumsily wipes his mouth with the back of his hand.*)

*Wash.*—Then there serenaders'll come around ag'in tonight, won't they, a-singing they songs? They gener'ly comes Christmas Eve, don't they?

*Ida.*—They'll be apt to come. (*Wearily.*) Young folks love to have good times at Christmas.

*Wash.*—That they do! That they do! But you and me's too old fer that. We ain't no longer young folks. But still we likes our music, don't we? Hah! hah! hah! (*He sings.*)

“Nearer, my God, to Thee,  
Nearer to Thee,  
E'en tho' it be a cross  
That raiseth me.  
Still all my song shall be—”

(*His voice cracks.*) Heh! heh! heh! That's another good 'un. My old man useter sing it first rate after he'd beat my britches off with a hick'ry. But I got it back on him. I got it back on him. He's dead and rotten, and I'm still a-living.

“Nearer, my God, to Thee,  
Nearer to Thee—”

(*His hand wanders vaguely before him, then he feels under the quilt*



*wrapped around him, rubs his forehead as if trying to remember something.)* Heigh, Ida, what you reckon 'tis I want? (*He rubs his forehead again.*)

*Ida.*—Your old harp, I reckon.

*Wash.*—Hah! hah! hah! That's it. And I couldn't think of it. It's in there. (*Motioning to the other room.*) Git it.

*Ida (Making no move).*—Pa, can't you be quiet a while. I—I want to talk to you.

*Wash.*—Well, go ahead and talk. But it's quair to me, fer you ain't never wanted to talk to me before. Cain't I play my harp and hear you too? Git it. I allus plays it after supper.

*Ida.*—I want to ask you a question. Let the old harp go.

*Wash (His eyes begin to shine and his head dodders as he half-screams).*—Hah! Git me that harp. I got to do something. I ain't got my money now, and—

*Ida.*—What's——Ain't got——yer money? That man from the bank didn't——he didn't——?

*Wash.*—What you know 'bout him? Nothing. 'Course I got my money. I just started to say I—I sold this here place.

*Ida.*—You sold the place! What am I—? You said time and ag'in that you'd leave it to me.

*Wash.*—Heh! heh! heh! That's all right. I got my lifetime right in it. You wouldn't need it nohow when I'm gone. And you know they ain't nothing like having the money. Hush yer mouth now, and git me that there harp. (*IDA goes into the room at the rear and brings back a small mouth organ. WASH takes it eagerly and begins puffing up and down, blowing out the semblance of "In the Sweet Bye-and-Bye." IDA sits by the fire with her chin in her hand. WASH continues his playing.*)

*Ida (Turning around and speaking resolutely).*—Fer the land's sake don't play that tonight or you'll run me crazy.

*Wash.*—Hah? Crazy! I ain't crazy. That's a good song. I'm coming along. I'm coming along. I'm gitting better, ain't I? Hah! hah! hah! (*He begins playing again, then stops and beats the mouth organ against his thigh to shake out the saliva.*)

*Ida.*—I want to talk to you. I got something to ask you.

*Wash (Eyeing her suspiciously).*—Hah! Well, talk. (*He starts playing again.*)

*Ida.*—It's 'bout Perry. (*A quiver runs through the old man's body. The harmonica slips from his fingers and falls to the floor. He closes his eyes. IDA looks at him, half afraid of what she has said. Suddenly WASH opens his eyes with a jerk, brings his fist*

*down on the table with a bang, seizes the bowl and crashes it to the floor. Then his hand wanders up towards his throat and he unfastens his coat as if suffocating.)*

*Wash (Screaming).—*What'd you say! Hah! Don't you say his name, don't you! *(The doddering of his head continues.)*  
Damn him! Damn him! *(Again he hits the table with his fist.)*

*Ida (Rising from her chair).—*Pa—!

*Wash (His eyes beginning to shine again).—*Hush it! Don't you speak of him to me. I hate him! I hate him!

*Ida.—*Lord, Lord, yeh, you hate everything, everything on the green earth.

*Wash.—*I hate him! I hate him! Didn't he run off and leave me to be tuck with p'ralysis. Him with his high notions. Went over there to town—*(He points.)*—to make money and git independent, too bigoty fer me, his old daddy—me here helpless, and he ain't never been a-nigh me—*(Shouting.)*—me who useter could walk my thirty miles and feel fresh at night—me laid up here paralyzed. Damn him! He ain't no kin to me. Hah! hah! hah!

*Ida.—*But we got to do something fer him. He's bad off.

*Wash.—*Hush it! Ain't I here helpless 'count of him and liable to die any minute. *(He raises his hand.)* I put a curse on him when he left me here by myself, and it'll git him, you see if it don't! Hah! hah! hah!

*Ida (Defiantly).—*You ain't got no heart in you. It's yer fault and you know it well as I do. He'd a come back, but you wouldn't let him—he a-living in two miles of you, and you wouldn't let nobody speak of him. But I'm going to speak.

*Wash (Shrilly).—*Yeh, I put a curse on him. He's the only thing I ever loved in this here world, and he went back on me. But let 'em all be ag'in me. I'll show 'em. *(He clutches at his throat.)*

*Ida.—*They ain't nobody ag'in you. It's you ag'in everybody else.

*Wash.—*Now, Ida, don't you . . .

*Ida.—*You think he's over there gitting rich, and he's starving to death, that's what he is.

*Wash.—*What's that 'bout starving! That's a lie. What you up to?

*Ida.—*Tain't no lie. Tim's been here and told me.

*Wash.—*Tim! I thought I heard somebody. *(Helplessly.)*

You all trying to git my money, that's what you air. (*Triumphantly.*) But you won't, you won't. Not yit nohow.

*Ida.*—Elsie's 'bout to die and the children's sick. We got to help 'em.

*Wash.*—That's a lie. Somebody's a-telling that to git my money.

*Ida (Despairingly).*—You got to help 'em, I tell you. They need money to git a doctor from off yander or Elsie's going to die, and . . .

*Wash.*—Hah—hah—hah! I put a curse on him. It's a-working, ain't it? I'll bring him down on his knees, I'll bring him down. I bring 'em all down.

*Ida.*—They made money fer a while. But he's been sick off'n on fer two year. He's got that cotton lint in his lungs. Elsie ain't been able to work none. And all they'd saved's been spent. They're just starving . . .

*Wash (Raising his hand warningly and wheezing).*—He ain't no worse off'n I am—heh, heh, heh! Damn him! Let him die, let 'em all die. I been cursing him fer seven long year, and I knowed he'd git it by and by. (*He looks at IDA cunningly and then pulls out a black steel document box from under the quilt and slams it down on the table.*) I put many a dollar in that there box, but he won't never git nary a cent of it. I've had my share of suffering in this world, and let him have his'n.

*Ida (After a moment, speaking harshly).*—I tell you you got to do something! (*She moves closer to him. He looks up at her in fear and tries to move away. Suddenly she snatches up the box, but he makes no effort to interrupt her.*)

*Wash.*—Hah-hah-hah! Go ahead, go ahead. I knowed it'd fetch you. I knowed you'd turn ag'in me someday like the wrath of God. He told me I'd better put it where you couldn't git at it.

*Ida.*—Where's the key?

*Wash.*—Don't look at me like that, don't you.

*Ida (Coming closer and speaking in the same dull hard voice).*—Where's the key?

*Wash.*—Heh—heh—heh! They ain't nothing in it. I done fixed it. I 'spected someday you'd all turn ag'in me and try to rob me of my money. Hah-hah! He told me yistiddy that's what'd happen.

*Ida.*—Where's the key?

*Wash.*—It ain't locked, open it. (*She opens it, finds it empty,*

and throws it from her.) Hah-hah-hah! (His head begins to wobble and his eyes roll. He clutches at his throat again and again, struggling for breath.)

*Ida.*—O Lord, I could kill you! Where's that money?

*Wash (Thickly).*—That's all right, that's all right.

*Ida.*—I been your slave fer thirty long year, and I'm done of it. Part of that money's mine, and I'm going to have it.

*Wash.*—Don't look at me like that, *Ida*. Don't you! Stop it! God A'mighty! (*As IDA picks up the butcher knife from the table and starts toward him*) I got a knife too. (*He whips out a long knife from under the quilt. IDA starts walking obliquely around him. He tries to twist around to keep her in front of him.*)

*Ida.*—I'm going to kill you if you don't tell me. Perry's got to have it.

*Wash.*—Hah! *Ida*! *Ida*, don't you! (*She draws nearer to him.*) I'll tell you! I'll tell you! I ain't got a cent, I ain't.

*Ida.*—Where is it?

*Wash.*—It's all been put in the bank. I sent it yistiddy by the—the cashier. (*He sways from side to side. IDA throws her knife from her and sinks into a chair. WASH makes a gasping noise, fighting for breath.*) *Ida*! *Ida*! Git me some water! *Ida*—(*She pays no attention to him.*) (*After a moment the door opens and PERRY LUCAS comes in. He is dressed in shabby clothes, bare-headed, wet and muddy. His feverish eyes stare brightly out from his unshaven face—a face typical of the slaves of the mill looms with its greenish pallor.*) (*As the door opens WASH tried to turn around to see who it is. IDA starts up, staring dully at PERRY as he looks around the room. WASH speaks.*) Who's that, *Ida*? Who's that?

*Ida.*—It's Perry.

*Wash.*—Hah! *With a violent effort he catches hold of the table and turns himself about. IDA goes to PERRY and clutches at his coat. He shudders and coughs. She hurries to the fireplace and stirs the fire.*)

*Ida.*—Come to the fire, Perry.

*Wash (Blankly).*—Who're you? What you want?

*Perry.*—I've come for money. (*He coughs.*)

*Wash (Raising his voice).*—And you've come back! Hah! hah! Where's them there fine clothes and all you useter brag you's going to git when you left the old man? You're down and out, ain't you? You're down and out. Heh! heh! heh! (*He points his long claw-like forefinger at PERRY.*) I knowed you'd

try and come back, but I ain't changed, I ain't. Hah! Git me some water, Ida!

*Ida.*—Come and warm, Perry. You're frozen.

*Wash.*—No you don't. Don't you come a step nigher.

*Perry (In a lifeless voice).*—No, I ain't cold. I'm burning up. I've come fer help.

*Ida (Throwing out her arms).*—Ain't I been a-begging him fer you? And I might a killed him, I don't know. But it's too late now. He can't help you.

*Perry (Brushing his arm across his forehead).*—Oh, I tell you, I got to have help. I don't want you to give me nothing, just lend it to me. I'll pay you back—anything fer Elsie and the children.

*Wash.*—Children! You can lose your'n like I lost mine—I had a son oncet and he turned ag'in me and left me alone seven long year by myself. And I don't fergit like 'tother folks, I don't.

*Perry.*—That's done and gone now. I was proud then, but I ain't got no pride no more—I want you to help me.

*Wash.*—We allus git justice in the end. Now you know how I've felt, year in, year out, night after night with no son by me—here helpless, and you with two good legs and arms to be going about.

*Ida (Ironically).*—It ain't no use—it's done—it's done too late.

*Perry.*—No, it ain't. The doctor says we can save her if we can git that specialist here. (*He turns towards WASH.*) Can't you see? I got to have some money. (*He comes closer.*) Give me the money. I got to git back—they ain't nobody there but Tim. She's sick, I tell you, and I—I'm sick too—(*He coughs.*) The mill—the mill has—(*He comes still closer to WASH.*)

*Wash (Pulling out his knife).*—Quit it, Perry! (*He shivers and drops the knife to the floor.*) Perry, Perry, think of it, boy, seven long year an I ain't seed you. (*His hand wanders out toward PERRY who stands with bowed head, his arms hanging lifelessly at his sides.*) Seven long year and me waiting fer you, boy, day and night a-thinking of you. (*He clutches at his throat.*)

*Perry.*—But Elsie's terrible sick, and—I got to git back—quick.

*Wash.*—Could you git the doctor there tonight, could you? If I's to—If I's to—

*Perry.*—You will help me, won't you? *He starts toward WASH with outstretched arms.*

*Wash.*—Seven year, boy, think of it! Seven yea —! (*The*

*door opens and TIM runs in, wet, muddy, and out of breath.*) Heigh! What—

*Perry (Turning toward the door).*—What is it, Tim? What's happened?

*Tim (Shaking his head).*—Right after you left she was tuck with a stifling spell and went all of a sudden like. (*PERRY is taken with a fit of coughing, after which he feels blankly around him. TIM helps him to a seat.*)

*Wash.*—What's that? What's that?

*Tim.*—Elsie's dead, that's all. It don't mean nothing to you.

*Wash.*—Now! Now! That's a lie. Perry boy, I'll help you out, I'll help you. But seven long year is hard to forgit, hard to fergit. Perry, I'll help you. (*PERRY sits staring blankly before him. IDA comes over to him and lays her hand on his shoulder.*)

*Ida.*—I'd try to comfort you, Perry, but they ain't nothing I can say.

*Wash.*—That's all right, Perry. I'll fix it. I got money and I'm going to help you out.

*Ida (Laughing bitterly).*—But you won't nuther. What'd yer money be worth now? But you ain't got no money.

*Wash.*—Hah! Hah! That's all right, that's all right. (*The habitual cunning look comes back to his face.*)

*Ida.*—You put all yer money in the bank, and the bank's busted and all yer money's gone. Thank God, you're gitting yer justice in the end.

*Wash (Screaming).*—What's that! You're trying to scare me! Heh! heh! But you won't, you won't.

*Tim.*—Naw, she ain't. It's broke, and they ain't a cent of money left, nothing but some old worthless papers, and—

*Wash (Wailing).*—Perry! Perry! You hear that, boy! Perry, make 'em quit.

*Perry (Rising mechanically).*—Yeh, it's all gone, everything's gone. (*He starts toward the door.*)

*Ida.*—Wait, Perry, I'm going up there and do what I can. *She goes to the chest at the rear and gets out a cape.*

*Wash.*—That there man, he told me—he told me—

*His words are lost in a throaty gurgling. Suddenly his head seems to rise from his body, his long right arm shoots out spasmodically, his fingers drawing in rigidly. PERRY and TIM move away from him in horror. IDA with her back to them is fastening*

her cape and putting on her shawl. A chorus of voices outside begin singing.

“Silent night, holy night !  
All is calm, all is bright,  
Round yon Virgin Mother and Child,  
Holy Infant so tender and mild—”

*Ida.*—There’s them young folks enjoying theyselves on Christmas Eve, while we—(*She turns and sees WASH as he slumps down utterly helpless in his chair.*) we—

*Wash* (*Calls to her in a low terror-stricken voice.*)—*Ida!* *Ida!*

*IDA* comes to him. He tries to speak but a second stroke has left him without the power of speech or movement. She gazes at him a moment and then turns away in despair before his pleading eyes.

*Ida.*—Lord, Perry, it’s another stroke!—What can I do?  
(*The singing passes on and dies away.*)

CURTAIN

## YESTERDAY

BY HELEN M. FRANCIS

You say you missed me yesterday  
And wanted to see my flame scarf blow,  
What, was it not enough to see  
My lighted window through the snow,  
And watch the flowers I gave you sway,  
But that you must look for sight of me?

I saw lads like you in the street,  
Books that you loved, a bas-relief  
Of Orpheus and Hermes. Clay?  
No, love and passion and music’s grief.  
Yet I too found them incomplete.

.....  
You say you missed me yesterday.

# DOES ALCOHOL STIMULATE POETIC INSPIRATION?

BY C. E. GRAVES

In a magazine article of not long ago\* Mr. Richard Le Gallienne uses a review of two anti-prohibition books as a vehicle for the expression of some of his own similar ideas on the subject. One of these ideas, which might easily be interpreted by those of the opposite faith as a libel on the art of poetry, is that the use of alcoholic beverages in moderation is necessary for the production of great imaginative works of art, especially poetry. Although Mr. Le Gallienne does not express the idea in those words, yet that is clearly what he has in mind. He quotes with approbation from Mr. Charles Hanson Towne's book, *The Rise and Fall of Prohibition*, as follows: "It is well-known that those races which refuse absolutely to drink do not produce anything of importance in the way of art," and he extends this thesis to English literature on his own account by saying: "As for English literature the only teetotal poet on record was the thinnest of all lyrists namely Edmund Waller; while if, among contemporary writers, prohibitionists and vegetarians can point to Mr. Bernard Shaw, the answer is easy that Mr. Shaw's wit and humor are of that lean and hungry kind which proclaims the doctrinaire, insufficiently nourished with humanity." He cites as an example of the "human virtues" of alcoholic beverages Prof. Saintsbury, "than whom no authority could be more to the point, for Prof. Saintsbury, who has been a wine-drinker all his life, has now reached the ripe age of seventy-eight, and is still adding industriously to that immense previous output of critical writing which has made him the Sainte-Beuve of the English language." He quotes Prof. Saintsbury as saying, among other things, that much of the best imaginative work of the world has been due to its (alcohol's) influence."

Inspired by a desire to know whether Mr. Le Gallienne's views on this subject were representative of poets as a class, the writer sent out a questionnaire to a number of representative (not neces-

\*Literary Digest International Book Review, June, 1923



sarily nationally known) American poets, listed in *Who's Who in America*, asking for an expression of opinion on the subject. This obviously allowed an opportunity to base the answer on personal experience or on historical precedent and general theory. Some of the correspondents chose the former method, some the latter and some both. Of the sixteen answers received, two refused to express an opinion, on the ground that their personal experience was insufficient. Dr. Henry Van Dyke considers a physician's experience necessary in order adequately to answer the question, while Mr. Henry H. Knibbs says that, as he has never used liquor in moderation—he doesn't say whether he has ever used it in any other way or not—he can't take a hand in the controversy.

Of the remaining fourteen answers, only one enthusiastically sides with Mr. Le Gallienne. This is Mr. Howard V. Sutherland, who expresses the opinion that, "Genius may thrive on crusts, but never on unadulterated water." He adds that "the worn spirit of the Artist, to maintain itself above the low levels of to-day, must occasionally be revived by the same God-given juices that strengthened a Homer and a Sappho, the poet of the Psalms and the immortal Song, and England's bright galaxy of singers." The historical accuracy of these statements will be touched on later, in part. For the rest, Mr. Le Gallienne must find considerable comfort in this one coincidence with his view that alcoholic juices can "strengthen the worn spirit of the Artist."

Of the remaining thirteen replies, only three can offer any crumbs of consolation to the proponents of Mr. Le Gallienne's theories. Mr. Edgar Arlington Robinson believes that "the best poets have not as a rule been averse to a certain amount of alcohol," but he is not willing to go so far as to say that alcohol is indispensable for the production of good poetry. Miss Harriet Monroe thinks that most of the poets of her acquaintance "accept prohibition under protest and with occasional infractions of the law" but she does not believe that "such infractions represent a dietary necessity for the production of works of genius." Mr. Henry A. Bellows expresses the somewhat enigmatical opinion that "it is difficult to imagine the production of any of the world's literary masterpieces under a strict enforcement of the Volstead act." Whether he refers to the moral conditions connected with strict law enforcement, or to the physiological results of an era of teetotalism is a matter of conjecture.

The other ten replies are unalterably opposed to the Le Gallienne theories. Mr. Vachel Lindsay says that it seems to him

“that the wrecks of alcohol in the art world are sufficient in number to make any thoughtful artist as dry as the desert of Gobi.” Mr. Douglas Malloch’s observations during his long career as a writer prove to him that “alcohol has always been the enemy and never the friend of art.” He thinks that the few exceptions, like Poe, who drank alcoholic stimulants and wrote great literature, did so in spite of, and not because of their appetite. Because Coleridge used drugs is not a good reason why anyone would recommend a drug diet. Mr. Malloch admits that alcohol stimulates, but he thinks that it stimulates the worst in men instead of the best. Taking up Carlisle’s definition of poetry as “musical thought,” he says that “under alcoholic stimulation the music is likely to be a little maudlin and the thought a little befuddled.” Mr. Charles G. Blanden also emphasizes this last thought, adding that “to create great works of art, one must have full possession of all his powers—have a head clear as crystal.” Mr. Harrison S. Morris thinks that “even the least endowed artist would want to avoid ‘putting an enemy in his mouth to steal away his brain.’” Mr. E. A. Brininstool says that he has gotten along so far without the use of the brew that is supposed to inebriate and that he doubtless will continue to worry along minus a joy-water jag. He adds that he is not a crank on the subject, however, and “If anybody—poet or otherwise—gets any benefit out of the stuff, let ’em hop to it, if that is the way they feel about it.”

Miss Margaret Sherwood cites Wordsworth and Shelley as shining examples of teetolism. She thinks that “there is no doubt that Wordsworth’s asceticism in food and drink heightened that sense of nature beauty wherein lay his deepest stimulus.” Going back to ancient times, she says: “What Homer drank (supposing him to have been a man!) or Dante, we do not know, yet I have faith to believe that both had deeper sources of inspiration than the wine-cup. One may have grave doubts as to whether Shakespeare was a teetotaler, yet there is no evidence to show that his work was done under the influence of alcohol.” As for the philosophical effects of alcohol, she expresses the opinion that any would-be poet who found that he had to depend on alcohol, even in moderation, in order to write, should seriously ask himself the question as to whether he were not intended by Nature to play the passive role of an appreciator of poetry. Real poets, she believes, derive their heightened powers from an intellectual and spiritual stimulus.

Mr. Cale Young Rice expresses the same idea when he says that

"no great artist ever became so merely through the use of alcoholic beverages: ninety-nine hundredths of his ability derives from genius and effort, and a care for proper food is far more determinative of the other hundredth than alcohol in any form." Mr. Rice does not believe that even temporary exhilaration and good cheer are sufficient to produce the inspirational mood. "On the contrary, they are more than likely to persuade the artist that facility is greatness—as happened in the case of Byron. His inhibitions and realizations are removed by a cheerfully expanded Ego. He seems a god but wakes to find he is not." Mr. Rice is also in full accord with the commonly expressed opinion that alcohol is ultimately a drug, not a stimulant, and that "in the long run no drug is productive of greatness, but rather destroys the will to achieve."

Mr. Wilbur D. Nesbit contributes an interesting incident to the discussion. He writes: "One of the greatest and best-beloved American poets told me one evening that he had suffered more from the fact that so many people, claiming to be on intimate terms with him, had said that he never could write a line until he had a few drinks" His comment on this was: "No man ever wrote anything when he was drunk. When a man is drinking, his entire time and attention are devoted to that; he has no time for work." Mr. Nesbit adds that his own "experience and observation are that stimulants of that nature are not helpful at the writing desk nor during writing hours. This does not mean that all total abstainers are geniuses, nor does it mean that good writers who take a glass occasionally would write better things, if they were 'on the water wagon.' To my mind, it is an individual problem, regulated by the temperament, mentality and constitution of the individual."

Mr. John G. Neihardt presents an original and interesting idea on the subject. He says: "I have found in my own case that alcohol, taken in any amount or form, tends to check the creative impulse in me. I have tried this often, and always with the same result. The creative act, I believe with F. W. H. Myers, is the result of a collaboration between the subconscious mind and the normal consciousness, the latter acting as critic of the material presented by uprushes of the former. If this be a correct theory (and it certainly explains the phenomena of creative effort as I know them) it would seem that, in my case at least, a slight intoxication tends to destroy the control of the normal consciousness over the subconscious, rendering the whole process in-

effective." He adds that although he has never developed a habit of drinking alcoholic liquor, he can well understand how one who has done so may actually need alcohol in periods of creative effort, since he is to be regarded as normal only when he is somewhat under the influence of liquor.

Perhaps this last thought is the real conciliator of conflicting opinions in the controversy. It is expressed more fully by Mr. Edward Lucas White who is inclined to conjecture that Mr. Le Gallienne has some basis for his ideas but misunderstands that basis. He writes: "Anyone brought up with the habit of taking wine or beer or whiskey or what not with his meals trains his digestion to depend on alcohol. If he drinks as usual, he digests his meals and feels light and comfortable and ready for anything, and if he is a writer, has all his faculties at their best, since he is eupeptic and vigorous. Such a person, if cut off from his habitual small ration of wine or beer or whatever, is not by any means as eupeptic as usual but is likely to become at once and uncomfortably dyspeptic or indigestive and to feel dull and heavy and drowsy and wretched and not at all in the humor for poetizing or writing anything out of his creative imagination. Of course such a person, by stern resolution and long self-restraint, can break such a habit of body and attain to reasonable comfort without his usual diet; but who wants to? If anyone finds that wine seems to help his creative imagination, who would not go on with the easy and pleasant way of life to which he has become used?"

It is not within the province of this article to attempt to investigate or analyze the personal habits of Mr. Le Gallienne and his sympathizers, but unless we accept the hypothesis of Mr. Neihardt and Mr. White that what they mistake to be the intellectual stimulus of alcoholic beverages is nothing but the "dietary necessity," to borrow a phrase from Miss Monroe, of sustaining a habit already formed, we are inevitably led to the conclusion that their estimate of the helpful qualities of the prohibited beverages differs radically from that of the large majority of their fellow-craftsmen.

# THE UNBIDDEN GUEST

A ONE-ACT PLAY

By O. W. FIRKINS

## CHARACTERS

ETIENNE VERTOT, *vinegrower in southeast France, 87 years old.*

JACQUES VERTOT, *his son, 59 years old.*

BERNARD VERTOT, *son of Jacques, 39 years old.*

PIERRE VERTOT, *son of Bernard, 19 years old.*

MARIE VALMORE, *betrothed to Pierre, 18 years old.*

JEAN, *servant to Etienne.*

DENIS, *another servant.*

*The action takes place on ETIENNE VERTOT'S property on a bright May afternoon of the last century. The occasion is the marriage of PIERRE VERTOT and MARIE VALMORE, which is to take place at the house of ETIENNE VERTOT, who is too feeble to leave his estate.*

*The scene on which the curtain rises is divided into three parts: the house, which forms the background, a stone-floored veranda in front of the house, and the ground level which fills a large space in front of the veranda and flanks the veranda to the right in a broad corridor. Doors in house wall, opening on veranda at centre and on corridor at right. Around the veranda runs a low wooden railing trebling its height at the corners. Near the right front corner of the veranda, steps lead down to the ground level. This groundlevel, which includes about two-thirds of the stage space, shows the following objects as the spectator's eye passes from right to left: a stone bench darkened with age, a sort of easel or clothes-horse on which bright-colored stuffs, now dulled with age, are spread out roughly to be aired, a linden stump, which serves as seat, a table, two chairs, and a small, delicately fashioned arbor, at the door of which is a tiny wooden bench. Hedges enclose the ground-space to right and left. Against the hedge flanking the corridor to the right is a small bronze table. An old staghound lies asleep on the veranda. The whole scene is prosperous and cheerful, and except for the picturesque disorder of the stuffs all is in perfect, not to say finical, order.*

*JEAN and DENIS are adding decorations as the curtain rises. JEAN places a bowl of lilies on the bronze table right and attaches*

three bands of scarlet silk to the neighboring hedge. The bands are upright and parallel, and the effect is stiff. DENIS is winding alternate strands of white and orange round the railing of the veranda. The effect is very pretty, but when he reaches the high corner at the right and tries to carry the braid upward he is impeded by the branches of a rosebush. He tries first to include, then to exclude, the unruly shoots, and fails in both attempts.

*Voice (From the house).—Jean! Denis! Come! (The men drop their work, and go out right.)*

The scene is empty for some moments, then sounds are heard behind the hedge at the left front, the hedge is broken with some effort, and a lithe, small figure, in black torn clothes, with a red scarf dropping from his shoulder, leaps upon the stage. His glance moves hither and thither searchingly, and after three or four seconds he begins to glide from point to point with movements only a little less swift than glances. So unusual is his agility that when his face turns toward the audience they are surprised to find that the moustache—the only hair visible on his capped and beardless person—is white as snow. He touches things eagerly, questioningly, as if his hand savored the object like a tongue and his face is bright or clouded according to his success or failure in finding in the the object the familiarity he craves. The face changes readily from the pensive to impish. The impish look comes out when he reaches JEAN'S attempts at decoration. Suddenly he removes two of the scarlet bands, drapes the third obliquely against the hedge, and brings the table with the lilies to a point where the scarlet, white and green set off each other. The improvement is marked, he tosses the discarded bands slightly over the hedge, and turns to inspect the unfinished work of DENIS. He smiles as he perceives the servant's problem, and with instinctive dexterity completes the decoration, giving to the included rose shoots the effect of a charming irregularity. He draws a long breath like a man suddenly tired, seats himself pensively on the linden stump, and putting his hands under his chin, looks half frowningly, half mockingly at the house. Then he rises, finds the bench behind the easel, stretches himself out on his back, puts out his tongue whether at the sky or the earth it is hard to say, and in twenty seconds falls asleep. The screen of stuffs hides him completely from the other actors.

The house-door right opens, and BERNARD VERTOT, a plump, shrewd, bourgeois-looking man, comes out, followed by ETIENNE VERTOT in a wheeled chair propelled by the two manservants.

ETIENNE is very old, very white, and very resolute. The grasp of his hands on the sides of his chair is firm.

*Bernard (Preceding the chair to left front near the arbor).*—This way, Jean. More gently, Denis. That is right. Will you have the shawl, grandfather?

*Etienne.*—No, Bernard. The air is warm—warm even for the old.

*Bernard (To JEAN and DENIS, after a survey of the decorations).*—You have done your work well—and quickly. I shall remember you to-night. (*The two men, following BERNARD'S eye, become aware of the completed decorations. They both start, then look in amazed but furtive inquiry at each other.*)

*Etienne (With authority).*—Go in, Jean and Denis, and help the men to hang the tapestries. (*He looks around.*) I thought Pierre was here.

*Bernard.*—He went out an hour ago—so Jean told me.

*Etienne (With displeasure).*—Afield? To-day?

*Bernard.*—Jean says Marie bade him go. She wanted to sort the stuffs in the old chests you gave her.

*Etienne (Reflectively).*—True—she is 'a silk-merchant's daughter.

*Bernard (Smiling a little).*—She is mistress already. She told Jean to air the stuffs here in the garden. They are there now on the—what are they on? (*He walks over to the stuffs.*)

*Etienne (Abstractedly).*—On what?

*Bernard (In a low tone).*—On the old easel.

*Etienne (Grimly).*—Ah! (*Then, in a tone as low as BERNARD'S.*) It isn't burnt?

*Bernard.*—Did you want it burned, grandfather?

*Etienne (Not heeding his question).*—I do not like old things coming out of their lairs to-day. It's an evil omen.

*Bernard (Reassuringly).*—We are safe, grandfather—quite safe. Pierre loves us. He loves her.

*Etienne.*—Not passionately.

*Bernard.*—No, but tenderly. That is better. He will marry at moonrise. Then his life is ours.

*Etienne.*—I wish it were moonrise.

*Bernard.*—What can happen now—in four hours?

*Etienne (Shaking his head).*—Much.

*Bernard.*—We have not seen the other for twelve years. He lives recklessly. He may be dead.

*Etienne.*—The hated do not die. (*He sees BERNARD shudder a little at the words.*) Don't you hate him?

*Bernard (Hesitating).*—After all, he is—(*An ireful gesture from the old man cuts short his speech.*)

*Etienne.*—He is a hound.

*Bernard.*—Pierre has never disobeyed—not once. He will be glad to make silks in Lyons with his bride's father. If he came—the other—could he draw a young man away from his bride—the sheets waiting?

*Etienne.*—He can do strange things. (*A clear string of musical notes is heard from without the hedge left.*)

*Bernard.*—What is that?

*Etienne.*—Pierre?

*Bernard.*—That is a flute. Pierre carries no flute. There have been no flutes on the land since—the other—(*A youth of nineteen scrambles through the opening in the hedge now enlarged by the entrance of the trespasser. His face is handsome, frank, and wonderfully gentle. He carries in his hand a cherry-bough in full blossom.*)

*Pierre.*—It let me through. I did not think it would. Good day, grandpapa. (*He stoops and kisses ETIENNE'S hand.*)

*Etienne (Severely).*—That is a schoolboy's trick. You are a man to-day.

*Pierre (Winningly).*—Forgive me, grandpapa. I forgot I was a man.

*Bernard.*—Where have you been, Pierre?

*Pierre (Seating himself on the stump).*—I started for the bluffs on the river-bank. I wanted to bring Marie some columbine from up yonder where they grow among the hawks' nests. But I could not reach them; they were too far away. So I brought her a cherry-bloom from the orchard.

*Bernard.*—Marie would rather have the cherry-bloom.

*Pierre.*—I do not know. There are only sparrows' nests in cherry-trees.

*Etienne.*—You are happy to-day, Pierre?

*Pierre.*—Surely, grandpapa. Am I not to be married to-day?

*Etienne.*—And you wish nothing else?

*Pierre.*—Nothing. Marie is very beautiful. What more should I wish? (*There is no doubt or concealment in the eyes he raises to his great grandfather's. If anything, they are a thought too clear.*)



*Bernard.*—And you like to make silks with your father-in-law?

*Pierre (A trifle absently).*—I think I shall. (*He has been drawing from the fold of his blouse a slender object which he raises to his lips, then, remembering the presence of his relatives, lowers it quietly. He shows it to the others.*) It is a flute. I found it this morning among my mother's things when I was looking for the lava comb set in onyx for Marie. She had saved it for me.

*Etienne (Darkly).*—Did you know the flute?

*Pierre (Laughing).*—Yes, it is mine. It was given me a long time ago by a man—a strange man.

*Bernard (Looking at ETIENNE).*—What man?

*Pierre.*—I do not know. A beggar perhaps. He kept me with him once a whole day in the woods. He had some odd very dry thin bread with him, and we plucked blackberries and drank the spring water. And he brought me to the gate at nightfall.

*Bernard.*—He gave you the flute then?

*Pierre (Smiling with pleasure).*—Yes. But mother took the flute away. I did not know—not till this morning—that she had kept it for me.

*Etienne (Angrily).*—She should have burnt it.

*Pierre.*—No, grandpapa, it is no common flute. He made it himself—the man—from a reed growing by the Nile. Do you see that little opening? It is curved like the new moon and the horn of the bull Apis. And look at this slit—it is shaped like the beak of the ibis. He asked if some day I would go with him to Memphis and hear the jackals whimper among the tombs. And I said I would (*he laughs*)—I was so very little. (*He muses a little.*) I should like to hear them.

*Etienne.*—Drivel!

*Pierre (Still recollecting).*—He had some blue chalk, and he drew on the white rock by the goats' crossing a picture of a Malay fishing-boat. I used to go to see it afterwards till the rains washed it quite out in October.

*Bernard.*—You went often?

*Pierre.*—Often? I do not know. I went sometimes. I wanted to see the man again. I wanted him to teach me the other half of the call.

*Etienne.*—What call?

*Pierre.*—A gipsy call, grandpapa. He played half of it for me—like this—and when I begged for the other half, he would not. He said it was not for the sons of vinedressers. But he said he

would come back to me when I was a grown man, and he would look into my eyes and if he could see in them the least flicker of the tail of an Arab horse he would play the other half for me.

*Bernard.*—Are these thoughts for a man's marriage-day?

*Pierre.*—Are they bad thoughts, father?

*Bernard (Roughly).*—Break that flute, Pierre.

*Pierre.*—Break it?

*Bernard.*—You have ears, have you not?

*Pierre.*—It is only a voice, father—a sweet voice—fit for a marriage-day. (*Then, seeing the hardness in BERNARD'S face, he turns to the old man.*) Grandpapa—

*Etienne (Sternly).*—Do sons question their fathers?

*Pierre (Without the smallest temper).*—It is your will, my father. (*He breaks the flute in two, and slowly drops the pieces on the ground before the linden stump on which he is sitting.*)

*Bernard.*—Forget that trinket. Think of Marie. Think of your duties.

*Pierre.*—Yes, father. (*He bends down to pick up the fragments of the flute.*)

*Etienne (Curtly).*—Let them lie, Pierre.

*Pierre (Lifting his eyes to his great-grandfather).*—I did not want the servants' feet to tread upon them.

*Etienne.*—Let them lie. (*PIERRE inclines his head respectfully. As the scene proceeds, he lets the tip of his foot approach the fragments and move them to and fro with the effect of a caress. The silence is broken by the advance of DENIS through the corridor from house-door right.*)

*Denis (At left front to ETIENNE).*—The butler says it is four o'clock, Monsieur.

*Etienne.*—True. I had forgot the nuptial wine. Take me to the cellar, Denis.

*Bernard (Anxiously).*—You should not go to the cellar, grandfather. The physician has warned you, and the vault is chilly.

*Etienne (Grimly).*—The next vault into which I go will be still chillier.

*Bernard.*—Stay here in the sunshine, grandfather. Let me go.

*Etienne.*—A Vertot will not die of a visit to his own wine-cellar. It is my part to show my great grandson the secret panel in the vault and the hiding place of the key. You know about this wine, Pierre?

*Pierre*.—Yes, grandpapa. Only the males of the house know where the wine is kept, and it is drunk only when the son of the house takes a wife.

*Etienne*.—You know the order in which it is drunk?

*Pierre* (*Eagerly*).—I was told once. The priest drinks first (*he looks inquiringly at ETIENNE, who nods assent.*) Then the bride—Marie. Then the masters of the house, present or future, in their order. First you will drink, grandpapa, and then—(*A sudden tense silence falls upon the group by the constraint of which PIERRE is obviously much less affected than the two others.*)

*Etienne* (*Resolutely*).—And then?

*Pierre*.—Then (*another just perceptible silence*) my father drinks, and then I—am I right, grandpapa?

*Etienne*.—Quite right. Come, Denis.

*Bernard*.—I will go with you, grandfather.

*Etienne* (*A little impatiently*).—Pierre shall go with me. There is much for you to do.

*Bernard* (*Respectfully*).—As you will. (*All four start to leave the grounds, DENIS at the back of ETIENNE'S chair. When they reach the covered easel, ETIENNE signals DENIS to halt. He turns to BERNARD.*)

*Etienne*.—These stuffs cannot stay here through the feast. Ask Marie if she wills that they be taken to her chambers or if they shall be hung elsewhere. (*BERNARD bows. The party resumes its movement and disappears through the door right. For some seconds the scene is vacant and noiseless. Then DENIS reappears at door centre.*)

*Denis*.—Jean! Jean!

*Jean*.—*Appearing from door right*).—Here.

*Denis*.—Monser Bernard bids you take the stand and the cloths to the chamber of Mademoiselle Valmore. (*JEAN nods assent, and goes toward the easel, while DENIS descends the steps from the veranda to the ground-level.*) Can you carry it alone?

*Jean* (*Shouldering the easel*).—The weight is not much. (*He goes toward the door right, DENIS following.*)

*Denis*.—I will open the door for you. (*DENIS, looking back for a moment, is arrested by the movement of the old staghound, who had risen from his sleep on the veranda in the sunshine and followed DENIS down the steps. The dog now moves toward the right. He stops by the sleeping man upon the bench, now exposed by the removal of the easel, and after an instant's hesitation licks his hand. DENIS'S eye is drawn to the sleeping figure. He returns down stage,*

and stands looking at the sleeper. After an instant of amaze, recognition lights his face. He turns and beckons to JEAN, who, pausing in the door which he expected DENIS to open, has set down his burden and turned round. JEAN obeys the signal, comes up, looks at the man on the bench, searches his mind confusedly, and suddenly grasps the truth. The two men face each other with a look in which surprise, terror, and a dim joy are strangely mingled. Then they turn again to the sleeper. DENIS touches his strange footgear with a timid finger; JEAN grazes with a finger equally delicate the tip of the white moustache. Both start guiltily at the sound of BERNARD'S voice at the door right.)

*Bernard (Impatiently).*—Jean! Denis! Why are you so slow? What are you doing? (*As he comes down stage, the two servants instinctively wheel round in such a fashion as to hide, if possible, the sleeper from their master's view. They do not quite succeed.*)

*Bernard.*—Are you hiding something? What is it?

*Denis (Stammering).*—Sir, it is a man, a man from outside. We—we will take him away.

*Bernard.*—Let me see him.

*Denis (Not moving, though clearly greatly frightened).*—Let us handle him, Sir. He—he is not fit for you to see.

*Bernard.*—What babble is this? Out of the way, both of you. (*DENIS and JEAN reluctantly give way. BERNARD draws near to the bench and looks down at the sleeper. He starts, not too violently, masters himself, places his hands behind his back, and studies the sleeper with a look that moment by moment acquires vindictiveness as if his hate found nourishment in every feature. The sleeper feels the concentration of the gaze, stirs, wakes, recognizes BERNARD, is quite calm in the recognition, and says impishly.*)

*Jacques.*—My Son!

*Bernard (In a low voice).*—What do you want?

*Jacques.*—I? To look at you, Bernard—what else? (*Still reclining, he raises his head and shoulders and looks with gay derision at BERNARD.*) You are quite worth looking at, my son—a noble vinegrower. Your cheeks are round as the grape, and your lips are as ruddy as wine.

*Bernard (Same tone).*—What do you want?

*Jacques.*—Gently, gently—I know you are impatient to be bountiful. But I must first survey my son again. Ah, what a man! So much girth at the equator, and no snow yet on the

northern pole. What curves! What plateaux! To think that I, unworthy that I am, am the father of all these rotundities!

*Bernard.*—Will you tell me what you want?

*Jacques.*—Patience, patience, most obese and generous of sons. My wants will come in due time. You are rich, are you not? Riches cling to you, I will swear, as a coin clings to butter. Bag and belly, they are fat alike. For my part, I dropped all my flesh and all my louis d'or too, on the path from Samarcand to Cairo, and my purse and I are lean together.

*Barnard.*—Will you go away for a price? We have gold. How much do you want?

*Jacques.*—I want no gold. I but played, most thrifty Bernard, with that purse-string of yours which is no other in truth than your heartstring. No, no—you have wine and gold, and to-night I will be content with wine. I will drink the nuptial wine,—I in my turn. Etienne Vertot, Jacques Vertot, Bernard Vertot, Pierre Vertot—it is a goodly order, is it not, son Bernard? It was an excellent jest of the heavens that put me between my father and you like a torn sheet of Rabelais between two pages of Holy Writ. Come! Will you help me up? No? Not a hand? (*He rises nimbly.*) Fortunately I grow limber with age. You too will grow agile, son Bernard, when it is time for you to outrun death. (*He turns round.*) Ah, who comes?

(*The door right opens, and ETIENNE in his chair, propelled by DENIS, enters. BERNARD meets him halfway up stage.*)

*Bernard (With grave solicitude).*—We have borne much, grandfather. We have (*he steps aside a little and barely indicates JACQUES*) more to bear.

*Etienne (Impassively, looking at JACQUES without salutation).*—Forward, Denis. (*DENIS guides the chair to its old place at left front. ETIENNE dismisses him by a gesture. Then, turning to JACQUES, he speaks with low-voiced tranquility.*) Your will?

*Jacques (Removing his cap and bowing almost to the ground).*—I salute you, father. (*He studies the face of ETIENNE.*) My prayers are heard. The years sit lightly on you. (*The actor should discriminate between the irony of JACQUES toward his father and toward BERNARD; the latter is more stinging.*)

*Etienne (Looking JACQUES in the face).*—My prayers are not heard; otherwise—

*Jacques.*—Some shark or tiger would have detained me in Asia. Ah, well, the sharks and tigers have been derelict. You have your son again.

*Etienne.*—You are no son to me.

*Jacques.*—I have been called so by a voice like yours.

*Etienne (With slow emphasis).*—You are to me no son—nor man either. You are a mouth to be filled. Speak quickly. What will fill it?

*Jacques.*—Do not be anxious, father, I assure you it is a very reasonable as well as a most respectful mouth. It asks but a sip of your old wine—the nuptial wine. Ah, there is a vintage. Three weeks ago off Malaga, I dreamt of that wine in the hold of a barge, stocked with figs and almonds from Cilicia. It is a wine to call back prodigals.

*Etienne (Keenly).*—Will that content you?

*Jacques.*—(Who has seated himself on the linden stump formerly occupied by PIERRE, and faces left toward ETIENNE.)—Is that too little? Your generosity is disappointed? Shall a father's thirst to give remain unslaked? Besides the wine, I will have a look into the eyes of my young grandson who takes a wife to-day.

*Etienne.*—What have you to do with him?

*Jacques.*—Truly, father, I would wish him god speed in the noble task of supplying new Vertots to a grateful France. Ah, how their country loves them! They are the fat upon her ribs. (His eye is caught by an object on the ground in front of him.)

*Etienne.*—Jacques Vertot—

*Jacques (Picking up one fragment of the flute from the ground and inspecting it with interest).*—You are pleased to recollect my name?

*Etienne.*—Jacques Verot, I am old—

*Jacques (Searching the ground for the other piece of flute).*—I too, father. I look now at every hole in the ground that I pass. It makes a face at me and says "By-and-by," and I—I make a face back at it, and say "Not yet." But you, father—you are the living proof to all eyes that death is polite. It will not hurry the Vertots.

*Etienne.*—It neither hurries nor spares. Listen to me. My lease of life is short. You would respect my grave perhaps. Respect its edge. What is this lad—what is this day—to you? They are all I have. Leave them to me, I—I—

*Jacques (Who has discovered the other fragment).*—Speak, father.

*Etienne (Putting force on himself).*—I (he gets no further)—

*Jacques (Eying ETIENNE curiously).*—What would you say?

*Etienne (With another great effort).—I—entreat. (The tone is just audible.)*

*Jacques (Almost moved).—No, no, most gallant of fathers, you shall not lower yourself to entreat your devil-may-care black-guard of a son. Besides, this I may not grant, though I were asked by the Archangel Michael in person and all the saints and patriarchs to boot. That boy I must see.*

*Etienne (After a pause).—We have some gold. It has been earned with pain—but let that pass. We have a little gold. Will you take half our fortune and be gone?*

*Jacques (Putting the broken edges of the flute together).—No, I will not take the half of your fortune; I am too dutiful a son. And I will not be gone; I am too excellent a grandfather.*

*Etienne.—As excellent a grandfather as you have been a loyal son and a kind father, Jacques Vertot. (Sharply.) What do you want with the boy?*

*Jacques.—Nothing, probably. I shall look into his eyes, and if I see there nothing but a kneading-trough and a clothes-press,—do I want him? (His gesture is contemptuous.)*

*Etienne.—He is not like you.*

*Jacques.—Like whom, then? Like Bernard? Like my rosy and globular son? Look at him, father. His belly is round like a puncheon and his chin is a saucer to itself. No, my grandson is not like that. Nature does not repeat her masterpieces.*

*Etienne (Suddenly changing the apparent subject).—How did you get in here?*

*Jacques (Who is busy fastening the fragments of the flute together by some secret cunning of his own).—The fox's way. I came through the hedge. (He points left.)*

*Etienne (After a pause, significantly).—I am a magistrate.*

*Jacques.—And I a vagrant. We have a bond, my father.*

*Etienne.—I could put you under lock and key.*

*Jacques.—True. But it would not be Jacques alone that would go to prison. It would be a Vertot. (They look at each other.) What do you fear? You have had him all his life. Do you think I can undo in ten minutes the work of nineteen years?*

*Bernard.—The devil aids you.*

*Jacques (Smiling again).—The devil is obliging, my good son, but I should not think of asking him to work miracles for a servitor so humble as myself. One must not strain a friend's good-nature too far.*

*Etienne.—Listen to me, Jacques Vertot. I speak for the last*

time. I swear to you if God be just and heeds the prayers of an old man who has tried to serve Him, you shall not see this boy.

*Jacques.*—God, my dear father, is not too just, and like other great folk, He is cloyed with supplications. (*Suddenly turning angry*) What possesses you? By my soul, if this boy be what your quaverings and coverings teach me to believe he is, let priest and notary come betimes. Take heed to yourselves, good father, gracious son. If I be chafed, I may grow dangerous. (*He throws himself in a reclining posture on the stump, adjusting himself with great dexterity to its narrow compass, and looking up into the sky, applies his lips soundlessly to the flute. The door centre opens, and PIERRE crosses the veranda and comes halfway down the steps.*)

*Pierre.*—The Abbe's carriage has been seen, grandpapa, at the top of the Neuchatel hill.

*Etienne (Agitated, but controlling himself).*—Good. Go, Pierre, inform Marie and her parents, and go yourself to the gate to meet the Abbe and make him welcome to our house. Tell him that when he has refreshed himself, your father and I will make haste to greet him.

*Pierre.*—Yes, grandpapa. (*He is turning round to go, when JACQUES, who has been lying on his back without a glance at PIERRE or the slightest visible interest in the conversation, suddenly whips over on his left side, and darts at PIERRE a curious glance made up in nearly equal parts of challenge and insouciance. PIERRE starts.*)

*Etienne (Firmly, and with studied gentleness).*—Go, Pierre.

*Pierre (Instantly tractable).*—Yes, grandpapa. (*With a last glance at JACQUES, he retires toward door centre. His hand is on the doorknob when he is detained by a voice that is equally marked by authority and mildness.*)

*Jacques.*—Pierre Vertot, come here. (*PIERRE stops hesitating.*)

*Etienne (Putting all his authority into his voice, but with entire calm).*—You heard me, I think, great-grandson.

*Pierre.*—I am going, sir. (*Again he turns. JACQUES puts the flute to his lips and plays several bars of a gay, exciting, vagrant call. He stops abruptly in the middle.*)

*Pierre (Forgetting everything but the call and running down the veranda steps to JACQUES).*—Play the rest of it!

*Jacques.*—Not yet. (*He smiles, half teasingly, half winningly, at PIERRE. ETIENNE, whose face has grown white, is about to speak, when one of BERNARD'S hands is laid upon his shoulder while the*



other points to PIERRE'S uplifted face. There is something so remote in the raptness of PIERRE'S expression that even the angry grandfather perceives the hopelessness of pressing the conflict to an issue then and there. The two men look fixedly at PIERRE and JACQUES during the dialogue that follows.)

*Jacques (To Pierre).*—Fetch a chair. (PIERRE fetches a chair from left.) Sit down. (PIERRE sits down left of JACQUES.) Look into my eyes. Look, I say. Not that way. You might look at a mullein-leaf or a plover's egg so. Look! That is better. Do you see anything?

*Pierre (Perplexed).*—I do not understand.

*Jacques (A little impatiently).*—Do you see perhaps pyramids and caravans and simooms and mirages?

*Pierre (Suddenly smiling).*—I think I see blackberry vines and a blue drawing on a white rock.

*Jacques.*—You have a memory? That is not so bad.

*Pierre.*—Who are you?

*Jacques.*—I? Ask your excellent father. Who am I, Bernard Vertot? Your son is curious.

*Bernard (Looking on the ground after a rather long irresolute pause).*—He is a beggar.

*Pierre (Looking at JACQUES).*—Are you?

*Jacques.*—He doubts still—doubts his estimable father. Do you speak, Etienne Vertot. Tell this young man who I am.

*Etienne (Looking at PIERRE).*—Does your father lie, Pierre?

*Jacques.*—They agree, you see, the truth telling Vertots. They are right. I am a beggar. Will you give me food and shelter for to-night?

*Pierre.*—Gladly, if my father and my great-grandsire will.

*Jacques.*—You are married to-night?

*Pierre.*—Yes.

*Jacques.*—Who is the woman?

*Pierre.*—She is the daughter of a silk-merchant in Lyons.

*Jacques.*—Caterpillars!

*Pierre.*—Sir?

*Jacques.*—Spinners all. Worms, worms—on two legs or twenty.

*Pierre (With boyish dignity).*—She is my bride, stranger.

*Jacques.*—Ay, ay. (He pauses a second.) You love her? She is pleasant to the eye?

*Pierre.*—She is beautiful.

*Jacques.*—Her beauty will last five or six years, and *she* will last—(*He shrugs his shoulders.*) You are content, then?

*Pierre.*—Surely.

*Jacques (To himself).*—Yet he remembered the call. (*His eye strays to the flute in his hand. He turns with sudden sharpness to PIERRE.*) Who broke that flute?

*Pierre (Hesitating slightly).*—It was I.

*Jacques.*—You?

*Pierre.*—I did not break it willingly. My father bade me.

*Jacques.*—He breaks flutes at his father's bidding! *He breaks flutes!* (*To ETIENNE and BERNARD.*) Take him, Messieurs. He is yours. (*To PIERRE.*) I have done with you. Go to your broths and quilts. Huckster! Cradle-rocker! Flute-breaker!

*Pierre.*—In Provence we obey our fathers, though we love flutes.

*Jacques.*—In Provence? Listen to me. These feet of mine have known many roads. Do you see the brown on this cheek? It is the work of many suns, suns of Tangier and Tripoli and Sahara, of Damascus and Ceylon and Singapore. I have seen Sirius in I know not how many waters, in Baikal and Aral and the Euxine, in Nile and Como and the Ganges. This hand has touched strange hands and done strange things; it has struck and it has bled: but it never broke a flute; it never gave away a flute but once, and then to a flute-breaker.

*Pierre (Who has been listening intently).*—Go on.

*Jacques (Struck).*—On?

*Pierre.*—I do not mind the chiding. Tell me all.

*Jacques (Pointing toward the horizon).*—Do you see the blue hills?

*Pierre (Eagerly).*—Yes.

*Jacques.*—Have you ever wished to go there?

*Pierre.*—Often.

*Jacques.*—You have never gone?

*Pierre.*—Never. (*He adds in reply to the question in JACQUES' face.*) There was my work, my play—(*with a shy glance at BERNARD*) my father.

*Jacques.*—Listen to me, Pierre Vertot. (*His voice is subdued and solemn.*) You will never get to the blue hills unless you go to-day, and (*long pause*)—if you go to-day (*second long pause*)—you will not marry.

(*ETIENNE, who has been listening attentively, speaks to BER-*

NARD in an inaudible voice. *This dumb-show conversation continues during the next two or three speeches.*)

*Pierre.*—Not marry?

*Jacques.*—It is no place for brides. The valleys are troughs—feeding-troughs, and the meadows trenchers. They are fit for women. The hills will not dandle you.

*Pierre.*—But to-day? (*BERNARD, apparently at ETIENNE'S bidding, goes out by veranda steps and door centre.*)

*Jacques (Not heeding him).*—You shall have no ease with me. I offer you hard bread and hard bedding, and the breast of woman that shall fall to your lot in my company will be hard too. I will give you poverty and hardship and the sun when your soul cries out for coolness and the frost when your body pines for warmth. And for all this you shall have nothing but a little freedom and a little song and a laugh at the sleek sides of the fat burgher and a look in the stars at night sometimes that they never show to the dwellers under rooftrees. It is little enough. Does it tempt you?

(*PIERRE watches the speaker as if spellbound. Meanwhile the door centre opens and BERNARD appears, leading MARIE VALMORE. BERNARD leads her to the foot of the veranda steps. Then he touches PIERRE on the shoulder.*)

*Bernard.*—Your betrothed, my son. (*PIERRE steps back toward MARIE, still looking at JACQUES, and absently, yet with an affectionate trustfulness all the more marked for its combination with the absence, puts his hand within her arm. MARIE is very pretty with small, strikingly regular features, and a look of housewifely skill; beyond this, there are no signs of mind. She is in her wedding-gown, but without either veil or jewels.*)

*Marie (Without pettishness).*—My dress, Pierre. (*With an amusingly unromantic dexterity, but with perfect good-temper, she removes PIERRE'S arm from its place and puts it round her waist in such a fashion that its pressure is no longer harmful. PIERRE, whose eyes have never left JACQUES, is smilingly but vaguely conscious of the movement. MARIE looks at JACQUES, whose cap sweeps the ground in a gesture of ironic deference. MARIE'S eyes rest with disfavor on the earthstains on JACQUES'S shoes and small clothes.*)

*Jacques.*—The baptism of the road, Mademoiselle. The road and I are lovers, and it clings to me even when I run away.

*Marie.*—Come into the house with me, Pierre.

*Pierre.*—Soon, dearest, soon.

*Marie.*—Who is this man?

*Pierre.*—He is—I do not quite know what he is, Marie. He says he is a beggar.

*Marie.*—If he is a beggar, give him bread and olives and bid him be gone upon his way.

*Pierre (Slightly laughing).*—It will take more than bread and olives to make this man go, I think.

*Marie (Primly).*—Then he is a very greedy beggar.

*Jacques (Who, from the linden-stump, surveys MARIE with a sort of contemptuous approval.)* The alms, I ask, pretty lady, is a soul.

*Marie (With umbrage).*—That is like the devil.

*Jacques (Whimsically).*—Or like God.

*Marie.*—He says evil things, Pierre. Come with me.

*Pierre (With what might be described as imploring refusal).*—Dearest! (*MARIE, in pique, releases herself. PIERRE timidly, and as by way of trial, extends the arm once more, but she evades the clasp. During this dumb-show ETIENNE and BERNARD have been speaking in low tones.*)

*Etienne.*—She cannot move him.

*Bernard.*—There is always the other means.

*Etienne.*—You sent for the man?

*Bernard.*—He will be there. (*Slight pause. Then ETIENNE addresses JACQUES, avoiding the use of his name.*)

*Etienne.*—Wayfarer—

*Jacques (With malice, turning toward ETIENNE).*—I listen, proprietor.

*Etienne.*—You should be told that this is my great-grandson's wedding-day.

*Jacques.*—I know. How should I not know? I have assisted in the decorations. (*He glances toward the railing.*)

*Etienne.*—If you will be pleased to hear me—

*Jacques (With suavity).*—I but interrupt the pleasure to prolong it.

*Etienne.*—On such a day you will understand that my great-grandson has but small time for—

*Jacques.*—Wayfarers? What then? Do I hold him? Let him go to his bit of Eve's flesh. It is toothsome. (*He glances at MARIE.*)

*Etienne (Austerly).*—My great-grandson is under an influence which—which your departure will remove.

*Jacques (Putting himself at ease on the stump).*—Ay, if I depart.

*Etienne (Sinisterly).*—Will you go?

*Jacques.*—I will go if the young fellow bids me. If he tires of me, let him speak. *(There is a pause.)*

*Bernard (Turning to PIERRE).*—Pierre, bid him go.

*Pierre (Advancing two steps right toward BERNARD).*—My father!

*Bernard.*—He will go at your bidding. Bid him go.

*Pierre (Very humbly).*—We cannot turn the beggar unfed from our house to-day, my father. When the house is glad, it should be kind.

*Bernard.*—It is your father who speaks to you.

*Pierre (Very gently).*—The best of fathers. He will not ask me to do this.

*Etienne (Severely).*—Pierre!

*Pierre.*—Sir?

*Etienne.*—The sons of the Vertots obey their fathers.

*Jacques (Looking at ETIENNE).*—They are blest in their sons.

*Etienne.*—Speak, Pierre. *(PIERRE turns as if to obey, advances a step toward JACQUES, who watches him with the eyes of a lynx, pauses, turns again, makes a gesture of the deepest distress and self-abasement before his father and great-grandfather, and retires to the veranda steps. He sits down on the lowest step, passes his left hand across his face, and with the other searches for MARIE'S. She does not refuse her hand.)*

*Jacques (Adjusting himself comfortably on the stump).*—The sons of the Vertots! Their fathers know them no more.

*Etienne (To JACQUES).*—Will you go?

*Jacques.*—Go? When the sunshine in this garden is so warm. The sunshine, good sir, is the beggar's patrimony. Look to your gear; I can doze in comfort. The stump, to be sure, is a trifle narrow, but I am like a snail or a housedog—I can make myself a girdle for myself. *(He curls himself up in a drowsy circle on the stump. From this time the light gradually fades.)*

*Etienne.*—Arouse yourself. Will you go peaceably, or will you force us to take other measures?

*Jacques (Lazily).*—Other measures? Will you set the dog on me? Come hither, Saladin. *(The dog gets up, goes to JACQUES, and licks his cheek. PIERRE watches the action intently.)* I have a spell for dogs—for servants, too, mayhap, though I grant your menials here are lusty fellows.

*Etienne.*—There are gendarmes.

*Jacques (Sitting up).*—Gendarmes? Ah, the resourcefulness

of the French bourgeois! When he has a delicate situation, he sends for the gendarmes. He cuts his fingernails with a broad axe. (*PIERRE has risen to his feet.*)

*Bernard* (*To JACQUES*).—If you will go peaceably, Denis will guide you to the landing where the river-barge stops at half-past-five. He will see you on the boat and return. If you will not go with Denis, a gendarme is in waiting who will take you to the prison in Greville. Am I clear?

*Jacques* (*Facing ETIENNE and BERNARD after an electrical side-glance at PIERRE*).—Blunderers!

*Etienne*.—What is your choice?

*Jacques* (*Provokingly*).—A doze in the sun. (*He resumes his reclining posture and fondles the dog. PIERRE has risen. MARIE puts a coaxing hand upon his shoulder and points to the door centre.*)

*Marie*.—Come, Pierre. (*PIERRE kisses her hand abstractedly, and says nothing. MARIE intimates rather than actually accomplishes a toss of the head, and with an ill-temper which is a mere ripple in her self-complacency, returns by herself to the house. PIERRE approaches BERNARD.*)

*Pierre*.—Father, who is this man? You would not send for a gendarme to turn out a common vagabond. Who is he?

*Bernard* (*Hesitating*).—He is—he is—

*Jacques*.—You embarrass your good father, young man. I will tell you who I am. I am a fishbone whom the Vertots have swallowed and who will choke them to death if he be not instantly removed. They are purple in the face with coughing.

*Pierre* (*To JACQUES*).—I do not understand. (*To BERNARD.*) Father, you cannot send for the gendarmes. This man is old, father. He is poor. It is my wedding-day. We must not give an old man cause to think of us with anger on the day when we ask God to be kind to our house. I have many reasons to love you, father. Give me one more. Be kind to this old man.

*Bernard*.—We have reasons for what we do, Pierre—reasons that I may not tell you. Content yourself.

*Pierre* (*Approaching ETIENNE'S chair after a moment of irresolution, and dropping to the ground on one knee*).—Great-grandfather!

*Etienne*.—Speak.

*Pierre*.—I have sometimes thought that you loved to make me happy. You have done so much for me that I have asked you for little—except childish things like toys and holidays. Grant me one thing. Let this man stay with us for to-night. Let him

have his bit of bread and his sip of wine, and let him pray with the rest of us, if he so wills, for bright years for me and for Marie and for our children. Do this, great-grandfather, that I may never cease to love you the more for this when I think of this day.

*Etienne (With hardness).*—Your father is right. Have you been dutiful? When a father's commands are disobeyed, a son's prayers should not be heeded. (*PIERRE listens with bowed head, stands for a moment thoughtful, then turns toward JACQUES right.*)

*Pierre (With a delicate respect).*—Sir, my great-grandfather and my father are wise and good, and you have heard their will. I am the youngest of the house. My will cannot open these doors. If it could, you should be welcome. If it ever can, you shall be welcome then. (*He offers his hand to JACQUES.*)

*Jacques (Taking the hand).*—When I come again, you shall hear—

*Pierre.*—What?

*Jacques (Smiling).*—The rest of the call. (*He rises, and turns to ETIENNE and BERNARD.*) I go unforced, gentlemen, since there is a sprig of your stock that would grieve to see a gendarme's hand upon an old man's shoulder. But look to yourselves. I came here but to jest and tease. If I had caught your birdling in my net, I would have held him only long enough to laugh at you and loose him. You have done after your kind, and I say to you now,—*fear me.* (*He turns toward the opening in the hedge. PIERRE follows him two or three steps. JACQUES turns, looks at PIERRE, and lays his hand deliberately upon his shoulder.*)

*Jacques (With sudden unexpected tenderness).*—Will you go with me? (*PIERRE's look, for a moment, seems eagerly receptive, then, releasing himself with the utmost gentleness, he retreats a step or two, and speaks in a tone in which friendliness is touched with delicate reproach.*)

*Pierre.*—It is my wedding-day.

*Jacques (Instantly resuming his impishness).*—Adieu,—bridegroom. (*He escapes through the opening.*)

*Bernard (After a pause).*—We should all go in. Come, Pierre.

*Pierre.*—Yes, father. (*There is a rustle in the hedge, and the face of JACQUES suddenly reappears in the opening.*)

*Jacques (With a quick glance at ETIENNE and BERNARD).*—Good-night, grandson. (*He disappears. A silence. PIERRE, stupified, turns to the others.*)

*Pierre.*—It is true?

*Etienne (Grimly).*—His name is Jacques Vertot.

*Pierre.*—He isn't dead?

*Bernard (Bitterly).*—He breathes—if that is what you mean.  
(*A silence.*)

*Etienne.*—You shall hear more of this some day, Pierre. The man has less right in this house than a thief. There is no time for speech. Forget him. Think only that you are to be married.

*Pierre (Dazedly, hand at forehead).*—Married? To-night?

*Etienne (Sternly).*—When else? Go to your bride. Come, Bernard. (*BERNARD wheels the chair to door right, while PIERRE mounts the veranda steps toward the other door. But with his hand on the knob, he pauses, looks around, finds himself alone, and comes back to the veranda rail. He remains nearly motionless for a time that represents about five minutes of real life. MARIE, fully gowned, a delicate vision in the increasing twilight, appears at door centre.*)

*Marie (Touching his arm).*—They want you, Pierre.

*Pierre.*—Dearest! (*He makes a movement as if to take her in his arms.*)

*Marie.*—My gown, Pierre! My gown!

*Pierre (Apologetically).*—I forgot. There is so much gown. Sit down, Marie.

*Marie.*—We ought to go, Pierre.

*Pierre.*—No, no, sit down a minute with me. (*He leads her half by force to a seat on the veranda, and kneels on a footstool at her feet. During the ensuing dialogue PIERRE'S mood is fitfully and feverishly gay until it is damped by the progress of the conversation.*)  
*Marie!*

*Marie.*—Well?

*Pierre (Coaxing and eager).*—Come and have a run with me on the greensward in the twilight.

*Marie (Shocked).*—Certainly not. I should spoil my slippers.

*Pierre (Whispering).*—Take off the slippers.

*Marie.*—No, Pierre. I should take cold in the dew.

*Pierre.*—One doesn't take cold on one's wedding-night.

*Marie.*—Why doesn't one?

*Pierre.*—Because—because—somebody one loves kisses off the dewdrops—a kiss for every drop.

*Marie (Rationally).*—That would take too much time.

*Pierre.*—I will kiss the foot anyhow. (*He brings his lips close to the satin bow.*)

*Marie (Drawing back the least bit).*—On the stocking, please.

*Pierre.*—On the stocking, yes. It is a dear foot, and I kiss



it gladly. (*With a shade of pensiveness.*) But I would have kissed it a dozen times if it had raced with me over the greensward in the dusk.

*Marie.*—You are wild to-night, Pierre.

*Pierre* (*Still on his knees, looking down stage toward the horizon*).—It is so dark there is no blue left on the hills. *Marie!*

*Marie.*—Yes?

*Pierre.*—Will you go with me to the blue hills to-morrow morning?

*Marie.*—To-morrow morning?

*Pierre.*—*He* said if I married I should never go to the blue hills.

*Marie.*—What should we do there?

*Pierre* (*A little puzzled*).—I think we should look into the sky a little and then down into the plains and then—then—we should look into each other's eyes.

*Marie.*—That would not do at all. We are to go to-morrow to my aunt near Carcassonne. She is a very good woman, and she has many vineyards that look directly south and are very fruitful.

*Pierre.*—But— (*He stops and look again toward the horizon.*) I shall never go. There will always be an aunt near Carcassonne.

*Marie.*—Not always. She is seventy-five years old.

*Pierre* (*Looking at Marie*).—Are there people as old as that?

*Marie.*—Of course. That is why we go first to her. Later we shall visit my aunt near Toulouse. Her vineyards look south-southwest, and she is only sixty-two years old. She may live many years yet.

*Pierre.*—Do aunts live so long, Marie?

*Marie.*—Yes, aunts are long-lived. It is inconvenient sometimes, but I do not blame them.

*Pierre.*—We shall be happy without aunts, Marie.

*Marie.*—When God takes them, yes.

*Pierre* (*Sitting on the footstool*).—Will you love me, Marie, very much?

*Marie.*—Certainly I shall love you. All good wives love their husbands.

*Pierre.*—I wish you would love me a little more than the other good wives love their husbands.

*Marie.*—Why?

*Pierre.*—Because I should love you so much more for the little more, than for all the rest of it.

*Marie.*—That is silly, Pierre. Enough is enough.

*Pierre (Looking at her wistfully).*—Not on one's wedding-day.

*Marie (Decisively).*—On one's wedding-day one should begin to be sensible. We are grown people now, and we shall have children very soon.

*Pierre.*—Ah, you will like that, Marie.

*Marie.*—I shall like it, of course. Your father and my father will do a great deal more for us after we have had a child or two. Besides they are pleasant things anyhow. (*PIERRE rises, and goes to the veranda rail He looks out broodingly.*)

*Pierre (Suddenly turning his face toward Marie).*—Marie, if that strange man came to our house, would you let him stay?

*Marie.*—That man? Surely not. He is a vagabond.

(*PIERRE turns his face again toward the horizon. Suddenly the full clear joyous notes of a wedding-march are heard from the interior of the house. MARIE rises hastily.*)

*Marie.*—They are waiting for us. Come, Pierre. (*PIERRE starts to give MARIE his hand, when another sound from beyond the lower stage left makes a second and more piercing cleavage of the silence. It is the first half of the flute-call played by JACQUES. PIERRE faces round, approaches the veranda rail, and listens with every nerve on edge. The wedding march continues. The first half of the call is completed; the second, a wilder, shriller, more alluring, reckless, and defiant melody, begins. PIERRE starts up, is halfway down the veranda steps, thinks of MARIE, turns, is instantly at her side. He is about to clasp her impetuously in his arms when she puts up her hands in an instinctive effort to protect her gown. A rueful, half-humorous smile just lightens the tragic purpose in his face as he stoops, almost without interruption of his gesture, to print upon her hand the kiss he would have laid upon her lips. The lips barely touch the hand, and he is gone. As the curtain slowly falls in the increasing dusk, the only object clearly visible is the bride, as she stands motionless, her hand on the veranda railing, looking after PIERRE.*)

# THE MARVELOUS ROMANCE OF WEN CHUN-CHIN\*

By C. C. HSIUNG

## FOREWORD

To a Chinese audience this play needs no introduction. The incidents are very well known. Wen Chun-Chin is the heroine of the thirty-fourth tale of the Ancient and Modern Strange Stories by Hsiao Fa (pseudonym). The serpent-in-the-cup illusion has so frequently occurred in Chinese literature that it has become the acknowledged term for that class of psychological phenomenon. According to the popular conception, a love-tale as a matter of fact should, in spite of all adversities and complications, end in a perfect way, for it is ever the rule that "beauty should always be wedded to genius as the ying (*female*) is always united with the yang (*male*) in this monadistic universe."

## CHARACTERS

WEN CHUN-CHIN, *A fair maiden who appears as a man.*

WEI TA, }  
TU SAN, } *Two Young Men, her schoolmates.*

MADAME WEN, *Her mother.*

THE EVIL ONE

AN INN-KEEPER

FU HSIAO-CHAI, *A rich heiress.*

AN OLD MAN, *Her uncle.*

THE PROPERTY-MAN, HIS ASSISTANTS, ETC.

TIME—*When the Emperor was still ruler in China, and the Civil Examination the means of selecting His officers.*

Place—*Sze-Chuan Province, China.*

## PROPERTY LIST

Several Chinese books

A bow

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Several arrows  
 A stuffed bird  
 A bracelet  
 Several whips with colored silk tassels  
 A sword  
 A quiver for arrows  
 Two spikes or clubs  
 A small red flag  
 A five-leaved twig  
 A flag-pole carrying a tavern sign  
 A wine decanter  
 A cup  
 A coral charm  
 Tables, chairs, screens, curtains, etc.

#### DESCRIPTION OF SCENE

*It is a Chinese stage. In the center of the rear wall is a picture of the The Theater-God; on each side of this is a door. The right-hand door (from the point of view of the actors) is used for entrance, and is furnished with a curtain on which is embroidered, with threads of gold and bright colored silk, the figure of a dragon. The left-hand door is used for exit and is furnished with a curtain on which is embroidered the figure of a phoenix. In front of the picture is the conventional table with three chairs around it. The front of the table is curtained with a piece of tapestry on which is embroidered the figure of a unicorn. Other stage-pieces will be set up and "struck" by the traditional PROPERTY-MAN who sees that the greatest effects, so says the law of economy of material and economy of attention, are produced by the least effort.*

*Symbolism, therefore, is the fundamental principle of Chinese stagecraft just as imagination and concentration are the requisites of the Chinese drama, or indeed, of any drama.*

*Black is the color of the costume of THE PROPERTY-MAN and his assistants, so as to render them invisible. As many colors can be used for the other costumes as there are harmonious combinations. The style of the costumes is that of the traditional Chinese stage which changes only with the dynasty.*

*We shall find out why our heroine appears in man's clothes, what she has been doing, what she is going to do, and why and where she is doing it—provided that there are such virtues in us known as credulity and imagination.*

*Enter WEI TA, from the right.*

*Wei Ta.*—I am Wei Ta, the only Blooming Talent of my family. I owe this title principally to my dear schoolmaster and schoolmates whose influence on me is like the spring upon this school garden. (*Gesturing.*) As the springtime is too precious to squander, I step into this school-room sometimes before my fellows. (*He steps into "the room" and takes the seat on the right side of the table.*) I must pursue these books with extra diligence lest my master should remark that the eldest pupil be the least accomplished. I hear footsteps which trippingly do proclaim the youngest of my mates. He is a nimble-witted fellow still, I am fonder of my other friend, half a year his senior but several degrees handsomer.

*Tu San (Who has entered from the right and walked by the same "garden path").*—I am Tu San, the youngest of the Blooming Talents of this school. Winning the blue-and-purple gown is to me as easy as plucking yonder daisy. I like the man who can chant all rhymes of The Book of Poesy not so much as the man who can discourse on *The Romance of the West Pavilion* and *The Dream of Red Chamber*. (*He likewise steps into the school-room and takes a seat opposite WEI TA to whom he speaks.*) Your hurried declaiming tells me of your good health and the approach of the higher examination. How old did our master say is the Civil Examiner?

*Wei Ta.*—Ask Chun-Chin. He is always heedful of such matters.

*WEN CHUN-CHIN enters from the right. Being the heroine of the play she is more beautifully dressed than the men. She walks down-stage with studied steps to display her costume.*

*Wen Chun-Chin.*—Though I appear in man's attire I am no other than the daughter of my father, the lord of this estate. I assume the outside of a man that I may have the privilege of going to school under a learned master. My mother thinks needlework is enough for me—such is the usual lot of woman. My father, being the offspring of military generals, has taught me how to shoot with bow and arrow. However, to compete with the literary genius in the Capital and to have our names appear on the imperial scholar-list is the wish of my mates. Oh, speak of mates! All who have eyes can see that I am of the age to seek a life-mate for myself. But, such is the mockery of Chance that what I seek afar stands pressing near, and in the perplexing number of two. I waver between them, unable to make a decision.

And tomorrow must they go away—(*She is now in sight of the two men.*)

*Wei Ta* (*To Tu San*).—Here comes he who can tell you everything as an eloquent diviner can tell your fortune from the date of your birth.

*Wen Chun-Chin* (*Taking the center seat*).—How now, good Tu San, are you eager to have your fortune told?

*Tu San*.—Not my fortune, but it does concern age.

*Wei Ta*.—He wants to know the age of our Civil Examiner. And as you have formerly given evidence of your excellent memory and intuition surpassing any of our species concerning such matter.

*Wen Chun-Chin*.—But I am no longer interested in dates and the elements and the system of fortune-telling based thereupon. I had our birth dates reckoned by a geomancer and he gave out nothing but that we three should harmonize in any undertaking. Surely you do not believe the birth-date of the Civil Examiner and his stars have anything to do with your election?

*Tu San*.—No; no more of the moons and stars. Nevertheless, it is customary to know something of the person who is to read your thoughts and whom you are to love or hate presently. Did I hear that you are not going with us to take the higher examination in the Capital?

*Wen Chun-Chin*.—I fear we must be separated for some time. My father has been summoned away by an imperial edict. My mother is ill. One successful examination is enough for a person like me. Now I must stay at home to take care of my mother and the household.

*Wei Ta*.—I admire your devotion to your mother. You are the most virtuous fellow I know of. Our examination, however, will not be long.

*Tu San*.—Yes, it will be long to me. Days will be years without Chun-Chin at my side. Oh, why were we not born in the same family so that we could always be together!

*Wen Chun-Chin*.—But even brothers and sisters do not stay together all the time. They become separated when each of them marries.

*Tu San*.—Then let us be of those who never separate till their death, for good or for evil. Oh, were either of us a maiden . . .

*Wei Ta*.—Then you would never have seen each other and studied together. No more nonsense. This is the eve of our departure. We must take inventory of our books, in our bag or in our belly. There is many an amiable companion in every page.

Seek wisdom, as our sage tells us, and you will be immutably wedded to virtue and beauty. You all the time discourse on romance, and know not romance comes without our seeking! Now, I must go and bid farewell to our master.

*Wen Chun-Chin.*—I came to say farewell for our master. He tells you to review Chu-tze's edition of The Four Books; the Civil Examiner has been known to fancy his interpretation and philosophy. Tomorrow at sunrise I will bid you fair wind. In the meantime be of good cheer. (*She walks out of the room and then to the right where she pauses.*) Another twelve-hour and I shall be left alone with nothing to amuse me but my bow and arrow and my flute. But what is musical sound without an appreciative ear? (*Meditating*) He admires my devotion to my mother. And he wishes we were in the same family. Tomorrow they start a long journey . . . romance at any turn of the road without seeking . . . and I must wait in my maiden chamber.

*She sighs demurely and goes out.*

*Wei Pa.*—Chun-Chin is reluctant to see us leave. He speaks in such a manner as if he had a thousand words to say, and his glances and steps linger, so silent and so expressive.

*Tu San.*—Is that the first time you took notice of him? Why, for the last fortnight he has been looking at us with such an inquisitive stare which I for one hardly know how to answer. His mother had a mah-jung coterie yesterday and therefore could not be very ill. He must have an underlying motive for not accompanying us, though he has hidden nothing from us heretofore.

*Wei Ta.*—Perchance some unforeseen domestic affairs have molested him, his father being away.

*Tu San.*—But there is nothing amiss with the domestics. Just look about you. Incense is kept burning steadily. The room is kept spotlessly clean. Flowers are watered. Everything is peaceful and calm. (*He moves about the stage and stops at the various places where the different objects are supposed to be. The PROPERTY-MAN, who has been enjoying everything in Peace and quietitude, suddenly throws on the stage a realistic arrow together with a stuffed bird which it has pierced. There is, of course, no blood spilling.*) What swift, arrow-like moving body is that? (*He picks up the arrow.*) It is an arrow, come down with its prey. Poor creature, shot thru the wing. How sorrowful must its mate be! Ah, it still breathes. I must take it to the bird-man and restore it to its mate. Wei Ta, kindly keep the arrow for me.

*He goes out.*

*Wei Ta (Examining the arrow).*—What a straight arrow! (*He reads the inscription.*) “This arrow never errs. Specially made for Fei-Ngai.” It looks like a lady’s name. I must show it to Chun-Chin, for he is the young son of the master of the estate.

*Wen Chun-Chin (Entering).*—I appear again in man’s attire. I must be pardoned for having shot the creature which did mock me by its cries when I was deliberating a choice between the two youths. Silently did I pray the arrow not to miss its aim, but help me to decide on whichever of the two first chances to pick it up. (*Stepping into the room.*) Did you see an arrow with inscriptions?

*Wei Ta.*—I have the arrow, but the inscriptions I cannot comprehend. Is there any lady by the name of Fei-Ngai so skilled in archery?

*Wen Chun-Chin.*—Yes, it is my sister.

*Wei Ta.*—May I ever hope to see her?

*Wen Chun-Chin.*—I thought you never cared to see a maiden. But she is exceedingly modest.

*Wei Ta.*—Modest did you say? Then I am the more eager to request the honor. How does she look?

*Wen Chun-Chin.*—She looks like me.

*Wei Ta.*—Then she must be handsome. Is she betrothed?

*Wen Chun-Chin.*—Not yet, though we have many an offer.

*Wei Ta.*—Chun-Chin, you have known me for a long time?

*Wen Chun-Chin.*—Yes.

*Wei Ta.*—And you know my parents?

*Wen Chun-Chin.*—Yes.

*Wei Ta.*—You know they are anxious to have me marry, particularly a daughter of an established family like yours, and I do fancy a maiden who is so happily endowed like you. Will you speak for me before your parents for your sister’s hand?

*Wen Chun-Chin.*—I will if you so wish. But you are starting a long journey—

*Wei Ta.*—This arrow will suffice to forearm me. Here is a jade-stone bracelet which, our parents willing, may she accept as a troth token!

*Wen Chun-Chin.*—The matter is then thus far settled. I must hasten to my mother. May both the God of Literary Glory and the God of Wedlock be with you! (*She steps out of the room and pauses at the left.*) Good Tu San, not that I love you less,



but it is decreed by our ancients that, as a loyal subject shall not serve two sovereigns, so shall not a chaste woman two husbands. It is the wish of God of Wedlock expressed in the deed of yonder arrow whom all hands and hearts must obey.

*She goes out.*

*Wei Ta.*—So the proverb is true! "Romance comes without our seeking." But whoever dreamed that it should come in the disguise of this arrow! I must have the best painter of the province paint the inscriptions. "This arrow never errs."

## II

*He goes out chanting.*

*Enter WEN CHUN-CHIN dressed as an adventurous Chinese Knight; plumed bonnet, gay mantle, trim, embroidered riding suit and boots. She wears a sword, and carries bow and arrows and a whip which she uses as if riding on horseback.*

*Wen Chun-Chin.*—I appear again in man's attire, this time not to go to school or to seek a husband, for anybody can remember that I promised myself to Wei Ta in receiving his jade-stone bracelet as a troth-token. Since the two scholars departed, my mother's illness has developed into a chronic one which only the finger-leaved herb of Hai-Yen Mountain can cure. The pass to this mountain is blockaded by The Evil One whose ponderous fatal spikes none dares to encounter. But what evil need I fear in an undertaking for the well-being of my mother, being armed with these inherited weapons and the home-taught art of self-defence and mounted on this 100-league horse? (*Here she flourishes her whip.*) We have travelled twice a hundred miles since the dawn and now the sun has scarcely passed the zenith. Let us forward, Swift One! Filial piety dreads no foe. (*She goes thru the business of urging and trotting the horse several times around the stage, and then stops where she began.* THE PROPERTY-MAN places a table on the left side of the stage and mounts a chair on this table to represent a mountain.) Yonder is a narrow and precipitous passage.

THE EVIL ONE appears on "The mountain." *He is dressed in outlandish costume. His face is painted in several colors, red and green predominating. He wields his massive spikes above his head covered with bushy red hair and bright colored pheasant feathers.*

*The Evil One.*—Good men are scarce these days. I have not had a victim for a long time. Hey, there! Who is so bold as to intrude the realm of The Evil One in this broad daylight?

*Wen Chun-Chin.*—All within the Four Seas is ruled by one Son-of-Heaven who lives in the Forbidden City and not in the mountains.

*The Evil One.*—This is my Forbidden City. He who comes must surrender and pay his toll, or these spikes will bite into him. You are yet too callow to feed the crows.

*Wen Chun-Chin.*—I do not punish without warning. Before I ply my bow and arrow I warn you not to obstruct my way. I am here to avenge the death of the innocent subjects of His Majesty, the very mention of whom will make your ears ring with terror.

*The Evil One.*—These spikes have no ears. I heed no warning nor weapons, be they winged or horse-backed, for I am invulnerable by anything hurled by any boy or man.

*Wen Chun-Chin.*—Then must you fall with this arrow. Even though I ride astride I am neither boy nor man. Your end is at hand. Look to the arrow! (*She shoots an arrow which brings THE EVIL ONE rolling "downhill."* THE PROPERTY-MAN waves the conventional fatal red-flag in front of THE EVIL ONE who gets up and goes out.) He did look fierce and his death groans were ugly. Now the road is clear. (*She crosses "the mountain."* THE PROPERTY-MAN hands her a little plant and removes "the mountain.") Now I have the finger-leaved herb for my mother. Trot on, Swift One! We shall sup at the first inn we come to. (*She walks slowly several times around the stage—business of riding.* THE PROPERTY-MAN plants down-stage a pole carrying a white flag on which is written in red the name of a Chinese Inn.) I see a wine flag hoisted high up in the air. The innkeeper has now heard your hoof-beats. (THE INNKEEPER has appeared and stands under the flag.) Is there lodging to be had here?

*The Innkeeper.*—Yes Sir, this is a tavern for gentlemen. (*He helps her to "dismount" and fastens the whip to the pole.*) Am I right in thinking my honored guest un-

*Wen Chun-Chin.*—Unescorted and quite alone and free.

*The Innkeeper.*—All scholars feel so after their examination. But they will not be when they reach home. They will be hurrying from one friend to another anticipating and celebrating their election, and then there will be excessive wine, song, and whatever they have had to do without. (*He ushers her to the center seat behind the table where she seats herself.*) How many cups shall I bring you, Sir?

*Cue for THE PROPERTY-MAN to set up on the left side of the*

*stage a balcony scene which is supposed to be the private chamber of a maiden in the next house.*

*Wen Chun-Chin.*—Just one. Plenty of hay for my horse.

*The Innkeeper.*—Yes, my honored guest. (*He goes out.*)

*Wen Chun-Chin (Looking around).*—This is a tidy place for a tavern—with all these artistic writings and paintings on the walls. (FU HSIAO-CHAI, a rich heiress, beautifully dressed, appears on the balcony) I think I see a young maid peeping behind yonder half-opened balcony windows, now concealing, now revealing herself. (FU HSIAO-CHAI smiles and beckons.) She is beautiful! Lo, how her smooth cheeks redden, her pearl-white teeth glisten, her almond eyes discourse like the poetry of Li Ta-Po. (*Reenter THE INNKEEPER with cup and wine.*) Whose chamber is that yonder?

*The Innkeeper.*—That Sir, is the house of my neighbor.

*Wen Chun-Chin.*—What kind of person is your neighbor?

*The Innkeeper.*—My neighbor, Sir, is a neighborly person. He is a learned old scholar, seventy-five years old, formerly the magistrate of the District of Yun-Yang of The Province of Ho-Nan, now retired from civil duty—

*Wen Chun-Chin.*—I asked not about him but about her whom I saw just a moment ago.

*The balcony and the lady have disappeared, as they are not needed any more.*

*The Innkeeper.*—I promised my neighbor not to talk about her to any of my honored guests save those who are unmarried and unbetrothed. I must keep my promise.

*Wen Chun-Chin.*—Your reticence piques me. I am neither married nor betrothed. Come, answer me fully.

*The Innkeeper.*—If my honored guest is interested I will go and ask my neighbor. (*He goes out and returns with THE OLD MAN who shakes his own hands in Chinese fashion to greet WEN CHUN-CHIN.*)

*The Old Man.*—May I have the pleasure to know whom I am addressing?

*Wen Chun-Chin.*—My humble name is Wen Chun-Chin.

*The Old Man.*—I am the uncle of the maiden whom you asked about. She has been tolerably schooled by my humble self and is an only heiress. Having seen your gentle and gallant bearing she rejected all the waiting offers of marriage and asked me to come to see you. I have heard so much about the Wen family which is a good match for that of my niece, Fu Hsiao-Chai.

*Wen Chun-Chin.*—I appreciate the honor, but I am already affianced.

*The Old Man.*—Come, a scholar must not prevaricate. The innkeeper just told me you were single and free. Smile not at my straightforward ways. Not that I shall praise the maiden excellences of my niece, but you will find her excelling all my praises. Here is a coral charm which she has always worn on her person. And from you I like nothing better as a troth-token than one of these straight arrows. (*Before WEN CHUN-CHIN can offer resistance he plucks an arrow from her quiver.*) I must hasten to her. When the peonies are in bloom I will present my niece at the shrine of the hall of your ancestors and complete the six ceremonies. A fair wind and the best of luck to you.

*Shaking hands as a farewell courtesy he hurries out.*

*Wen Chun-Chin (Petting her bow and arrow).*—This is too good and too fast to be true. You will be admired more as a match-maker than as a weapon of self-defence.

*Enter TU SAN in high spirits.*

*Tu San.*—The streets are invigorating after days of confinement in the examination stalls. My essays and verses shall not fail to attract the red ink of the Civil Examiner. (*Seeing the flag*) There must be a few scholars in this tavern, so tidy and so conveniently situated. We will drink to each other's healths and compare our works. (*He pauses before the flag-pole.*) I think I have seen this horse before. He looks capable of a hundred league a day. (*Seeing WEN CHUN-CHIN.*) Ah, well met, my dear boy! What wind brought you here?

*Wen Chun-Chin.*—This is a pleasant surprise. Where is Wei Ta?

*Tu San.*—He left one day ahead of me. He said he had some private affairs to attend to.

*Wen Chun-Chin.*—Private affairs did he say?

*Tu San.*—I asked him what they were, but he would not tell me. I did not see what he was hiding from me. And you—(*WEN CHUN-CHIN starts.*) Why did you say you could not take the examination? Now, what did you write about the lyric of Po-Chi-I?

*Wen Chun-Chin (Assuming an easy attitude).*—I did not take the higher examination; I came to get the finger-leaved herb for my mother's illness.

*Tu San.*—Your mother's illness, finger-leaved herb indeed! What is the conspiracy behind all this, anyway?

*Wen Chun-Chin.*—Really it is the only thing that can cure my mother's illness. Here it is. (*Showing the herb.*) And I had to kill a devil to get it.

*Pu San.*—Kill a devil indeed! How?

*Wen Chun-Chin.*—With my bow and arrow. My father taught me how to shoot when I was in a child's dress by which a boy cannot be distinguished from a girl.

*Tu San.*—But I never saw you shoot at anything. The only shooting I saw was aimed at a poor bird. I intended to look up the lady who was so proud as to inscribe her name on the arrow and yet so deliberate as to harm that poor winged creature. But it was bleeding and had to be attended to. I gave the arrow to Wei Ta.

*Wen Chun-Chin.*—So that was why he was so shy about leaving so early (*Pause.*) Yet he did show absolute trust in what I told him.

*Tu San.*—And I suppose you told him that Fei-Ngai was what you were called by in your family?

*Wen Chun-Chin.*—Why, Fei-Ngai and I are one and the same.

*Tu San.*—Then what we wished does come true?

*Wen Chun-Chin (Bashfully).*—Yes, as we two are concerned. (*TU SAN starts to embrace her. THE OLD MAN'S voice is heard.*) Hush, we must not be seen like this. I must consult Wei Ta before I see that old man again. Did you come on horseback?

*Tu San.*—Yes.

*Wen Chun-Chin.*—Quick! Let us go home (*They seize their whips, go thru the business of galloping and pass out.*)

### III

*Enter WEN CHUN-CHIN dressed as in II*

*Wen Chun-Chin.*—I appear yet again in man's attire, perhaps for the last time; for Tu San, who ranked high in the imperial scholar list, even a hundred columns ahead of Wei Ta, has been appointed the viceroy of this province and is looking for a home where he will prepare the sedan-chair and the flower-candle to welcome me as a bride. It will be hard for me to see Wei Ta. He sincerely believes that I had a beautiful sister. But what more beautiful maiden can one wish for a sister than that maiden of Fu family? And what literary genius will not yield to beauty? Here I am home again and I must give this finger-leaved herb to my mother before the sun goes down. (*She drops her whip to the floor and knocks at the imaginary doors.*)

*The Mother (Entering).*—Last night the candle did throw longer beams. This morning the lark did sing clearer notes. It must be my versatile boy-daughter home with good news. (*She opens the imaginary doors.*) Ah, my dear child, have you brought home the finger-leaved herb?

*Wen Chun-Chin.*—With your blessing, dear mother. And Tu San ranked fifth in the imperial scholar list, even a hundred columns ahead of Wei Ta, and has been appointed the viceroy of this province and is going to make his home here and live near us. Has Wei Ta been here?

*The Mother.*—He has been knocking these doors repeatedly, but I have been too weak to receive him. (*She sits in the center chair.*)

*Wen Chun-Chin.*—This finger-leaved herb will restore your good health and we will have a mah-jung party every day.

*The Mother.*—And all our friends shall know that my daughter has gallantly done it all. You know, my child, since I did not want your name to go as far as the imperial court, let us, before long, surprise all the provinces. Let us tell them that you, who have been one of the three scholars in our school, are in reality a girl and that you could win higher laurels if you were allowed to take the higher examination. Then you will have so many admirers from whom you—

*Wen Chun-Chin.*—But, dear mother, I am satisfied as it is. Let me make a potion for you from this herb. (*She puts her bow and arrows on the table. THE PROPERTY-MAN hands her a cup. She dips the herb into the cup for a second and gives the potion to her mother.*)

*The Mother (After drinking).*—It was cool and slimy-like. Tell me, my dear child, were you comfortable all the way alone without even a dressing maid?

*Wen Chun-Chin.*—I had winds as combs, lakes as mirrors and the moon as my companion. But hereafter I shall always be with you. Let me go and change and be your daughter again. (*She goes out.*)

(*Enter WEI TA, ceremoniously dressed.*)

*Wei Ta.*—I appear now as a Registered Scholar. Though my name is not among the first hundred in the imperial scholar-list, I am well satisfied, for I shall soon wed a beautiful maiden. I have not been able to secure admission within these doors; certainly they have not forgotten me? Today I will knock again; nobody

should be discouraged in the interest of a good match. (*He knocks.*)

*The Mother (Opening the imaginary doors).*—Ah, my celebrated scholar, all welcome to your old haunts. Is the Honorable Tu San with you?

*Wei Ta.*—No, he is just a little behind.

*The Mother.*—Your examination was successful I suppose?

*Wei Ta.*—My rank is a hundred and five.

*The Mother.*—Just the difference of an even hundred between you and the Honorable Tu San. (*They are seated at the table. WEN CHUN-CHIN appears in woman's dress from behind the door curtain.*)

*Wen Chun-Chin.*—I think I hear the voice of Wei Ta. But stay, I now belong to Tu San. Wei Ta cannot see me in this dress. (*She withdraws.*)

*Wei Ta.*—You will be interested to know, Madame Wen, that I have been appointed the magistrate of the neighboring district.

*The Mother.*—How admirable! and you will be a member of the administration of the Honorable Tu San.

*Wei Ta.*—And I will make my home near—

*The Mother (Feeling her throat).*—Oh, my throat!

*Wei Ta (Going over to her side).*—Does your throat hurt you?

*The Mother.*—Now it is all right. Just one of the common throat sores, I suppose.

*Wei Ta.*—As I was saying, Madame Wen, I will make my permanent home here and we shall always be near each other and—

*The Mother.*—That is what the Honorable Tu San is going to do. When are you going to take up your new duties? (*WEN CHUN-CHIN appears again behind the door curtain.*)

*Wen Chun-Chin.*—Now they are talking about household and the new duties. I must get him out and have Tu San explain to him before he makes any further plans. How shall I get him out?

*Wei Ta.*—I shall take up my duties almost any day after I have made the calls on all of my friends. It is so charming to renew and strengthen relations—

*The Mother.*—Of course, among our acquaintances the Honorable Tu San and—(*Clutching her throat*) Oh, my throat!

*Wei Ta.*—Always her throat and the Honorable Tu San! Can it be that they prefer him to me because of his greater suc-

cess, and try to evade me thus? Still, he was the first to pick up the arrow . . . Could I help you to ease your throat?

*The Mother.*—No, it hurts inside.

*Wen Chun-Chin (Speaking behind the curtain).*—Of course your throat is inside. No, dear Mother, it is no use to feign sore-throat; he will find the more excuse to stay longer. Ah, I have it! I will set my horse galloping and raise an alarm. (*She walks downstage, whips the whip, and then throws it behind the door curtain.*) Help! Help! Look to the runaway horse!

*WEI TA dashes out. WEN CHUN-CHIN comes to her mother who is still clutching her throat.*

*Wen Chun-Chin.*—Is your throat really sore, dear mother?

*The Mother.*—Yes, I feel something wriggling inside. It hurts me so that I can scarcely sit up. (*Genuine pain is shown by her expression and pantomime.*)

*Wen Chun-Chin.*—Let me help you to the bed. (*She and her mother go out. Presently she returns very grave and sad.*) Oh, woe is me! My mother's health is in great danger. She says she swallowed a serpent with the potion. I must shut the doors and look among the books for the treatment of such ailment. (*She shuts the imaginary doors and then sits down to turn the books.*) No, the Imperial Almanac does not contain such. (*She turns the pages of a few more books.*) Nor does the Encyclopedia Medica. Certainly I have not put into the cup a living serpent, nor even the spirit of a serpent. Ah, can it be the spirit of The Evil One raging after death? (*She shudders with fear and stares ahead with wide-open eyes. In the meantime THE OLD MAN has entered with FU HSIAO-CHAI, the latter walking between two flags on each of which is painted the wheel of a carriage.*)

*The Old Man.*—I think this must be the house. It will make a good home for you. Stay in your carriage. I will inquire within. (*He knocks.*)

*Wen Chun-Chin.*—There is Wei Ta coming back again. Oh, what shall I do? But he may be able to help mother. I will let him in. (*She opens the imaginary doors.*)

*The Old Man.*—Could you tell me whether this is the family of Wen? Is Master Wen in?

*Wen Chun-Chin.*—No, Master Wen is not in. Could you tell me how to treat a woman who has swallowed a serpent?

*The Old Man.*—What an ailment! But you look really sad. How did you happen to swallow a serpent?



*Wen Chun-Chin.*—It is Madame Wen. She is in extreme agony.

*The Old Man.*—It is singularly bad. Did you say no gentleman is in? If not for the custom forbidding a maiden to enter the house of her betrothed before wedding I would bring my niece in. She has some apt wisdom and may effect a wonderful cure.

*Wen Chun-Chin.*—That will be proper enough. Please ask her in. (*THE OLD MAN steps outside and goes in again with FU HSIAO-CHAI, while the supernumary, who has been holding the flags, withdraws.*)

*Wen Chun-Chin.*—Could you tell me how to treat a woman who has swallowed a serpent.

*Fu Hsiao-Chai.*—How could a woman swallow a serpent?

*Wen Chun-Chin.*—Or how to treat the spirit of The Evil One lodged in a woman's throat?

*Fu Hsiao-Chai.*—Why should the spirit of The Evil One lodge in a woman's throat? But, despair not, tell me how it all happened.

*Wen Chun-Chin.*—Madame Wen was so ill that she had to drink the potion made from the finger-leaved herb, to obtain which, it was necessary to shoot the The Evil One dead. But, before the potion showed any effect, the spirit of The Evil One was raging in Madame Wen's throat like a serpent.

*Fu Hsiao-Chai* (*Pointing to the bow and arrows which are standing on the table*).—And this is the bow that was used to shoot The Evil One?

*Wen Chun-Chin.*—The very same. And these are the hands that plied it. Oh, Evil One, why do you not avenge yourself on my hands instead of her throat? (*She beats herself.*)

*Fu Hsiao-Chai.*—Does Madame Wen feel a pain in her throat intermittently or continuously?

*Wen Chun-Chin.*—Intermittently.

*Fu Hsiao-Chai.*—Will you help her to come out?

*Wen Chun-Chin.*—I will do anything for her. Nay, I will sacrifice myself. (*She goes out and soon comes back with her mother leaning on her shoulders. She helps her to the center chair.*)

*Fu Hsiao-Chai.*—Did you, Madame Wen, drink the potion from this cup, thus seated in this chair?

*The Mother.*—I did.

*Fu Hsiao-Chai.*—Let us prepare another potion from the same herb; for all good things are in twos. (*WEN CHUN-CHIN*

*prepares another potion and gives it to THE MOTHER, who is about to drink it.*

*Fu Hsiao-Chai.*—Wait! Look in the cup. What do you see?

*The Mother.*—I see a serpent, the same as the one I swallowed. (*Her hand trembles.*) And it is wriggling! Oh, my throat!

*Fu Hsiao-Chai (Removing the bow from the table).*—Now do you still see the serpent?

*The Mother.*—No, I do not.

*Fu Hsiao-Chai (Replacing the bow and spreading her fingers on its curves).*—Now, do you see the serpent again?

*The Mother.*—Yes, and also the five leaves of the herb. (*Noticing the reflection of FU HSIAO-CHAI'S fingers and of the bow in the cup.*) Ah, I see. So the serpent was a reflection of the bow! (*She drinks the potion at a gulp.*) Now I begin to feel the good effect of the herb. (*Straightening up.*) I feel well already.

*Wen Chun-Chin (Caressing FU HSIAO-CHAI).*—Oh, my dear benefactress! I can only requite your kindness by granting you a husband. I hear hoof-beats already. It must be he. (*WEI TA enters with TU SAN. They dismount by dropping the whips to the floor.*)

*Tu San (To WEI TA).*—So you will be satisfied with our arrangement if you know more of Fu Hsiao-Chai?

*Wei Ta.*—Yes, you made me happy before and after the examination beside being the first choice. I bear no ill will toward you.

*Wen Chun-Chin (Opening the imaginary doors).*—Is that you? Both are welcome. (*FU HSIAO-CHAI pretends to leave.*) Stay! Now, gentlemen, here is the lady who saved my mother's life from long illness and the poison of a serpent which she discovered to be only the shadow of this bow.

*All (Each stressing a different word.—Your mother's life?)*

*Wen Chun-Chin.*—Yes, to whom I have been at once daughter and son. Scholar Wei, will you take this wise and fair maiden as your wife?

*Wei Ta.*—I will.

*Wen Chun-Chin (Quickly to THE OLD MAN).*—And you, sir, will you have this scholar as a nephew? (*To FU HSIAO-CHAI.*) And you, as a husband? (*To THE MOTHER.*) And you, dear Mother, our Governor as a Son?

*All.*—I will!

CURTAIN

# MARGOT ASQUITH: AN IMPRESSION

BY ARTHUR WILLIAM ROW

Not so long ago I heard of an article by Mrs. Burnett called "Queens I have met," and naturally I settled myself to enjoy for an hour the personal experience Mrs. Burnett had rubbing elbows (so to speak) with those interesting ladies. Imagine my surprise on reading the article to find she had not met one of them! That the article was purely imaginative and entirely philosophical.

Yet it was one of the most intimate, penetrating articles I have ever read and fragrant with the ineffable charm that exudes from most of the writings of the creator of "Little Lord Fauntleroy." They say the best poem on Niagara was done by a man who never saw it, and Strachey in his introduction to *Eminent Victorians* rather prides or preens himself on knowing nothing of the subject he chooses to dilate on, and reminds me again that Carlyle said that History was a "fable agreed upon." To know nothing is to let loose the imagination, and imagination is the breath of art. Imagination is akin to vista and vista is the dreamy corridor taking us gently by the hand down a long, green lane of thought and imagery.

My excuse for this pre-ramble is that I want to write an impression of Margot Asquith, and I have neither met her nor heard her lecture though I did read her book. She is an interesting study. Amongst vaudeville people there is an expression that I want to use; it is "*real person.*"

Vaudeville is the acid test in all of the theatre. To "make good" in vaudeville is more than many famous actors can accomplish. To exist—to survive in vaudeville one must have "facets." In a risqué moment I once asked Mrs. Langtry why good women on and off the stage were of no earthly "use." She replied "they have no facets." In vaudeville one must have facets. To do one stunt is not enough. You must scintillate, and this means infinite variety. Then again, in vaudeville to make good one must be "a real person" on and off the stage—no bosh—no pose—a regular fellow. A book could be written on this but maybe I have made my point.

If I were asked to describe Mrs. Asquith in one line, I should

say she was a "real person." You may condemn her as you will or disagree absolutely with her or hate her as many do, cordially, but you are arrested by her because she is "real". It was this quality that made Marie Baskertcheff a sensation—that made Mary McLean a nine days wonder—that gave Roosevelt his greatest edge.

It is a rare quality.

It never fails to attract and hold.

Margot Asquith is fearless. This quality of the thoroughbred she effectually showed on a most trying occasion. At her first lecture in New York, one woman quite forgetting that manners came before morals yelled from the audience at her that she (Mrs. Asquith) was no good, or words to that effect. It was an incident timed to upset the bravest actor—the most seasoned player, but Margot Asquith met it calmly, unflinchingly and with absolute composure and disdain. She continued her lecture without a break. This proved her metal. To the comparative failure of her first talk there were extenuating circumstances. She was weak from seasickness having arrived only the day before from England. It was her opening lecture. Only public speakers and those on the stage and in vaudeville know the cold horror of *that* ordeal!

The point that many critics seem to miss of this woman's visit was that she came over here to be informed—to learn. She was big enough to put herself in that trying position at her mature age. How many people there are who refuse to admit they have anything *to* learn. The fact that she was paid was a business incident to the trip and has been unduly stressed. It is piffle to "high light" it as the motive of her visit.

She stirred large audiences and interested them. Even her critics admitted her charm; her royal grace and distinction, and confessed the plausibility of her many conquests. She "barged into" America, to use an English expression, and the contact did all concerned good. Her "impression" in McCall's magazine enhances my impression of a very real modesty and a humility that is impressive.

Mrs. Asquith has made a sensation because in a world that is ruled by convention and hypocrisy she has dared to do her own thinking. Added to this she usually acts as and when she thinks. The result is what the French are pleased to call "an original." Even Lady Astor, who frankly does not like her, declares her to be "unique." Maybe these two women are too

much alike to "like" each other. Maybe they "chemicalize" each other. People are dangerously like chemicals and opposing ingredients are apt to stir up a particular Hell in both with no real reflection on either.

Shaw says somewhere if you tell the Truth no one will believe it. Mrs. Asquith has and the trouble is everybody has believed it. It reminds one of a story of the late Bishop Potter. At a dinner party he was deploring the utter lack of biblical knowledge on the part of his parishioners.

"Why" he said "a woman asked me this week if Sodom and Gomorrah weren't married."

"Weren't they?" replied the woman.

"No, my dear," he hastened to correct her, "that was the trouble."

Nothing could be more illuminative than the vogue and lure of Mrs. Asquith. At a dinner recently I met Mrs. T. P. O'Connor famous for her wit. During the dinner I reminded her of her reputation and said she lived up to it. She replied "I am not over bright but I tell the truth and *in a woman that passes for wit.*"

Margot Asquith is brilliant, scintillant and drastic in thought and expression. She knows life and people. Her lure as a writer is the fact that she is naked and quite unafraid. Her audacity in exposing famous folks whether artists or statesmen as *human beings* is unparalleled in the history of letters. She has rediscovered the fact that the truth unadorned is dramatic in the extreme as well as pathetic and endlessly humorous. Of course she has faults—lots of them—both as artist and woman. I imagine many of her stories listen better than they read in cold print, though this criticism will probably emanate from the more middle class. People may think her vulgar or lacking in taste but never middle class.

What few seem to sense is a flaming love of beauty and all things poetic and a heart warm and vigorous. These last are her saving graces and for them much will be forgiven her. In the highest and best sense she has loved much. Her feeling for humanity is deep, trenchant and real. Her gift of friendship would indeed be a "gift" and a rare and wonderful quality. She is a kind of grown up but not a mature *enfant terrible*. She is the eternal child continually knocking her head against the stone walls of stupid conventionality, pharisaism and the complacency of those who exist, not live, in a rut, "stranded in the back waters of life" as Mrs. Atherton says.

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# Poet Lore

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*World Literature & the Drama*

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**The Great Freeholder, A Three Act Drama**

By Frantisek Adolf Subert

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**Painted Legends**

By Christabel F. Fiske

---

**An American Grandfather, A Play in One Act**

By Marian Spencer Smith

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**Two Black Sheep, A Satiric Dialogue**

By Arthur Corning White

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AUTUMN, 1924

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# THE GREAT FREEHOLDER\*

A THREE ACT DRAMA

BY FRANTISEK ADOLF SUBERT

*Translated from the Bohemian by Beatrice M. Mekota*

## CAST

DR. LUDVIK SVOBODA, *A great freeholder*

KLEMENTINA, *His wife*

ANEZKA

FILIPINA } *Their children*

JAROSLAV

COUNT MITROVEC OF MITROV

BARON SIEGDORF

JIRI PROKOP, *A journalist from Prague*

WALDEMAR SCHEFFEL } *Manufacturers*

JOSEF KYTKA

MAX NEUFELD, *An officer in a bank*

ARON LEWI, *A money loaner*

BROZ, *Treasurer at the estate*

SKALA, *A farmer*

HROMADKA, *A small farmer*

PROUZA

CERNY } *Members of the County Legislature*

VALTERA

PROCHAZKA } *Public Commissioners*

DUB

CIZEK, *Clerk*

MRS. HROMADKA

SERVANT

*Scene laid in a castle in eastern Bohemia, year 1872*

## ACT I

*A salon in a castle with a balcony at one end, and doors at the sides.*

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## SCENE I

*Without the village band is playing as it approaches from a distance. The music ceases before the conversation in the salon begins. At the entrance to the balcony stands DR. SVOBODA with his two daughters, FILIPINA and ANEZKA; within the salon his wife KLEMENTINA, his son, JAROSLAV, and the two visitors, SCHEFFEL and KYTKA.*

*Anezka (Plainly attired; looking gloomy).—*They are here!

*Filipina (Gayly).—*Music! A horseback procession! Flower maids and our seven firemen!

*Anezka.—*The school-master, the village council, and all the people behind them!

*Filipina.—*Papa, papa! This is all in your honor!

*Dr. Svoboda (Banteringly).—*Just take notice of all the honor conferred upon me! They have elected me a magistrate for the third time, and now they have prepared this procession to surprise me! (*He steps to the door of the balcony but does not appear upon it.*)

*Jaroslav.—*Because they are expecting a good time. They look forward to it as though they were going to celebrate a feast-day.

*Klementina.—*Jaroslav!

*Jaroslav (To SCHEFFEL).—*What a rabble! They want to do nothing but eat and drink! What a pity that Baron Siegdorf didn't come! What sport he would have out of this!

*Scheffel.—*Do not begrudge the people their pleasure. It is right that they should try to show their respect for the owner of the castle!

*Klementina.—*Certainly! I myself would not tolerate anything extreme in the way of a celebration. But we surely can accept this tribute of respect!

*Scheffel.—*Why, you are a great freeholder here!

*Klementina.—*Ach! A freeholder! Where are those days when the owners of the great estates were almost on the same level with the nobility! We are now but common citizens,—just like those howling down below!

*Scheffel.—*It seems to me, gracious lady, that it all depends on you whether you will become anything else. You were born into a noble family from Jiranek—

*Jaroslav (Ironically).—*Oh, we are the real thing, the genuine nobility! My grandfather on my mother's side was a tanner in Nachod . . .

*Klementina (Angrily).*—Jaroslav!

*Jaroslav (Approaching with a laugh).*—And my grandfather in Vienna was first a manufacturer, then a member of the commissary department in the army, and finally a noble.

*Scheffel.*—That reflects nothing but honor upon your grandfather who advanced so rapidly through his own efforts. (*To KLEMENTINA.*) If your husband, gracious lady, would give us some indication of being ambitious, you might have your desire gratified, and become elevated to the rank of the nobility!

*Klementina.*—Yes, if he only were different from what you see him! But my husband! His whole concern and only pleasure in life consists in curing ailing farmers! And his aspiration, his highest ambition, is to be a Bohemian representative! When I married a physician's title, I hoped that my husband would become a noble. But, (*with a short and bitter laugh*) those dreams have vanished, long ago. It is better to turn from such meditations and watch the procession which the village has prepared in honor of Dr. Svoboda. (*Walks with SCHEFFEL to the balcony.*)

*Kytka (To JAROSLAV).*—It would please me greatly if I should have such an honor as this conferred upon me!

*Jaroslav.*—You have only to become a justice of the peace in your community to have a similar comedy conferred upon you!

*Kytka (Laughing).*—That would be fine! As though I have not enough to do, taking care of myself, without having an entire community to look after.

*Klementina (To her husband).*—Come! Step out on the balcony so the people can see you! Agnes, Filipina, step aside a bit!

*Dr. Svoboda (Walks out on the balcony.)*

*People (Shouting under the window).*—Long live the doctor! Long live our magistrate!

(*A deputation from the village council steps forth; SKALA, HROMADKA, the parson, schoolmaster, and two representatives.*)

## SCENE II

SKALA, HROMADKA, the parson, school-master, and the two representatives.

*Skala (A fleshy, but restless, sanguine, and somewhat elderly farmer).*—God bless you, gracious sir! May you prosper, you with all your titled family!

*Dr. Svoboda (Laughing).*—Born, friend, not a titled family! (*Greets the others.*)

*Klementina.*—I welcome you, friends.

*Hromadka.*—We,—gracious lady— . . . How could I . . . I, Hromadka,—and not this gentleman . . . God bless you . . . (*offers his hand to KLEMENTINA who backs away.*) Well then . . . (*Presses the hand of KLEMENTINA who winces at his grasp, and steps to one side where JAROSLAV and SCHEFFEL stand laughing.*)

*Filipina* (*Quietly laughing, to her mother.*)—That was a sincere handshake.

*Klementina* (*Jokingly, holding her hand.*)—It was . . .

*Skala.*—Since we are all here, permit, dear sir, permit me to express what is in my heart. Well, then, (*Raising his voice*) Gracious sir, and your respected family! We, the plain but good people of the village of Lhot, are overjoyed because you, our beloved freeholder, philanthropist and recognized patriot, such as is seldom known, have again accepted the election and become, once more, our benefactor and magistrate. We feel as if all anxiety, all care, had fallen from our shoulders . . .

*Jaroslav* (*Quietly.*)—I believe you . . . that is just what you wish, you rascals!

*Skala.*—Because you, gracious sir, look after the village, well, just as—no offence, sir,—just as a hen looks after its brood. (*DR. SVOBODA is laughing in the midst of the ladies who are trying to suppress their mirth.*)

*Jaroslav.*—Boors, you mean, not a brood of chickens!

*Skala.*—Whatever we have in the village that is worth mentioning, the school, the parsonage, the church—these were all built by you, gracious sir, or at least improved. You give the people an opportunity to earn their living, you advise and help them in all things. And so, we thank God for the blessings.

*Jaroslav* (*In a low voice.*)—Of getting drunk and making merry at our expense.

*Skala.*—And we only hope that you, good sir, may honor that dignified office to which we have again elected you, and hold it to the end of your days.

*Members of the deputation.*—Glory!

*SKALA.*—Hromadko, place the signal, (*Pointing to the balcony,*) up there!

*Hromadka* (*Leaping to the balcony, waves a red handkerchief, and shouts.*)—Glory!

*People* (*Beneath the window.*)—Glory! Glory! Glory!

*Dr. Svoboda.*—I thank you, my friends, for this honor. The

more sincere the demonstration, the better it pleases me. I hope the Lord will grant you all the gifts of health and happiness.

*Skala*—And you hope that we, the common people, may retain our reason and good sense, so as not to bother you more than we should.—(*Laughter.*)

*Hromadka*.—We beg you to get along with us the best you can.

*Dr. Svoboda*.—I will try! I will endeavor to. Give my greetings to the entire community, and in the afternoon, come out to the park. There we will have a gathering, all of us together.

*Hromadka* (*Leaps up, shouting from the balcony*).—Afternoon . . . to the park! (*Making the sign of eating and drinking.*) (*More laughter.*)

*People* (*Below*).—Glory! Glory! Glory! (*The deputation taking leave.*)

*Dr. Svoboda*.—The Lord be with you, good friends and neighbors!

*Hromadka* (*Turning to KLEMENTINA, who in consternation, but looking unconcerned, is trying to find a way to escape. HROMADKA finally seizes her hand. In that instant he slips and falls.*)—Thunder!

*Klementina*.—Thank the Lord! (*Laughter in the group around her.*)

*Skala*.—Well, friend, you did that neatly! (*Pointing to HROMADKA.*) What a picture!

(*HROMADKA arises, and in the midst of laughter, steps backward to the right.*)

*Jaroslav* (*Pointing out HROMADKA to SCHEFFEL and KYTKA*).—And that is also a part of the public office!

### SCENE III

KYTKA, JAROSLAV, SCHEFFEL, KLEMENTINA, *later* DR. SVOBODA.

*Kytka*.—Well, that was fine! I would give a thousand dollars to have some one speak the same way of me.

*Jaroslav*.—I could make better use of that thousand.

*Kytka*.—Well, perhaps! Then I would give you another thousand.

*Jaroslav* (*To himself*).—Money bag!

*Scheffel (Approaching KLEMENTINA).*—I am going to be very uncivil, gracious lady.

*Klementina.*—Ah!

*Scheffel.*—May I remind you, gracious lady.

*Klementina.*—Oh, you wished to have a few words? I will be very much pleased. Attend me to my room, Mr. Scheffel. (*Enter DR. SVOBODA. Speaks to KYTKA.*) Mr. Kytka, you will excuse me for a moment. (*Makes a sign to KYTKA who answers with a clumsy bow. KLEMENTINA and SCHEFFEL walk off to the left.*)

#### SCENE IV

DR. SVOBODA, KYTKA

*Kytka.*—And now I am with you, Respected Doctor, alone. Now, . . . now, . . . I will attempt it . . . doctor!

*Dr. Svoboda.*—You appear to be somewhat disturbed, dear friend!

*Kytka.*—I am (*Looking around, trying to compose himself.*) I cannot speak! But perhaps you have already noticed, dear doctor, that there is nothing on earth which would delight me more, (*Choking*) . . . the privilege of asking for your daughter's hand . . .

*Dr. Svoboda (Laughing).*—Mine?

*Kytka.*—That is just the case . . . the hand of your daughter, Anezka.

*Dr. Svoboda.*—And does my daughter know of this?

*Kytka.*—She does not! She does not! I have not had the courage! I am here now for the fifth time to pay my respects, and I knew her even before that . . . but I can only look . . . I am not able to talk!

*Dr. Svoboda.*—But just try to, once.

*Kytka.*—This time, I am going to. Doctor, you know my father left me a sugar-factory with an estate which I sold for six hundred thousand florins!

*Dr. Svoboda (Frowning, says to himself).*—So that is the most important news, you poor mortal!

*Kytka.*—I will give your daughter all that I have if she will only accept me. I want nothing for myself, (*With emphasis*) but her!

*Dr. Svoboda.*—Well, I will refer the matter to her mother. Hold your head up! Go into the garden, compose yourself, then come back. (*Enter KLEMENTINA, quickly, looking somewhat disturbed.*)

*Klementina (Notices KYTKA).*—Ah! (*KYTKA bows and walks away.*)

## SCENE V

## DR. SVOBODA, KLEMENTINA

*Dr. Svoboda.*—What is it?

*Klementina.*—I have news!

*Dr. Svoboda.*—The same as I have, I wonder!

*Klementina.*—What is it?

*Dr. Svoboda.*—Young Kytka has just asked me for the hand of Anezka.

*Klementina (With brightening face).*—And Mr. Scheffel has just asked me for the hand of Filipina.

*Dr. Svoboda (To himself).*—Ah! Then we will be celebrating two weddings at one time!

*Klementina.*—You are so serious!

*Dr. Svoboda.*—It is a serious matter. It is necessary, first of all, to know what the children think about it.

*Klementina.*—Filipina is fortunate. She truly likes Mr. Scheffel.

*Dr. Svoboda.*—And Anezka?

*Klementina.*—She is so reticent. I feel that she is almost a stranger to me. She is such a riddle that I have not the patience to solve her.

*Dr. Svoboda.*—You love her altogether too little!

*Klementina.*—About as much as she loves me. But you, at least, cannot complain that you do not possess her affection!

*Dr. Svoboda.*—She is a kind and dutiful daughter.

*Klementina.*—A bit provincial. You two are just alike. And as I was saying, that Kytka—

*Dr. Svoboda (Moving about nervously).*—Is a simple boy . . .

*Klementina (Seating herself; ironically).*—Yes, very simple!

*Dr. Svoboda (Seating himself).*—What a pity that he hasn't a little more intelligence!

*Klementina (Proudly).*—For Anezka, he has quite enough!

(*Enter ANEZKA*)



## SCENE VI

ANEZKA, DR. SVOBODA, KLEMENTINA, *later the servant*

*Anezka (Brightening, extends toward them a letter which she holds in her hand).*—Father,—mother,—we are going to have company!

*Klementina.*—Who is it to be?

*Anezka (Radiantly).*—Mr. Prokop . . . he writes me that he is coming!

*Klementina (Aside to her husband).*—Notice how she looked when she spoke of him.

*Anezka.*—He is coming some time this morning!

*Dr. Svoboda.*—But he did not write to me?

*Anezka.*—His letter is awaiting you; it is downstairs. I will bring it up with the others.

*Klementina.*—Listen, *Anezka*—let that letter go just now.

*Anezka (Looking at the two).*—Mother, . . . is it something serious?

*Klementina.*—Mr. Kytka has just asked for permission to speak for your hand.

*Anezka (Overcome with surprise).*—Mine,—mine! (*Glances from her mother to her father, bursts into tears, then runs off.*)

## SCENE VII

DR. SVOBODA, KLEMENTINA, *later the servant*

*Dr. Svoboda.*—That is not a cheerful sign!

*Klementina (Suspiciously).*—There is love back of it!

*Dr. Svoboda.*—You think so? What kind?

*Klementina.*—I do not know.

*Dr. Svoboda (Sighing).*—Our answer to Mr. Kytka will be somewhat disappointing to him! And what shall we say to Mr. Scheffel?

*Klementina.*—That depends upon ourselves.

*Dr. Svoboda.*—Upon him, rather! He is not a simple-minded boy!

*Klementina (Hesitatingly).*—He told the treasurer several times yesterday, that he is still in need of fifty thousand florins for his factory.

*Dr. Svoboda (Ironically).*—A practical man,—he comes right to the point.

*Klementina.*—He wants to leave this afternoon.

*Dr. Svoboda.*—We will give him his answer in a few days.

*Klementina.*—Very well. (*Walks off to the left.*)

*Dr. Svoboda* (*Buried in thought*).—But what kind of an answer? Can I grant his request and make my child happy, at the same time? (*He is silent for a moment; a servant enters the room.*)

*Servant.*—Your Grace,—Count Mitrovec of Mitrova.

*Dr. Svoboda* (*Overcome with surprise*).—The Count? Let him come in! After he leaves, tell the treasurer I wish to see him.

(*Enter COUNT MITROVEC; exit servant.*)

### SCENE VIII

COUNT MITROVEC of Mitrova; DR. SVOBODA; later the SERVANT and BROZ

*Count.*—Doctor, I hope I have not annoyed you by this surprise! (*Presses his hand.*)

*Dr. Svoboda.*—I so seldom have the honor of seeing you!

*Count.*—We two understand the pleasure of being alone, so we seldom visit each other. Even today, doctor, I do not wish to take much of your time. For I have come neither to exchange ideas, nor to be entertained.

*Dr. Svoboda.*—I am consumed with curiosity! (*Motions to him to be seated.*)

*Count.*—I am about to leave the village. Just an hour ago, I received a letter from the Count of Smecen which enraged me.

*Dr. Svoboda.*—Has something happened? Something serious?

*Count.*—Say, rather, something contemptible,—low!

*Dr. Svoboda.*—You are growing angry, Count!

*Count.*—Yes, even I, the old philosophical observer of human life and human events, who has but sympathy and mercy for the depravity of the human race. But this depravity, which stirred me so deeply today, is such a sure indication of moral decay, that even I could no longer retain my composure! Can you believe what the Count of Smecen writes me about the coming elections of the House of Representatives, and those frenzied agitations on the part of our opponents?

*Dr. Svoboda.*—I am curious.

*Count.*—My old friend informs me that the opposite side has resorted to methods such as never yet have been heard of in political battles. They intend to buy up, with large sums of

money, as many as possible of the great estates and large freeholders, so that our faction, which represents the historical past of the country, and its independence, could not become victorious, by any manner or means! (*Rising angrily.*) They want to drown us out with a stream of their filthy money,—ah, what abomination is possible on earth!

*Dr. Svoboda (Rising).*—This thing,—which you are now telling me . . . it is so frightful, so low, that I still can hardly believe it! When it was discussed in the newspapers, I thought it must be a mere conjecture,—but if it is really true, what will be the result?

*Count.*—Yes, yes, the possible result! In former times, war was waged in our country with arms and accompanied by the flow of blood, today it is waged with the ballot. But this coming fight, which will decide the election among the freeholders, will be fully as decisive as any bloody battle fought in the Middle Ages.

*Dr. Svoboda*—Certainly. If we lose this battle, it will affect us for the next hundred years. But we need not be gravely concerned about the plans of our opponents. To carry on a plan to its execution is not as easy as sliding down hill (*With a laugh.*) The large estates are not easily bought up. None of them are on sale for a six-pence!

*Count.*—Yet you could buy up a score of them if you were willing to lose several millions. And are you aware of the source from which our opponents are drawing their money?

*Dr. Svoboda.*—They established a special bank for that purpose in Vienna.

*Count.*—Yes; by buying up mortgages, a large sum of money will be raised by our opponents.

*Dr. Svoboda.*—Then it behooves us to work, agitate the matter, warning the voters, so that no member of our side could be induced to sell his estate.

*Count.*—So, so, . . . if such things as poverty, selfishness and corruption were unknown among the freeholders themselves. Defense through speech alone will not help. For poison there must be anti-poison. We have no other recourse, my friend, but to resort to similar weapons.

*Dr. Svoboda* . . . which, whether we wish to or not, we must call immoral.

*Count.*—Essentially immoral, perhaps; but not immoral when applied for the purpose of self-defense. Or shall we permit ourselves, rather, to be smothered out? Never! We must not

remain inert! Of course our hands must remain clean. They shall never touch strange money! Our party, the first representatives of historic nobility, has been raising funds to buy up as many as possible of the large estates, and today, I myself directed by telegram the payment of a certain sum of money. I have made an arrangement, through which most of the money that I leave would be used for important public purposes after my death. But today, and no doubt during the next hundred years, there will be no more important event than the winning of this election. For we now are facing the necessity of preserving our national identity and saving our nation.

*Dr. Sjoboda.*—Every patriot must do his duty according to his means.

*Count.*—But God forbid that the corruption I anticipate should be greater in our own party than we expect!

*Dr. Svoboda.*—Honesty has not so completely died out that corruption could dance unpunished on its grave!

*Count.*—And in spite of all my philosophy, I share the same opinion. But I was greatly alarmed over that last report, and I must confess, there will be a period of disquiet for me until after the election. (*Rising to go.*) So come to see me, my dear neighbor, and we will discuss the subject more fully.

*Dr. Svoboda.*—With your consent, Count.

*Count.*—Give my excuses to your family since I have failed to pay them my respects.

*Dr. Svoboda.*—They will regret it deeply.

*Count (Laughing).*—I would be but a sorry companion for them today (*Walks away, escorted by DR. SVOBODA.*)

(*BROZ enters, with papers and bills which he begins to examine. DR. SVOBODA returns after a few minutes.*)

#### SCENE IX

DR. SVOBODA, BROZ

*Dr. Svoboda (Somewhat uncertainly).*—My dear Mr. Broz, I have just received a report from Count Mitrovec which imposes a certain obligation upon me . . . .

*Broz (With a rough laugh).*—You wish to contribute to another subscription . . . .

*Dr. Svoboda (Uncertainly).*—Yes, yes . . . how much have we in the treasury?

*Broz.*—I cannot give you the exact amount off hand, but it does not exceed a thousand florins.

*Dr. Svoboda (To himself).*—That is but little, very little indeed!

*Broz.*—And that has been put aside for pressing expenses.

*Dr. Svoboda.*—But I must have more!

*Broz (With emphasis on the word "notes").*—And certain notes are due in three weeks.

*Dr. Svoboda (Passing his hand over his forehead).*—Do not talk to me about notes. A sacred duty demands the money of me.

*Broz (Dryly).*—Impossible to break a trust, I suppose.

*Dr. Svoboda (Frightened).*—Do not frighten me!

*Broz.*—If it were but a matter of a few hundred . . . .

*Dr. Svoboda.*—Ten thousand is the smallest amount that I can give!

*Broz (With a harsh laugh).*—Ten thousand! I cannot even meet those notes in three weeks, and now I shall be fortunate if I can borrow . . . .

*Dr. Svoboda (Mopping his forehead).*—The fields look promising,—and the harvest ought to pay back all that we owe!

*Broz.*—That is, it can save the estate in a year's time if no unforeseen occurrence or streak of ill-luck comes! The Lord grant that the present cloud looming up will blow over. If the harvest were to be lost, everything would go with it!

*Dr. Svoboda.*—You frighten me!

*Broz.*—I am always the black lining to your cloud! Would that I could be the silver one!

*Dr. Svoboda (Sharply).*—But I must contribute something to the cause!

*Broz.*—Better attend to your own floor first so it doesn't cave through!

*Dr. Svoboda.*—Yes, that is the excellent principle of selfishness which screens itself by excuses regardless of the consequence to others, regardless of its duty to the nation and the people. That is the mask which screens that national avarice which refuses to see the herd of the hungry, the mask so neatly prepared that the people cannot hear the word, "Help!"

*Broz.*—And suppose that we, for the need of timely help, should perish ourselves?

*Dr. Svoboda (Angrily).*—Self-praise is unnecessary,—but it might be better to perish than to drift on to that abyss where people perish with their principles. If each one of us should intelligently help, according to his own strength and ability, the

appearance of the entire country would become changed, and our loftiest dreams would be realized.

*Broz.*—I do not wish to thrust my surly egotism upon you, doctor, but I am only talking common sense, cold common sense. (*An uproar in the courtyard with a rising shout.*)

What a misfortune!

*Voices.*—Frightful! Horrible!

*Dr. Svoboda.*—What is happening? (*Hastens out upon the balcony.*)

(*KLEMENTINA quickly steps in.*)

### SCENE X

KLEMENTINA, DR. SVOBODA, BROZ

*Klementina.*—Do you know what has happened?

*Dr. Svoboda.*—I just heard the poeple shouting . . .

*Klementina.*—Baron Siegdorf arrived a short time ago. He requested the pleasure of seeing my new coach-horses. The coachman Jirik brought them out of the stable,—but something must have frightened the horses. One started forward and fell, drawing down the other, and now both are lying in a heap with their legs broken!

*Dr. Svoboda.*—And Jirik?

*Klementina.*—He managed to slide out of it alive.

*Dr. Svoboda.*—Thank Heaven! And nothing else has happened?

*Klementina.*—Nothing else. Except that just at that instant, old Hromadkova was passing with her cow. The cow leaped aside to escape the horses, and struck the old woman in the head with her horns.

*Dr. Svoboda.*—Where is Hromadkova?

*Klementina.*—Down below in the servant's-hall. (*Angrily.*) But does she interest you more than the poor horses do?

*Dr. Svoboda.*—That is not a mere misfortune but an accident!

*Klementina.*—Then order another team of horses for me at once, and be sure they are good trotters as the others were! (*DR. SVOBODA stops, looking at the treasurer.*)

*Broz.*—They were valued at three thousand florins.

*Klementina.*—Then we must have that same amount.—

*Broz.*—But we cannot raise it!

*Klementina.*—Mr. Broz! . . . (*Looks intently at DR.*)

SVBODA.) Ludvik! Certainly I am not going to walk to town, or go afoot to the neighbors?

*Dr. Svoboda.*—But surely, there are other horses to be had?

*Klementina.*—Not unless you mean that ancient team of yours? One would need to shoot above their heads to make them break into a trot!

*Dr. Svoboda.*—My dear Klementina, certainly you realize how we stand financially!

*Klementina.*—And if we were ten times worse off than we really are, I still would say, without a coach and pair I cannot get along! Why don't you sell your bank stock?

*Dr. Svoboda.*—Impossible! Without losing half of its face value. Wait until the stock advances a bit!

*Klementina.*—Then try some other device. (*To Broz*) Send a telegram to Prague for the horses.

*Broz.*—I beg to be pardoned, gracious lady,—but there is no money to pay for them!

*Klementina.*—I did not ask you, officer, whether there is money or not. I sternly command you to see to it that in three days the horses are here! (*Walks off to the left without acknowledging the officer's low bow.*)

## SCENE XI

DR. SVOBODA, BROZ, *later the* SERVANT *and* HROMADKOVA

*Dr. Svoboda (To Broz).*—Will it be possible?

*Broz (Dryly).*—Your annual income, respected sir, is already overdrawn by two thousand florins,—and the year is hardly half gone!

*Dr. Svoboda (Carefully, as though afraid of pressing the subject).*—Mr. Broz, this time, even I did not ask you to volunteer any information.

*Broz.*—Hm, hm, you will pardon the offense, I hope!

*Dr. Svoboda.*—If the money cannot be raised, we will not purchase any more horses before the harvest.

*Broz.*—That is sensible!

*Dr. Svoboda.*—But my contribution to Prague must be sent! At least five thousand.

*Broz (With emphasis).*—Doctor!

*Dr. Svoboda.*—Yes, at least five thousand. Sell my bank stock for six.

*Broz (To himself).*—At this rate, we will soon be at the foot of the hill!

*(SERVANT enters.)*

*Dr. Svoboda (Irritably).*—What has happened now? I did not wish to be disturbed by anyone!

*Servant.*—Old Hromadkova is begging for your aid. The cow put out her eye.

*Dr. Svoboda.*—What are you saying? *(To himself, shortly.)* Klementina did not mention that to me. Of course, the horses were of more importance! *(Civilly to the servant.)* Then gather together my surgical instruments. We will go to her.

*Servant.*—She is waiting here. *(Pointing to the door.)*

*Dr. Svoboda.*—Bring her in.

*(The SERVANT opens the door. Enter HROMADKOVA, her face half-bandaged by a shawl.)*

*Dr. Svoboda (Greeting the old woman).*—Well, well, Neighbor, and what did that fallow animal do to you? *(Dismisses SERVANT.)*

*Hromadkova.*—She put out my eye! I thought I would die, right on the spot!

*Servant (Enters with a surgical case.)*

*Dr. Svoboda.*—Oh, it may not be so bad. The eye is out?

*Hromadkova.*—It is.

*Dr. Svoboda.*—I must take care of the wound, and later you shall have an artificial eye. Come.

*(The old woman, servant and doctor step into the room at the left. Enter JAROSLAV. Looks around then approaches the treasurer.)*

## SCENE XII

JAROSLAV, BROZ, later DR. SVOBODA, and HROMADKOVA

*Jaroslav.*—Well then, High Lord Chancellor of the Treasury, how is your treasure? Those two thousand that I spoke of before,—you have them ready for me?

*Broz.*—I have not, young sir.

*Jaroslav.*—Then they must be secured in some other way. With Aron, my credit is still good. And what about those new coach-horses for my highly respected mother?

*Broz.*—The doctor will not allow us to buy them,—not until after the harvest.

*Jaroslav (Laughing).*—Would not allow them? This will be another merry day for mother! Yes, we are getting along, fine!



This is thrift, good husbandry! We must begin to use our wits and find other resources! But do you hear me, Mr. Broz? I am in pressing need of that two thousand today!

*Broz.*—For what purpose?

*Jaroslav.*—My very good friend from Vienna, Max Neufeld, is coming. I want to go with him to the city. Its been a long time since I've been out on a real vagabondage. (*Goes aside to the right.*) Mr. Scheffel has been asking for you. (*Whistles and walks away.*)

*Broz.*—Again? A very special honor.

(*From the left enters DR. SVOBODA, HROMADKOVA, and SERVANT.*)

*Dr. Svoboda.*—There. For the present I have fixed you up. Just be careful not to move the bandage.

*Hromadkova.*—May the Lord reward you a thousand times, noble sir!

*Dr. Svoboda.*—That's all right! Just come back again tomorrow! (*Exit the OLD WOMAN and SERVANT from the right.*)

*Broz.*—Another relieved patient. But be careful: "May the Lord reward you!"

*Dr. Svoboda.*—Wouldn't it be fine! To allow these poor unfortunates to pay for their misfortune! But they reward me in other ways.

*Broz.*—Just as that farmer, Zicha, did. Do you remember how you set his fractured shoulder, then he led the water from his marshy land down through ditches into your field?

(*From the left enters BARON SIEGDORF in short satin riding coat and riding-trousers, with a whip in hand. His feet are somewhat crooked. He speaks quickly and proudly with an affected German accent. He tries to assume an air of importance, yet at times is comical and almost clownish. Without a word of greeting, he steps boldly up to DR. SVOBODA, and offers his hand. BROZ, standing in the background, is closely observing the baron during his conversation with the doctor.*)

### SCENE XIII

BARON SIEGDORF, DR. SVOBODA, BROZ

*Siegdorf.*—That was a stroke of bad luck. Such horses, Neighbor! Such trotters! And that stupid *rajtknecht* allowed them to become frightened! I would have him beaten well and driven away. But you can buy a new team and all will be well

again. If I only had a team of coach-horses with me, I would insist that madame accept them in place of her maimed ones, but I have just a saddle-horse with me, just a *rajtpferd*. (*He runs about the salon, picking up particles, examining pictures, without taking further notice of the doctor or BROZ.*)

*Dr. Svoboda.*—I thank you for my wife, Baron, but you are somewhat late.

*Siegdorf.*—Pardon, Neighbor. I wanted to be present for that farce which took place here, that comedy which the neighbors planned so neatly in your honor, but you see I was delayed. I was just about to start when there appeared that rogue, that district-usurer, Aron Lewi, with two servants of the Lord . . . and you can imagine the scene we had! (*Laughing.*) For a while, I merely humored them and laughed. Finally, they wearied me. So I had the footman show them out,—and Lewi I put out forcibly.

*Dr. Svoboda.*—But those people will surely seek revenge, Baron.

*Siegdorf.*—What kind of revenge? I pay only my legitimate debts, and money they cannot get! And if they dare lay a plot of some sort against me, I will beat them up at the first chance meeting on the street.

*Dr. Svoboda.*—But your estate?

*Siegdorf.*—Oh, the devil took possession of that, long ago! Not as much as a wing of it rightfully belongs to me now. Let them have it. If somebody should want it, I would put it up to an appraiser, possibly today.

*Dr. Svoboda.*—Today? . . . Before the election?

*Siegdorf.*—It makes no difference,—either before election, or after. Who is going to stop for election?

*Dr. Svoboda.*—But you are alligned with our party! You cannot desert us just before election!

*Siegdorf.*—I shall stay with you as long as it may suit my convenience to do so. But if I can dispose of the estate at a good figure, certainly no one would expect me to wait out of consideration for a foolish political principle! Some opponent or other from the opposite side will sell your party another estate, so in the end, things will be held about even, Dr. Svoboda.

*Dr. Svoboda.*—Baron, you surely must be joking. At least, hold your estate until election is over. It would be greatly to your credit!

*Siegdorf.*—But how irrational you are, Neighbor! I am not

joking. I could not make a better decision or act more sensibly! If I can rid myself of financial embarrassment so easily, surely I should not be irresolute and hesitate to sell on account of a foolish election!

*Dr. Svoboda.*—But listen a minute, Baron. Count Mitrovec is greatly disturbed over the report that our opponents are making use of large sums of money to win this coming election. His honor as a noble . . . .

*Siegdorf.*—Eh, what is Count Mitrovec to me? He is an old fossil and a recluse. And as for honor? The first fundamental law is the law of self-protection. To sell an estate is surely not dishonorable. But, Neighbor, let us stop quarreling over trifles! I have a slight request to make of you. (*He stops running about the room, striking an attitude before the DOCTOR.*)

*Dr. Svoboda.*—Let me hear it.

*Siegdorf.*—I have a debt to pay. I lost fifteen thousand at cards. Could you not, Neighbor, make me a loan of a couple of thousand for a month or so?

*Dr. Svoboda.*—I deeply regret, my friend, that I am unable to grant your request.

*Siegdorf.*—Do not be afraid. I will not offer you a note. Notes I do not always pay but my honorable debts I settle. I give you my word of honor that I will remember to pay it back. Two thousand I can surely sell the castle for, and in a month's time, the money will be mine. And if not,—well then, my good aunt cannot live forever, and after her demise, I shall inherit half of her estate. Then I will settle everything, and even pay off the Jew, Aron.

*Dr. Svoboda.*—You embarrass me by pressing your request, Baron, but I must refuse you. My hands are now tied . . .

*Baron.*—I depended upon you absolutely. But how goes it with you, Neighbor? Are you so badly off, then? These are surely devilish hard times (*Suddenly leaves the DOCTOR and begins to run about the salon.*) But where are the young ladies, your daughters? I must pay them my respects

*Dr. Svoboda.*—Most likely they are in the park. If you wish, I will attend you there, Baron. Will you permit me to say another word or two about the election?

*Siegdorf.*—I thank you, but do not exert yourself unnecessarily. I feel perfectly at home here. (*Bows, quickly making his exit to the left.*)

## SCENE XIV

BROZ, DR. SVOBODA

*Broz (Gazing after SIEGDORF).*—That is a fine specimen of the nobility!

*Dr. Svoboda.*—He will never be different. But, (*Meditating*) it seems to me, Master of the Treasury, that you began a somewhat serious conversation with me a while ago.

*Broz.*—Yes, that is true. And if you will permit me . . .

*Dr. Svoboda.*—Tell me everything that is on your mind. And make it short.

*Broz.*—Honorable Doctor, unless there is a change in your finances before long, somebody else will be ruling in your place over this estate.

*Dr. Svoboda (Frightened).*—Seat yourself. (*They are both seated.*)

*Broz.*—When it pleased you to buy this estate, you were out of debt except for a part of the dowry which you owe your wife. Today, you owe 30,000 florins borrowed on the estate, and the timbers have been chopped out five years in advance.

*Dr. Svoboda (Sighing).*—I cannot understand why everything seems to be turning against us. I have an excellent farm manager. Few as capable are to be found. We have also had prosperous years.

*Broz.*—Yes, yes—the farm manager is a good repairer, but he takes no account of what repairs cost! Add to that a number of very poor years, as far as harvests are concerned, with one tremendous flood,—then speculation with your fatal bank-stock—and then—

*Dr. Svoboda.*—Do not stop.

*Broz.*—That yearly deficit . . . .

*Dr. Svoboda.*—So, it is so! . . . And the remainder of my property with all my wordly goods hangs high in the air. Well, I almost expected as much. I was afraid to admit it to myself . . . Now it probably is too late!

*Broz.*—Not yet!

*Dr. Svoboda.*—How is that?

*Broz.*—If you wish me to advise you, I would suggest that you manage everything yourself.

*Dr. Svoboda.*—I am hardly fitted for such an undertaking!

*Broz.*—At first, you need do nothing more than to remain

steadily on your estate. Give up everything that is needlessly taking your money and your time.

*Dr. Svoboda.*—And that is?

*Broz.*—Your representative mandate, your three month's visit to Prague, your village magistracy, and your office in the Farmer's Savings Bank.

*Dr. Svoboda.*—And further . . . .

*Broz.*—Furthermore, limit your countless expenses, and try to show the members of your family how to reduce theirs.

*Dr. Svoboda.*—So I stand on the very verge of ruin, and only a complete change in the management of my affairs can save me. (*Holly, as though to himself.*) So you see, my friend, how my fondest hopes have remained unfulfilled, and how the tide of fortune has turned against me. My dream can never be realized. From a struggling Bohemian student, I kept on rising until I became a noted physician and professor in Prague. I acquired a famous reputation, and the money poured in. Had I but remained in Vienna, I might today be a man of great wealth. But something kept drawing me back to the land of my fathers, and I became possessed of the desire to have a castle with a great estate. And for this crazy reason: to be the master over all I surveyed, to live in the seat of one of the oldest and best known Bohemian families, and to finally help decide the destinies of my country. Who can believe me, who can feel and understand the wondrous fascination of the idea, the charm with which it held me!

*Broz.*—It was a beautiful and fond ambition,—that I can readily understand!

*Dr. Svoboda.*—I actually succeeded in realizing my ambition. From that moment forth, I lived here as one lives in a dream. And see, today I hear from your lips the truth,—that my roof is caving in over my head, and the floor is about to sink under my feet. This is terrible!

*Broz.*—Energy and good management can yet save the situation.

*Dr. Svoboda.*—You are right. I must make amends for my remissness in the past. It is not I alone whom this affects, but my wife, my children!

*Broz.*—Splendid! Splendid! That is right, doctor! Just depend on me! We will see you through together. (*Enter the SERVANT.*)

*Dr. Svoboda (Irritably).*—Now what has happened?

*Servant.*—A deputation of County Representatives is here.

*Dr. Svoboda.*—That is how it goes, (*Aside to BROZ with a laugh.*) They have come most likely, to ask me to be their County Magistrate. But I will accept no more of their honors. (*Aloud to the SERVANT.*) Let the gentlemen come in.

(*Enter the burgomaster, PROUZA, with the farmers CERNY and VALTERA. The SERVANT leaves.*)

## SCENE XV

PROUZA, VALTERA, CERNY, *the Others*

*Prouza (A sincere and serious man).*—Respected Doctor, now our Honorable Magistrate!

*Dr. Svoboda (With a laugh).*—What does this mean, gentlemen? The whole speech at once, please!

*Valtera (A voluble talker, easily excited).*—It cannot be otherwise with us, Honorable Doctor! What would become of us in these legislative times? We, the people, had to keep our opinions behind our teeth for several hundred years,—so now we must say frankly what we think and feel, and talk things over.

*Prouza.*—Tomorrow the election of the County Magistrate is to take place, so we have come with one accord, Honorable Doctor, to ask you to take upon yourself the burden of this office.

*Dr. Svoboda.*—Gentlemen, I assure you that I am pleased with the confidence you repose in me. But grave and serious reasons make it imperative that I should, for the present at least, give up all offices.

*Valtera.*—But that is not possible!

*Dr. Svoboda.*—I cannot accept the office.

*Prouza.*—Honorable Doctor, without you, (*Taking his hand*) the entire county would be an orphan. You are not only a magistrate, but a father to the people, . . . you take better care of public interests than you do of your own estate!

*Dr. Svoboda (Buried in thought).*—That is probably true.

*Prouza.*—And so just now, when we are just beginning to profit through your services, when you have attended to all the funds that had to be raised, the loans made necessary by last year's floods, when our success at this moment depends entirely upon you,—no, doctor, today you cannot refuse us.

*Dr. Svoboda.*—In spite of all that, gentlemen, you must manage to get along without my services.

*Prouza.*—We realize that our arguments are weak, Respected

Doctor, and we do not know how to talk to you. But on my soul, this is a disappointment, a bitter disappointment!

*Cerny.*—But Valtera!

*Valtera (Turning upon CERNY).*—Isn't this enough to make one shed tears? But you know I warned you he might refuse us! The great freeholder,—it may be as it may,—but he should have a warm spot in his heart for us, the struggling common people!

*Dr. Svoboda.*—Valtera! You do not know how hard you are making it for me! (*Turning in doubt to BROZ.*) If there were any possible way . . .

*Broz (Warningly).*—Doctor!

*Prouza.*—It must be possible! Won't you try to give up something else . . . but do . . . do not abandon us now!

*Dr. Svoboda.*—If you only realized . . . my time . . .

*Prouza.*—Just this one time . . . we will not come again!

*Dr. Svoboda (To himself).*—This is painful. (*To BROZ*) I must conserve the time in some other way. (*To the deputation*) Then I will accept the office this time, once more!

*Valtera.*—Glory! Glory!

*Prouza.*—Accept, beloved friend, our heartfelt thanks. It comes from the depths of our hearts. All the village will bless you!

*Dr. Svoboda.*—Be well, and may you prosper, gentlemen! Till we meet again!

(*The deputation leaves.*)

*Broz.*—In vain . . . to reason with you is all in vain!

(*The door half opens; ANEZKA appears.*)

## SCENE XVI

ANEZKA, FILIPINA, PROKOP, *then the servant*

*Anezka.*—Father, Mr. Prokop has arrived.

*Dr. Svoboda.*—Where is he?

*Anezka.*—We are bringing him with us. (*Enter PROKOP with ANEZKA and FILIPINA.*)

*Dr. Svoboda.*—I welcome you, dear Jirik! I see you have grown up, yet to me you are just a boy still.

*Prokop.*—Just as I was twenty years ago.

*Broz.*—Respected Doctor!

*Dr. Svoboda (Dismissing Broz).*—My dear friend, do not

look so gloomy. This afternoon we must have a council and talk over all our plans.

*Broz (To himself, shaking his head).*—And by tomorrow, it may be too late. (*Goes away.*)

*Dr. Svoboda.*—And now, my Jirik, what is happening in Prague?

*Prokop.*—Everyone is looking forward to the coming election. It will take place within five weeks. The excitement is increasing from day to day. The establishment of People's Savings Banks, reports of the preparations which are being made against us,—that all reacts upon the people like the sounding of an alarm.

*Dr. Svoboda.*—What a pity that I cannot be in Prague!

*Prokop.*—For the present, Honorable Doctor, you are needed more here. We are counting greatly upon your support.

*Dr. Svoboda.*—In what capacity?

*Prokop.*—In this: that you will use your influence to persuade the great holders of estates to remain, in this surrounding district, loyal to their historic traditions. I have been sent out to obtain, if possible, a reliable report from each. I must go directly from here to the Soukup, the Zahradka estates, and then to Baron Siegdorf. We are uncertain about them.

*Dr. Svoboda.*—Soukup is with us,—but Baron Siegdorf is exceedingly uncertain. The others, . . . Siegdorf is now present here . . . (*Looks at his daughters.*)

*Filipina.*—He is with mamma in the park.

*Dr. Svoboda.*—Come, my friend! We will speak with him before he leaves. (*Rising*)

*Prokop.*—Very well. (*Rises. All leave.*)

*Dr. Svoboda.*—If it is in any way possible, I will ride to the Soukup estate with you. (*Leaving. Enter NEUFELD and JAROSLAV from the right.*)

### SCENE XVIII

DR. SVOBODA, NEUFELD, JAROSLAV

*Dr. Svoboda (Questioningly).*—I have the honor?

*Jaroslav.*—My esteemed friend and former University associate.

*Neufeld.*—Max Neufeld, son of the banker Neufeld of Vienna.

*Dr. Svoboda.*—Can I be of any service to you?

*Neufeld.*—My father desires very much to buy up some property in Bohemia. I thought at once of my friend, your es-



teemed son, and took the liberty to come, Honorable Doctor, to ask you for advice in this matter, or at least for a suggestion.

*Dr. Svoboda.*—I deeply regret, Mr. Neufeld, that such matters do not fall within my province.

*Neufeld (Persistently).*—I took the trouble to learn whether there is an estate for sale in this district. My mother has taken a fancy to the historic banks of the Elbe which she knew years ago.

*Jaroslav (Aside).*—When she was still the daughter of the Burgomaster Kostelec.

*Dr. Svoboda.*—I know of none which would be to your liking, Mr. Neufeld.

*Neufeld.*—My mother especially fancied this castle and estate. Honorable Doctor, should you by any chance be considering the disposal of your estate, I beg you to feel that I am not approaching you as a buyer of estates but as a connoisseur, a mere connoisseur.

*Dr. Svoboda.*—Mr. Neufeld, even though I were considering a change, it would be necessary for me to know, first of all, when the sale would occur.

*Neufeld (As though he did not understand).*—Whenever it might suit your pleasure, Honorable Doctor. Within four weeks, a week, (*With a laugh,*) or possibly even today!

*Dr. Svoboda.*—And if I should say that the sale could not take place until after the coming election?

*Neufeld (Stirring uneasily).*—I think it is unnecessary to make such a useless request.

*Dr. Svoboda.*—And I share the same opinion with you, Mr. Neufeld. (*With emphasis.*) For my estate is not on sale.

*Neufeld (Surprised).*—Why?

*Dr. Svoboda.*—I have two reasons,—(*Ironically.*) and above them all, I have a very strong attachment for my estate. (*Bows and walks away.*)

## SCENE XIX

NEUFELD, JAROSLAV

*Neufeld (Gazing a few minutes at JAROSLAV).*—We have lost the game before it was even played.

*Jaroslav.*—Not at all. We must be patient and wait. The old man has scented something in the wind.

*Neufeld.*—Your respected father has pledged his support to his own party. He will not sell before election.

*Jaroslav.*—He will, He will!

(*Rings. A servant enters.*)

Jean, go to mother unobserved and tell her that I must speak to her at once. (*Servant makes his exit to the left.*) Just leave me for a minute, Neufeld, and look over our trophies in the corridor, or if it suits your fancy, look out of the window at some pretty girl from the village. I will call you at once.

(*NEUFELD leaves.*)

### SCENE XX

*Jaroslav.*—We will play a double game here; either play is good; the better one will be the one that can win the estate. First, I must send a telegram to Prague to the election committee which represents the historical nobility. (*Sits himself to write.*) Ha! Ha! I will send it in my good father's name. (*Writes.*) "My estate is threatened with an executioner's sale before election. I urge you to buy it for 650,000 florins, which the opposite side offers me. If you do not accept, I shall be obliged to find other means of saving myself and family from ruin. Svoboda." There. The response no doubt will be prompt, either by telegram or letter. Father will rage at first because I used his name, but otherwise I have not lied. If this society which represents the historical nobility buys up the estate, even father cannot complain and we will be supplied with money once more. If not, we must try another manœuvre, and first of all we must talk it over with my saintly mamma. (*Laughing.*) Those coach-horses will help matters along!

(*Enter KLEMENTINA.*)

### SCENE XXI

JAROSLAV, KLEMENTINA, *later* DR. SVOBODA

*Klementina.*—What is so pressing?

*Jaroslav.*—Mamma, father told the treasurer that he could not buy your new coach-horses until after election.

*Klementina (With surprise).*—Your father did that? The treasurer shall send for those horses today!

*Jaroslav.*—Hm! He must, must he? He probably would if he could!

*Klementina.*—Your father must recall that order.

*Jaroslav.*—Yes, recall it. I suppose he would not even have given it had he seen some other way out of the situation. But

where there is nothing to draw upon, then neither the Jew nor the devil can carry anything away. (KLEMENTINA *tries to interrupt.*) Compose yourself, mother! Look at the situation calmly, and prepare yourself for a great blow.

*Klementina (With astonishment).*—What kind of blow?

*Jaroslav.*—Our estate is not valued at even a half million as the forests are practically chopped out and destroyed. We cannot scrape together money enough so you could have your coach-horses and go about in proper style to pay your calls. (KLEMENTINA *tries to interrupt.*) No, we have not! You will not accomplish anything by growing angry and flying into a fit of temper . . . so, be calm. But good fortune has brought us some one, (*With emphasis,*) who urges us to accept 650,000 florins for the estate. I will run the figure up to 670,000 before I am through with him—(*Adding quickly,*)—that 20,000 will fall to me. Do you consent to the sale?

*Klementina.*—Without a single condition.

*Jaroslav (With emphasis).*—But father will surely object. He knows the estate would fall into German hands, even before election! Can you manage to overcome his opposition?

*Klementina (Quickly).*—I will. For the sake of you and your sisters, for the protection of your father and myself, I must. Today, we are all standing on the very verge of ruin. By the sale of the estate we can be saved! With this acquired amount, we can marry off both your sisters creditably, and you and I can both indulge our tastes once more. (*With emphasis.*) I must induce your father to sell the estate!

*Jaroslav.*—Splendid!

(*Enter DR. SVOBODA*)

*Dr. Svoboda (Angrily).*—Klementina, have you heard of the insolence of this Neufeld, who is urging me to sell out to the opposite side?

*Klementina (Looking the doctor straight in the eye).*—Yes. I know all about it.

## ACT II

### *The Same Salon*

#### SCENE I

NEUFELD, KLEMENTINA, JAROSLAV

*Neufeld (Seated).*—I thank you, gracious lady, for the interest you have taken in my plans.

*Klementina.*—It is first of all, my duty. I am shielding not only myself but my entire family before this insane obsession of my husband, which is blinding his eyes to the inevitable doom which awaits us.

*Neufeld.*—Should I be successful in accomplishing my purpose, I will make an effort to have your future home embellished with a seal.

*Klementina (Joyfully surprised).*—A seal? But I did not ask for one.

*Neufeld.*—The present combination of our syndicate might even acquire a title for you.

*Jaroslav (Standing by the window).*—Listen, mother, it might be worth while to think about that.

*Klementina.*—We must first reach the goal we are striving for. (*Rises. NEUFELD does the same.*)

*Neufeld.*—I hope you will have good news for me tomorrow, gracious lady!

*Klementina.*—Nothing would please me better.

(*NEUFELD bows, and makes his exit from the right, JAROSLAV with him. DR. SVOBODA enters from the left.*)

## SCENE II

DR. SVOBODA, KLEMENTINA

*Dr. Svoboda (Greatly excited, holding two papers in his hand).*—I have come to tell you that, that person, (*Pointing after NEUFELD*) had better leave my home.

*Klementina.*—Why?

*Dr. Svoboda.*—Because his presence here is compromising me. He is an agent appointed by the banks interested in the election to buy up the great estates.

*Klementina.*—To me, he is only a bidder for our estate.

*Dr. Svoboda.*—To me, he is a person with whom I cannot do business.

*Klementina.*—Let us drop this subject. I have a more serious matter weighing upon my mind.

*Dr. Svoboda.*—And that is?

*Klementina.*—The betrothal of our daughters. Ludvik,—I mean, Mr. Scheffel, is awaiting his answer today. What will you tell him?

*Dr. Svoboda.*—True. I might give Filipina an annual allowance of some sort, but 50,000 florins I cannot raise now.

*Klementina.*—But Filipina loves Mr. Scheffel!

*Dr. Svoboda.*—How unfortunate!

*Klementina.*—And he would be a very desirable husband!

*Dr. Svoboda (With a laugh).*—A very practical one!

*Klementina.*—To turn him away means that we must blight the happiness and the good fortune of our daughter.

*Dr. Svoboda.*—But we cannot wave a charmed wand and bring the money here.

*Klementina.*—'There is another way to get it.

*Dr. Svoboda.*—What is it?

*Klementina.*—Consider the suggestion of selling your estate.

*Dr. Svoboda.*—That is not necessary. I will undertake the management of the place myself and save it.

*Klementina.*—Your undertakings, as far as merely abstract things are not concerned, vanish in the air like a phantom. Everything comes and goes with you.

*Dr. Svoboda.*—Energy does not need to proclaim itself.

*Klementina.*—But perseverance does. You are not a man of hard practical sense, and you never will be.

*Dr. Svoboda.*—Then find me a buyer who will be a successor to my political principles,—and I will then be induced to sell,—yes, perhaps even a part of my own heart with it.

*Klementina.*—The buyer is here; there is no need of inquiring about his political principles.

*Dr. Svoboda.*—Every honorable man today must do so. The soil of this estate does not belong to me, a private person, alone, but to the sons of this land and their country.

*Klementina.*—You subordinate the sacred duty you owe your family to your duty toward your country? Nationalism is mere fanaticism, a relic of barbarism, the intellectual limitation of a greater or lesser number of people.

*Dr. Svoboda.*—A diversity of nationalism is a characteristic, a national trait of the people. With the exception of sex, and the physiological parts of the body, there is not a more natural division among the people. For that reason, it is justifiable.

*Klementina.*—The people, however, gravitate toward unity, and toward that purpose, diversity of nationalism is an obstacle.

*Dr. Svoboda.*—Unity among the people can be only intellectual, and diversity of nationalism is no obstacle to it.

*Klementina.*—The people are gravitating even toward a universal language.

*Dr. Svoboda.*—That was attempted by the Roman kings, and

later by the Latins. The first attempt was broken by a force of nations, the second by the force of nationalism.

*Klementina.*—But nationalism is not the highest object, the supreme aim, that man aspires to.

*Dr. Svoboda.*—Then what is higher?

*Klementina.*—Humanity.

*Dr. Svoboda.*—Humanism is only one noble part of the human soul. But man is also at various times a barbarian.

*Klementina.*—When?

*Dr. Svoboda.*—When the heart of the individual is neglected, or when in the name of culture or religion, nations are destroyed.

*Klementina.*—You are continually harping on nationality, yet your duty toward your family is more apparent, certainly, than an assumed duty to your country. Everything that concerns your family seems to be of secondary importance.

*Dr. Svoboda.*—Sometimes yes, and sometimes no. There is a turning point which may lead man either to a great action, or to one that is unjust.

*Klementina.*—The right step is the one which is prompted by self-denial, generosity, and duty.

*Dr. Svoboda.*—The right act is the one which, in a conflict between two duties, is prompted by the inner conviction of the individual.

*Klementina.*—That is intellectual sophistry.

*Dr. Svoboda.*—That is the highest law of morality.

*Klementina (Maliciously).*—Then you intend, on account of this highest law, to shake from your conscience your duty to your family?

*Dr. Svoboda (Agitated and with emphasis).*—I shake off only that duty, which my family seems to require of me, of selling myself to a slavish, unclean act, of giving my family the opportunity to profit by their father's baseness.

*Klementina.*—What a speech!

*Dr. Svoboda.*—You have been poisoned by the words of that man! There is contagion and corruption in every footprint he leaves behind him!

*Klementina.*—But with the money he offers you, we might buy another smaller estate, recorded in the registers of the country.

*Dr. Svoboda.*—But when? After election, when the unfriendly party is shouting, "We have conquered!"

*Klementina*.—Neufeld offers 650,000 florins, but what is more, we could secure,—for the children,—even a title!

*Dr. Svoboda*.—What are you saying? Is that phantom still haunting you?

*Klementina*.—A title is not a phantom. By forming a connection with these people, we might be able to acquire one.

*Dr. Svoboda (Searchingly)*.—So? That is surprising . . .  
(*To himself*) The villain! (*Aloud*) Well, then, I would like to learn something more definite.

*Klementina*.—I will call Neufeld. (*Rings. A servant enters.*)  
You surely are the best father and husband on earth!

(*Enter NEUFELD with JAROSLAV.*)

*Dr. Svoboda (To himself)*.—I will get rid of him at one stroke!

### SCENE III

DR. SVOBODA, NEUFELD, KLEMENTINA, JAROSLAV

*Dr. Svoboda*.—Mr. Neufeld, my wife has been telling me something very interesting. It seems that you referred to something,—something about the possible elevation of my family,—to the rank of the nobility.

*Neufeld*.—I am proud to tell you that our syndicate might be able to be of service to you in this respect.

*Dr. Svoboda*.—Then you no longer speak in the name of your honorable mother and respected father.

*Neufeld*.—Both in their name and that of the syndicate.

*Dr. Svoboda (Angrily)*.—An honorable man tells first of all in whose name his business is negotiated.

*Neufeld (Taken by surprise)*.—Is that offensively intended?

*Dr. Svoboda (With sarcasm)*.—For you, nothing is offensive.

*Neufeld*.—I am sincerely offering to you, Respected Doctor, a means of winning favor with your wife and of securing certain advantages that are not to be sneered at, both for your children and yourself.

*Dr. Svoboda (Sharply)*.—He who is inclined to accept anything is equally low as the man who dares to offer anything. From you, Mr. Neufeld, I might consider the matter of buying up a pile of old trash,—but never will I allow my family or myself to acquire a title through the dishonorable sale of my estate to advance the interests of the rabble you represent. (*Rising.*)

*Neufeld (Stiffly)*.—Sir!

*Dr. Svoboda.*—I am your respectful servant! (*Leaves the room.*)

*Klementina.*—Husband! (*Hurries after him.*)

*Jaroslav.*—Oh curses!

## SCENE IV

## NEUFELD, JAROSLAV

*Neufeld.*—That is an insult! I am choking! I must be avenged!

*Jaroslav.*—Compose yourself, my friend. Self-control may bring victory just now, but you will surely defeat your purpose by becoming enraged. You will yet succeed.

*Neufeld.*—I was ready to be of service, now I am prepared to destroy!

*Jaroslav.*—Destroy whom? You certainly want to buy our estate! Success at this juncture may mean to you the acquisition of two other estates, and possibly three! Baron Siegdorf . . .

*Neufeld.*—I am sure of him, in any event. I am going, I must leave this instant!

*Jaroslav.*—To do so now, (*Pointing out of the window*) is impossible. Night and day are merging into one. And besides, I have not cast the last horse-shoe yet.

*Neufeld.*—At least, take me away somewhere, so I can be alone.

*Jaroslav.*—Be good enough to go to your room for a moment. I will follow you there almost immediately.

(*NEUFELD leaves to the right.*)

## SCENE V

JAROSLAV, BROZ, *later* DR. SVOBODA, *then the servant*

*Broz.*—The Honorable Doctor, is he here?

*Jaroslav.*—He must be in his room. And what report do you bring from the hopperies and the fields?

*Broz.*—Terrible!

(*Enter DR. SVOBODA.*)

*Dr. Svoboda* (*Gazing about, then to JAROSLAV*).—Has he gone?

*Jaroslav.*—Yes.

*Broz.*—Doctor!



*Dr. Svoboda.*—You appear to be terribly excited!

*Broz.*—During the night, the flood and whirlwind made fearful ravages in the fields. All the grain that was cut is now ruined! The rest lies flooded on the ground. As for the hops, they are completely destroyed.

*Dr. Svoboda.*—This is awful!

*Broz.*—And still it is steadily raining, and the water keeps on rising. Bastyr came running to the farm manager for men to fortify the flood-gates.

*Dr. Svoboda.*—I shall go to see about them myself.

*Broz.*—Please, wait a while longer. Lewi has arrived. I wrote him day before yesterday.

*Dr. Svoboda (To himself).*—The notes!

*Broz.*—Yes, the notes. (*Talks aside to the doctor.*)

*Jaroslav (Meditating).*—Aron Lewi could cool our papa off a bit! His notes will speak up more forcibly than all our duplicity!

## SCENE VI

LEWI, BROZ, DR. SVOBODA, JAROSLAV

*Lewi (A rich Jew, small, corpulent, in fashionable street attire. He greets the others in a decided Jewish accent).*—Honorable Doctor, I have been requested to come. I hardly cared about the honor in this weather. (*Pointing to the window.*)

*Dr. Svoboda.*—It was kind of you, Mr. Lewi . . . .

*Lewi.*—What do you wish?

*Dr. Svoboda.*—Within three weeks, my notes will be due.

*Lewi.*—Somewhat sooner.

*Dr. Svoboda.*—I will be caught up financially before the summer is over. And I have need of 6000 florins more. What about the loan, Mr. Lewi?

*Lewi.*—I am unable to grant your request.

*Dr. Svoboda (Frightened).*—You refuse to extend the notes?

*Lewi.*—I have no security. The harvest this year is destroyed.

*Dr. Svoboda.*—Then for your security, let me give you a tract of timber.

*Lewi.*—The timber will not answer the purpose since it cannot be felled. (*DR. SVOBODA talks aside to BROZ. LEWI to himself.*) This salon, this castle and estate,—that would not be so bad! (*JAROSLAV enters.*)

*Dr. Svoboda.*—Then I am determined to do that which I have been intending to do only as an extreme measure. I have bank stock in the company “Vulcan” valued at 20,000 florins. I will lose fully half of its value by selling today. Do you wish to offer, Mr. Lewi, 9000 florins for the stock, and meanwhile extend the notes?

*Lewi.*—Such expensive trappings I do not buy. At the best, I am satisfied to take a quarter-meter to the florin.

*Dr. Svoboda (Frightened).*—What are you saying?

*Lewi (Taking a newspaper from his pocket).*—The advertisement of the sale of the Vulcan stock appears in the papers today.

*Dr. Svoboda.*—That is a lie!

*Lewi.*—As you please. Such lies the papers do not publish. In these times, the stockholders are dancing tarantellas so wildly that occasionally a dancer strikes his heels together and falls to the ground. That “Vulcan” happens to be the latest, and tomorrow, the day after, other companies will meet with the same fate.

*Dr. Svoboda (To himself).*—Oh horrors! (*Aloud*) And why do you refuse to grant me even my insignificant request?

*Lewi.*—Because I do not know how the notes will be paid later on. And your bare word . . . (*With a laugh*) even a Jew will not rely upon that today. If your honor has reliable surety of any sort, all may yet be well. If not, I can only express my deep regrets.

*Dr. Svoboda.*—Mr. Broz! (*They walk to the window, standing in a consultation for a few minutes.*)

*Lewi (Looking about the salon).*—If it came to an auction, something might be made on this!

*Jaroslav (Expressing his thoughts).*—This will help. Father will now be compelled to sell. It looks simple; it may go through. (*Quietly to LEWI*) A word with you, Mr. Lewi.

*Lewi (Quietly).*—What is it?

*Jaroslav.*—I can find a buyer for father’s notes.

*Lewi.*—When?

*Jaroslav.*—Yet today.

*Lewi.*—That would be strange indeed. Who would want them? The roadrunner hovers over the snake, but above a Jew?

*Jaroslav.*—Only another Jew.

*Lewi.*—He he!

*Jaroslav.*—But instead of giving me a commission, you will be good enough to loan me 1000 florins.

*Lewi.*—I might say that I will grant that commission to your worthiness, but loan is a better-sounding word.

*Jaroslav.*—Good! But now keep your tongue behind your teeth. You will find me in my room. (*Makes his exit to the right.*)

*Dr. Svoboda (Coming forward).*—Mr. Lewi, at just this moment, I cannot find a guarantor . . . but—

*Lewi.*—Then I must express my deep regrets. New terms I cannot make you, and the notes cannot be prolonged. Command me. (*Walks off to the right.*)

## SCENE VII

DR. SVOBODA, BROZ

*Dr. Svoboda.*—He will not extend the notes! . . . That means their protest, an executioner's sale of my estate . . . (*Looking about him.*) They will come here to attach my property . . . they will bring appraisors with them . . . everything will be sold . . . strange unclean hands will scatter about my most sacred relics, . . . they will display for sale, with pity or scorn, my furnishings, dishes, relics, my clothes,—all, all that I still can call my own! . . . (*Holding his head between his hands*) I cannot bear it . . . that would be unendurable!

*Broz.*—Compose yourself, my dear doctor! That must not happen.

*Dr. Svoboda.*—Must not! No, of course it must not! But where do you see any source of help?

*Broz.*—I will speak once more with Lewi.

*Dr. Svoboda.*—And if he still refuses?

*Broz.*—Then it will be necessary to turn to Prague.

*Dr. Svoboda.*—What can be gained there? My friends in Prague have difficulty enough in raising money to buy up estates only when it seems to be imperative to fortify our position. And to ask them to sign my notes or make a loan,—it would be a fraud! I do not know how I could pay back the debt! (*Sinking into a chair.*) How terribly my improvidence is avenging itself upon me in these days. If I had but thatched my own roof more securely, I could now be standing erect upon my feet, under obligations to no one, a stanch proclaimer of my own convictions. And what am I today?

*Broz.*—Somebody can help you even now.

*Dr. Svoboda.*—Who?

*Broz.*—Mr. Kytka.

*Dr. Svoboda.*—Mr. Kytka . . . but that is uncertain

*Broz.*—Or . . .

*Dr. Svoboda (Anxiously).*—Or?

*Broz.*— . . . Sell the estate to Neufeld.

*Dr. Svoboda (Shortly).*—Even you advise me to do so?

*Broz.*—I do not, but the ciphers do.

*Dr. Svoboda.*—And you can offer no other advice?

*Broz.*—I cannot. Otherwise, I see no way of averting your ruin.

*Dr. Svoboda.*—Inevitable . . . the word sounds like a knell! . . . But do you not believe, my friend, that there may possibly be people who live true to their convictions, and act upon a certain principle, even when they know that by doing so they will plunge themselves into inevitable ruin?

*Broz.*—Possibly so, but such people have no duty to others to consider, and no one to think of but themselves.

*Dr. Svoboda.*—But I also know of others, others who owed a duty to their families, yet did not hesitate to face their doom for the sake of those things which were held sacred by them. I myself saw an example which made me shudder. For all eternity, it became impressed upon my memory. Listen, friend. (*Motions to BROZ to seat himself, at the same time taking a seat beside him.*) Three years ago, I was passing through a little town near Budejovic. In the middle of a narrow lane, I came upon some broken furniture which had been forcibly thrown out from an abandoned house. A woman sat upon a chest with her children, lamenting, sobbing, all of them in tears, while her husband stood helplessly behind her. Unkempt, dishevelled, with bewildered eyes, he was a pathetic figure standing there, with his hands clasped behind his soiled shoemaker's apron. He was a bootmaker by trade. I approached and sympathetically inquired what had happened. "They have thrown us out!" he answered. And why?—"Because I would not deny my mother tongue! In this whole nest, there is not a room they will rent me!"—What are you going to do?—"I will move somewhere else."—Do you know how you will earn a living?—"I do not; but I will not give up my self-respect."

You see, my friend . . . so he spoke, so he acted . . .  
 . . . one of the rabble Want, misery, actual destruction,

looked him straight in the eye, but he would not yield, he would not become a traitor to his own convictions. And he was just a common laborer. And I, a gentleman from birth, a man of culture and education, an example to the entire community and a chosen representative of my people . . . am I to sink lower than that poor unkempt shoemaker, who willingly sacrificed himself with his whole family as martyrs to a sacred idea?

*Broz*—But is it advisable to perish through similar heroism? Might it not be wiser to save yourself, to sacrifice a principle for the moment, than to sacrifice yourself for all eternity?

*Dr. Svoboda*.—There is not now . . . there never has been a great ideal but what has demanded its great sacrifice. Every ideal is like a fairy which walks forth with a shining star above its head to guide its followers, but always at midnight changes itself into a dragon and devours the devotees who happen to be near it.

*Broz*.—Then allow someone else to be the victim for the sacrifice, Honorable Doctor, some one who does not owe so many duties to others.

*Dr. Svoboda*.—Another! Another means nobody! For according to that maxim, each one has the right to say, “Not I . . . let another be the victim for the execution!” Not at all, my dear friends; he whom fate points out must be the sacrifice. He must not only give battle for his convictions, but when necessary, even give up his life for them. In this fight, one is no better than another.

*Broz*.—These are lofty ideals, but they will ruin you, my dear doctor. You might yet be saved, even now, by your daughter Anezka,—

*Dr. Svoboda*.—Yes, if she were but in love with Mr. Kytka . . . if she were willing to consent to a union with him!

*Broz*.—Yes.

*Dr. Svoboda*.—But dare I urge her to accept a husband that might be distasteful to her?

*Broz*.—Certainly, such cases are not at all unusual! Thousands of families have been obliged to do so, to preserve themselves in the face of destruction . . . there is no dishonor in it!

*Dr. Svoboda*.—And does there not exist, Mr. Broz, in the hearts and minds of some people, something which rises and becomes enraged at the idea . . . this barter of one’s own flesh and blood?

*Broz.*—I am a practical man, and through experience have arrived at the conclusion that excessively delicate scruples may destroy one not only materially but even spiritually.

*Dr. Svoboda (Ironically).*—Then blessed be he who has no scruples. But be at rest, Mr. Broz. You may find a following of plenty of such, both among men and among women.

(*PROKOP enters. BROZ bows, taking his leave.*)

## SCENE VIII

PROKOP, DR. SVOBODA, *later the servant*

*Prokop.*—Honorable Doctor!

*Dr. Svoboda.*—My friend! How did you fare on the way? You do not appear to be happy!

*Prokop.*—Blow upon blow! I received the report yesterday from Prague to the effect that the corruption among the large free-holders is amazing. Within the last three days, fully twenty changes have been made in the titles to the large estates. Formerly, it appeared as though our victory was certain. Now it depends upon every individual vote.

*Dr. Svoboda (Thoughtfully repeats).*—Upon every individual vote!

*Prokop.*—And today, Baron Rozkosny announced that he also has sold his estate to the rabble!

*Dr. Svoboda.*—Terrible! And he did it from mere rapacity!

*Prokop.*—Baron Siegdorf will do the same.

*Dr. Svoboda.*—That is also possible.

*Prokop.*—A committee of citizens called upon Rozkos to urge him to be loyal. But all in vain.

*Dr. Svoboda.*—They called upon me also.

*Prokop.*—I have almost become effeminate through my contact with Baron Rozkos. And Zahradka seemed undecided. But from him and Soukup, we finally won the promise that they would stay with us. So we are at ease about them.

*Dr. Svoboda.*—As for myself . . . then you have implicit faith in me?

*Prokop.*—Doctor—such a joke!

*Dr. Svoboda.*—Yes, it would be a terrible joke . . . But, my friend, what would you advise me to do were I to tell you that my loyalty to my political principles may sacrifice my entire family?

*Prokop.*—My friend, I hope that such a supposition as an

actuality is impossible. But even in that case, you are not in need of my advice.

*Dr. Svoboda.*—Why?

*Prokop.*—Because I feel assured that every step you take will be guided by one leading star . . .

*Dr. Svoboda.*—And that is?

*Prokop.*—Your conviction.

*Dr. Svoboda.*—And if by my conviction, I should spoil the wedding of my daughter?

*Prokop.*—The wedding of your daughter? If the husband you have chosen for your daughter is honorable and worthy of your confidence, surely he would not retract because you cannot give the lady her dowry?

*Dr. Svoboda.*—And do you think there still are people in the world so noble?

*Prokop (With emphasis).*—There are.

*Dr. Svoboda.*—In your words, there is still a spark of idealism. It is possibly the last I shall ever hear. (*Enter the servant.*)

*Servant.*—My lady with Baron Siegdorf.

*Prokop.*—Siegdorf?

*Dr. Svoboda.*—If you will be so good, my Jiri, go to my children for a few minutes.

(*PROKOP leaves to the left. From the right comes BARON SIEGDORF with KLEMENTINA. The SERVANT leaves.*)

## SCENE IX

KLEMENTINA, SIEGDORF, DR. SVOBODA

*Siegdorf.*—Doctor! (*Runs to the doctor with outstretched hands.*)

*Dr. Svoboda.*—I have the honor, Baron?

*Siegdorf.*—Are you not thinking, kind neighbor, that I have come back again to borrow money?

*Dr. Svoboda (With a Laugh).*—Not at all! Not at all!

*Siegdorf.*—That pleases me greatly! For . . . listen, doctor—I have already told your gracious lady—I have blossomed out of my difficulties—and how?

*Dr. Svoboda.*—What is this? Did you inherit something, then?

*Siegdorf.*—Not at all. My good aunt has not as yet been kind enough to die. But in spite of that, I now have in my pocket 160,000—clear money . . . mine . . .

*Dr. Svoboda (Suspiciously).*—You have—

*Siegdorf.*—Sold my estate.

*Dr. Svoboda (Angrily).*—To whom?

*Siegdorf.*—To a bank in Vienna, or (*With a laugh*), as it is called, the bank of the rabble.

*Dr. Svoboda (Quickly).*—You, Baron?

*Siegdorf.*—Yes, that was a clever play. And how was it managed? Do you know that I played one side against the other until they both began to grow excited? There was some concern shown, believe me!

*Dr. Svoboda.*—You then, Baron, do not expect to vote with us in the coming election?

*Klementia.*—Not at all. The Baron found a convenient moment to look after his own interests. He saved himself by selling his estate.

*Siegdorf.*—And how! And how! Just let me tell you! You must, my highly esteemed friend, do exactly the same!

*Klementina.*—Pray be seated. (*All seat themselves.*)

*Siegdorf.*—Then that agent came around to see me . . . the same one that called to pay his respects to you . . .

*Klementina.*—Neufeld.

*Siegdorf.*—Yes, Neufeld. He bid for the estate. Offered 300,000. I, without any delay, sent a telegram to our party in Prague to ask for 350,000 florins. They answer they will pay it. I showed that telegram to Neufeld who said he would add 50,000. I once more sent a wire to Prague. They replied that they could go no higher than 360,000 florins. And here, my honorable neighbor, is where I performed my cleverest trick! I changed the figure three to a four, gave it to Neufeld to read, and he offered me 460,000 florins! Ha ha ha! Wasn't that fine?

*Dr. Svoboda (Angrily).*—But Baron, that is not a joke—that is . . .

*Siegdorf (Seriously).*—No, indeed. I am serious. After all my debts were paid, I had some 160,000 florins left which I fell into by a clever manœuvre!

*Dr. Svoboda.*—And what about our party, which depended upon you?

*Siegdorf.*—Let it look for new members elsewhere! They won't mourn over the loss of my vote . . . or my presence either. I would have been a pauper in a short time. Now I can live respectably again.

*Dr. Svoboda (Aside).*—That is amazing.



*Siegdorf.*—Yes, Doctor, and you cannot act more wisely than I. In fact, you would receive even a larger offer, as your estate is worth twice as much as mine was. Sell it, sell it!

*Dr. Svoboda.*—Thank you, Baron, for your advice, but my estate is not for sale today.

*Siegdorf.*—Ah, that is a pity! You are throwing money away! After election, nobody will want to buy an estate! But where is my friend, Jaroslav? I must tell him the news. Today we will both be merry. He will take colossal delight in my idea!

*Dr. Svoboda.*—I pray you . . .

(*KLEMENTINA bows. SIEGDORF bows to both and walks away.*)

## SCENE X

KLEMENTINA, DR. SVOBODA.

*Klementina.*—Baron Siegdorf is an example . . . you may profit by doing likewise.

*Dr. Svoboda (Dryly).*—I see in him as plainly as though I were gazing into a mirror, all the infamy I should have fallen into had I done the same.

*Klementina.*—You are closing your eyes to the fate of your wife and your children. You would, then, abandon us to our fate with the certain knowledge that destruction awaits us all?

*Dr. Svoboda.*—Klementina!

*Klementina.*—Yes, that will be the inevitable result of your decision. Then what answer can you give to Scheffel? He is waiting for it today. Kytka also wants your reply. If you are thinking of your children, tell them what you have in view for their future.

(*Walks off toward the left.*)

## SCENE XI

DR. SVOBODA

*Dr. Svoboda.*—My children! Their whole future, in which I took as keen a pleasure and delight as I might take in my own second youth! To save them means the betrayal of my convictions, to be loyal to myself means their ruin! Only Anezka is able to help us now—only she, and she alone! And if she will not help, (*despairingly*) what then, what then?

(*Enter KLEMENTINA with ANEZKA and FILIPINA.*)

## SCENE XII

KLEMENTINA, ANEZKA, FILIPINA, DR. SVOBODA, *later* JAROSLAV.

*Dr. Svoboda (Rising).*—My children . . . (*Sinking into a chair.*)

*Anezka (Hurries to him).*—You are agitated, father dear! Something has happened!

*Dr. Svoboda.*—Be composed. Nothing is the matter with me. Seat yourselves. (*The ladies are seated; JAROSLAV remains standing at one side, carelessly indifferent.*) Heavy times are gathering you around me, and drawing the family circle together. Our entire future depends upon the present. And so, my children, listen to all I say to you most carefully, weigh it with deliberation, and then, each of you, (*turning to his daughters,*) answer as your own hearts, your own convictions, or the voice of conscience dictates.

*Filipina (Turning to her mother).*—Mamma!

*Dr. Svoboda.*—What my life has brought to me, I have dedicated to you, (*addressing the group*) from the fervent love of my heart, to the property which, years ago, I accumulated. Today, I love you, if possible, more than ever before. My whole existence and being is so completely wrapped up in you that I truly think life would be impossible without you. But our property is lost, destroyed!

*Filipina.*—Good Heavens!

*Dr. Svoboda.*—Half of our estate is gone, the remainder is threatened, and unless some extraordinary help is found, and found within a few days, all will be lost. I could help myself and thereby save you, but to do so, I would be driven to a disgraceful act.

*Klementina, Jaroslav.*—Not at all!

*Dr. Svoboda.*—Yes, disgraceful . . .

*Anezka.*—Then father, you cannot follow such a course . . .

*Dr. Svoboda.*— . . .for the betrayal of one's convictions and one's nation is always disgraceful. And so now there is left us but one honorable source of help, and that depends, my Anezka, upon you.

*Anezka.*—Upon me? And how?

*Dr. Svoboda.*—Mr. Kytka has asked for your hand.

*Anezka.*—And I . . . and I should then be obliged to marry Mr. Kytka?

*Dr. Svoboda.*—Yes.

*Anezka.*—That is impossible!

*Dr. Svoboda.*—Impossible! Anezka, listen calmly, then make your decision!

*Anezka.*—I am fully decided.

*Dr. Svoboda.*—Upon your decision, depends your entire future, with material comfort, peace and good fortune, or else your necessary resignation to a life of penury and misfortune. The future happiness of your sister hinges upon it, of your mother, and lastly, of your brother, who has never understood the meaning of the word, *Work!*

*Jaroslav.*—And now you would expect it of me!

*Anezka.*—And how is it, father, that you have not thought of yourself?

*Dr. Svoboda.*—My future must be devoted to my practice. I am a physician, and should I lose everything, I will strive to earn my own bread and yours, if necessary, by the practice of medicine.

*Klementina.*—What crazy idea is this? For twenty years, you have neglected your practice, except for your occasional amateurish attempts! Now, at your advanced age, do not expect to have any professional summons!

*Anezka.*—What then, am I to do?

*Dr. Svoboda.*—If you could decide to marry Mr. Kytka . . .

*Anezka (Rising).*—Father . . . ask of me anything else—work, poverty, even my life . . . for my mother, my sister and my brother, but Mr. Kytka, happen what may, I cannot and will not marry!

*Klementina.*—Agnes!

*Filipina.*—Anezka!

*Jaroslav.*—And this we could anticipate!

*Klementina (Terribly aroused).*—Agnes, you do not wish to profit by the advantages of this union . . . and do you, then, want to meet the misery and poverty into which we all must fall if you and your father persist in your defiance?

*Anezka.*—I do not wish to, I cannot marry him!

*Klementina.*—And why, pray?

*Anezka.*—First, because Mr. Kytka is personally repulsive to me, secondly because he is a man without a soul, without a spark of warmth—and because I can never, never become his wife . . . (*Sinks weeping into a chair and covers her face with her hands.*)

*Klementina.*—Personal inclination must be subordinated to duty and it is your duty, Agnes—that much is evident.

*Anezka.*—No one has the right to coerce me in such a step. It is also a debatable question, mother, whether or not it is my duty!

*Klementina.*—You are our daughter!

*Anezka.*—But no daughter is compelled to marry to further the interests of her parents!

*Klementina.*—Agnes!

*Anezka.*—Forgive me, mother, and you, father . . . don't you understand? I cannot do otherwise!

*Klementina (To DR. SVOBODA).*—Now you see her as she really is, your beloved pet! Your kind and simple Anezka!

*Anezka.*—Mother!

*Dr. Svoboda (To KLEMENTINA).*—Stop! (*To ANEZKA.*) And you, Agnes, compose yourself. You are my own flesh and blood. Were I in your place, I could not do otherwise. Nevertheless, I ask you, my dear child, on account of your entire future existence, on account of the poverty which perhaps awaits you—having you considered and weighed everything?

*Anezka.*—Everything.

*Klementina.*—You love some one else.

*Anezka.*—Yes.

(*All look at each other.*)

*Klementina.*—And that is?

*Anezka.*—Jiri Prokop.

*All together.*—Prokop!

*Anezka (With deep agitation).*—He is my one and only true love! Him I can marry and none other!

*Dr. Svoboda (Rising).*—My child, the Lord be with you. (*Kisses her on the forehead.*) I ask nothing more of you.

(*ANEZKA looks at her father, then walks slowly away, her eyes fixed upon the ground.*)

### SCENE XIII

DR. SVOBODA, KLEMENTINA, FILIPINA, JAROSLAV, *later the*  
SERVANT.

*Klementina (To DR. SVOBODA).*—Then the last hope we entertained, aside from yourself, is lost. What now? Will you have the courage to spoil the happiness of your other daughter?

(*Pointing to FILIPINA*). Are you going to allow Jaroslav to meet his evil fate? Will you permit Anezka to marry without a dowry, a poor man and struggling journalist? And will you, then, forget to have compassion even for me? From my very infancy, I have been accustomed to luxury, raised in it, and now my children are accustomed to it the same as I. Neither I, neither they, have the fortitude to endure misery and want. Will you allow the executioner to come here, within a few weeks, to drive us from our home like beggars, the butt of ridicule, laughed at by the rabble?

*Dr. Svoboda*.—Heaven help you and me also. I must keep the sanity of my mind. I cannot sell myself to an unprincipled act, therefore it is impossible for me to secure the dowry for Filipina.

*Klementina*.—Then you will compel her to lose the hand of Mr. Scheffel, and . . . drive her to despair!

*Filipina* (*Embracing her father fervently*).—Father! You surely do not wish to make me unhappy the rest of my life! You are so fond of us all . . . and I have never disobeyed you in anything! I am your dutiful daughter, I respect you for your nobility of purpose! But I am deeply in love with Mr. Scheffel . . . I could be so happy with him! Help me win the husband of my choice! With the dowry you would give him, he could make my happiness secure, and he may yet become a prop to mother and yourself! Do not drive me away to ceaseless regret and remorse! It would finally end in despair!

*Dr. Svoboda*.—Child! . . . Filipina! Give me a moment . . . let me have a moment's calm, a breath . . .

*Filipina*.—And will you promise, then, papa, to make my marriage possible? Will you bear in mind the happiness of your Filipina?

*Dr. Svoboda*.—I cannot promise . . . I dare not, lest I break my word to you!

*Filipina*.—My happiness! Gone! (*Walks weakly to the rear, and falls into a chair.*)

*Klementina* (*To DR. SVOBODA*).—Look about you, and open your eyes to the misery which you are summoning forth everywhere like a lunatic! Do you wish to destroy us all—me, the children, yourself—are you, then, going to be our executioner?

*Dr. Svoboda*.—I wish to remain a self-respecting man who does not betray his honor, his convictions, his principles . . .

*Jaroslav*.—What madness is this!

*Klementina (In desperation).*—That which is destroying my family is not honorable, but terrifying, awful!

*Dr. Svoboda.*—Stop! You are now treading upon sacred ground, not only the sacred ground upon which I stand, but the entire nation!

*Klementina (With the deepest agitation).*—What do I care about your nation, your people, when my children are to be sacrificed for the sake of a mere abstraction, an idea! This is sheer madness!

*Dr. Svoboda.*—Call it whatever you will. But I cannot deal a foul blow at my nation . . . and I will not allow my name to be spat upon!

*(The servant enters with messages.)*

*Servant.*—I pray you, forgive the intrusion. Special messages have arrived.

*(DR. SVOBODA signs, opens the messages, and reads with growing amazement.)*

*Jaroslav.*—Ah! The message from Prague! *(Servant leaves.)*

#### SCENE XIV

*The Same without the SERVANT.*

*Dr. Svoboda (With growing excitement and agitation).*—What is happening? *(Reads.)* “We find it impossible to tell you, dear friend, how painfully your decision is operating against us.” What is this? “Upon you we were building a fortress of faith, but your telegram announces a fearful reality.” Which telegram? What is it all about? What does it mean? “To dispose of your estate in the most critical moment, and to offer it to us at such a price, to desire to profit in such manner at the expense of our hardship . . . .”—For Heaven’s sake!

*Klementina.*—What is happening?

*Jaroslav (To himself).*—Aha! They are rejecting!

*Dr. Svoboda (Reading).*—“We each of us contributed large sums of money from our estates, and we have no robbers’ bank to draw upon, from which we might meet the prices, which on all sides, the most shameless corruption is demanding. No one suspected how many there are of these titled gentlemen who are pressing their estates upon us for sale. And behold, now comes even Dr. Svoboda, that patriot of patriots, taken at his word, who asks us to pay for his estate fully 150,000 florins above its worth. This is shameless, terrible!”—Yes, this is terrible!

*Jaroslav.*—This is going to be a bitter moment.

*Klementina.*—But what has happened?

*Dr. Svoboda (Reading on).*—“But there remains nothing more to be said except that your grievous speculation is all in vain. Your estate we cannot buy, because we are obliged to use our rapidly diminishing funds to purchase the small estates. Carry out that deed then, with which you now threaten us; settle with your conscience; sell your estate to the opposing party: we cannot prevent you from so doing—and be prepared to find your name, (*that of our greatest patriot*) drowned in the mire and eternally befouled by this deed!”

(*Cries out*) Oh scoundrel, scoundrel! Who has done this? Who has robbed me of my honor and my good name!

(*Looks at JAROSLAV who turns away.*) Jaroslav! It could only be you . . . or your mother . . . or was it Broz . . . who was it? Who did it?

*Jaroslav (Stepping out boldly).*—Father, I am that resolute person.

*Klementina, Filipina.*—Jaroslav!

*Dr. Svoboda.*—You! You! Out of my sight, (*pointing to the door*) before I cast you out!

*Jaroslav (Calmly).*—Not at all. For I transacted the matter in a perfectly honorable manner as I wished to see the estate held in the hands of our party. You are a Cech, my mother is partly German, and I am only a man. You are going straightway over the abyss with your crazy phantom; do not expect my mother and me to follow you there. The estate must be sold. And if that glorious nobility in Prague would not purchase it, that inglorious bank in Vienna will!

*Dr. Svoboda.*—It shall not! Even though I knew beyond a doubt that a year from today I would be a pauper!

*Jaroslav.*—Would you rather lose all that we have? You must sell the estate to Neufeld!

*Dr. Svoboda.*—You say I must?

*Jaroslav.*—Yes. According to my will and command. I am your first and only son. I have the right to demand of you a livelihood—as I also find it my duty to save your family.

*Dr. Svoboda.*—Will you hold your tongue!

*Jaroslav.*—What am I today? Nobody! Nothing!

*Dr. Svoboda.*—Whose fault is it but your own? Why did you always find all useful work so tiresome?

*Jaroslav.*—Because you brought me up to believe that we had an abundance of money!

*Dr. Svoboda.*—Then try something now!

*Jaroslav.*—It is too late. At my age, a position of responsibility does not present itself to me.

*Dr. Svoboda.*—People who are afraid of work find every age the wrong one in which to begin. And the natural consequence of it results in such baseness as the sending of that telegram to Prague! Who can clear me of suspicion! Who will have faith in me now! Upon me, the infamy will fall, and if I try to ward it off, the supposition will at once arise, that like a coward I am trying to save myself from the consequences of the deed when I failed to accomplish my design! Oh you scoundrel!

*Jaroslav.*—Why waste such useless phrases!

*Dr. Svoboda.*—Truly, why waste phrases. For your perfidy and baseness deserve a different sort of answer.

*Jaroslav.*—Then you still gaze with indifference upon the precipice which is threatening to engulf us all for the sake of your crazy whim?

*Dr. Svoboda.*—I am gazing with alarm upon that chasm of moral depravity and shame which is fast engulfing my son!

*Jaroslav.*—Come, mother! We are in the way here. Before he will relent, our ruin must stare him in the eyes!

(JAROSLAV walks away with his mother and FILIPINA.)

## SCENE XV

DR. SVOBODA.

*Dr. Svoboda (Sinks into a chair weakly, looking faint).*—Such shame! Such disgrace! Shall I be able to bear this avalanche without being crushed . . . this avalanche coming down upon me from all sides . . . and will not all my efforts and my sacrifice in the end be made in vain? . . . (*Talking to himself in evident indecision.*) And who can assure me, after all, that I am absolutely in the right by taking this stand against all the interests of myself, my family? And must I finally take upon myself, through my loyalty in this affair, some horrible blame which as yet I cannot foresee? Oh that someone would lift from me this awful crushing load, and make the sacrifice a lighter one! (*ANEZKA enters.*)



## SCENE XVI

ANEZKA, DR. SVOBODA.

*Anezka.*—Father, my dear father, I have so grievously hurt you!

*Dr. Svoboda.*—You followed the prompting of truth, of your deepest innermost convictions! You have been true to my teachings. Only, will you not be disappointed now, in Prokop?

*Anezka.*—I will not! I know he will not disappoint me!

*Dr. Svoboda.*—Be it as it may—I must tell Prokop everything. (*With a sigh.*) I wish with all my heart that your sun may soon rise upon a happier day for you while mine is going down.

*Anezka.*—Father!

*Dr. Svoboda.*—And now take your stand by me, my child, and never permit this clear brow of yours to become clouded by shame! Neither must you give way to those who will try to overcome your every objection to gain their desires for their own advantage. (*Enter BROZ.*)

## SCENE XVII

BROZ, DR. SVOBODA, ANEZKA

*Broz (Deeply agitated).*—Doctor! (*Sees ANEZKA.*) I beg you, excuse this intrusion . . .

*Dr. Svoboda.*—What has happened?

*Broz.*—The manager sends the report by a special courier that the flood gates at the brook are torn down! The water is rushing into the fields and destroying the last of the harvest!

(*ANEZKA rises to leave in deep agitation.*)

*Dr. Svoboda (In desperation).*—Well, then, let it carry away everything, and first of all, my own wretched life! (*Enter KLEMENTINA.*) I am now prepared for any misfortune. Have my horse saddled. I will start immediately.

(*BROZ makes his exit to the right.*)

## SCENE XVIII

KLEMENTINA, DR. SVOBODA

*Klementina (Seriously).*—You have heard of the flood?

*Dr. Svoboda.*—Yes.

*Klementina.*—And you are still composed?

*Dr. Svoboda.*—As composed as a man overwhelmed by a train of misfortunes can be.

*Klementina*.—Cast aside this false mask of composure! At last wake up, and look around you! This last disaster comes knocking at our door like the blow of the last nail into a coffin.

*Dr. Svoboda*.—I will exert every effort, use every remaining resource, to save the estate. If that is utterly impossible, then I will sell it as soon as the election is over!

*Klementina*.—An estate laid waste . . . who will buy it after the election, even for the amount of its debts? The executioner's annuity may surprise us at any moment, and the notes held by Lewi may ruin us even sooner! (*Fervently.*) My relative, my husband listen! (*Takes him by the hand.*) Do not set up strange and far-off interests in opposition to your closest ones, in opposition to the salvation of your wife and family! See, by your defiance I am no longer enraged, only crushed and overwhelmed. I do not threaten nor even complain. I only beg you to have mercy on us, and humbly entreat you not to abandon us to this pitiless doom. I am your wife, the mother of your children. And I moreover take myself to task because I now realize that my wastefulness, my lack of consideration, have hastened the doom which is about to overtake us all. But I will be more conscientious—in the future you will find me different striving to make amends for my remissness in the past. Just take mercy upon us this one time, sell the estate to save us . . . spare me the humiliation of begging from my relatives a piece of bread and a roof to shelter my head—or perhaps the misery of dying in the streets, a veritable beggar!

*Dr. Svoboda (In desperation)*.—Klementina, forgive me, forgive! Your tears and lamentations almost deprive me of my very reason! But I cannot act otherwise!

*Klementina (Turning on him at his last words in deep agitation)*.—Then we are all lost. I did not realize that the destruction of your entire family would be so easy for you. You are a monster, not a man—a monster without a heart or soul!

(*Enter JAROSLAV and NEUFELD.*)

## SCENE XIX

JAROSLAV, NEUFELD and the others.

*Dr. Svoboda*.—Neufeld! You scoundrel! What insolence is this. Out, out with you!

*Jaroslav (Suppressing his inward rage)*.—Compose yourself, father. If there is no spot within you that is vulnerable to the

distress of my mother and the poverty closing in upon us all, then you should be aware, at least, of the fate that is awaiting us within the next few days.

*Dr. Svoboda (To Neufeld).*—Away from here, away!

*Neufeld.*—I am going. But first, look at these. (*Extends his hand with the notes.*)

*Dr. Svoboda.*—Those are the notes!

*Neufeld.*—These are your notes, Venerable Doctor, which I purchased from Lewi. The election will occur in a month's time, but these notes are due in somewhat less than three weeks. Sell me the estate, and I will let you have the notes at a marketable rate in the bargain.

*Dr. Svoboda.*—I will not sell.

*Neufeld.*—If you refuse, you will be ruined even before the election.

*Dr. Svoboda.*—But you cannot prevent me from casting my vote.

*Neufeld.*—I cannot, but I will pave that road for you in such a manner that you will have reason to remember it for a long time to come. I will spoil your credit, so you will find it to be impossible to pay your notes, and I will have them protested on the very day they fall due. I will seize everything movable in both this castle and in court, then demand an executioner's sale of this entire estate, and on the day you cast your election vote, you will take your seat there with the knowledge that you are a beggar, with the knowledge that you have brought ruin upon your entire family.

*Dr. Svoboda.*—And if I knew I were to sell my very life for it, I will not part now with this estate! Away from here, you scoundrel, (*stepping toward him*) away from this castle, or I will have you thrust out . . . or kill you!

*Klementina.*—Ludvik!

*Neufeld.*—I am going. But in less than a month's time, you also will leave. And when you leave, it will be with the knowledge that the return road is forever barred! (*Walks out.*)

*Klementina.*—Jaroslav . . . hold him!

(*JAROSLAV follows NEUFELD.*)

## SCENE XX

KLEMENTINA, DR. SVOBODA.

*Klementina.*—Ludvik, this is my last opportunity to warn

you! Save yourself, save us, save the children! You will be their destroyer unless you do as I beg you—and me you will drive away from you.

*Dr. Svoboda (In amazement).*—It is incredible . . . you mean that you would leave me?

*Klementina.*—I would. Otherwise, I would be driven to madness over your folly. I could never endure the sight of the vultures which would soon be clawing at our most sacred possessions.

*Dr. Svoboda (Shortly, with terrible suppressed anger).*—I, the destroyer of my children—I, a madman before whom his own flesh and blood must flee? A madman? Have my actions ascribed to madness if you will, proclaim me a lunatic bereft of all reason! But that lunatic, thief, and destroyer of his hearth, will not consent to have his name, the name of his fathers, stained by an act of dishonor! He will not betray his own convictions! Though his own lost roof were to sink in on his head, he will remain true to his people, the Czechish blood from which he sprang forth!

### ACT III

*The same room, with dismantled walls, and the executioner's sale in progress. A lounge is in the center of the room. Clothes, pictures, various articles are strewn upon it. About the room are scattered dishes, books, mirrors, relics, revolvers; the draperies and curtains torn down.*

#### SCENE I

*At the table sits CIZEK, taking an inventory of the goods which DUB and PROCHAZKA are looking over.*

*Dub (Examining a Persian rug, which he casts aside).*—What is this rag worth? It might yet be used to wipe one's boots on. Put down, Mr. Cizek, two florins.

*Prochazka.*—Isn't that too much?

*Dub.*—Then make it one and fifty.

*Cizek.*—One and fifty.

*Dub (Picking up some clothing).*—This rag you might put down for about five florins.

*Prochazka.*—What an idea! Three is more than enough!

*Dub.*—Then make it three. Those pictures—write down—there are five of them—let them go at two apiece.

*Prochazka.*—Who would buy them? They will doubtless go to the junk pile.

*Dub.*—Those books must be weighed and sold for old paper. And that porcelain . . .

*Cizek.*—How many pieces?

*Dub.*—Two trays and something with them . . . they might be set down for twenty.

*Prochazka.*—Well, they are worth something!

*Cizek.*—What about these satin curtains?

*Prochazka.*—The devil! But they are fine! (*Digging around among them.*) What material! My girl could have a waist made of that—and there would still be a nice piece left. If by any chance, nobody were looking, and something could disappear, this is just what I would want. At least half of it—it might be cut in two!

*Dub.*—And I would choose something else. That clock in the corner, perhaps. What about you, Mr. Cizek?

*Cizek.*—I would rather have some silver.

*Dub.*—Oh the dickens, The notary was very careful about all the gold and silver. He had an inventory made in his own presence. Not a handle must be missing from anything. But some old trinket or other . . . who would know the difference?

*Cizek.*—And when will the notary return from town?

*Dub.*—Most likely in the evening.

*Cizek.*—In the evening—and we are slaving away as though he were sitting here watching us now.

*Prochazka.*—On my faith, you are right! (*Throws aside a picture which he held in his hand.*)

*Dub.*—I am almost faint from it all. (*Stretches out his arms, yawning.*)

*Cizek.*—Mr. Prochazka, call that lackey—tell him to bring us something.

*Prochazka.*—That's right! (*Opens the door, calling.*) Hey lackey! (*Closes the door again.*) Yes, that lackey, you can wait for him! It seems just like the day after a funeral. We had better jump up, Mr. Cizek, and go after him ourselves. Let him bring a bottle of Bordeaux, and perhaps a deer roast with it.

*Dub.*—Go away with your venison! We have already had some today.

*Prochazka.*—Then what will you have?

*Dub.*—Let it be two bottles of beer. I am always thirsty after drinking Bordeaux. (*CIZEK goes away.*)

## SCENE II

PROCHAZKA, DUB, *later the* SERVANT and CIZEK

*Prochazka.*—I was going to say . . . it seems to me that we are hurrying this appraisal along. We are here only five days, and almost everything has been appraised. In a week, we will be through.

*Dub.*—You are right . . . we must drag it out a little longer.

*Prochazka.*—Yes, it ought to take at least three weeks. Why this is a castle . . . such luck as this doesn't fall to one more than once or twice in a lifetime.

*Dub.*—But that notary there, (*pointing to his place*), better give him a hint, so he would not waste breath talking unnecessarily.

*Prochazka.*—Don't worry—I have thought of him. (*SERVANT enters, bringing food in a basket. CIZEK, who came in at the same time, begins to clear the table, bringing out glasses and plates.*)

*Dub.*—Only one bottle of Bordeaux—that is not enough. (*To the SERVANT.*) You must bring another.

*Servant.*—It is about time that I also was enjoying life and getting some profit from my service. I won't be turning around here much longer. (*Leaves.*)

*Prochazka.*—No need of knives and forks. I have my own pocket knife. It will do very well. (*Cuts a piece of bread and meat, taking them in his fingers, then lies on the sofa, with his feet in the air as he eats. The others sit at the table, eating, drinking, and occasionally filling a glass for PROCHAZKA.*)

## SCENE III

PROCHAZKA, DUB, CIZEK, *later the* SERVANT.

*Dub.*—I cannot understand how these people went down so rapidly. Plenty of everything—and in a few years through with it all.

*Prochazka.*—Yes, it makes me laugh. A fine example we have here of extravagance and mismanagement. A sharp person

would have saved himself. Look at that Baron Siegdorf! He is a clever fellow! He won out! But this doctor here! These educated people are seldom as keen as they should be.

*Dub.*—That is true. It is his own fault.

*Prochazka.*—Expenses on every hand, nonsense of all sorts and this is the way it ended.

*Dub.*—He built a new school for the people in the village. And he used to waste his time running off to Prague and Vienna as a representative of the people.

*Dub.*—And that family—they certainly made a show!  
(*Enter SERVANT.*)

*Prochazka.*—And now they are off at one side in two rooms, (*pointing to the left*), and nobody sees or hears anything of them.

*Dub.*—The old lady and the children leave tomorrow, so we hear. Is it true, Mr. Johanes?

*Servant* (*Who has also seated himself at the table*).—Even to-day it seems. Nana was saying to me that they are packing their few belongings now.

*Dub.*—I wonder when the old doctor will return. He will see some strange sights when he gets back.

*Prochazka.*—The fool! He is reaping just as he sowed. That bank in Vienna was offering him more than the value of his estate—he might have grabbed with all ten fingers. But even with that doctor's title, he is still a stupid man. He would not take the offer.

*Dub.*—I believe he is not quite right here, (*pointing to his forehead*.) A sane man would have acted differently.

*Servant* (*Mysteriously*).—If I only dared to talk!

*Prochazka, Dub, Cizek.*—What is it? What did you say?

*Servant.*—Nothing except that his five senses are not all there, as they should be. The old lady told him so before he went away. Gentlemen, that was a scene! One could hear them over the whole corridor!

*Dub.*—What did she say to him?

*Servant.*—She told him plainly that he was crazy . . . that she would have him put in the asylum at Prague!

*Dub.*—He went to Prague on account of the election—is it not true?

*Servant.*—Exactly. He wanted to vote, to be a representative, that is why he would not sell out.

*Dub.*—And how did the election go?

*Servant.*—It is all in the papers. The other side won.

*Prochazka.*—The idiot! There he is now! That is what he gets for not taking advice!

*Cizek.*—And now there will be peace. I have always said: the state should be superior to everything, and these fights should not occur. But why should we care? Legislators and ministers, more show and display! That is all there is to it!

*Prochazka.*—That is right!

(DR. SVOBODA enters unnoticed.)

## SCENE IV

DR. SVOBODA, *the others.*

*Dr. Svoboda (To himself).*—The vultures have already alighted on the corpse.

*Dub.*—And what about the estate?

*Servant.*—It will be sold at auction. There won't be enough left to pay off the debts.

*Dub.*—And where will these people go?

*Servant.*—The old lady has a brother in Vienna. She will go to him.

*Dr. Svoboda (To himself).*—Good Heavens!

*Dub.*—And the old man?

*Servant.*—He may go where he likes . . . nobody cares about him.

*Dr. Svoboda (Stepping to the front).*—You scoundrel!

*Servant (Jumps up with the others).*—Good Lord! The master!

*Dr. Svoboda (To the Servant).*—Away! Away! (SERVANT hurries off. To the others.) And you may leave this room at once!

*Prochazka (Fearlessly).*—We were appointed by the court, so whom are we to deal with?

*Dr. Svoboda.*—I am the master of this house!

*Prochazka.*—That is—as the Honorable Doctor,—you once were the master of this house. But the place has since been in the hands of the executioner, so who has the right to command us now?

*Dub (Dryly).*—No one . . . do you understand?

*Dr. Svoboda (Taking a step forward, then controlling himself).*—No one! Then I can give no further orders in my home!

*Cizek.*—We have come from the court, (*insolently*) and if any one dares to touch us . . . that is what the court is for.



*Prochazka.*—These, (*pointing to the furnishings*) we had the servants bring these things in here, so the family would be left in peace for a few days, and so they might be spared the pain of seeing what is going on.

(*DR. SVOBODA bows his head with pain.*)

*Dub (To the others).*—Let us go away. We will say he drove us out. Then the appraisalment will hold out longer.

*Prochazka.*—Your grace may command us. We will return in the morning.

*Cizek (Aside to PROCHAZKA).*—I will tell Neufeld that the doctor is here. (*They leave.*)

#### SCENE V

#### DR. SVOBODA

*Dr. Svoboda (Holding his head between his hands, rocking back and forth.)* This was once my home—this was once my property—a ruin upon the wreck of my life. You will-o'-the-wisp, you dream, where have you led me? Those longings that soared so high, what murderous cliffs you have dashed my frail craft against, shattering it to pieces. Now the rabble is grovelling among my possessions, slime and mire coat my most cherished mementoes, and the worms will soon be crawling through the remains of the corpse. (*Taking various objects in his hands.*) Pictures of my parents, souvenirs of forgotten honors, my past glory, all that is now buried with my by gone years—you are all here, and I myself am cast aside with you. Nothing is left me now, not even the consciousness that I have helped to win the Cause for which I battled. All have fallen into the abyss. The deluge has drowned us all. Everything dear to me which I wished to preserve has been destroyed with my own ruin. (*He sinks into a chair. From the left enter Klementina, FILIPINA and JAROSLAV. The ladies are dressed in black travelling costumes with hats on their heads. JAROSLAV carries a travelling coat on his arm, a bag in his hand. KLEMENTINA in deep agitation, paces the salon, occasionally wiping her eyes. FILIPINA keeps close to her mother, despair in her face. It is rapidly growing dark. No one sees DR. SVOBODA who is hovering over the articles scattered on the floor. When the ladies advance to the front, they see the doctor for the first time.*)

## SCENE VI

DR. SVOBODA, KLEMENTINA, FILIPINA, JAROSLAV

*Klementina (With a frightened cry)*—Oh! (*Wheels around as though she would run away.*)

*Filipina (Holding her)*—Mamma!

*Jaroslav*—What is happening?

*Dr. Svoboda (Rising)*—Klementina!

*Klementina (Agitated)*—You! (*To herself*) I must go away!

*Dr. Svoboda (Firmly)*—Stay! Be seated!

*Klementina (Supported by JAROSLAV and FILIPINA, who seat her in a chair. Painfully, in a lifeless and heavy voice.)*—I did not wish to see you again! I only wanted to look about for the last time at these things. We are leaving now!

*Dr. Svoboda*—Leaving! Without my knowledge!

*Klementina*—I am leaving . . . I will not return again! I did not know that you had come back. Had I known, I would not have seen you.

*Dr. Svoboda*—Yes, I came home to find a deserted court. No one in sight anywhere, . . . and two people who saw me, fled as if they were afraid of meeting me.

*Klementina.*—And I also would have fled before you in the same way. (*Shortly, as she rises.*) Goodbye. . . we will never meet again. (*Leaving.*)

*Dr. Svoboda—(Stepping before her.)*—Klementina! Surely you are not going! You would not desert me now!

*Klementina (trying to control her rising voice. In the deepest agitation.)*—You deserted me and the children! You forgot to consider us! You would not look ahead to face the poverty, the misery we have fallen into! Therefore, in the sight of the Lord and all the world, I want to sever every tie that binds me to you, and consider yourself fortunate if I do not curse the very hour in which we two met!

*Dr. Svoboda*—Wife!

*Klementina*—Goodbye! (*Without meeting his eyes, she walks slowly away.*)

*Dr. Svoboda*—My children! Filipina!

*Filipina*—I must go with mother! I cannot leave her! (*Kneels before her father, bursting into tears.*) Father! Father!

*Dr. Svoboda (Placing both hands on her head.)*—I bless you, my child . . . I will not keep you longer now. . . and if

if we never meet again, I only ask that you will return to my grave at times . . .

*Filipina*—Father!

*Dr. Svoboda*—The Lord be with you! (*Turning away from her. FILIPINA hastens after her mother.*)

*Jaroslav*—(*Stepping to the front*)—Be in good health, father! And if your conscience ever awakens, and you realize what you have done, then find some philosophical formula to quiet and console you. (*Offers his hand*) I have been nothing, I am nothing now . . . and I take with me from here, (*reaching for the revolver on the table*) this weapon, so that if necessity drive! me to it, I will be true to my destiny and become nothing indeed.

*Dr. Svoboda*—Jaroslav!

*Jaroslav*—Until we meet again! (*Hurries after his mother and sister to the left.*)

#### SCENE VII

DR. SVOBODA

*Dr. Svoboda*—My wife, my children! They are leaving me! Have I then been a traitor to my family? Should I have changed me decision? And my third child! Where is Anezka? (*Steps advancing from the right*) I hear steps . . . that must be she! (*NEUFELD enters.*) Oh!

#### SCENE VIII

DR. SVOBODA, NEUFELD

*Neufeld* (*With an evil laugh*)—Good Evening, Doctor! Do not be afraid! You see it is I, Neufeld!

*Dr. Svoboda*—Leave my house at once!

*Neufeld* (*Bursting into laughter*)—Your house! What an idea!

*Dr. Svoboda*—Away!

*Neufeld*—Certainly, I can go if you so desire for I have a place to stay. But where will Your Highness go, where will you find another roof to shelter you after I leave? And has Your Grace the proper clothes, and a wallet sufficiently large to take you forth upon that journey, that very long journey from your castle?

*Dr. Svoboda*—Leave, I tell you! Or I will send you to hell!

*Neufeld*—Here we have your glory, your former grand

style, lying all in a heap! Do not be angry, doctor! (*Drawing the notes from his breast-pocket.*) Here for example . . . you will probably have need of them on the way . . . pray accept from me, as a memento of your former magnificence, this . . . (*with sarcastic emphasis*). . . this old junk!

*Dr. Svoboda*—I will kill you!

*Neufeld* (*Drawing a revolver from his hip-pocket*)—I am prepared even for that!

*Dr. Svoboda* (*Leaping upon him, snatches the weapon, flinging it upon the floor.*)—I will strangle you, you dog! With these two hands I will strangle you!

*Neufeld*—Help! Help! (*Runs quickly away. ANEZKA. appears from the left.*)

## SCENE IX

ANEZKA, DR. SVOBODA

*Anezka*—Who was calling for help! Father!

*Dr. Svoboda*—Anezka . . . hold me . . . or I will go after that cur and kill him!

*Anezka*—For Heaven's sake, father! Remember where we are!

*Dr. Svoboda* (*Staggering into a chair*)—Do not be afraid.

*Anezka*—Mamma has left—Filipina and Jaroslav with her, and you father—

*Dr. Svoboda* (*Calmly again*)—And you, my daughter, you stayed behind?

*Anezka*—And will continue to stay.

*Dr. Svoboda*—On my account?

*Anezka*—On your account.

*Dr. Svoboda*—And I am a beggar,—and you would become my companion—you would fetter yourself to me—

*Anezka*—There are happier days coming. Jiri has written that he will ask you and mother for my hand—we will all live together.

*Dr. Svoboda*—He has already spoken to me. Yesterday, after the election, when I told him that I have lost everything, that I am now a beggar—I never in my life heard a manlier answer than he gave me. I only want your daughter, he said: and if she will be satisfied with the humble little nest that a journalist can offer her, than let her marry me—in a month, tomorrow,—or perhaps even today.

*Anezka*—My Jiri—oh my father! You will come with us, won't you?

*Dr. Svoboda*—(*Buried in thought*)—Yes—I would go about the streets of Prague—and people would point after me and say: See, there goes Dr. Svoboda, formerly the great freeholder! They threw him out—he is run down at the heels now—has nothing—lives off of his daughter and son-in-law!—Or what could I do—starting anew with the youngsters in the hospitals, competing with them for a living in the profession that I have now neglected for these twenty years—finding myself subordinated, even an utter failure—My life has run its course—I missed my aim—

*Anezka*—Father—dear father! Do not talk so!

*Dr. Svoboda*—(*Smoothing her hair*)—That was only for a moment. You do not know as yet, what ideas may take possession of a defeated man. *Anezka*, let me rest and take breath. See, night is at hand, and I have had a terrible day—My child, (*kissing her on the forehead*)—go now, and be at peace.

*Anezka*—I could compose myself, if I only knew that you, my father, would be calm!

*Dr. Svoboda*—I will be at rest—in a few minutes, but I now must be alone—alone—

*Anezka*—Won't you take refreshment of some sort?

*Dr. Svoboda*—Not today—Where the beaks of the vultures have been feeding, (*pointing to the table*)—I can no longer eat.

*Anezka*—Father!

*Dr. Svoboda*—Good night, dear child, Good night! (*Kisses her, holding her for a minute in his arms.*)

*Anezka*—Good night! (*Leaves him.*)

## SCENE X

### DR. SVOBODA

*DR. SVOBODA* (*To himself*)—Good night!—May you sleep well, my dearest, best beloved child! Before my last sleep, I wish you good night! It is growing late, the day is fading, and the night is spreading out like a dark and heavy blanket, into which it would forever enfold me. For eternity,—yes, what is left—what wiser philosophy could I think of,—the surest and safest refuge—it is a short and sharp word, death—Death. . . Here I stand before that riddle, before which I have stood a thousand times when it was disputing itself with others, drawing others to its bosom. Today, I must solve that puzzle myself. Why did not the

thought come to me before the election? Then I might have died, and my family could have been saved. But then, my death would have been an act of cowardice, of shame, and the bullet that would have pierced my brain would have branded my name with infamy and dishonor. Today, I have purchased death and paid the price—it is my reward—what peace in that eternal forgetfulness—forgetfulness of my loss, my dreams, my love, my family, my home—On this fatal day, at the bottom of my life, there is left me but death, a sure and swift death instead of a slow and painful dying. (*From the right there enters a woman dressed in black*).

*Dr. Svoboda (In a whisper)*—It is she! It is death! Come then, I have purchased you!

## SCENE XI

HROMADKOVA, DR. SVOBADA

*Hromadkova*—Good Heavens! What a fright!

*Dr. Svoboda*—Who are you?

*Hromadkova*—Our former master—doctor—it is I! I only came to beg—

*Dr. Svoboda*—Go, go away,—leave me in peace—

*Hromadkova*—But, your honor, I only want to ask you to look at my eye! The other is becoming inflamed—I am afraid I will lose them both!

*Dr. Svoboda*—Go to a physician—I am not able—

*Hromadkova*—But where would I go? I have been waiting for you to return! Do not be angry at me on account of this rabble which has taken your castle—

*Dr. Svoboda*—Woman! (*Overcoming his impatience, he says to himself, I must be a man to the last. (To Mrs. HROMADKOVA)* Come out to the balcony. I will look at it. (*They step out.*)

*Hromadkova*—May the Lord repay you for all your goodness and bring you an easy death! You are still, gracious sir, our best friend!

*Dr. Svoboda*—Where is my surgical case? (*Goes back into the darkened room to get it. Looking about.*) Here—(*Opens the case, taking out vials, instruments, and picking out one little bottle. To himself, in deep agitation.*) Poison! Poison! (*Holds the vial a moment in his hand, buried in thought.*)

*Hromadkova (From the balcony)*—I pray you, dear doctor, do not forget me—

*Dr. Svoboda (With a sudden start, placing the vial on the table) I am coming! (Goes quickly to the balcony.)* Have no fear, Hromadkova. Nothing will happen to your eye. Wash the wound with the medicine I have given you. Within a week the inflammation will be gone.

*Hromadkova.*—May Heaven reward you! And did you know, Honorable Doctor, that the people from the village are getting ready to come to the castle to pay you their respects? With torchlights and music!

*Dr. Svoboda.*—What is this? Ridicule? What do they mean by such madness! (*Walling about.*)

*Hromadkova.*—No, no! Just a tribute for their respect! That is because you voted for your nation, and cared nothing, nothing, even though you lost all that you had!

*Dr. Svoboda.*—HROMADKOVA—tell them that I respectfully beg them to leave off everything—and not to come.

*Hromadkova.*—Why! They won't have it any other way! And what is the use of spoiling their pleasure? Heaven bless you once more and may the Lord be with you! (*Leaving.*)

## SCENE XII

### DR. SVOBODA

*Dr Svoboda.*—Well, then, let them have their childish pleasure. For me there is another reward—a far greater one — (*goes to the table, picking up the vial with the poison.*) Poison! That woman surely brought me my death—Physicians, since ancient times, have sought their death by means of poison—I from the former freeholder, just a physician is left once more . . . must remain true to my calling. (*Raises the vial, walking to the light to examine it.*) Yes, this is the universal healer, the medicine that cures all ills, all that we have fought against in vain; the shortest formula of philosophy, the dropstone of wisdom, and the key which unlocks the other world. Come! my friend! Take me there for all eternity, to that peace from which there is no awakening! (*Drinks, staggers, falls and dies. The room grows darker and darker in the fading twilight until it becomes wrapped in blackness. All is still for a moment. Then from a distance comes the strains of a national hymn, drawing nearer to the castle, with shouts and voices. At last the music ceases.*)

*Voice (under the window)*—Long live DR. SVOBODA! Glory!

*Other Voices* Long live DR. SVOBODA! Glory! Glory!

(ANEZKA runs in. *The reflection from the burning torches without glows in the room.*)

## SCENE XIII

ANEZKA, *the dead* DR. SVOBODA

*Anezka*—Father! Listen, listen, father! They are calling you! They are doing this in your honor! (*Looking around*) Where is father? Has he gone away? Is he in the room? (*Sees her father lying on the ground*) Merciful Heavens! Father! (*Runs and kneels beside him, raising his head. A piercing scream.*) Father! He is dead!

(CURTAIN)

## FANTAISIE

BY GERARD DE NERVAL

*Translated By Frances Taylor*

There is an air for which I would exchange  
Rossini, Mozart, Weber, one and all—  
An ancient tune, drowsy, funeral,  
That stirs me with a charm remote and strange.

For every time I hear it played it seems  
Two hundred years slip from my world-worn soul:  
Louis XIII still reigns—the yellow beams  
Of sunset kiss a little grassy knoll.

Then a brick castle with stone corners shows  
Its windows pageanted with rosy hue,  
Girdled with spreading parks; a river flows  
Bathing its feet, the flowering meadows through.

Then to its topmost window comes a lady  
Blond, with dark eyes, appalled as of yore,  
Whom in some long-forgotten life, it may be,  
I saw!—and I remember evermore!



# PAINTED LEGENDS

BY CHRISTABEL F. FISKE

The following pages delineate the most intimate phase of my spiritual experience during two months of a gloomy London winter, a phase not, in itself, in any absolute sense, the most significant, but, unquestionably, the most subtle and characteristic. In general, it sprang from a chance combination of the state of my mind and the state of the weather.

As to my mind, it may roughly be described as consistently refusing, for the time, any steady systematic exertion, preferring rather to drift along paths of picturesque least resistance. Sometimes during those entrancing days, to my amused leisurely observation, it seemed a strange, objective-thing, a mimetic bird or beast moving here and there through its environment wherever chance offered it protective coloring against possible challenge to practical activity, such challenge gradually objectifying itself, in turn, as a bird of prey spying me out. In its mimetic escapades, it would seem to me, my chameleon-brain, sometimes a tiny moth, frostedly green, or a strange gray worm of the texture of a cluster of crumpled ashes, both alike indistinguishable among the shadows and interstices of crisp, lichened bark; or a jointed, green spider camouflaged among the needles of a fir tree. Sometimes, in a kind of happy lethargy—dull, uninspired—it lay at rest, a breathed blue-winged grasshopper on peat, or a tawny caterpillar on faded bracken. Sometimes, vivid, irresponsible, rejoicing in and wilfully concealing its fitness,—an orange-flecked white butterfly, or a Crimson Underwing,—it sheathed itself in a dull coat and fell to earth to drift obscure among a mass of withered upper leaves. Sometimes, on the other hand, fully revealing its vividness, but under ambiguous aspects,—a predatory insect, flower-like in form and color,—it waited lazily among clustering leaves for its destined prey to drift automatically into its grasp. Or, in this mood, so naturally did my proper material float to me out of the misty maelstrom of London, that my brain seemed to me, instead, some deep-sea mollusc attaching to its shells stray bits of pebble and brilliant coral; or a Squinado crab trailing strands of living sea weed.

So much for my mind. As for the weather, it was steadily gloomy, the fog scarcely lifting from November to February. But

I learned to love its every phase from the diffused, blue mistiness of which the Cherubs' wings in the East Window of Holy Trinity seemed mere ineffable essence, to its concentration above and around the city into a sulphur-hued, smoke-shot dome through the sides of which dwellers in Hampstead and Highgate passed, at noon, out of suburban sunshine into the electric glare of metropolitan midnight. More and more, as the days passed, I grew aware of this colorful aspect of the fog,—of its resting, dimly green, in the hollows of Hyde Park, deep cerulean against the tombstones of Savoy Chapel church-yard, dull carmine against the blank walls of some city block, copper-colored around the buried sun, till, in growing comprehension of its beauty, I began at last to understand the fundamental realism of Turner's pictures—his *Streets With Children* where houses show vaguely like cliffs, rose-brown and azure; his *Grenoble Bridge*, misty blue blocks washed with lemon-gold; his *Stormy Sea* where mere swaying masses of cloudy green and amber and rose break sullenly one upon another. Gradually my searching for chromatic values in the strange shifting medium through which I constantly wandered, became a sort of obsession: for holly-berries running in delicate flame through ghostly hedges; for chrysanthemums,—orange, lavender, white,—smouldering up from baskets borne on the heads of women with indistinguishable faces; for plumage of birds, pyramided jellies, crinkled heaps of silk glimmering out at me from shop windows. These arresting things allured me constantly in the most unexpected places: from angles of Guy's Hospital, where convalescents, wrapped in purple or blue or orange rugs, like rain-blurred posters, while away the morning hours playing cards; or from windows of small suburban villas where, as if from wizard's fire within, there flickered in the panes reflection of the garden's high-growing purple asters. And I knew that it was all unspeakably lovely and strange, and that actually the flowers were not flowers at all, nor the fruit, fruit, nor the fog, fog. But their actual significance to me I did not, as yet, grasp in the very least.

I began dimly to understand one day after hours in the National Gallery. I had drifted in with a wraith of fog which speedily dissolved itself into a perfectly discernible murky umbra pervading the great First Room. It was one of the days when the Gallery just *did not* close on account of the darkness. I wandered around for a while not knowing precisely what I wanted. My eyes fell on a single detail in a small canvas and suddenly I knew. I wanted legends. I wanted, above all things, that morn-

ing, to see in detail how graphic art treated legends familiar to me in literature. The picture in question was a tiny one of the Old French School, a medieval garden full of separate little flowers, each clear and star-like, from which rose a single, high-hung, blue columbine cluster. The close-shaven turf ran smoothly up into a pleasant seat, upon which sat The Virgin with The Child. Behind a low, castellated terra cotta wall, their arms resting easily upon it, quite shorn of their austerity, lounged six saints looking across with neighborly interest at the holy group and gossiping, their very emblems, Barbara's Tower, Lawrence's Gridiron, etc., looking exactly like toys they were bringing to the baby. But the element in the picture that held my attention was the background where I saw, in most singular treatment, the Ruin of Lucifer. I have heard him fall to the thunder of Milton's periods, and perceived the terror of his tumultuous descent reflected in archangelical faces bending, in Spinello's fragmentary frescoes, from heavenly battlements; and I have seen him and his headlong crew, caught in drifts of air and water, in hollows of mountains and convolutions of subterranean fire, charmingly transformed into nymphs, gnomes, salamanders, etc. But, for quaint ironic miniature, this aerial drama was unique. In front, against a gray-skyed background, are poised two delicious blue dragonflies of angels holding a coronet over the Virgin's head; while in the higher middle distance hovers, white and moth-like, another chasing down the horizon an appealing little grasshopper-skeleton of a Lucifer, mere jointed hieroglyph of faded glory. The very presence of the blue dragon-fly angels, to whose scale he is drawn, is significant. Neither goodness nor badness matters. His negligibility, and theirs, it is that counts. Behind the pretty domestic idyll of flowers, saints, mother and heroically-moulded Child, the once portentous spirit shrinks to the proportion and significance of a paltry, wizened wight piping his feeble song, among his kind, in a summer twilight.

I looked at my watch, gave up thought of luncheon, and wandered on tracking legends, pausing next at a picture of Joachim Patinir's, *The Flight into Egypt*, in which I found, also, the graphic treatment of a motive that, in literary versions, has always interested me: the falling prone on the ground of the devil-inhabited images of the pagan gods when the Christ-child passed by on his way to Egypt. But these gods I had always conceived of as temple-gods,--massive stone or brazen images in costly shrines, adorned with all barbarous ornament that Oriental imagination

could devise. I was not prepared for the exquisite thing I found in this picture of Patinir's. Within the cool depths of a forest, Mary and Joseph and the Child are lingering. Just behind them, beside the path they have traversed, stands a pedestal upon which the slim, bronze image of a wood-god is tinkling into tiny ruin before our eyes. The legs and torso, with one arm outstretched, are still intact; but on the ground there lies already the round, satyr-like head pelted by the falling fragments. The holy trio pass on unmoved, unconscious; but startled forest things stand at gaze, notably a wide-eyed, serene-browed deer; while in the deepest shadow, furtively, an evil thing, ape-like, lowers. I have never seen the hackneyed motive of the emergent devil—often roaring or sulphurously sulky or otherwise spectacular—so subtly and dramatically treated. Here, even in the surprise of sudden dislodgment, his half-human hands newly grasping the branches for support, you yet get a sense, in the sinister backward glance at the lovely victorious Child, of the implacable turning to his own purpose of even his apparent discomfiture. Like the great malignant spirits streaming out of Milton's hell, he is now, at least, free, by the Child's own act, to wander where he lists, satisfying to the full his invincible will to evil.

The third legend that especially attracted me was the *Miracle of the Sacrament* by Stephano di Giovanni; and it differed from the miracles connected with that rite to which I had been accustomed in literary accounts in that, in such accounts, they have usually consisted either in the emergence of sinister bats or owls from the sinner's mouth as he took the holy elements; or in physical contortions indicative of some special sin characterizing him. In the case under consideration the painter seems to have borrowed a motive connected, so far as I have come across it in literature, with the actual death-bed of a sinner. Here, however, a highly dramatic element is introduced by the fact that the catastrophe breaks in upon him in his full hey-day of vigorous life. The picture differs from the other two of which we have just spoken in that it takes us away from the idyllic atmosphere of garden and wood into the sophistication of a monastic chapel,—a gray, gothic chapel, its ambrous, black-figured windows touched with red and gold and, at the right, a group of sombre monks behind whom richly-garbed worshippers glow like flowers. Your eye merely glances over the accessories of the picture, however, becoming riveted at once on the depiction of the poignant human element: the officiating priest, transfixed with amazement, his hand holding

the sacred cup still extended toward an unhappy communicant who, staggering back, falls fainting into the arms of another of the brethren. But your sympathy with this collapsing brother is instantly swallowed up in that evoked by the vision of the little inhabitant of his robust body issuing from his mouth. Never have I seen anything so appealingly helpless as that small white wraith of a soul except, perhaps, the blurred wisp of a baby-blue Jonah being swallowed by a ferocious whale, likewise baby-blue, among the golden fervors of a medieval manuscript. It writhes and palpitates, that little lost soul, striving to pull back its wavering spirit-hands from the uncompromising grip of a prongy and efficient devil in an obvious hurry to get back to hell. From no literary treatment of the same motive have I begun to get the thrill of weird horror with which the painter has managed to envelop his treatment of a haunting medieval conception. The reason for this difference is, I suppose, that in this picture (as in the one in which Patinir depicts the shattered wood-god), we have, sympathetically handled by gifted artists, motives which, in their literary treatment, have been merely manipulated for moralistic purposes by doggerel monks. In the case of the first picture discussed, that of the falling Lucifer, the painter has definitely added to art's treasury another delicate treatment of a conception that, throughout the centuries, has stirred the imagination of poets and painters alike.

The pictures just discussed interested me as units embodying each a given theme. Another significant phase of these painted legends involves the gradual rationalization of a given mythical motive, a familiar literary phenomenon, though I know no literary analogy to the one I have chosen now to discuss, namely, the retracing by a mythologized fowl of her way back into normal birdhood. The pelican as bestiary symbol of Christ is the case in point. Three pictures piquantly represent her in her naturalistic development. The first,—an Old Master, not piquant,—represents the Virgin sitting on a golden-backed chair surrounded by haloed saints. One of them holds a staff supporting a crucifix upon which a nested Pelican is driving her bill into her breast with professional vigor. In the second picture, Antonio Pisano's rendering of the legend of Saint Eustace,—the Pelican bears no obvious relation at all to the Cross miraculously planted, to the end of his conversion, between the horns of the stag confronting the young hunter. She merely appears amid a bewilderment of bird life,—medley of brown and olive-green with bright white flashes,—so natural and exqui-

site that it seemed as if it must have fluttered into the Gallery, along with me and the mist, from the Isle of Birds in Hyde Park. Yet her symbolic capacity is subtly suggested. It is surely no accident that, among the swimming, splashing, hovering throng, she, alone, stands motionless on a ledge of rock above the pool, her eyes fixed quietly on the cross.

In the third treatment, the prototypal fowl has lost, even more completely, her symbolical quality and, altogether, her Pelican aspect. She appears merely as a fluffy, agreeable bird among a group of creatures playing around Saint Jerome as he prays in the desert,—calves and kids and puffy rabbits,—before a Cross bearing the crucified Christ. In its general aspect, so simple a scene is it that even the bird's significant position upon an arm of the Cross would seem mere accident except for a significantly contrasting touch,—a dimly-seen dragon lurking in shadow and eying askance, malevolently, the holy symbol with its feathered accessory. Then only do we recognize our friend, the Pelican, rationalized into an ordinary fowl who has chosen the Sacred Tree for resting place in her flight across the desert. I know no prettier instance of the path along which a highly artificial product of fantastic imagination makes its way back to its station in the normal order of things.

The third fashion in which my mind played with these legends was the noting the miscellaneous fashion in which painters handle one figure which, in medieval literature, has always interested me: namely, the Dove masking supernatural beings. In an article several years ago I pointed out that it is usually a highly impressive little creature, whether it appears as Holy Ghost, hovering over the Savior at his baptism, or as angel, breathing into Saint Gregory's ears the wisdom expressed in his works. It is also somewhat lacking in color, except in the case of the bird in the old English Martyrology in whose shape the soul of a beheaded man, just escaped from its fleshly prison, hovers awhile around the body, caressing it, and then flies up to heaven.

The doves in the Natinal Gallery fell into two classes: the ordinary dove and the Dove Elect, usually the Holy Ghost, a distinction well illustrated in Crivelli's *Annunciation*, where along the roofs walk sedately white, heavy, crooning creatures; while down a shining ray towards the reading Mary, his bright little halo systematically adjusted, slides the Dove de Luxe on his mission, energetically emitting Heavenly Influence. These common-garden doves appear constantly as foils to their celestial com-

panion, phlegmatically pecking at cracks in tiled floors or at the roots of the grasses pushing up through them. But the Inspired One assumes an interesting variety of aspects. The augustness, so evident in literary treatment, unquestionably appears in such paintings as Piero di Francesca's *Baptism of Christ* where, poised ineffably, every inch a Holy Ghost, in the foreground above Christ's head, he dominates the noble scene with its sculpturally-moulded figures and superbly-managed perspective. Two liberties, however, poets never take with the Third Member of the Trinity which painters unquestionably do: they never make him stodgy; but, on the other hand, deplorably, they never make him gay. The stodgy type is usually in evidence among German and Flemish painters. In one, by Hans Baldung, the inspired creature crouches ball-like, owl-headed, on fat, grey cloud cushions adrift in a yellow sky, stolidly staring down on a *Pieta*. But though this objectional type is not present among the poets, nor yet the scrawny, red-beaked, neurotic sort of the old French School, there is also lacking, as I have said, the temperamental type, mercurial and exquisite, individuals of which simply become permanent specimens in one's spiritual aviary. With two of them I would not part for worlds. They appear, as it happens, in canvasses representing two great periods of The Virgin's life, the Annunciation and the Nativity. The treatment of the Annunciation by Rosetti is, in many respects, the most charming and the most unscriptural treatment that I know. Gabriel, who often seems intrusive, is completely ignored. In the loveliest of medieval closes, among gray-green trees, an exquisite Greek water vessel beside her, stands Mary gardening, intent, serene, her dull jade-blue gown,—precisely the color of a ripened lilac-berry,—falling straight downward to sun-steeped grass. It is the lightest and brightest of April scenes; and, essential part of it all, very symbol of burgeoning spring, towards her across the flower-tops, interfered with by no pompous angel, marked by no golden halo, sweeps the gayest, most eager of doves about to bring her, by the mere sweep of his life-giving wings, within the enchanted circle of the fertile spring-time. It is the most pagan of pictures,—a great poet's idealization of the vegetation motive, the blossoming towards fruitage, within the charmed circle of sympathetic magic, of nature herself.

The second picture is a studied architectural treatment of The Nativity by Jan de Mabuse,—a Renaissance portico full of richly dressed people and stylish little dogs, all grouped around an

elaborate Holy Child. I was turning uninterestedly away from it one morning, when my eye was caught by the celestial group above the portico, the Father, the Holy Ghost, and a group of rejoicing attendant angels. Never before or since have I seen the third member of the Trinity, in a situation where he is usually poised quite characterlessly, acting in so unbalanced a fashion. He is the gay dove of the Rosetti garden, rejoicing over the consummation of his holy *affaire d'amour*. The angels are swaying in radiant rhythms of heavenly joy, and rhythmically, with them, wing-tip to wing-tip, in an ecstasy of exultation, sways the Holy Dove. It is a remarkable and unique treatment, to which I know no literary parallel of a well-worn theme.

It was on my emergence from the National Gallery that day, as I rode down through The City on the top of Bus 18, that I began to understand, on the basis of my morning's experience, the intuition previously haunting me that, as I said before, the flowers whose hues I caught dimly through the fog were not flowers at all, nor the fruit, fruit; nor, indeed, the fog, fog. For into my musing fancy as it strayed farther and farther down the vista of fantastic ecclesiastical legend under stimulus of shifting glimpses of the old City churches, there were suddenly projected strange, quaint figures from St. Ethelburga's and St. Mary Le Bow's, and St. Bartolph Bishopgate's, till at last, close around me, the fog fell like faded tapestry wrought with saints. And from that moment on I knew that I had grasped, for myself personally, the function of the fog: that, in certain well defined, familiar moods, however long or short might be my stay in London, it would serve as delicate, unobtrusive canvas for the colorful strokes of my reaction to scattered physical and spiritual stimuli; for fragmentary portrayal of my whimsical sense of the past, of my own peculiar legend.

It was not without significance that my comprehension of the fog as mere gray canvas for my own artistry dawned upon me, in part, through half-caught glimpsing of the City churches. I was interested to see, as I glanced through my guide-book the other day, how familiar they are—how intimately I know their environment and appearance, and how naturally details drift through my mind in connection with them: that Nelson's Horatia was christened in the little old Marylebone parish church, that Milton married his second wife at St. Mary Aldermanbury, that Prince Lee Bow of the Pelew Islands lies in the churchyard of St. Mary Rotherhithe among the docks, that the reputed head of Lady



Jane Gray's father is preserved in St. Catherine Cree's. They took deeper hold in my fancy, these old City churches, than any other buildings in London.

The London churches are of two sorts: first, the churches in The City proper,—the heart of business London; and, second, those outside that area. Of these two groups, the first is distinctly more interesting to me. And, concerning them, my impressions drift along two markedly-contrasted lines which may be roughly defined as that in which the dedicatory saint involved figures only faintly; and, that in which he springs into vivid personality, his legend growing in my own hands. In the first case, the saint exists merely as an umbra within the precincts of a phantom church. I scarcely know how to express the beauty to me of these architectural ghosts—these phantom churches—projected, like mists from a genie's vase, from out some surviving relic or fragment. Only once before have I been so exquisitely haunted,—then, through the imprint of a prehistoric drop of rain fallen into greens and, which filled my ears for hours with the moaning and sighing of a primordial storm.

This instantaneous reconstruction into impalpable, unauthentic architectural unity occurred constantly wherever I encountered these moving fragments of old churches: the ancient tower of St. Mary Somerset, with its rich encrustment of saints and cherubs and its crooning doves, rising startlingly out from among the factories and shops of paper-makers on Upper Thames Street; that of All Hallows Staining, wrapt in fifteenth-century dreams in its little court entered, near Mark Lane, through a low arched gateway; and, very singularly, from an ancient pillar projecting three feet above the floor in the rebuilt St. Catherine Cree. Fragments standing still in their old places, however, were not the only data thus suggestive. There is a church in Lombard Street, entirely buried among taller office buildings, wittily called *The Church Invisible*. But there are many churches in London truly invisible even in any slightest fragment to aught save the leisurely, brooding mind,—a cloud of witnesses to one of the great tragic events in London history, little City churches whose spirits do always hover, to the eye that sees, around the great memorial monument in Fish Hill Street commemorating the Great Fire in 1666. I found nothing in London more pathetic and engrossing than the little green scraps of ground with sagging tomb stones that brought me to a sudden stand in the very busiest part of the City. Most tiny and moving of all is the small triangle of earth

lying tranced and still in the midst of heavy traffic at the corner of Noble Street, off Cheapside. It lies there so little and green and helpless in the midst of the encroaching flood of buildings that have already swallowed up most of it. You linger there, trembling lest, any minute, a heavy truck may run over it. (You would not mind seeing one of the little horses from the shield adorning The Sadlers' Hall around the corner grazing softly among its stones.) And you know quite well that it is only a matter of time before the great, squat building next door shall set a clumsy hoof down upon its moving beauty. This is all that remains of the original churchyard of St. John Zachary; and its fate was the same as that announced in the case of the ancient St. Olave, further up the street, by a tablet marked with skull and cross bones attached to the wall of the gaunt little yard with benches in it for passers-by: "Here stood St. Olave Silver before the dreadful Fire of 1666." It is a grim little yard, its earth left baked, its old sarcophagi charred, by the devastating flames,— a strange contrast to the similar relic of St. Mary Staining a few yards distant, buried among office buildings, but shining softly, its slanting tomb-stones overgrown with ivy, like a gentle, jade-green Phoenix reborn from its ashes.

I have dealt thus far with the ghosts of churches evoked for me by one stimulus or other. When it comes to churches still in existence, I find myself in a very different atmosphere; and, as St. John on one occasion conceived ancient religious foundations in terms of their "Angels," so I always thought of them in terms of their dedicatory saints. In several cases a name might represent one of two saints, that of Bartholomew, for instance, which might mean either the obscure apostle or (since Scandinavian saints are popular in the City) that delightful hermit of Farne at whose death there was a sound "as of mice dancing across the kitchen floor" and "of sparrows pecking,"—precisely what you would expect, in contrast with St. Frances' poetic birds, of a Scandinavian saint (his real name was Tosti), since Scandinavians, whether saints or vikings, always have their feet on the ground, however high among the clouds their heads may reach.

These forty saints divide themselves into two classes according to the general districts in which they live: the stylish saints, like St. James of Piccadilly and St. George, Hanover Square, and the saints-in-trade like St. Albans, St. Olave and St. Lawrence down in the city. Sometimes, like a perennial group of the English aristocracy, a saint appears to have two aspects: works

in the morning, like St. James, Clerkenwell, and is baptised, married or buried a la mode in Piccadilly later in the day. But such is not often the versatility of a London saint. It may be noted as a curious bit of subconscious association that whereas I sometimes speak of *Sir* George, Hanover Square, a similar slip never occurs with a down-town saint; also, that you say, deliberately, St. George, Hanover Square; but, clippingly, St. Lawrence Poultry.

This vivid contemporary aspect of the saints is partly induced by their surnames. They have acquired them quite after the fashion of other human beings throughout the centuries: from place (St. Mary at Hill, St. Mary Overy, St. Mary Undercroft who is located in an old crypt chapel); or from physical traits (St. Mary le Bow, whose church is built on arches of stone); or from custom (St. Andrew Undershaft, because on May-day the May-pole overshadowed the church tower); or from occupation (St. Margaret Pattens, or St. Mary Woolnoth or St. James Garlickhithe); or from connection with distinguished persons (St. Martin Outwich, from the burial within his courts of Sir John Oteswich); or as a means of distinction from some other Mary or Andrew, as in the case of St. Mary Aldermary so called because her church is thought to be the oldest of the Mary churches in the city.

The vivid conception of the saints as persons, of which I have just spoken, presented itself under two chief aspects: first, as historical persons legendized by the Ages; second as historical persons legendized by me. As to the first group,—that legendized by the Ages,—it is divided, also, sharply into two classes, the one consisting of such palpable saints as St. George with his dragon and St. Cecilia with her lilies, who bored me because I have known them so long. The others I found more interesting because less familiar; and, having acquired the hagiographic knack of levitation, floated out of the window of many a dark little church to join them in their traditional occupations and amusements: to walk with St. Anthony, for instance, along forest ways, giving a furtive pat to the head of the worried, devout little satyr (unquestionably among the elect), who asked him anxious questions concerning Christian doctrine. Sometimes I sat lazily on a grassy bank with that saintly slacker of an Ethelburga who let angels with golden sickles do her job at harvest time; or loitered unseen in market gardens watching St. Bartholomew industriously at work giving large heads to cabbages, and definitely criticising

his methods upon the authority of Mr. J. B. Frazer. For he should have been a lady; and, as I once pointed out in the case of Minnehaha's field-walking for agricultural purposes, should have worn softest deerskin all painted with totem turtles, and mystical suns and moons and waters; and her bare arms should have shone with barbarous golden ornaments to give color to the corn; and she should have leaped and danced around the corn-field "shaking and tossing" her long, black hair to make the crop grow high with a luxuriant profusion of silken tassels. Sometimes, on the contrary, fit and vigorous, along with that other St. Ethelburga of Barking at one end of a heavy beam and her canonized brother at the other, I tugged with might and main to increase its length, having finally the satisfaction of seeing it fit neatly into its appointed place in the building whose construction they were superintending. Sometimes, devout and contemplative, I sought St. Botolph on his tree-covered, rush-girdled mound among the fens; or prayed with St. Vidast in his ruined church at an altar overgrown with nettles and briars until a bear, who had made the place his lair, incontinently appeared, when we rose and cursed him together with great sobriety and effect.

In all these cases, I was following well-worn footsteps. But what interested me most was the fashion in which, in my own hands, these saints developed legendwise. My most radical measure was the actual creation of a sister for Bartholomew named Ptolomea, who not only thus prettily corroborated the theory of a medieval etymologist, namely, that the apostle Bartholomew was an Egyptian Ptolemy by birth, but also provided the proper sex and other accessories tending to the perfection of cabbages. But short, even, of this somewhat sensational achievement, my hagiographic activities were sufficiently exciting. Having discovered several hospitable Caravanseries—All Hallows Barking, All Hallows Lombard, All Hallows-on-the-Wall, All Saints Brompton, All Saints Fulham, All Saints Margaret Street—I proceeded without scruple to import certain saints whose absence I had deeply deplored, notably, the entrancing Christina of Norway, an impulsive, good-hearted maiden who, greatly exercised over Purgatorial suffering, on the basis of a vision vouchsafed her, plunged whole-souledly into a self-devised, eccentric scheme of vicarious inconvenience for their benefit, creeping into bakers' ovens, dancing among hot embers, "dropping under the sluice of the miller's conduit to shoot with the stream under the wheel," etc. I have seldom met a more utterly engaging saint. But her

strenuous proclivities, while endearing her to every right-minded person, made her, naturally, somewhat difficult to locate in even the most elastic of the holy hostelries. The problem was solved, however, by means of the double dedication, so common an expedient in London for the accommodation of saints newly adopted or dispossessed of their former abodes by fire, shift of population or other accident. I housed her comfortably with St. Bride in her lovely abode just off Fleet Street, that St. Bride whose easy domestic manners,—her casual way, for instance, of hanging her clothes on sunbeams or handing impulsively over to beggars any of her relatives' property, coins or cows, that lay at hand at the moment,—rendered her less susceptible to annoyance from Christina's vagaries than would have been less lovable, better regulated persons. ●

Such creation and importation of saints, as illustrated in the cases of Sts. Ptolomea and Christina respectively, were, however, far from exhausting my hagiographic activities. I discovered well-known implications of origin such as, I am sure, no other scholar has ever discerned. Take St. Magnus, for instance, one of the vigorous Scandinavian saints. His legendary story is interesting. Taken a-questing by his uncle, King Magnus Bare-foot, he refused utterly to fight, saying that he would not slaughter people who had never injured him. Taunted as a coward and ordered scornfully to go below, he nevertheless seated himself on the upper deck in the midst of flying arrows, vigorously chanting psalms. Now one must admit that this conduct on the part of an ancient viking is odd, though, as one who believes that the genuine conscious objector type is more common in the past than usually conceived, I am willing to admit it, even on that basis, within the range of possibility. But why resort to that hypothesis when a convincing scientific explanation is at hand? It occurred to me early one dark November morning when I came suddenly upon his church on Lower Thames Street near Billingsgate. I had just been wandering through the great market a stone's throw off, watching the unloading at the piers of fish to be swiftly distributed among the stalls and trucks. I was thinking of the glancing iridescence of their stencilled silken sides, and disposing them, in prospect, into pleasing patterns of grotesque loveliness around the altar of the old church at the September Harvest Festival for a fish-man, confirmed by Muirhead, had just told me that St. Magnus's was adorned with fish instead of corn and vegetables at that special fete, when, in a flash the mythic

connection grew clear to me. Magnus, reputed Earl of Orkney, was, in origin, a sea-god, rationalized into a Christian Prince. His inexplicable refusal to shoot enemy-vikings, as ordered by his uncle, was a trace of his old patronhood over not only all beings within the sea but, also, of all that sailed thereon. To some carping minds it may seem unfortunate, for this bit of legendizing, that Magnus was, in life, particularly hard on sea-rovers. But this can disturb not a whit one who, guided by Freud, well knows that, under subconscious suppression of various sorts, actual affections mask themselves as antipathies and vice versa. And who can compute the number of deplorable irregularities that may result in the nervous system of a saint by the presence in it of a suppressed sea-god?

Not only, however, did I thus discover saintly origins. Spurred thereto, possibly, by the window in St. James, Spanish Place, where I saw St. Michael against a blue background, with rose-colored wings and yellow feathers ruffling from waist to knees, assuming patronage of a thoroughly equipped 1917 aeroplane poised beneath him. I began at a great rate to multiply the functions of many an already over-worked saint. Fascinated by a pleasant authentic tale of how, at one time, the North Transept of St. Bartholomew's, Smithfield was occupied by a blacksmith's shop, I filled in a gap of many years in his legend by apprenticing him, at the age of twelve, to a farrier, whereby he stepped naturally into patronage of the craft crowding out, in my canon, St. Barbara. It was a pleasant story, that of the blacksmith's shop, to brood on in the shadowy beauty of St. Bartholomew's, a tale neither brutal nor incongruous. For the horses I saw were of celestial breed,—high stepping, curly-maned, Pegasus neck-to-neck with the steeds of Elijah,—tinkling across the tiles to lift up dainty hoofs, for shoeing, upon vine-wreathed, marble pedestals.

St. Margaret, also, of Rood Lane, had *her* duties largely increased in my canonry. Up to this time St. Margaret had never interested me, being, in legend, a mere conventional virgin-saint not as appealing, because better-mannered, than Cecilia, and leagues removed from the delightsomeness of Bride and Christina. In London, however, she became my best-loved saint. She abides, as I said, in an old church in Rood Lane, a street whose staple sale was, in medieval times, pattens, on which account she became popularly known as St. Margaret Pattens; and, for me, patron saint of all the cosy, intimate, informal side of London

street-life that I dearly love: of the big policeman walking, in his stately fashion across the court of the British Museum, a steaming tea-kettle in his hand; of the City men hurrying, bare-headed, into Lyons or an A. B. C. for their eleven o'clock coffee; of the little book-shop nested cosily at the very base of the tower of St. Stephen Walbrook; of the flower stall tucked in between the buttresses of the Dutch Church in Austin Friars; of the little tailors' shops you make an excuse to enter in the twilight through tiny aisles of overlapping cloth-stuffs, to get a glimpse of the little fire-lit sitting room behind, where the family is having tea; of Petticoat Market where, among the jostling crowd, near a booth displaying jellied eels and other delicacies, a girl in frankly-stockinged feet is trying on shoes; of the cosy Shepherds' Market tucked away in the very heart of Mayfair. St. Margaret it is who guards the crusty loaf lying guilelessly on the doorsteps of the house in Bennett Place; and St. Margaret it is who is the special saint of the engaging type of small boy such as I have never seen elsewhere,—a small boy with a round, rosy face and the perfectest of unpriggish manners who, left in charge of his father's little open booth of a Southwark shop, says, "Yes, Madam?" in anticipation of your request; or, having nearly knocked your head off with a ball, detaches himself from his group to lift his cap and express his pleasure that you are still alive. Above all it is Margaret who guards and sustains the shabby, careworn, gentle people, men and women, who haunt the old book-shops in Southwark, people whose meagre faces, serenely abstracted as they turn over leather volumes and peer between their covers, make even moderate material prosperity seem crass and vulgar, and me almost passionately glad, glancing down at my own clothing, to see that I had not even noticed that the fur on my coat was somewhat worn, and my gloves a little rusty.

The personages, however, that par excellence seemed to me to typify City-saints appear in the triple dedication to St. Anne, St. Agnes and St. John Zachary. The last mentioned originally had a church to himself; but, being burned out, had been taken in by the other two. Just as St. Magnus had absorbed an ancient sea-god, Zachary had absorbed St. John the Baptist to whom his church had been originally dedicated, Zachary being a twelfth century monk favored by the canons of St. Paul's. St. John Zachary, as became his position in the very heart of London and the absorber of John the Baptist, rapidly became extremely energetic metropolitan character. He guarded his own rights

vigorously. "St. John Zacharies," we read,\* "brought a Chancery suit in regard to the legacies of William Smith, citizen and joiner, of which they were unable to obtain payment from the executors." He quarrels with the Goldsmiths Company over rent; with St. Botolph over the maintenance of an infant-foundling,—which each saint attempted, as it were, to father on the other; and with the wax-chandlers in a dispute which resulted in the receipt by the Company of seventeen shillings "of the person of St. John Zacharius for costs," to which dispute the spicy entry in the Wax Chandlers' records possibly refers: "Paied the XXIXth of January for a quartern of faggots (when Mr. Kendemas made a Seller in the next house to oure Hawle, and Made boaste that he wolde have as mutche roome in oure Kitchen as sholde make a paire of Staires to go up and downe to fetch them drinke, and wee by the advice of oure lerned Counsell Made water seething hott ready to poure on their hedds iff they had undermynded our Kytchen), VIId." It is agreeable to see him occasionally relaxing the strenuousness of his parochial mind. In Machyn's Diary one may read, under 1559, of how "on the XXIIII day of June there was a May Game and St. John Sacerys, with a giant, and drumes and gunes and the IX wordes (i. e. worthies), with spechys, and a goodly pagant with a quen (crowned) and dyvers odur, with specheys; and then Sant Gorge and the dragon, the Mores daunse (morrice dance), and after, Robyn Hode and Lytyll John, and Maid Marion, and frere Tuke, and they had spechys rond a-bout London."

Turning to St. Anne with whom, after the great fire, as has been said, St. John Zachary joined forces, we find her even more typical. In the first place, it is interesting to remember that, for St. Anne, there is no foundation at all except that the Virgin Mary unquestionably had a mother, however disputed in theological circles the fatherhood of her own Son may be. Of this mother not a shred of authentic information exists. She appears first in the Apochryphal Scriptures as St. Anne, and her legend grows in such hands as those of Sir John Mandeville who tells us of the beauty of the oriental palace where she had her abode, an account involving as great a transformation of this unknown peasant mother as that which, in Spanish folk-lore, makes St. James, fisherman of Galilee, the son of a wealthy Spanish hidalgo. She is at last firmly and finally established as a popular saint by the dedication to her, in England, of many churches, of which several

\*See Bibliographical Note at end.



are in London. Nor is she suggested to the popular mind by these relics alone. Her heads are buried all over Europe; while her arms exceed in number those of any octopian pagan goddess. Besides acquiring in the course of her wanderings down the ages, three husbands, she has collected, also, the most charming set of names: "St. Anne in The Grove," "St. Anne in The Willows," and, for a namesake of hers, "Anne of The Wells." In Grasmere she is definitely regarded as a patron of wells; and St. Longinus was, doubtless, divinely inspired to drop one of her heads into the most watery—as into the most appropriate of resting places, the tiny islet of St. Barbara off Lyons. If St. Anne was originally a water-spirit, along with Nymphadora (also canonized) so unearthly sweet of face,—a member, that is, of the rationalized-fairy group of saints,—what more appropriate super-natural mother,—married to a nice human Hebrew,—could possibly be discovered for the marvellous little Virgin who floated up the Temple steps and performed other amazing miracles at the age of seven?

St. Anne's later development, however, seems to me especially interesting. She has, since the date of her establishment in London in the twelfth century, developed into a most active City saint contracting, as it were, a fourth marriage, this time of expediency, with St. John Zachary after they were both burned out in 1666. Indeed, she seems quite to have absorbed Zachary as a personality, her superior importance being even more or less officially recognized since we read of them that "the vestry room (of the joint church) was not regarded as common to both parishes,—St. John being permitted to use it only on suffrance and in return for the annual payment of five shillings." It is interesting that, in this union, little St. Agnes, associated with St. Anne in the original dedication, seems to fade out entirely, like a delicate child dominated by two bustling elders. In the account I read, her name appears only once, appropriately, enough in the item concerning the burial a baby-Percy, child of Henry, ninth Earl of Northumberland.

Anne, as parochial saint, is exhaustless in energy, as she needs be in a parish where, at certain periods of her existence, any sort of disturbance was liable to break out, at any moment, within her walls: "a combustion between a Stranger sometime a Jesuite, but now, thanks be to God, reformed to our church, and one Marler, a Button-maker, contending which should first preach, the Minister being absent;" or a commotion between factions resulting in the tearing of the Book of Common Prayer at its

restoration to the Church, along with the Font, after the passing of the Act of Uniformity. This latter incident might well perplex the mind of a saint already twice a convert; while the way murderers had of seeking sanctuary under her roof must have been trying to an administration used to holding offenders sharply to their deserts. She is, indeed, definitely summary in her disciplinary methods, empowering the Church wardens to burn out disorderly houses "if it be requisite and to make use of a bell when parties are seen going in and out of the said Houses." She hates heresy, handing over to imprisonment and final execution a pelterer named John Claudon; and accepting, if tradition is true, a bequest of six shillings eightpence for faggots for burning heretics. She finds her colleagues in sainthood, also, more or less trying. Though willing, even eager, to provide for her own foundlings, she is obliged to dispute matters vigorously with St. Botolph (who seems peculiarly sly along this line), and St. Leonard Foster, when they attempt to foist on her their proper parish responsibilities. Sometimes, in these cases, the issue is curiously mixed, one quarrel with St. Leonard involving the interesting point that the child in question was born on ground to which both saints laid claim. Both wanted the ground, neither the child. In cases, however, where the waif in question was unquestionably of her own parish, she appears to have taken considerable pains. Sometimes, when discovered these pathetic children required only the payment of "seven shillings to the Crowner for his duty." But, when alive, Anne seems to have taken considerable pains with their individual cases. She gave them suitable names, the most original being that of little Quakoriana Taylor, discovered in the passage leading to the Friends' Meeting House, and spent considerable money trying to give them a start in life. She had cordial relations with the various City Guilds, the Cordwainers' Company coming (their custom still), every New Year's Day to do her honor. "Sir, Your company is desired at The Love-Feast of St. Anne and Agnes on the 26th of July to hear a sermon and afterward to dine together." Such, on an engraved sheet some six inches square, was her form of invitation. She must observe various social usages, going into mourning at the death of such persons as Queen Caroline and the Duchess of Kent, and celebrating with joy the births of royal children. She is much pre-occupied with her dwelling place. It is again and again being "Beautified." One quaint entry runs, "Paid to Mr. Harris [his

name was Apollo] the Bricklayer his salary for doing nothing to this church this year, ten shillings."

It is interesting to compare with these City saints the development of a *recherché* uptown saint like Luke, of Chelsea. He is no burgher-saint with market traffic rumbling around his precincts; and of the sick and poor we get only brief glimpse, by implication, in such statements as that "the benevolence and devotion of Lady Jane Cheyne were much celebrated during the fourteen years of her life in Chelsea;" and that Richard Guilford "left some money to the poor of Chelsea." We read of no vulgar disputes with neighboring saints over foundling children, nor are there any brawls in *his* Chancel. As becomes a physician with a pretty avocation in the shape of painting, his legend in connection with old Chelsea Church has developed along chivalrous and aristocratic lines. He has companied all these years not with substantial aldermanic or burgher ghosts like those of John Robinson, citizen and merchant, Andrew Judde, citizen and skinner, Frances Bancroft, Corporation Officer of St. Helen's; or of Nicholas Twyford, John Franceys, Drew Barentyn, John Sutton, Goldsmiths, at St. Anne's; but with the shadowy Duchess of Northumberland, mother of the Earl of Leicester, with Mary Sidney, mother of Sir Phillip; with Doctor Adams Littleton, Chaplain to Charles II; with Elizabeth de Caumont and with Lady Jane Cheyne. And the children lying there within his walls are not unknown, unmonumented little ghosts, Quakoriana Taylors or Annes of the Wells, but exquisite marble children, like the daughter of Lord and Lady Dacre lying quietly beside her parents, and Jane Lister, "deare childe," in Westminster Abbey. He has not, like Anne and Zachary, maintained merely formal social relations with the great, mourning at their deaths, rejoicing at their marriages, and occasionally burying an infant—Percy. He possibly presided in person (if *subrosa*, and haunted by the reproachful ghost of Thomas More who had served him at the altar and in procession and choir), at a secret marriage of Henry VIII and Jane Seymour in Lawrence Chapel; and the Princess' Elizabeth Tudor, was his neighbor in Crosby House around the corner. His connection with the Napoleonic wars did not consist merely, like St. Anne's and St. Zachary's, in the practical business of providing men and money for the defense of the country. He stands definitely out, chief among the chivalry of the land, by a manifest token,—a pole up above the Chancel arch, with "tiny

\*See Bibliographical Note at end.

fragments of the colors still adhering," bearing his medallion and the designation, "St. Luke, Chelsea," alongside of The King's Colour "made and presented by Queen Charlotte and her daughters and bearing the inscription 'The Queen's royal volunteers.'"

It is interesting to note that St. Luke behaves himself somewhat more like a liberally educated saint towards the crime of heresy than does St. Anne down in the City. While she is producing one Warde in Consistory Court, approving, apparently his statement to the defendant, a cobbler, "I shall make the to bere a fagot the which heretyks (as thow art one off theme) were wont to bere," St. Luke is falling in with Erasmus's conviction that it is a pity to have heretics classed with murderers and thieves in Sir Thomas More's epitaph ("furibus autem et homicidis hereticisque molestus"), and erased it. It is also interesting to find in his church, on the tomb of the daughter of Thomas Lawrence, the sculptural treatment of a conception which, in form of an unorthodox opinion, was adduced as charge against the said cobbler at his trial. "As this candill," said the devout and picturesque cobbler, "doyth vaad and gooeth out, lykwyse my soole shall goo and assend to hevyn." The monument referred to has Mistress Colvile rising from her grave in her winding sheet, the tomb bursting and the heavens opening above her, as suggestion, I have understood, that "in return for her life of piety and good works, the lady was permitted to pass direct to the state of final blessedness without having to wait for the general resurrection and judgment."

It was the National Gallery, as we have seen, that started me off along this line of hagiographic legendizing. The British Museum it was that sent me off along another. Among the vast collection of precious prints contained there, it was on one especially that my thoughts focussed,—a delightful Indian print representing The Raven discoursing to the other animals. Against a background of deep rich blue, at the peak of a rocky pyramid covered with moss and little purple clouds of shrubs, stands the sombre fowl, focal point in an oriental riot of color. Towards him they fly and climb and creep and leap, all the creatures: winged dragons with lavender claws and fierce, wistful eyes, convoyed by whirling glories of gray and golden birds; troops of coalblack horses with silvery-blue coats; tawny lions and tigers and bears; while behind an earnest-eyed crocodile, dim green with effective rose-colored nostrils, troops of bright brown snakes and spotted adders, golden frogs, silver lobsters, and alluring turtles

(bright green bodies fringing olive-hued shell), made their way up from a little pond out of which eager fish of all possible variety were leaping. Scattered around in the interstices of this biological pyramid were all those irritating little creatures that appear in every Natural History Museum or Zoological Garden, which one never knows the names of: pangolins, I suppose, and wombats, etc., and, doubtless, scamels. But, whatever their scale, from formidablest of mammals to flimsiest of flies, all alike are pressing upward with flaming zeal to catch the wisdom falling from The Raven's lips. St. Francis's birds and fish awaiting his words in seemly rows and semi-circles seem tame in comparison with this burning, aspiring throng.

I saw this picture one afternoon up in the Print Exhibition Room; and, having bought a large photograph of it, meditated concerning The Raven's message as I drank tea cosily beneath the rain-drenched skylight of the Museum restaurant. I had still a stretch of time before dinner for aimless wandering through the great halls; and it was during the first dim hour of it, before the electric lights came on, that a singular incident occurred. It happened in front of the great Tutankhamen Lion. As I stood there half dreaming of his distant opened tomb, half remembering the brilliant whirlings and lithe leapings of the Indian beasts, lo! the tiny hieroglyphic beasts in the Lion's inscription began to leap, also, and the stiff little birds to whirl. And I gradually grew aware of a medley of sound, at first mere impact upon my thrilled nerves of suddenly rippling air,—a sensation like nothing so much as the first physical consciousness of the clangor of the bells of St. Paul's before you actually *hear* them ringing. Once and forever, for me, the dim Egyptian gallery woke from its age-long sleep. Out from their nesting places of centuries they sprang, these birds and beasts: black and jointed from papyrus scrolls; glimmering and ghost-like from sunken relief in red or ambrous or green sandstone; while little lions with rosy, spotted manes, and aqua-marinish cranes slipped out from the Theban recension of *The Book of The Dead*. Gradually the Lilliputian humming became deeper and more insistent. With sound like the wheeling of a shining sphere, the colossal Lotus-bud capping the ancient temple column of Rameses II drowsily opened its giant petals anew to the reflection of sunshine flooding suddenly a distant Egyptian tomb; and the stony Pharaohs lengthwise of the hall opened wide upon me their heavy-lidded eyes.

The first fashion in which Egypt awoke for me was in the ex-

cessive loveliness of the landscape of which I suddenly became conscious, evolved, so far as I could see, out of chance phrases in hand-books and histories hitherto unregarded which, floating through my mind, expanded suddenly into dull golden, caverned stretches of sand and rock (as a papyrus scroll might unfold itself into an exquisite colored map), its austere beauty softened by the leafing of sycamore and acacia-trees, of mulberry and pomegranate, and by a brief rapture of spring blossoms—iris and asphodel, poppy and corn flower, and large yellow daisies.

Not only did the land of Egypt wake up for me. So did the gods. It pleased me, as I looked at the paintings, up in the Second Egyptian Room, of the golden cow-headed Hathor gazing meditatively out of the window of a Theban funeral mound,—Hathor, all prettily haloed with green, yellow-rimmed lotus,—to think how she was again snatching glimpses of the sunshine from the open door of Tutankhamen's tomb. She is a most appealing goddess, with charming epithets: "Hathor of the Sycamore Tree," "Hathor the goddess of the land of the Turquoise;" and I found her in many shapes and sizes, from a colossal human head topping a granite column, lovely as the great Lotus-buds with which it alternates, to a tiny obsidian heifer grazing at peace among little lapis lazuli lions and rock-crystal hippopotami, and silver ibises and other amuletic beasts on the velvety sward of a central Exhibition-case. She is so lovely, this Hathor of The Sycamore Tree, that I resolutely suppress memory of the revolting day when, as the Eye of Ra, she proceeded over the whole earth slaying the human race of whom Ra had grown weary, assisted by Sekhet, the Catheaded Lady of the Acacias, who waded about in pools of men's blood and whom, in such a scene, we have no difficulty visualizing. If I cannot quite forget it, I simply say, that the unfortunate episode occurred ages ago before Hathor, as a goddess, had gotten properly projected from out a herd of extremely ferocious cattle,—when she was, as it were, an unlicked young calf of a goddess; and, that, anyway, she and Sekhet did not behave any worse than did the Israelites let loose by Jehovah upon their enemies

Another of the deities in defense of whom I am willing to go to almost any length is Hapi, the gracious, beautiful Nile-god, whom I visited again and again as he stands before his altar in the Egyptian hall among birds and delicate water plants. I liked to think of him down in his cavern under the rock of Philae,—his cavern encircled by a kindly brooding serpent,—clustered water-

plants on his head, pouring out from two vases streams of water that became, respectively, The White and The Blue Niles: one a slender vase with a flat little stream; the other chubby, its stream crinkled. Or Hapi sometimes carries a lovely little altar with long stems of papyri and lotus hanging from it exactly like a series of bells, upon which altars rest the Nile vases with little bundles of grain, like vegetable-seraphs, hovering about them. Once, he is *two* vivid little figures, engaged in symbolizing the union of South and North Egypt by tying together the long lithe stems of growing lotus and papyrus which, in their loopings, suggest delicate nooses destined for the corralling of the tiny, grazing amulet-beasts above referred to. So beneficent and unbelligerent are these figures of the Nile-god that one angrily resents the vision, so graphically represented in the Bible, of his beautiful blue and white streams turned to blood "so that the river stank and the Egyptians could not drink of the water of the river."

But if Hathor and Hapi have thus developed into beautiful, amenable deities, such is not the case with Sekhet, the speckled-granite Acacia Lady above mentioned, from whom I often caught, as I passed, exactly the single high, weird, bubbling snarl which I had been sure, before I ever heard it, would be her characteristic mode of expression. I heard it later, unexpectedly, in the Vatican Museum in Rome and knew precisely the subtle, malevolent figure that would greet me when I turned my head. The inscriptions of her bear the name of Shashanq; and it must be said, for Sekhet, that, in behalf of this, her royal protégé, her temper must have been greatly tried, in her formative years some three thousand years ago, by the whimsicality of her rival, the god of the Hebrews. For Shashanq was one of those exasperated pagan kings whose armies, drawn up for a happy bout of slaughter and plunder, was being constantly checked by Jehovah because the Jews, for instance, had ceased to worship a Golden Calf. Why object to a Golden Calf? Was not she herself, Sekhet, a Cat? Was not Smetsmet, her green basalt friend over yonder, a hippopotamus? And as for Hathor—might not Hathor herself, mated with the Golden Bull of Apis, have been the very dam of the objurgated Calf? It may be here observed that, so fond did I become of the Egyptian stone and gem and papyrus people, I constantly found my sympathies veering around toward them quite away from the hitherto venerated Hebrews. The Hebrews, I found myself saying, were without doubt a very unadaptable people, hard to live with. Why could not Moses have studied

the Egyptians and tried to get on with them? Even Darius tried, and so did Cambyses. As for the Ptolemies, they simply settled down among them and adopted all their customs.

Not only did the Egyptian gods become very familiar and dear to me. So did the Pharaohs, who hitherto had been merely expressionless, wigged and curiously-tailed statues in museums. Even so, there had been some thing fine and Epic about them; but now, endued with new life, they stepped off their pedestals and took their places definitely among my ancient heroes. Exceedingly interesting was the fashion in which I found that some of them were, indeed, much-cherished old friends. I had known, to be sure, that Rameses II was the Pharaoh of the Oppression; but not that he was the Greek Sesostris (see Iliad). Nor had I the slightest idea that the amiable and sprightly Amenhetep III second Pharaoh before Tutankhamen, was the Memnon of the Greeks. I had often looked with interest at Seti I,—Seti of the Epic Wanderings,—but I had never discovered before that he was the father of the admired princess, Myrrhra, who extricated Moses from the bull-rushes. Nor had I fully grasped, though I literally knew it, the fact that the Pharaoh of the Oppression was not the Pharaoh of the Exodus, whose name was Menephthah. Other obscurer identifications or connections interested me: to know, for instance, that Haa-ab-Ra, sculptured on a lime-stone stele, was that Pharaoh Hophra whose name as a child I found fascinating, of whom Jeremiah said, because he quite naturally would not help Zedekiah against Nebuchadnezzar II, "This is a sign to you, that I shall punish you in this place. Behold, I will give Pharaoh Hophra, the king of Egypt, into the hands of his enemies and into the hands of them that seek his life." And I was even interested to find the prophet Nahum, a shadowy person hitherto, gaining some distinctness in my mind merely because his account, in the Old Testament, of the burning and pillaging of Thebes corresponded with that of the great cylinder of Ashnerbani-al in the Babylonian Room, who spends his days pleasantly chasing fugitives through a bas relief and impaling them on stakes.

Though thus interested in these various connections and identifications fraught, as they were, with stirring Epic quality, they would yet have left these marble images merely heroes and gods, fully alive but very remote. The really thrilling moment came when I was able to understand emotionally, not merely to conceive, the full significance of the serene, expressionless repose of



of these colossal marble countenances; to realize it as the mere hieratic royal mask assumed by these high personages, and to catch behind it the harassed faces of living men. It came to me, mostly, as in the case of Egypt itself, through the sudden burgeoning into significance of mere phrases in catalogue and history whereby many of the clay tablets and granite stele and inscribed gems and scarabs and papyrus rolls became, for me, mere domestic annals of the simple daily doings of the Pharaohs. The language inscribed on these dry clay tablets and azure faience scarabs lived again as records of the loves and sports of the lad, Amenhetep; the king of Babylon descended forever from his Epic pedestal as I looked at a pettish clay-letter from him to this same Amenhetep, saying that only a *fragment* of his accompanying gift was to go to Nefertiti, Amenhetep's wife, because she has not asked, in her last communication, with sufficient solicitude, after his health. Above all, it endears to one extremely Pepi II of the Sixth Dynasty to learn that, when Her-Khuf, a caravan master, brought back a pigmy from "the land of the ghosts," not only did he command Her-Khuf to bring it at once to Memphis, but also sent explicit orders to the effect that "the pigmy was to be watched during the day so that it might not fall into the water, and that his sleeping place was to be visited ten times each night by properly qualified people." "For," said Pepi, "I wish to see him more than all the tributes of Smii and Punt." It is to be hoped that the pigmy proved the most satisfactory of all the little pigmies whose skeletons have been recently found, and that he gratefully danced "the dance of the gods" before the king to a ripe old age.

Naturally however, since it was Tutankhamen, last king of the Eighteenth Dynasty, whose post-mortem experiences at the hands of Lord Carnarvon and Mr. Howard Carter had resulted in vivifying for me all Egyptian history, it was with him and his immediate predecessors that I was especially pre-occupied. Though Tutankhamen has further burst into romance as hero of a recently-published historical novel, I find him on the whole the dullest of the group. But what a group to be even the dullest in: Amases I, Amenhetep I, Thothmes I, II, III, Amenhetep II, Thothmes IV, Amenhetep III, and Amenhetep IV greatest glory and greatest failure of his line. To this tragic young figure, Tutankhamen succeeded as Pharaoh, and suffers by contrast. After all, he was only a son-in-law in the line, anyway. Compared to Amenhetep IV's, even his boomerang is less engaging,—a mere

fragment, unornamented with lotus buds and eyes of Horus as is his predecessor's. In spite of the glamor thrown about his name by recent events, I wandered around the Museum gazing unmoved at his scarabs and his sandals and his procelain tube for eye paint; and at alabaster vases and funeral boats and dried dates and folding chairs, all starred in the catalogue as exactly resembling those just found in his tomb. He still remains to me merely a mummied son-in-law of the magnetic Akhnaten—which is the *other* name of Amenhetep IV.

The case was entirely different with this Akhnaten and his father Amenhetep III, of whom mention has already been made. I trailed *their* stibium-pots, and blue porcelain tubes and vases, and glazed cobalt staff-handles to the remotest lair of the British Museum. I was fascinated by a hunting scarab which recorded Amenhetep's killing of one hundred and two lions with his own hands in the first ten years of his reign; and it was while hunting, by the way, that he met the lady of the pretty love-affair recorded on the clay tablet already referred to. She became his beautiful and deeply loved queen, for whom he built a marvellous palace, wherein was born the remarkable child Akhnaten of tragic fate, who appears as variously interpreted by modern scientific historians as he could possibly have been by medieval legend-makers, being denominated either "a doctrinaire and a prig," or a "practical politician who felt the closing grasp of the Amon priesthood and attempted to break its financial power," or "an idealist who hoped to rule by love alone," or "a religious fanatic," or "the first individual in history." Thus do historians differ in the ultimate interpretation of him, and, so far as *I* know, any one of them may be right. But there is little doubt which legend of him will be chosen by the layman under the spell of the sensitive young face sunk in painted relief in a stone tablet. That he was "an extraordinary young man" all agree, basing their conviction on the following facts: that dying at the age of thirty-six, he had revolutionized Egyptian art, "introducing into it the elements of simplicity and truth to nature;" that he broke down, in his court, the meticulous etiquette surrounding the god-born Pharaoh; that he conceived one supreme God who, God of love, was God as well of the stranger as of the Egyptian; and that he let slip away, without a single blow, the bulk of the foreign possessions of the Empire. A record like this, thirteen hundred years before Christ, in its mere statement, turns even truth into something stranger than legend,—assumes automatically, indeed,

the character of legend. In his tomb prepared, doubtless, during his lifetime, and biographical rather than sepulchral in decoration, the Pharaoh abandons conventional dignity of pose and expression: we see him driving with his wife and children surrounded by an unarmed body guard; sitting in natural attitudes in the midst of his family, jesting and laughing with his children, six small princesses who play around in charming red-golden nakedness, as small princesses sensibly did in those days, petting soft giraffes; mourning the second of them, Meke-ton, as deeply as other Pharaohs mourned son and heir; and "selecting his intimates from peasants as well as potentates." All this writers agree on. It is the interpretation of his foreign policy upon which they disagree,—his letting his foreign possessions as a whole, slip away without a stroke. Was he a practical statesman so absorbed in breaking the power of a greedy priesthood that he had no time for foreign affairs? Such sheer specialization of his undoubted acumen and foresight seems a contradiction in terms. Was he a weak religious dreamer letting things merely drift along until it was too late? The vigor and constancy with which he carried out internal reforms does not look like it. What then was his attitude during twenty years during which his faithful soldiers and servants, surrounded by seething rebellion in Asia, stuck to their posts with despairing hearts as the inevitable catastrophe came nearer and nearer? However little imperialistic one may be in sentiment, it is unquestionably true that the clay records on the Tell-el-Amarna tablets make pathetic reading: "Thus (saith) Abi-Milki thy servant. . . Indeed I am keeping guard over the fortress of the king which he placed in my hands. My face is set towards going to see the face of my lord the king, but I am unable to do so because of the hand (i.e., action) of Zimrida of the city of Sidon; for should he hear of my departure to the palace he will perform acts of enmity unto me. Let the king my lord give me twenty (?) men to guard the fortress of the king my lord, and then let me come before the king my lord, so that I may see his happy face. . . Let the king my lord turn his face (to me) and give me water to drink. . . and wood for his servant (to burn). . . Let the king my lord know that we are cut off from the land, and that we have neither water (to drink) nor wood (to burn). Let the king know that fire broke out in the city of Ugarit, and that one-half of the city hath been burnt, but the other half hath escaped. The Khatti have

disappeared. Itakama hath conquered the city of Kadesi, and Azirul hath made enmity with Namyawiza. I know the evil act which zimrida hath committed and how he has gathered together ships and men from the cities which are friendly to Aziru (and that they will come) against me. . . Let the king turn his face to his servant, and set out to come (to us)." If we reject the practical statesman legend and the weak dreamer legend, there remains only one other theory to adopt, namely, that "this extraordinary young man" is the first practical pacifist, who was willing to carry his ideals to their ultimate limit; that, conceiving "a benevolent God to whom all his creatures are equally objects of affectionate regard," he deliberately refused to engage in that wholesale massacre which we call war, preferring to lose Egypt's foreign possessions all of which, according to the economic conceptions of his time, were the Pharaoh's own personal property. Whether this theory be true or not, it is certain that to Akhnaten was meted out, to its last pang, the punishment that meets the conscientious objector. He died with waves of popular and priestly hatred beating upon him from every side to be known for years after as "that criminal Akhaten;" and to endure, poor hounded ghost, all post-mortem torture that religious fanaticism and hatred could devise.

We have thus seen the ghost of Akhnaten entering on a tragic career after death; and whatever death may mean to the modern, it must have been for the Egyptian the greatest possible adventure. The interior of an Egyptian tomb, far from being silent and sepulchral, was a distinctly lively place. People speak of the Pharaohs sleeping the sleep of ages in their hidden tombs. That, of course, is absurd. Tutankhamen, for instance, was by no means asleep when Lord Carnarvon and Mr. Howard Carter entered his tomb. He was simply interrupted in the midst of a very busy day in his post-mortem existence. The silence and gloom which greeted the excavators were mere pretense. The Ka sank back amazed into the great stone statue; the swift servitors shrank and hardened into alluring little green and blue and amethystine porcelain images; the lilies and lotus flowers, feathered birds, and glowing fruits on the tables, and the rich garments of the guests, shrivelled into faded wisps and remnants on gorgeous dishes or in rich chests; his queen, along with his court officials, sank back into stiff, stark figures on the wall among the hieroglyphic birds and beasts which ceased, on the

instant, their potent, magical murmurs and flutterings. Once before it had happened to them here, long ages ago, this breaking of robbers in on their enchanted life. Once before this they had presented a blank front to ruthless intruders who had hastily entered and withdrawn. It was not the mystery of age-long death that awed Lord Carnarvon and Mr. Howard Carter as they entered the tomb, but that of a suddenly suspended breathless life. Tutankhamen's ultimate tragedy was upon him.

It is, as has been said, an interesting fact to modern consciousness that however commonplace, in ancient Egypt, one's earthly life had been, once a mummy there was little dearth of excitement. In the first place, as has been previously implied, there was nothing whatever dead about you. Your very body became "glorified, lasting, incorruptible, endued with knowledge." Also, you disintegrated in curious but vital fashion. You simply lay there letting fly a number of glorious things which never quite got away from you, like a fleet of delicate-hued balloons attached to strings in a child's hands. There were six of you: your Ka, your Ab, your Sekhem, your Khu, your Ba, and your Khaibit. You let them out through a little door in your sarcophagus just level with your head; and you watched them through a large Eye painted above it. It must have been confusing to even the best regulated mummy when all its selves visited it together. Looking up you would see, grouped around you, your astral body, its vaguer double, a dusky shadow, and a shining translucent "pod" of great beauty, while down the shaft from the Chamber of Offerings, usually late, slid the Ba, a charming human-headed hawk that fluttered lovingly up against your breast.

Of all these little figures the Ka and the Ba are most easily graspable by the mere modern mind; and, indeed, to the ancient evidently, the others seldom appearing in tomb-paintings, though I have seen one interesting instance in the case of Queen Nefertari, wife of Rameses II, in which her Ka, or astral body, was sitting at the table playing draughts whence, rising, it passed out of the tomb to adore the sun, while her Ba perched on the top of the door-way and her Khu stood intelligently by in the form of a beautiful pale blue crane. The Ka was the most definitely domestic; in short the Ka was *you* projected up, as host, into the busy social life of the Chamber of Offerings above stairs. It dwelt in a great statue made as exactly like you as could possibly be, and led an interesting and varied existence. The Ba, on the other hand, dwelt with the gods, coming down only for periodical

visits. The Khaibit, or Shadow, was an inveterate wanderer, too often off haunting I judge, to be much in evidence in normal tomb life.

I have found few things more interesting, during leisure moments, as I loitered through the Egyptian Rooms, than the imagining the experiences of a brisk and full-blooded Ka in its daily life. Inside a tomb-chamber in one of the great halls of the Museum, ancient tomb-life became extremely vivid. Sometimes nothing happened for a long time. The Pharaoh just lay there in the dim light, peacefully asleep. But always, sooner or later, the great Eye above the little door on the right side of the sarcophagus grew luminous, the little door itself opened and, like a whir of luminous vapor, the Khu-Crane flew to the top of the coffin, and, after it, the Ka, who slowly ascended the deep shaft up into the Chamber of Offerings. The Ka summoned his attendants by repeating Chapter VI of *The Book of The Dead*; and instantly the seven hundred small porcelain images, purple, green and blue, shimmered into warmth and light. They opened great chests revealing marvellous fabrics,—linen into a square inch of which are woven together five hundred and forty threads, soft gazelle skins, loin cloths adorned with strange long tails, great wigs topped with “lily-adorned cones containing a ball saturated with oil designed to run slowly down over the hair and shoulders;” papyrus or palm fibre sandals with faint rosy stain; and a wealth of anklets, bracelets, armlets, necklaces, collars, pectorals, pendants, amulets, earrings, jars of henna, rouge, pomades and scents which emitted languorously their heavy fragrance. Luxuriously clothed and adorned at last, the Ka seats himself on an ebon couch inlaid with ivory, and reads the bill of fare graved in long lines in the gray stone wall amid graphic representations of its various items. And suddenly the whole right side of the tomb becomes a glorified larder, alive with color, from which the swift servants cull, at will, viands of all possible variety: pigeons or ducks or geese dressed in their feathers; gazelle and antelope to be eaten with seeds of spices; onions and cucumbers, beans, peas, lentils, radishes, pumpkins, water-melons, leeks, garlic, turnips, carrots, egg-plant and spinach; figs, dates, mulberries, grapes, pomegranates; syrups and sweet meats, milk and cheese; beer from honey and wine from dates.

His astral needs thus abundantly satisfied, he spends his day as his tastes dictate. He may pass out through the door of his tomb to spend it in his old way on his estates, watching his scribes

stock-taking,—beautiful rows of cattle, black, white, gray, tan, presenting themselves duly for inspection, or dainty geese, their heads laid “profile to profile,” like the angels in a Renaissance Church Judgment Day painting. He listens, as of old, to the chatter of the herdsmen: “Hurry not with thy feet, oh thou who are holding the geese. Dost thou not know of any other time in which to talk?”—“Come, come, get away! Don’t talk too much in the presence of the honorable gentleman!” Or he may wander among his vineyards and his fields, listening to the singing of the laborers: “It is a fine day and I am cool. The oxen are pulling well and the sky is what we would have it. Let us work for the prince;” or to the happy boast of the old man combing the seed-heads under a tree: “If you bring me eleven thousand and nine sheaves, I am the man to strip them all;” or to the “coaxing” exhortation of the charioteer to his horses: “Stand still!—Do not be disobedient, you good horse whom your master loves, and of whom the prince boasts to everybody.” Or he may choose a peaceful domestic hour with his family beside a lake where young geese swim among the water lilies, reclining at sumptuously-spread tables among palms, flowering acacias, pomegranate and sycamore-fig trees, amidst whose fruit, at judicious intervals, hang his enemies’ heads; or fowling in his slim boat through reed-filled marshes midst a delicate storm-breeze of startled birds,—geese, herons, cranes, interspersed with golden butterflies,—his hunting cat leaping into the air, his small daughter, clad in a massive gold necklace, at his feet. Sometimes, more adventurous, he sails on a strange quest far into the East, to the Mountain of the Sunrise, where the Morning Star is singing, and where, between the Two Sycamores, he finds the entrance to the Elysian Fields; and here he sees his companion, the Ba, among the other beautiful spirits, reaping barley “three cubits high,” Osiris himself moving among them, “his limbs silver-gold,” his hands “blue like lapis lazuli,” the space either side of him “the color of turquoise.” He never stays long however, being of a domestic turn of mind, preferring, most often, merely to lie at ease in his pleasant tomb, eating and drinking, receiving periodic visits from his living relatives, or merely lying quietly gazing up at the great blue Scarabaeus adored by green Baboons painted on the ceiling, or out at the sunset through the open mastaba door; or, refusing to touch the spring of vivid life buried deep in the heart of each pictured scene on the wall, whereby he may render himself an actual partaker once more of,

the experiences they delineate, he lets them remain mere pictured biography of his own earthly experience to brood over endlessly as he lies there at rest.

The life above depicted, however, is an ideal life such as probably fell to the lot of very few mummies. Chances were on the whole, greatly against you. In the first place, you might die before your tomb was completed; or your relatives might be, for some reason, hurried and careless concerning some details in your obsequies. In fact, on these scores, there was much occasion for pre-mortem concern. I stood a long time before the rounded immature young face of Shep-ses-kaf, 3000 B.C., and in imagination, could see the lines of worry gradually creasing the smooth forehead, and shadowing the mouth when later, a young heir left suddenly alone by the death of his father, harassed by rivals, he bundled hastily into the tomb, the unfinished statues of the distinguished Mycerinus and, presumably, set about finishing his own. What inconvenience this caused Mycerinus can easily be conjectured; for the Ka is a haughty and sensitive creature who, requiring at times, a palpable shape to slip into, (for receiving visitors, for instance; he did not mind loafing in astrals when alone), nevertheless refused to occupy it unless, in minutest detail, it resembled his mortal body. Indeed, such defective slate or red granite or marble bodies would not only be embarrassing but might even result in your Ka's permanent disability, distorting or cramping your delicate limbs or blurring your features. Or even more gruesome results might cripple forever your post-mortem existence. There was always danger that the mummy bandages might not be properly adjusted, the soul with its various elements being thus confined forever, like struggling caged birds, behind obstructed mouth and nostrils.

But even if all ante-mortem and funereal preparations have been scrupulously attended to, even if you have been interred with all possible ceremony, and your soul has passed triumphant through the great Judgment Hall of Osiris where he sits on a lofty throne, in front of him, on a shining lotus flower, in trim row, the tiny sons of Horus,—even then you are still far from safe. Human ignorance may still, even fatally, interrupt your serene existence. Christian hermits, creeping for shelter on a stormy night, may austere scrape away all the lovely ladies from the wall reliefs, thus depriving you forever of feminine society; or peasants, with reverent iconoclasm, may scratch into fine powdered dust, for medical purposes, your favorite hunting hound



or boomerang, thus crippling forever your sporting equipment; or an enemy's malice may proceed, systematically, to render your future life futile forever, as in the case of the most unhappy Menna\* who lived his mere mortal life about 1400 B. C. Some implacable foe has gone through his tomb consistently mutilating the bas reliefs in every spot where such proceeding could definitely inconvenience and irritate Menna in his daily post-mortem life. He has cut the boomerang in half. Menna can, therefore, never hunt ducks again. The eye of his pictured figure is destroyed. Never again can he inspect his estates or rejoice in the beauty of his fields and crops and fragrant woods and pastures. Knobs are cut from the measuring ropes. Never again can he count his acres. In his boat among the reeds his hand is destroyed. He can no longer spear his fish. With a curious refinement of malice, the unknown foe has destroyed the mouth of a pictured laborer to whom a girl is offering a jar of water. Not only, by this device, must the unhappy man himself slowly perish, but, for lack of sufficient man-power, which this laborer symbolized, Menna's thriving estates must lapse into bewildered desert.

But another even more deadly peril threatened you. It might be neither ignorance nor hatred, but mere human rapacity that ruined forever your eternal prospects. Robbers might come in two shapes: first, hurriedly in the night, breaking into your holy of holies, snatching your inlaid furniture, your robes and valuables of all sorts from your chests, tearing open your sarcophagus and rifling your very body of its jewels and adornments. Thereafter you must dress poorly and shabbily, a broken and bankrupt Ka. Or they might come in broad daylight, these intruders, not one day, but day after day, quietly and systematically exploring, with complete sets of implements, and white foreign faces, to its dimmest depth and corner, every inch of your habitation. And, at last, these strange, pale people might approach your very self,—very painstakingly and gently and reverently, it must be admitted, and might even bear you away across strange seas and deserts, far away from your thousands of years of peaceful tomb life. Sometimes your adventures might be strange and terrible. What a fate he had, Mycerinus,—builder of the third great pyramid 4000 B.C.,—his sarcophagus tossed from a wrecked vessel into the stormy ocean to be beaten and buffeted and finally borne up by the billows upon the seashore near Gibraltar! Who can tell how they

\*See Bibliographical Note at end.

tortured him, evil spirits astride the richly-colored chest careering onward night and day through grey swirling waters, before he found at last desolate and alien sanctuary in the first Egyptian Room in the British Museum?

Such were the chances and vicissitudes that might agitate the breast of the nobly-born mummy. He might have his bitter but noble epic tragedy. He might even have his great revenge, as when Tutankhamen caught, through his muffled ears, the news that the gods, for his high sake, had smitten as with a thunderbolt the pale Chief who had entered his Tomb, and sowed dissension among his followers.. But occasional dire chance, even when unmitigated by soul-satisfying vengeance, is not so moving to contemplate as the pathetic certainties awaiting the poor. I do not know that I have ever more bitterly resented class distinctions and inequalities,—not even during visits to the English House of Commons when Conservatives were talking,—than during my contemplation of the post-mortem fates of Egyptian workers. The minimum requirements for the maintenance of a decent necropolitan standard of living were as follows: a sarcophagus; a door-plate; a set of canopic jars; a statue; a Ushapti figure; a heart-scarab in hard, green stone inserted in your breast to take the place of your actual heart nested in a canopic jar; a copy of religious texts written on stone or wood or papyrus; a set of vessels for holding unguents, oils, astringent liquids, etc; a little furniture; food; clothing. What place for *these* in the shallow graves made in the desert or in caves and hollows of the mountains? The image in which a poor man's Ka might find its palpable body, so necessary for the palpable enjoyment of its simple post-mortem existence, was one of those turned out wholesale by cheap workmen, as unlike as possible to the great beautiful ones of blue-gray slate or red granite in which the happy spirits of the rich feasted and caroused and which, that they might feel perfectly at home, were wrought into the most exact images of the bodies they had inhabited on earth, even to the reproduction of physical deformity. Compelled thus to use mouths and eyes and ears and noses that muffled his own like an ill-fitting mask, to crowd himself into ill-adjusted arms and legs and heads that cramped or distended him, the indignant Ka, at best, shuffled miserably along through eternity. But an even bitterer fate befall the spirit of the Egyptian serf. It was possible that, however, virtuous and industrious in his life on earth, he might be requisitioned among the forced-labor gangs who, under

celestial task-masters, did the hard work in the Elysian Fields. The happy, high-born spirits also worked there as, on earth, Achilles and Laertes worked in their paternal fields. But these high ones moved as gods over the budding or the ripened acres, rejoicing, like Triptolemus himself, in the promise of the budding spring-time and the easy opulence of the autumn. No such joy of possession or sympathetic self-identification with the very forces of nature, whereby in their mortal days, these lords and princes sometimes, in lofty exultation, laid down their very lives that their sacred blood might magically enrich the soil, could animate these others, poor, bent, drudging spirits, who must accomplish, beneath the lash of brutal overseers, their muscle-breaking tasks.

A second result sprang from the vivid impression made upon my mind by the Indian print of the Raven with his attendant birds and beasts. Not only did all Egypt rouse itself for me, but also all the animal life in the British Museum. The stirring of the little hieroglyphic lions on the Tutankhamen statue was only the precursor of the murmurings and rustlings accompanying me for days through its halls. Some of these creatures have long been old friends of mine, curiously and lovingly pursued; but now I became curiously aware that they were pursuing me. Often just after I had passed them I could hear uncanny noises: deep, muffled booming of the colossal green granite beetle; subdued metallic clanging of the trappings of the Assyrian Bull; straining of the mighty haunches of the great mutilated Lions from the Sacred Way of the Branchidae. But these portentous creatures were not the only ones of whose awareness I was growingly conscious. Everywhere from the smaller creatures there fell in behind me creakings, flutterings, soughings, sighings: from the little blue and purple and yellow scarab-beasts, and the nut-nibbling terra-cotta squirrels on flat Roman lamps; from amuletic cats with delectably-curved tails; from little gray incised vultures on Nah-Ab-Ra's coffin; from sacred fluffy-finned buff fishes delicately wrought in porcelain; from luminous, wine-colored sard lionesses and from owls of red jasper. But these rustlings of the creatures did not always occur merely sporadically as I passed from room to room. In certain moods, I found crowds of them drawn from all corners of the Museum, gathered around some typical beast. Sometimes mere similarity of natural element seemed whimsically to attract weird Conferences of Creatures to some particular habitat of their kind, as when the

delicate white river flowing, wavy-lined, in bas relief, along the western wall of the Nimroud Gallery (presided over by a group of terra-cotta priests in fish skins), rose and leapt along its banks like brooks in spring, as into it, through mystical underground channels, all the lovely, meticulous waters in the Museum made their way. Into its current swam dolphins from circular parti-colored pools in Roman pavements; and all the dazed aquatic things struggling to birth in the ocean lying bedded in the clay of the Babylonian creation tablets; and, from his black cavern beneath the sea rippling from edge to ambrous edge of the Nekhtu-Amen Papyrus, the awful sun destroying monster Aapep. The normal inhabitants of the river, ghostly, eager-faced fishes, nowise abashed by their portentous visitors, found their own proper ranks invaded by iridescent wraiths of themselves quivering out from incised gems,—emerald, amethyst, chalcedony; by small, brilliant, green enamelled dragons; and by lustrous little hippocamps, their bodies huge irregular pearls. Sometimes Conferences of Creatures seemed to spring from the basis of some temperamental or aesthetic affinity as when, around the melanic leopard,—silent, sinister, a black ghost,—gathered all the grotesques of the Museum, grim, and comic: the terra-cotta figurines of the archaic period, weird distortions and combinations of human and animal forms; clay pots and jars fluttering and leaping and running in the shape of hens, goats, sheep, calves, like Ovidian transformations in some ceramic Hades, along with their sophisticated highly-wrought counterparts, jewelled stags, unicorns and ostriches from the Waddesley Cup Collection; a weird rout of mummied creatures—gazelles, calves, rams, crocodiles, birds, snakes; a terra-cotta sphinx, doubtless with a horrid complex (for her features were pleasant), engaged in devouring a hapless youth; a grisley, cooked water-fowl three thousand years old, its wings gnawed into, through the ages, by pauper Kas; satyrs—burlesques of Heracles in the garden of the Hesperides, plucking pitchers instead of apples from its famous trees. On the other hand, around the gentle harpies in the Archaic Room, bearing off tenderly in their arms small clinging souls, hovered a strangely contrasted throng: flights of purple swans, or rosy Eroses drifting through the black skies of Greek red-figured vases; winged horses which, half buried in the sides of of great terra-cotta wine-jars, had extricated themselves, for the nonce, from the red clinging clay; charming ape-spirits of the dawn, devout, delicately ecstatic, still absently hymning the

rising sun; ghostly bats, symbol of the four winds, waving softly and rhythmically their outspread wings; satyrs surrounding a rusty green copper bust of Silenus (like the mossy face of a sculptured gargoyle-fragment fallen long years ago into an old cloister-court),—satyrs subdued from their old wildness into gentle rural sophistication, gathering grapes with engaging earnestness, or pressing and piping and carrying overflowing baskets, or wistfully serving rural-gods, or consorting with reformed maenads in a serene otherworld meadow-corner.

These community hauntings of me, if I may so express it, while charming and stimulating, were also sometimes a little terrifying, as if indicative of certain mystic, unifying powers capable of producing, on occasion, combinations and classifications among the objects in the Museum quite different from those indicated in the catalogue. It was as if these creatures, of whose awareness I was so growingly conscious, were symbolic of far-reaching, deeply significant forces and tendencies. It was with this conviction strong upon me that I entered the Egyptian Room one day to find collected there one of these fundamentally congenial, but often physically-separated, groups. There they were, the Great Egyptian Hawk of Horus, the Indian Elephant God Ganesa, a Sacred Okapi from South Africa, and a Persian Cat of peculiar size and fierceness, each centre of a throng of compatriot Birds and Beasts; while around the outskirts of the assembly growled and prowled strange little creatures from sundry islands and archipelagoes of the southern seas. And suddenly I knew that they had something on their minds that they wanted to say to me, this particular group of creatures; that, knowing me for one who dearly loved their kind in medieval Bestiaries where, freighted with allegorical meaning, they showed in quaint and lovely forms, they were trusting me to interpret, also, their newer significances and yearnings. Somewhat appalled by this obligation and full, also, of the liveliest curiosity, I listened while the confused murmur of sound to which I had grown accustomed shaped itself into articulate words. "Why are we? Why are we?" trumpeted and grunted and wailed and roared and snarled and chirped and sang and shrilled The Creatures, their eyes from thatches of tangled hair or half-open shell (for monstrous tropical bivalves, too, were there), glaring steadily at me.

Before this startling inquiry, thus astonishingly presented, I was utterly abashed; but reply was absolutely necessary. "I do not know! I do not know!" I murmured piteously.

"Why do you ask *me*? Why do you not ask some well-qualified creature like the Sphinx?"

"Which Sphinx?" queried my captors. "The ram-headed Sphinx, the lion-headed Sphinx, the hawk-headed Sphinx or the human-headed Sphinx?—the sard Sphinx, the granite Sphinx, or the papyrus Sphinx?—the Sphinx as Tutankhamen treading down his enemies, or the Sphinx as Ptolemy, or the Sphinx as Poincare?" At my suggestion of the Sphinx of Oedipus, "It isn't here! She isn't here!" they chorused impartially. And then they were silent staring at me.

Seeing myself in a really desperate position, I strove to rise to the occasion. "The question you propound," I said, "is such an intricate one that, on the spur of the moment, I feel quite unable to answer it." I turned awkwardly and uncertainly toward the door. But a lithe and efficient aqua-marine locust, somewhat taller than I, with ironic emerald eyes, twanging a nonchalant note on his little lute, stepped quietly in front of me. There was another silence during which The Creatures continued staring fixedly at me.

"Really," I began, this time appealingly, for I was now thoroughly frightened, "I just can't answer that question! I really don't know *why* you are! How should I? I don't even know *why I am!*"

A philosophical-appearing Indian Ibis came to my rescue. "I told you at the beginning," she said, "that an occidental human, however well-meaning, cannot be expected to shape a universal proposition so as to include in it, at once, all particulars, distinguishing nevertheless, by subtle emphasis, the point in question." She turned to me indulgently. "The special category in the Problem of Being that we want dealt with now is that of *Place*—" and, at these words, all The Creatures broke into weird, disconcerting chorus, "Why are we *here*?"

"Oh, that!" I cried, immensely relieved. "You are practically asking me to explain the *raison d'être* of a great Museum. Why, that is simple! Or—well, is it? Is it so simple?" Dismay swept over me again. "Do you or do you not mean to ask me—" But before I could finish, the assembly, for the third time, broke out weirdly, "Yes, we do! *Why* is this Museum?"

At that question such a variety of images swept over my mind that I was for the moment nonplussed. Then a gleam of hope broke in on me as my eye fell upon the brilliant pyramid of Creatures clustered around the Raven. "Ask the Raven!

*He knows!*" I pleaded. And then the most fearsome utterance I had yet heard burst from the throng. "*You are the Raven!*" they chorused; and again they were silent, staring.

I turned my eyes, helpless, on that sombre bird. "They are quite right. To all intents and purposes you are," he said courteously. "In my native environment, amidst the traditions that gave me birth, I was able to solve for my fellow creatures all the problems of existence. But here in this cold northern clime I have lost my bearings."

I pressed my point. "I can scarcely believe," I said, "that so universal a bird should find himself at a loss. Throughout all ages and all lands you have been known. Indeed, you have only to go to Winchmore Hill, to see large numbers of yourself. And your penetrating, even uncanny, wisdom is celebrated in America by a notable poem. So cosmopolitan a creature must surely be able to adapt himself to novel conditions."

"There are two reasons why I cannot go to Winchmore Hill," said the Raven, whose scholarship was of that type which thoroughly ties up one point before it attacks another. "In the first place, the windows are never open; and in the second, my going would utterly disperse one of the finest collections in the Museum." He glanced proudly down at his colorful satellites. "We feel our responsibility. Though, as Indians, we resent constraint by Great Britain, nevertheless we stand, on the whole for established order. At least, we feel that time is *not yet ripe*. Should we ever change our minds—" he raised his wings slowly and portentously, and a murmur ran through the Pyramidal Beasts. The Creatures in the hall around, especially the Egyptians and the Persians, muttered sympathetically, and a Turkish Antelope gave a faint cheer. The Raven frowned. "Bad taste," he said sharply. "While loyal, we are loyal." ("He means," buzzed the Locust in my ear, "that, *should* we decide to revolt against the Empire, there'd be hell in the Museum. All the nations that don't like G.B. would organize, march through the building and smash the specimens, beginning with the Chelsea china.")

It would, indeed, have been a dull mind which could not have seized its cue from the trend of the conversation. I proceeded, with the deference that so delicate a subject demanded, to argue that surely one of the reasons for a Museum might be the opportunity it offered for effectively developing international understanding. Surely so great a concourse of creatures, representing every nation on earth, should furnish abundant ground for better

mutual comprehension of each other on the part of the races represented. Why not, indeed, organize right here a great international League of Beasts? Its bearing on the issue of internationalism, in the opportunity offered for mutual exposition and interpretation, could hardly be overestimated.

My argument met with that deep, ominous murmur so disconcerting to mere mortal wandered by chance into the heart of the animal kingdom, whether in jungle or zoological garden. So long and confused was the murmuring that I gave up in despair any hope of comprehending it; but finally it, too, grew articulate. "How *can* we interpret ourselves,—to *whom* can we interpret ourselves, academic fool?" roared and shrilled and sang again The Creatures. And a single voice, in strange, high monotone, chanted, "We are here in a land we do not love, forced by the conquest, or wrung from the poverty and ignorance, of the regions that bore us. Like the emptiness of the niches of The Parthenon, such is the emptiness of our homelands for lack of us,—such the emptiness of our hearts. In fair Italy from the depths of the earth they are emerging again to rejoice in the sunshine, Pompeiian birds and beasts *twice* born of the soil they love. How can *we* rejoice, fettered here in the halls of our foreign masters? Alas, for the blue skies and the burning sands and the broad shining rivers, gone forever! Can the Fettered love the Fetterer? Can the Despoiled love the Spoiler? Can the enslaved, can the coerced, can the un-determined of Self interpret him to the Free? Why prate you to *us* of peace between the nations?" And the voice ceased, and the eyes of all The Creatures looked me through and through. Then they sank into immobility once more and, in spite of my wistful wooing, never spoke to me again though behind me I heard them, many a time, stirring and rustling as I passed, and caught, many a time, across my shoulder, the glimmer of the green, ironic eyes of the versatile Locust. And thenceforward, though I often reasoned with myself as to the necessity, for purposes of scholarship, of great Museums like this, I could never again see a striking archaeological relic without becoming instantaneously conscious of its original background. The ruined Lion, for instance, in the Mausoleum Room, found high up on a towering cliff over-hanging the sea: always, when I looked at him, the Museum walls melted away leaving him couched majestically there against the sky above a dawn-touched ocean, roaring softly, like the Colossus of Rhodes, to greet the rising sun. And, looking, I understood quite well the



scornful withdrawal from me, and the silence, of *The Creatures*.

It was with this really exciting and disconcerting adventure in mind that I drifted over one morning, in the fog, to the Museum of Natural History in South Kensington. I entered its doors with some relief. In contrast with the Bloomsbury institution, I should find here, I was sure, a soothing lack of sophistication and meticulousness,—no hybrid creation, springing from the the play of man's mind upon natural phenomena, but genuine, natural creatures that had actually once lived and moved. The large, flightless, phlegmatic Dodo is a far less disconcerting bird than the soaring pyrotechnical Phoenix; the pathetic seacow, hounded through the ocean to extinction at last in Behring Sea, than the temperamental Unicorn; and the man-eating tiger, than the blood-thirsty Sphinx with the complex above referred to. I was for the moment, I felt, refreshingly free from the strain of symbols and allegories and legends. It was not until I came suddenly, in the Hall of Mammal-skeletons, upon that of a seal, raised in a sitting posture above a hypothetical sea-line, a baby-seal in her arms, that I discovered my delusion. The attached card indicated that this phenomenon, seen by sailors across stormy waters, was one of the strands in a germinal cluster of fables blossoming into the mermaid legend. Whether or not this is true, the realization flashed across me suddenly that, far from being escaped, among these halls, from fantastic legend, I was plunged into the very sources of it; was simply moving, in a sense, among its raw materials rather than the evolving or finished product; that many a time, as I wandered through these halls I should find some fable half-sprung from some specimen or other, like the white calcite dove,—head, body, one wing complete,—half emerged from a great mass of black, glossy Sphalerite Ukstavis upstairs among the minerals.

As in the case of the British Museum, a very phrase from catalogue or guide book set me off along characteristic lines. Of the fossils of *Echinodermata Srinoidea*, or the "feather-stars," contained in "foam-stone lime," I read, "The slab displays about twenty-five bodies or crowns of these animals, and many portions of the stems by which the crowns were raised from the sea-floor." This suggestion of flower-like animals was enough. I coined the word "Lily-beasts" and had an instant vision of a weird, sub-marine flower-close, a court cloistered by curiously chambered caves, where Spenser's Garden of Adonis bloomed forever in

“infinite Shapes of Creatures”—“every sort set in a sondry bed,”

“Some made for beasts, some made for birds to weare,  
And all the fruitful spawne of fishes hew.”

I saw them blooming down there, all the Kensington Museum fishes, their fins and tails,—some iridescent as peacocks' wings,—expanding and ruffling and curling and trailing into exquisite petals around scarlet or deep-carmine or blue, amber-striped bodies; and so lovely were these “fruitful spawne of fishes hew,” swaying flower-like on sinuous stems, that I longed to box hundreds of them for decoration of St. Magnus's Church in September.

But not only were these feather-stars in foam-stone thus suggestive. In the magnificent, jagged blocks of coal in the Mineral Gallery, their uneven, scaling surfaces sinking and rising in lustrous bas relief, I saw a whole series of legendary landscapes,—in *Pecoteris-arborescens*, Childe Roland's Tower among wooded mountains; in *Splenopteris Honinghausi*, the Erl-king's Hill seen through over-arching trees. Often these beautiful scenes contained their proper habitants. Upon *Lapidodenron Lycopodioides*, rose a spreading tree covered with St. Brandon's birds; through the jungle-forest of Calamoclades, Rama and Sita wandered peacefully among the loving beasts. I formed, moreover, the most grotesque but charming combinations. Into the beautiful shell of a giant mollusc, with its perfectly defined vestibules and galleries, its turrets and winding staircases, I transported a whole bevy of miniature figures from ancientest Japanese prints,—maidens with intense, tiny faces, their gowns sprinkled with mimosa leaves and deep blue convolvulus—to move trancedly to and fro, forever, amid the delicate involutions of their tide-stranded otherworld mansion, their black, alluring eyes brooding forever outward over swaying purple oceans.

Thus it was that, among the animals and birds and minerals of the Kensington Museum, I found myself as completely as ever in the grip of old legends quaintly reset. But the unique feature of my experience here was that phase of it wherein suggestions came of me, from these relics, of mighty forces now completely vanished. “Wind-worn pebbles irregularly fluted” found in glacial gravel-drifts; “pebbles roughly shaped by wind-blown sand;” “pebbles subjected to the action of two desert winds:” no winds raging in the caverns of Aeolus, or in any other fashion blown through the brains of poets, ever moved me like these

suggestions of primordial tempests sweeping across a travailing, evolving earth. My body stood there in the dim gallery until told to leave by the guard, while my mind was journeying over leagues of land and water, borne along by an "erratic quartzite from the elder Paleolithic Age which, dropped into the chalk sea from a melted iceberg, or transported on the roots of drifted trees, or attached to large seaweeds floated from some distant coast, or buried in the entrails of some sea-monster," came to rest, at last, in a chalk stratum at Gravesend; or, all ear, other senses asleep, I listened, ages-long, to the low, relentless cleavage of the slate stratum which had distorted, "with longitudinal expansions and lateral compressions," the strange little trilobite on the shelf before me. All the poetry of mountains thundering and cracking with the movement of giants imprisoned in their wombs lived again for me in the vision of that little wracked fossil.

But these battered pebbles and fossils, tortured relics of desert winds and sands, were as nothing, in their strangeness of suggestion, to the physical tracks and traces of primal tempests and storms. It was here that the real eeriness of my experience entered. The mere fossils of a shoal of herrings buried in old red or yellow sandstone or green-sand or flaggy lime are just ordinarily interesting. There is nothing particularly weird about them, for there they are. But for sheer uncanny, aquatic suggestion, I know nothing equal to the "impressions in slate of a fleet of jelly-fishes stranded on the ancient Cambrian shore." The tremulous, translucent, faintly-colored heaps have vanished from their sealed rocky casing as completely as drifts of moonlight from the face of a cliff. Yet there, to eternity, their haunting shapes remain,—incredibly,—the impression, in solid rock, of those impalpable creatures lying at ease, ages ago, on shifting sand. But, strange though they are, these impressions, they were not to me so entirely uncanny as the traces of another group of creatures leaving no casts of their entire shape, but only tracks of a weird procession along the shores of an ancient sea. The ripple-marks on sandstone of waves that broke before the dawn of history, are enough to set one dreaming for hours. But when such a ripple-marked slab is covered with small reptile and bird footprints, all the ringed and spotted and bright green adders of the ages begin hissing softly at my feet. They mustered there along the shores of a gray primeval ocean, along with them ghostly troops of birds, each little claw

fitting itself meticulously into its old imprint. And mightier phantoms there were, *Rhynchosaurus* and *Cheirotherium Storetonense*, those familiar beasts; and from out great, strange footprints shaped like fig-leaves many times their natural size, and glimmering dimly in green sandstone (footprints marked *Problematical* by the experts), rose slowly huge fantastic shapes, composites of all the Behemoths, Leviathans, and mystical monsters, sacred and profane, that ever were born in the brain of man. They varied in awe-inspiring quality all the way up the scale from the "most slender and delicate Dinosaur yet discovered," the fragile *Anchisaurus Colorus* only thirty feet long, a dainty lap-dog of a Dinosaur, to the terrific *Iguanodon* with his soft, enormous three-pronged feet whom I could hear just behind me padding softly across wet sand.

Passing through the doors of the great building that houses these precious collections, I found myself no less happily haunted in the dark streets as I made my way, by circuitous-bus-riding and rambling, over to that smaller institution, the London Museum. Classical and Biblical motives from the pictures in the National Gallery translated themselves, out here in the fog, into quaint shapes. Daphne herself, arms outstretched, lovely body bent forward, legs already lightly caught together by enfolding rind, I saw turning, before my eyes, into a delicate limestree, foliage sprouting from her outspread fingers, a senescent Apollo with garden shears in close pursuit. Straining upward I could just discern, outlined in marble above St. Stephen Coleman's gate, babies lying at ease in cosy little caskets, lids removed indiscriminately by earthquakes and angels, regarding with equable infantile wonder the Seven Signs of Doom disporting themselves simultaneously in the air above. The flowers and vegetables gleaming at me through the mist, crystalized before my eyes into the magical treasures of the Jermyn Museum: frosted brown rinds, sable seeded; strange, brittle, gray gourds filled with carmine or quince-colored pulp; curious tawny clusters of fingered citron,—crisp, delicate morsels for the iron jaws of Moody's Stone Men and Earth Women in his "Masque of Judgment." The strange, magical little green doors and blue casements breaking, in Chester Square, the monotonous stately stucco piles of Belgravia, (God knows what happy artist's whim disposed them there!), lead me straight through gray walls into the gardens of the Hesperides. Over in Southwark, gas-flames flaring and dancing in

a market booth, like chrysanthemums and tulips and great, flat, white lilies gone irretrievably and suddenly mad, seemed to me grotesques of some Linnaean nightmare; and medieval bestiary-beasts leaped, in blurred outline, from the merry-go-round in a shabby court around the corner, its garish colors muffling out through the fog like smoke-buried flame. These, however, were mere whimsical eddies in the main stream of my experience. The chief significance of my outdoor wanderings was summed up in the dim, rooted, golden Presences looming here and there throughout London like a shattered procession of gods smitten into immobility by cataclysmic magic. In St. James' Churchyard they cluster, and in Guy's Gardens; in the fragment of the graveyard of old St. Peter's Church in Wood Street; in Lincoln's Inn Fields; in the Temple Gardens; in Red Lion Court. And as I passed them, laying my hands with reverence on their bark, I felt the throbbing of divine ichor in their veins, and knew them living spirits.

These haunting Epic presences gradually became to me definitely symbolic. They were not trees at all, but mighty traditions: projections first, from such buried persons as, having transcended in their significance the usual scope of mere individual experience, merge into and represent the life of the race; second, from the strata of buried civilizations upon which London spins its bewildering web of social and political life.

As to symbolic individuals to whom I have referred, I was conscious of them mostly in London cemeteries. They were profoundly impressive absorbing, as they did, into themselves, all the lesser people sleeping around them. I can scarcely illustrate my point here better than to take, by contrast, the effect upon me of graveyards in one of our American cities, Boston, where naturally, in spite of her many unique and powerful historical individuals, the lack of any unbroken age-long racial tradition automatically prevents their so frequently emerging into all-embracing symbolism. This lack of any such dominating traditions with their inevitable accompaniment of personal exponents, may manifest itself to the interested necropolitan observer (I myself am never happier than in Boston cemeteries), in one of several ways: first, minor social considerations obtrude themselves upon you in the form of some specific class atmosphere, as in Mount Auburn; second, your special idiocracy, or even your mood of the moment, meeting no es-

pecially formidable mass impact, may assert itself audaciously, as in little Copp's Hill; third, as in Old King's, your mind, deeply impressed but perplexed, is apt to lose its bearings in its seeking amid the turbulent cross-currents that have poured in upon us since our abrupt severance of ties with the parent stock, some clue to the trend of our national destiny. Take Mount Auburn, with its still, stately folk ranged orderly along streets and terraces; with its clean-shaven lawns, sunken gardens, and lily-strewn ponds; with its mounts, its paths, its solemn bells; with its grave angels pointing heavenward, its flowers flaming and wavering like altar tapers or glowing like tiny grails full of dim rich blood,—mystic, sacerdotal, each (save for one haunting thug of a hydrangea, damp, full-blown, which thudded me heavily, softly, on the chest one evening as I leaned forward to peer through a vault-doorway at Presences seated in solemn state around a dim, gray, carven table). Indeed, so well ordered and socially ritualistic is Mount Auburn, that I find myself exceedingly self-conscious there, walking with soul subdued, silken-shod, brooding upon my latter end, *dust to dust, ashes to ashes*, anxious about the productive achievement of my single talent, and anxious, especially, to omit no technical detail in preparation for the Judgment Day, that my garments of righteousness, on that occasion, may be quite properly cut and shaped.

Sometimes, on the contrary, as in the enchanting little graveyard on Copp's Hill, so heterogeneous and unimpressive is the atmosphere that, as I said, you feel no obstacle opposed to any assertion of your casual whim or mood. It lies there glowing—but I burst into verse one morning about Copp's Hill:

. . . . . Copp's Hill,  
 High hung above the harbour  
 And the little Chiesa Italiana,  
 With your chameleon-splinters of tombstones  
 Washed amethystine, ambrous, cerulean,  
 By the tide of sunshine swimming across the grass  
 From dull red tenement to dancing azure water;  
 With your grim cherubs,  
 Your grieved cherubs,  
 Your trim, tidy cherubs,  
 Feathers ruffled modishly around their faces,  
 Your dishevelled, chuckling cherubs;  
 With your friendly skeletons,—  
*That* one, ogling me  
 Through the quivering green glamor of its sunken hollow

With gentle ironic humor,  
 Its gnarled, bony finger  
 Pointing ominously downward,  
 Revealing—(Hic Timor Mortis!)—  
 A soft warm kitten  
 Cosily asleep beneath its bony menace;  
 . . . . . Copps Hill  
 With your dim-graven, weird Death's-heads  
 —Hollow-eyed, trim-toothed,—  
 Fluttering humorously off at last from their stones  
 To circle around me, in the lambent, locust shadows,  
 In slow, soft owl-flights:  
 You are the spot, delicious little yard,  
 Where my mind, aloof, untouched, plays lightly  
 With life and with death,  
 Tinkling cross-bones like castanets,  
 Drinking ineffable wines out of quaint polished skulls,  
 Decking skeletons with daisies.

Sometimes in one of these Boston cemeteries it is not class atmosphere nor one's own ego of which one is primarily conscious, but rather that curious perplexity of mind previously referred to, such as might bewilder the sapling of an old tree transplanted to a new soil whose heady ingredients dissolve distractingly through its veins. This mood possesses me in such cemeteries as King's Chapel's and the The Granary; or, to change the sapling-figure, I share the obvious bewilderment of the armorial or bestial Beasts and Birds sprinkled over the tomb-stones,—the British Lion, for instance, tail stiff-curled, crown tensely-set, heraldic, heroic, forever ramping and frowning perplexedly, and challenging always his ancient right to the allegiance of the Pilgrim Fathers and Boston Tea-party persons lying about him. And there is the Unicorn, his eyes bewildered by his passage down the ages out of an old mystic Beast-book, through the British coat-of-arms, on to these sagging gray stones. It would perplex the most intelligent Unicorn to puzzle out the problem as to whether he, at present, represents the founder of Christianity, the kingdom of Scotland or The Commonwealth of Massachusetts. But about his horn and his hoofs he is perfectly sure, and keeps them, in the face of any contingency, indomitably and respectively pointed and planted. The very Dove in this Epic graveyard presents curious mixture of mind, as well she may, drifted, as she is, olive branch in beak, down through the ages from the black, swirling ocean of her earliest adventure, through canon-riven

worlds, to a resting place at last in this dim green nook where, still ruffled, and militant, she yet keeps tight hold of her somewhat scraggly-leaved Emblem of Peace.

Such mixture of sentiment it is that holds me, in Old King's Cemetery, as I wander slowly across the shafts of sunshine crooking their way from The Tomb of The Children to the Chapel steps,—haggard sunshine, worn thin and gaunt in its frittering downward between high office buildings, its lustrous, fleecy fragments left caught high up on stony juttings and angles. Here, if anywhere, the thoughtful American of Saxon descent comes face to face with the problem of the sort of civilization that is to emerge, ultimately, from our welter of races. Here, in this little graveyard, eye to eye with The Lion, he lives over again the drama of the great Kin-Enmity, feels the tug of blood toward blood, the anger of The Quarrel, the anguish of the severing of limb from trunk, The Transplanting, the gradual healing Reconciliation; and then, glancing out through the iron-wrought railing, he sees them streaming past,—Czech and Russian, Italian and Greek, German, Pole and Swede, African, Asiatic; and his mind falters with sense of the magnitude of the problem facing us, swaying helplessly in the maelstrom of thronging, inconclusive suggestion.

So much for Boston. The case, whether for better or worse, is entirely different in the class of London cemeteries I have in mind, of which Bunhill Fields is an exponent. Here no perception of class atmosphere, no obstreperous individual mood, no perplexed political instinct can, for the moment, in the mind of the visitor, assert itself against the influence of the Representative Person lying,—or rather, looming,—there and, by virtue of his very representative quality, acting as suggestive index to the future trend of British civilization. Its inhabitants divide themselves into two classes, the Represented and the Representer; and, secure of vicarious immortality by right of him whose microcosmic dust lies in their midst, the humbler dead sleep on beyond touch of memory or joy or pain. Sometimes so vanished are they from men's minds, these humble dead, that their very headstones have ceased even to mark the spot where their bones moulder. In St. James Clerkenwell, these headstones rest in rows along the mouldering church-yard wall, their ruffled and fluted crests joining quaintly in broken curves like the tide-line on the sea-wall of some ancient castle ruin; in Old Pancras, they are piled reverently and carefully



together in rugged order, like a mountain cairn to the memory of some vanished clan. Most impressive, however, are they, these ancient stones, in Bunhill Fields where they sweep up around a granite tomb standing beneath a pale, golden Plane Tree. It is difficult for me to express the singular effect, to one standing at the City Road gate, of a lengthwise slanting glance along the tops of these sagging tombstones. Not here, as in St. James Clerkenwell, do they form a delicate water-line against the churchyard wall. Instead, in alluring perspective, these delicately ruffled and fluted crests lap up over one another around the granite tomb, like nothing so much, in their haunting, serried undulation, as the impressions left by rippling, broken waves on the sands at Wallasey. It is moving to stand there beside Bunyan's grave within a few feet of which, along a narrow footpath cleaving this City graveyard, passes the ceaseless tramp morning, noon and evening, of the feet of pilgrims whose spiritual experience he so graphically portrayed: the Moneyloves, Savealls, Hold-the-Worlds, Feeble-minds, Evangelists, Ready-to-halts, Smooth-mans, Valiant-for-Truths, Greathearts of modern London. It is moving also, standing there, to realize him Exponent not only of those who, clustering close around him there in Bunhill Fields, and scattered throughout England, cherished even to the death, beneath Cromwell's banner, the creed he held, but also of that other more tragic group, the Puritan Cavaliers like Sir Edmund Verney who, though "he loved the Bible and Parliament well" yet "having eaten the king's bread and served him for near thirty years" could not "do so base a thing as to forsake him" and fell at Edgehill "struck through by the Puritan sword he would himself so gladly have wielded" choosing rather to lose his life ("which" he said, "I am sure I shall do"), "to preserve and defend those things which were against—his conscience to defend." It is even profoundly moving, in a larger sense to know him Exponent not only of these who thus, at home, fought the great issue out to its end, but also of those others who dared the perils of savage oceans and peoples to plant in new soil, also, the seed of political and religious liberty.

So much for the dim golden plane trees as symbolic of buried individuals. Their symbolic value as connected with buried civilizations came to me as result of a singular hallucination whereby, glancing back by chance, one morning, I caught the diminished end of a vista of London's past blocked entirely by an immaculate Paleolithic man while, slightly nearer me into

this backyard corridor of time, there stepped, in his very skeleton, a wistfully-grinning Saxon invader. This miracle occurred after several days of wandering through the London Museum in Stafford House, a museum which devotes itself strictly to archaeological and cultural antiquities found within the bounds of London itself. This strict and clear localization of objects arranged in orderly sequence through series of rooms,—their comparative fewness and immense significance,—made graspable for me, at last, a progressive localized racial development. My mind, delighted, unperplexed, followed its clear congruent suggestion, weaving all the while a golden clue which, thereafter, in the British Museum, or the Louvre would guide me, untroubled, through the cultural legacies of divergent races through many centuries. Indeed, on the spot, an elementary classification began in my mind; for all the astral bodies of what were specifically London antiquities preserved in the British Museum and the Guildhall, suddenly ranged themselves, here, in their appropriate place, like well-drilled soldiers rallying to a standard.

Characteristically, it was certain phrases in the guide-book, glanced into casually as I wandered from room to room at Stafford House, that thrilled me into acute consciousness of the submerged civilizations of which these relics, ranged in rows were vivid symbols. "Few Londoners realize," I read, "as they walk along the streets of the metropolis, that a few feet below them lie the pavements, foundations of houses, ashpits, and other relics of the ancient Roman town of Londinium." It must be a singularly apathetic mind to which such an inspired sentence will not suggest not only buried Roman London, but all the other pavements and foundations and ashpits lying in strata below the soil. The familiar names of modern London streets attached to these hoary antiquities as designating the spots where they were discovered, gave me constantly a curious sense of the consecutiveness of London's cultural evolution. To see mammoth teeth, 10x10 from Pall Mall, where I had been buying tourists tickets that morning; rhinoceros teeth, 2x4, from Piccadilly where, yesterday, I had been shopping; deep rich blue or green or clouded amber-colored arrow-heads from Old Bailey, Saxon knives from Honey Lane Market, polished flint hammers from Battersea, Saxon coins from Leadenhall, totem-boars from Eastcheap, bronze ingots from Kingsway, horn-pins and combs from Wandsworth, had often the effect of filming successively for me, in dim gorgeous pageant, all the various settlements that had

occupied the City's site, from the pile village rising prehistorically out of the swamp of meandering, unembanked Thames, to the great metropolis of George V. Sometimes, however, there intervened between the dim past suggested by the Relic itself and the vivid present suggested by the Label on it, no such orderly progressive visions. The two periods telescoped so neatly in my imagination that often the buses in Trafalgar Square turned before my eyes into herds of charging Ichthyosauruses, and the shop windows into repositories for all the furry, bony and rocky accessories to the toilet of a well-groomed neolithic lady. Mostly, however, these teeth and bones and pots and flint weapons and implements, merely caused the walls of Stafford House to fall away, and the superficies of London, slipping from beneath my feet, to roll itself up neatly like the topmost one of a series of architect's maps, followed, in like fashion, by the next stratum and then the next, each with its London shrunken in circumference until, often, at last, every trace of human habitation had utterly vanished. Upon these occasions I had the strangest of whimsical Apocalypses of which the following stand out most distinctly in my mind: The Carving-out of the Lands (springing from a guide-book phrase *plus Pliny plus The Elder Edda*); The Coming of Vegetation (from a gray old eolith *plus Wells plus Pliny plus Sir Thomas Browne*), and of The Creatures (shoulderbone of a Miocene Merocodus *plus Milton plus Montellius*), and of Primitive Man (from a lustrous black flint arrowhead *plus a variety of persons*.)

In the first of these, The Carving-out of The Lands, the various London strata having folded up scroll-like from beneath my feet, I found myself standing on the shore of a bleak windless continent out from the north of which came a giantess with great black oxen. And she set them before a giant plow and around me "the earth was cut so deep and so wide that it loosened the land; and the oxen drew the land out into the sea westward—And there the giantess set the land and gave it a name—And from that time on the spot where the land had been torn up is water." And the name she gave to the land was Angle-land and to the sea, was the North Sea. And then, behold, I saw her take from the plowshare the huge, jagged coulter with which she had been not only thus setting Angle-land adrift from the continent, but also hollowing out the coast of Europe into numerous bays and headlands, and breaking off other

segments of land destined, some of them, to root themselves firmly among the waves; others, to wander, flower-crowned along southern coasts or (nesting on their barren rocks crowds of clanging sea-gulls) through the sullen, black seas of the north. And she inserted, instead of the huge jagged coulter, a fine blade of iron into the plow; and she plowed slender furrows athwart Angle-land until, at last, between grim, black, undulating hills, bare yet of leaf or flower, thin silver rivers flowed into the sea.

Such was my glimpse of The Carving-of-The-Lands. And it was on the barren shore of this bleak Angle-land that I found myself again standing by virtue of the magical suggestion of the old gray eolith above mentioned, beside me a receding primordial sea, "luminous with tiny phosphorescent creatures," and swelling with strange monsters of which some lumbered out to graze upon seaweed scattered up along the strand. By no means, however, on that occasion, was my interest in seaweed exhausted by its flotsam and jetsam aspect as fodder for prehistoric sea-beasts. It was as pioneer invaders of the land, quite pathetically represented by Van Loon and Wells as climbing up from the sea crowded out by over-population, that they chiefly allured me. It was, indeed, pretty to perceive the Seanettles, those wanderers to and fro by night among the ocean-tides to pounce here upon a scallop, there upon a sea-urchin, leaping finally, straight out of the waves, to root themselves firmly in arid sand; and the charming Sea-wheels, with like intent, their weeds gathered up daintily around them, rolling softly up upon the beach through gently-breaking waves; to watch, also, many a quaint vegetable sea-lettuce "with wrinkled leaves," sea-leeks, sea-carrots and "the leafless, red-barked sea-fig,"—stranded, all these, by the retreating tide,—adapting themselves in modified curve and color to their new environment.

And with them came more imposing sea things. All along the beach they came,—at first, single strange, outlandish shapes: here a gaunt salty Tree of Persis, digging its naked roots deep into the sand; there, like some primeval Protean juggler, the progenitor of the Lynean Gossypium "shaking balls of down from its salty gourds;" and, far to the left, the ominous Aostria clinging sullenly to naked rocks. But soon they began to press out in companies: knotted reeds and grasses and shrubs from shoaly places near the shore, grotesque and dwarf-like; fir-trees "with shells clinging to their branches,"

and acorn-covered oaks; whole fragrant forests of hybrid trees with leaves like laurel and blossoms like violets and berries like olives." And with them came strange sea-creatures lodged in their branches: sea-swallows, sea-thrushes, sea-blackbirds; and, loveliest of all, the charming little variegated Phycis, the only nest-building fish who, learning in his architecture to substitute hair and grasses for seaweeds, developed as naturally and simply as possible, I firmly maintain (I can *see* him do it!), into all the varieties of nest-building birds.

The vegetable life thus establishing itself firmly before my eyes, flourished like mad. And it was into such surroundings that there burst my third Apocalyptic vision, The Coming of the Creatures. For there I found lying the great shoulder-bone I had last seen on a shelf in the London Museum. And even as I regarded it amazedly, to this great bone there sprang from some hidden lair many other giant-bones fitting themselves neatly, ball to socket, till the hugest of pre-historic monsters, Uintothere, stood before me ponderously shaking down his skeleton into pristine shape and, like the master bull of a herd, roaring softly with the most dazing possible Miltonian results,—dazing because it startles even the strongest evolution-warped intelligence to see "the grassy clods calving" at your very feet; and, half-appearing at your right hand, "the tawny lion pawing to get free his hinder parts;" to observe, in circles around you, "the ounce and the tiger as the mole rising, the crumpled earth above them throw;" while, all around, "fleeced the flocks and bleating rose as plants," each woolly lamb held firmly in place, for a perceptible moment, by an unextricated paw; to have, nearby, "the swift stag from underground bear up his branching head," while directly in front Behemoth, biggest born of earth, upheaves his vastness." Not only these, but there also rose from the earth the bison and the urus, the achlis and countless other creatures. And they all gazed uncomprehendingly upon me, as I was once awfully gazed upon by an enormous bull in a glamorous Sicilian mountain-glade (I never *could* understand Adam's self-possession at the function of The Naming of The Creatures.) And then they all trotted off to their respective pastures. And I was delighted to perceive the wide-eyed, rather naive Colossi whom I had seen battening upon seaweed, waddling up to join a herd of hospitable Neo-hipparions in their grazing upon a headland above the ocean.

Such were my fragmentary visions of The Carving-out of

The Lands, The Coming of Vegetation and The Coming of The Creatures. My fourth subterranean vision was induced by a beautifully wrought honey-colored seax, picked up, as the label stated, in Leadenhall Market, a heroic place on a dark morning where, through misty vistas, dim lights burn before fog-shrouded booths like votive lamps at the shrines of Sublimated Birds, ancient projectors and emblems of the gods, and of Hero-Beasts, sacred Totems of the Tribe, lying there in their various degrees of bepluméd and furred and fluffy glory. On this occasion, London strata uprolling as usual, I sank down to strange collections of iron and copper and bronze weapons and implements, far down to the ancient Paleolithic floor which, extending (charmingly says the catalogue) "in undulating waves beneath the surface of the earth, cropping up now and then through the contorted drift of clay, gravel, and boulders borne down from the north and north-west by rivers of slowly-moving half-frozen mud," sweeps away across the lea "over the greater part of east Middlesex as far as Hertford and Ware to Luton, Dunstable, Coddington and Hitchin, possibly in patches on both sides of the Thames from Oxford to the Nore." I had a chance to land in the most interesting of places,—a regular Paleolithic workshop, "among heaps of raw material, finished implements, rough flakes, cores and hammerstones found practically as Paleolithic man left them." The nest of jewels on exhibition in the Museum found buried in Wood Street in 1912, (stock-in-trade, probably of some sixteenth century shopkeeper) never moved me half so much by the beauty of its gleaming, exquisitely-wrought specimens as did this stock-in-trade of Paleolithic man: lustrous flint implements of rich blues and greens and tawny yellows with water-worn surfaces; strange "granite cores lying, wavy-edged, amid their heavily-cruste'd flakes;" scrapers, chipped and pointed; dainty green "Pigmies" or minute flakes carefully trimmed and used probably as fish-hooks; rudely-chipped axe-heads of obsidian and jasper; daggers and ripple-flaked knives; all these works of primitive man scattered among fossil shells and rolled tertiary pebbles and the dainty "grey wethers" of an antiquity far anti-dating any human activity.

It was inevitable that these fascinating relics of human handicraft should suggest to my mind the makers of them. From the shining black surface of an especially well-formed flint at my feet was projected, first the working hand of him,

and then the whole, of a Paleolithic man who quickly subdivided into two: one, an incredibly powerful, repulsive *Homo Neanderthalensis* who promptly proceeded, with guttural groanings, to tear to pieces an infantine Woolly Rhinoceros trotting placably past; the other, a most attractive person, exactly like the picture, in the Pre-historic Room, of the immaculate Paleolithic person before-mentioned, his flint club meticulously polished, each hair of his fur coat carefully brushed into place, his fur cap tied neatly under his chin while in front of a highly eligible cave, each stalactite and stalagmite painstakingly scrubbed, stood an obviously notable Paleolithic housewife affectionately seeing her noble spouse off for the day. The inside of the cave matched its occupants in charm and spruceness, a-shine as it was with various charming things painted on the wall,—bisons and horses and ibexes and bears; and with strings and stores and rows and piles of the delicatest viands: hazelnuts, beechnuts, sweet chestnuts, earth-nuts and acorns; crab-apples, wild pears, wild cherries, wild gooseberries, bullaces, sorbs and sloes, blackberries and yewberries; watercress, fungi and leafbuds; birds' eggs and the honeycomb of wild bees; fish, water molluscs and seaweed. Before his sophisticated cave-dweller thus usurping and adorning his former dwelling, I saw the more savage Render of infantine rhinoceroses cowering farther and farther back into the open steppes. And between these prehistoric Prosperos and Calibans I was persistently conscious of a third species, a strange projection of the wisdom of the Prospero and the crafty malice of the Caliban: a grotesque Paleolithic Puck who scurried around like a malignant half-human squirrel, hiding flints and weapons and implements in strange, unnatural places for the misleading and undoing of future archaeologists. Indeed, this Loki-Squirrel of mine has become a sort of personification of the mischievous floods and winds and subterranean landslides, which I always wonder if archaeologists have sufficiently taken into account in the fascinating significances they attach to fossils found in unusual places.

Such were certain of my unique visions of the past during long hours spent in that most charming of graspable Museums, Stafford House. They came humorously, wilfully, flitting across an orderly sequence of mental pictures of Paleolithic, Neolithic, Roman, Saxon, Medieval, Elizabethan, Stewart, Georgian, and Victorian Londons, as through years I had con-

structed them in my mind,—the necessary mental possession of a scholar whose academic interests are with the past. These orderly visions did not much interest me. I was too used to them. Except the absorbing twentieth century metropolis stretching out around me, the only London of which I received any vision at once distinct, unified and enthralling was a city whose unauthentic, chronologically incongruous features were nevertheless synthesized by my brooding fancy into dream-like harmony. I was startled into the spontaneous re-creation of this Elizabethan London by a bit of information that reached me through a casual but authoritative stranger, as I wandered one afternoon among the “greybeards” and blackjacks and prentice flat-caps and jewellery and samplers and spoons of the Tudor room, namely, that Whitgift Hospital was to be torn down. Within five minutes I was on the top of Number 19 going out to Croydon, fearful lest the cursed implements of destruction might already be thumping its venerable walls. My heart actually beat faster with relief as I caught sight of it, flanked by whizzing traffic and encroaching shops, shining softly there in the late afternoon sunshine,—old wine in an old bottle amid the glitter and crispness of a modern banquet awaiting the hour when, its slender stream poured into a brisk, brand-new bottle, properly sealed and labelled, itself would pass beneath the wreckers’ hammer. It dates back to Elizabeth’s days. “This yeere,” says Stowe concerning the year 1600, “the most reverend father, John Whitgift, Archbishop of Canterbury, did finish that notable and memorable monument of our time, to wit, his hospital of the Holy Trinity in Croydon for the relief and sustenance of certain poor people.” It stands around a little richly-colored court, its walls pierced by mullioned windows, its roof red-tiled and ridged with lace-like ironwork. Over its low-arched entrance hangs a well-wrought iron lamp, its decorative quality well balanced on each side-wall by fixtures of hollowed carven stone for running water, and, opposite (glimpsed through a corresponding archway), by a tapestry of vine hung against a wall—a carefully nurtured and patterned vine, large-leaved and glossy in its broad central strip, bordered with daintier leaves and screened by little bristling shrubs, a row, in front. Passing slowly round the court past the deep hooded doorways leading each into an apartment of a pensioner, you glance into the old-fashioned brick-ovened kitchen, into the chapel with its rough and knotted timber seats and old



oaken wainscoting; into the Common Hall with its panelled walls, its glass graced with the arms of Queen Elizabeth, its heavy oaken tables. For an hour out there in the corner of the court, I sat in a long spring twilight, venturing now and then, encouraged by their kindly glances, to speak to gentle old men and women passing to and fro with their pitchers between their peaked doorways and the stone basins. "We bowl in the summer," said one of them pointing toward grass in the midst of the court. "We have good times." They spoke, also, anxiously of their warden, a brother-pensioner like themselves, lying that moment at point of death. And as I sat on, while the twilight fell, watching the mullioned windows, one after another, growing luminous with firelight, my mind brooded long on the unknown man who, after bitter buffeting of fortune, had risen to humble dignity among his mates, to live on through lapsing years and to die honorably at last, in the old panelled bedroom with its heavy oak two-ply door that had often sheltered the augustness of Bishop Whitgift himself. And thence I passed, by natural transition, into indignant reflection on the vandalism about to deprive indigent age of this harmless anodyne of brooding reminiscent beauty as, during the centuries, it has destroyed so many ancient monuments spared even by the Great Fire. And, sitting there in the fore-doomed little court, I invoked a delicate spiritual vengeance upon that splendid modern tyrant, Economic Expediency, which has left the old hospital standing so lonely there, and on so precarious tenure. For I yielded to an idiosyncrasy whereby I can always reconstruct into mythic loveliness any chance town in terms of the architectural relics it contains. In this instance, letting down the bar in my consciousness that keeps my brain-flock grazing orderly within Reason's pleasant pastures, I left them free to range where they would with, as result, their fleeing hither and thither like Samson's foxes with fiery brushes, burning entirely out of existence every vestige of modern London save those structures wrapped in the glamor of antiquity which appeared to serve as a kind of spiritual asbestos. Of the incongruous stateliness of modern London nothing remained but the Abbey, the Guildhall and their like; of all my decorous scholarly visions of the London of the first four Georges, nothing but relics surviving, even from Roman times, up to the beginning of the nineteenth century: bastions and towers here and there of the old Roman wall, and scattered arches and courts and cloisters of old monastic houses.

As for late Stewart London, my devastating foxes left nothing at all save the survivors of the Great Fire, the wistful fringe of gabled, protruding-roofed timbered Elizabethan houses circling the burned area along with some oases of them dotting it here and there spared, no doubt, by the sporadic clemency of some protecting saint. Up around the old Elizabethan building in whose richly-colored court I sat, they trooped and crowded, these old houses, some of them bursting through their cerements of modern plaster to shake off disdainfully its cloying dust from their delicate, steep-browed faces. Up they trooped around the old hospital, in broken throngs: here, cheek to cheek above narrow twisting streets; there, drawing apart to face each other across small squares in which there stood, perhaps, a market cross with its massive central column, its vaulted ceiling sweeping down into its circle of heavy piers; or an hexagonal open-air pulpit, its central pillar supporting a ribbed stone-roof delicately overgrown with sporadic grasses and wandering vines; or, a solid groined stone conduit bringing the townspeople water fresh from Saint Andrew's spring. There is no type of roof-hung vista or shadowy angle still surviving in provincial English towns, or visible only in old yellowed prints, that did not spell itself into this, my old London, by means of these quaint architectural hieroglyphs, these old fair houses. In from Bristol they throng, from Winchester and from Gloucester and from York, clustering around a gateway arch of the old city wall leading to Christine's Steps, at the top of which stands curious stone seats and a chapel dedicated to the Magi; lining the street called Middlebrook through which runs an arm of the Itchin turned in its course, at last, by a low Cathedral tower; hollowing backward suddenly into the court of The New Inn with its great beams of chestnut wood, its delicate staircase, its gables and its over-hanging galleries; giving way to form a shrine in the narrow street for a canopied Queen's Cross, sculpture-encrusted; darkening into shy mystery beneath the shadow of a massive gate-house which, cutting suddenly across their timbered sides, cause their panes to glimmer, dim and blue, in the dusk.

But it was not London thus earth-rooted and fragrant in its ancient loveliness alone that fascinated me. It had its mystical, ecstatic moods, musing heavenwards through a fossil forest of delicate spires and towers firmly yet lightly poised, as if borne hither upon the spread, laboring pinions of their gargoyle birds and beasts as to some central City of Refuge at the

prayers of their niched, kneeling saints prophetic of modern vandalism. It brooded reverently and half-remorsefully, this old London of mine, over the ruins of monastic houses scattered throughout the city,—the desolate, unroofed halls of the Convent of the Sisters of Saint Claire; the gates, archways and courts of Holy Trinity Priory; bits of the Fraternity refectory; a fragment of the cloister of Austin Friars,—covering their ruined shrines and altars with votive offerings of vine and flower springing up richly, through crack and crevice, from the fertile soil that for centuries had nurtured a religious tradition officially and finally rejected. Each of these old ruins had, in my reconstructed city, one of two fates: either every smallest fragment of desecrated beauty, steeped in the warm wave of my moved imagination, like one of those expanding wraiths of Japanese tissue children throw into water, bloomed again into its ancient perfect flower of architectural design; or it simply rested there, in pathetic, legend-haunted grace. One of these ruined memorials, however, in my reconstructed London, is fraught not with pathos but with quaintest gaiety and charm. It stands there, the shattered flank of an old monastic ruin, furnishing the fourth side of a tiny square court otherwise enclosed, opposite, by the Cathedral itself, and by the walls, facing each other, of the greater and lesser cloisters. Down into this tiny enclosure they have fallen year after year, now among spring flowers, now among winter snows, fragments of pillars and vaultings and window copings, each with its accompanying freight of carven angel or satyr or avaricious hedgehog apple-adorned, or unicorn or kneeling prophet. There they lay, beaten by rain and storm, scorched by the sun, quivering like severed nerves to strains from the cathedral soaring heavenward like the arches and architraves to which they once belonged, till some old verger, surely inspired by the spirit of Charles Lamb at his finest—may his humble sleep be sweet in some green English graveyard!—touched them with thrifty loving hands, and they sprang again into coherent significance. They are now part, each fragment, of an exquisite garden, bounded by rich brown walls pierced, one of them by the dim-green cathedral-window. A single juniper tree grows in an old foundation hollow; flowering lilacs and laburnums line luxuriantly the old stone walls; trailing vines, soft grasses, bright jewel-like flowers,—crimson, golden, dazzling white,—fill the tiny court, ranged, yet, in sweet and delicate orderliness. For the distinctive feature of this old garden

is the unique, organic fashion in which these ancient architectural fragments have been made to under-lie and support lightly this wealth of shining vegetation. It is as if these carven beasts and angels, fallen like Lucifer and his crew into dazed ruin, having drunk deep of earth's vitality in their eclipse, had sprung up again into smiling earth-spirits, no longer celestial, but quaint and gay in their humble revival. From window arches and slabs now placed upright for the vines to clamber over, from fragments of pillar bases bordering the tiny paths, they peer at you friendlily, these quaintly-rooted gargoyles,—one, like a hermit at peace among his loving beasts, the most delicately-chiselled, whimsical old saint's face I have ever seen.

Such then, small, earth-rooted, yet aspiring, was the Elizabethan London of my vision, a unified, distinct, delightful spectacle; and hemming in all this loveliness, along its old lines ran the ancient Roman wall,—along its old lines but not in its old austere strength; overgrown, rather, with the dim yellow wall-flowers and mosses and grasses it had acquired in its centuries of crumbling decay.

It was an interesting fact that, amid all these visions evoked by the London Museum, I was never much aware of people's clothes,—only of their houses. But it was in the London Museum, nevertheless, that, at last, once for all, the clothes of past ages grew significant to me; that, they became the man in a very real sense. This happened as I wandered through the costume gallery among splendid colors and whimsical shapes of the garments of the past fixed there like entomological specimens, souls fled, in zoological museums: Elizabethan costumes like gorgeous butterflies; dingy eighteenth-century velvet suits—one of Oliver Goldsmith's—like dusty moths; uniforms worn at Waterloo and Dettingen, like tarnished blue dragonflies. I had wandered into the London Museum after hours in the Abbey, my mind still full of the quiet shapes lying at rest on their marble tombs or standing above them in bronze relief; full of *them*, and full, also, of a book I had just been reading about tomb-brasses in general, showing how closely changes in taste could be followed down the ages by means of these monumental fashion-plates. And suddenly all the brilliant costumes in the gallery began to crackle and rustle in the strangest way; and the hitherto vacant spaces between the necks and wigs became filled with faces, as the marble and bronze people, slipping off from their sepulchral couches, took possession, each of them,

before my eyes, of the velvety or silken analogue to his monumental costume. It was, indeed, a quaint sight to see Anne and Anne, wives of Sir Clement Heigham, Knt., Barrow, Suffolk, exactly alike with their small round-toed shoes and their undergowns embroidered with arabesques, the slit wrist-frilled sleeves of them protruding through the stiff-collared upper gown, melting, as it were, out of their moulded brazen effigies, smiling to feel silken fabric flow softly, once more, about their cramped limbs; to see, also Sir Thomas Bullen, in his jewelled coronet, cloak with a badge on the left shoulder and Collar of Garters each enclosing a rose, shaking his shoulders free of his brazen sheath with such sighs of relief as a medieval warrior must have breathed when he, too, (home from the wars) exchanged his ponderous armor for court velvet and laces. Most charming of all it was, however, to see a troop of gallant children—William, son of George Brome, aged ten, in trunk hose, doublet and short skirt; little Anne, daughter of Sir George Chute, with peaked stomacher and farthingale-distended skirt, her hair dressed precisely like her mother's, nine peaks, one above the other,—to see these and many others doffing their stiff metal clothing and slipping, like children flushed from long sleep, into little mid-Victorian suits and frocks; while a crowd of small dogs, serving sepulchally as footstools, shook their joints free and scampered around at their heels. From that hour on I was more aware of costume than, in any connection, I had ever been before, though human clothes will never interest me as much as does that looser sheath of man, his house, which, nautilus-like, as his needs increase, he builds cell by cell until the key of it, at last, unlocks for us his cultural history.

Such was my experience with the London past as primarily suggested by the London Museum: for the most part quaintly distorted, spontaneously-engendered visions breaking in incongruously between the orderly sequence of scholarly reconstructions long my mental possession. And had it not been for one other institution in London most fascinatingly supplementing the Museum, I should have carried away from my dreaming not only there, but throughout London, only this conglomerate mosaic of reminiscent experience sharply differentiated, by my mood, into orderly, well-constructed stretches broken by splashes and streaks of wilful color, with no suggestion of any organic blending of these apparently inharmonious elements.

It was into the representation of the stream of developing

national experience sweeping across the stage of the Old Vic Theatre in Southwark that the still life poisoning itself breathless, a-tip-toe in The London Museum—its suggestion-fraught jars, knives, skeletons, etc.,—was caught and transformed into consistent cultural background for the continuous racial drama enacted before me through a series of entrancing evenings. No visible stage-scenery could have begun to equal in poignant, emotional effect the landscapes and architectural vistas that evolved before my eyes as result of my hours in the Museum. It was through the misty England of Neolithic man, which had risen around me as I pondered the works of his hands laid in orderly rows in the Museum-cases, that I watched, from the four-penny gallery, the Britons of Bottomley's play, "Britain's Daughter," wandering and fighting and dying; it was towards a London later to be filled with the very golden-hazed dishes, leaf-decorated bowls, tear-bottles, lamps, styluses, egg-spoons, bronze saucepans, intaglios, over which for hours I had brooded, that their predestined conquerors were making their way in triremes that scattered the native craft like wild fowl before the hawk. My imagination, stimulated to the highest degree by this chance union, in my consciousness, of cultural object and historic act, worked eagerly forward reconstructing rapidly background for the series of Shakespearean Chronicle Plays soon to follow,—the successive Londons from King John to Henry VIII. And, in turn, under the stimulus of these Chronicle Plays my mind, further enlarged and strengthened, worked yet more vigorously back into the past and forward into the future, utilizing in this cultural reconstruction, all the impressions which had hitherto, during my London wanderings, poured in so richly upon it, (not only all that was coherent and consecutive but even the most fragmentary and casual of them) till, beneath the cumulative creative magic of the Old Vic Theatre, English racial evolution, from the days of Alfred to those of Elizabeth, fell into a cosmic sequence so superb that I was breathless before it. And, in this experience, one source of my keenest pleasure lay in my knowledge that this full-volumed flood of racial life that I was witnessing was not *literally* at all the life that had been lived in England; that events had been transformed, figures magnified, quality enhanced; that I was, in short, witnessing an Epic Legend unfolding itself before me,—a mighty Epic Legend and, therefore, in its idealization of both good and evil, in its symbolic, interpretative quality, a truer revelation of

progressive English consciousness than any scientific sequence of historian's pages, as *The Iliad* and the *Odyssey* are the supreme portrayal of the heart of the Homeric age. And because it was so, and because, also, epic portrayal justly shadowing racial mood and movement would not be complete without its hovering cloud of myth and folk-lore, springing organically from popular attempts to interpret life but, in its turn, giving birth to more shallow, whimsical analogies, I found two-fold joy in this experience of mine at *The Old Vic Theatre*: first, the joy of spiritual liberation into a vast of impersonal experience; second, that of knowing that not the lightest of my fancies concerning this London, throbbing heart of the great *Chronicle Drama* was, in nature, excluded from its scope; that as all the knowledge I had laboriously acquired concerning the past of England during my whole life was enveloped and forever vitalized by this flood of epic history whose onrolling I was witnessing so, among the insubstantial creatures shaping themselves at dawn and evening from out its rising mists and fen-born phosphorescences, my own frailer fancies had, each one, its homely prescriptive right to spread its wings and sing.

*Bibliographic Note:*

As is indicated in the text of this essay, I have adapted to my purpose material found in the various catalogues of *The British Museum*, *The London Museum* and other institutions; in accounts of London Churches, in works dealing with Egyptian and Babylonian history and inscriptions; and in a miscellaneous collection glanced into, here and there, as need dictated. My impression is that the few lines concerning *Menna* are a fairly close paraphrase or summary of a passage in one of the above indicated books whose title I have forgotten.

# AN AMERICAN GRANDFATHER

A PLAY IN ONE ACT

BY MARIAN SPENCER SMITH

## SCENE

*A bare room, with a few benches around the wall. A high window at back with steam radiators underneath. There is a door at the left. On the floor, bundles, valises—a miscellaneous litter of luggage.*

*Time, The Present.*

## CHARACTERS

FYDOR, a young man.

MARTA, his wife.

JAN, an old man.

STANSILAUS, a violinist.

IMMIGRATION OFFICER.

OTHER IMMIGRANTS.

*As the curtain goes up, the immigrants in their gay costumes are seated about the room, FYDOR and MARTA at right and a little apart from the rest. At the left, near the door, the rest of the immigrants, including JAN and STANSILAUS, are grouped; some looking apathetically or with bewilderment about them, others chattering with animation, while a few dance as STANISLAUS plays his violin. After a moment a young immigration officer appears at the doorway. A hush falls over the room.*

*Immigration Officer (Briskly).—All ready now. Numbers 191, 192, 193, 4, and 5, come with me.*

*The immigrants examine their tags, and five of them, picking up their bundles, leave the room. As they go, they nod happily and a bit proudly to those who are left behind.*

*Fydor (Turning to MARTA).—It is almost two hundred now. Soon it will be our turn.*

*Marta.—Yes. Only nine, only nine are left, but they go first. (Nodding in the direction of a little group in a corner, a woman with two children, a middle aged man, and a beautiful young girl with the look of a bride about her.)*

*Fydor (Looking over and catching the eye of the bride. He*



*smiles and she smiles back at him*).—I tell you, Marta, if I were the man who is waiting outside now for Chita—so lovely she is, such eyes . . .

*Marta (Sharply)*.—And such a wart on the chin. A sure sign, they say, of a bad disposition.

*Fydor*.—With that face though, what does it matter? I tell you he will be a proud man.

*Marta*.—Proud? Maybe so, but in America do the women wear shawls like hers? No. They wear hats—like mine. (*She touches the hat which she holds carefully in her lap.*)

*Fydor (Laughing)*.—Come now, Marta, you're not going to be jealous, eh? You will have a hard time I'm thinking if you are, for in America all women are lovely and all wear hats. Besides, was it not for you, for you and no one else I work to buy that hat, so that you can be a real American.

*Marta*.—I promise you it will not take me long. In our new home we shall have nothing but American things. Shiny furniture, stoves under the windows, like these, (*indicating the radiators*), and a rug with flowers. (*She puts on hat.*) And, Fydor—do you like—tell me, is the hat not pretty?

*Fydor (Turning her face up with his hand)*.—I like best what I see underneath the hat . . . when it smiles at me . . . so.

*Marta*.—Ah, when you have that fine position and we have our little house you shall see nothing but smiles. And in the evening, when it is like day inside with the lights we turn on by a click of the little button . . .

*Fydor*.—I shall be coming home long before it is time to turn on the lights. In America we work only a few hours. To work late into the night is a thing unheard of.

*Marta*.—Then in the evenings you can carve your toys, and I shall sell them to the shops around us. So much money we will make, it almost frightens me.

*Fydor*.—Perhaps they will not care for my toys in America.

*Marta*.—Did not the American who was in Matchin last summer say how fine they were, and are you not the best carver in the village?

*Fydor*.—Maybe so, but we are no longer in the village. All that we have left behind us. You do not seem to understand, Marta; the long hours in the fields, the cold winters, with the snow coming thru the chinks in the walls, and my fingers so numb I could hardly work at the carving, it is all behind us.

*Marta.*—Ah, how lucky it is that we could come now while we are still young. See, here comes old Jan. What can it mean to him now after all these years to have a house like this, where it is summer all year, a house with little boxes full of heat along the wall.

*Jan (Approaching and sitting down beside them).*—You will catch cold, Marta, without your shawl. In a hat like that there is no warmth.

(FYDOR and MARTA exchange glances.)

*Marta.*—Wait until you get into America, Jan. You will see then that all the women wear hats, and to be an American, one does not mind if the ears are a little cold.

*Immigration Officer (At door).*—Numbers 196, 197, 198, 199 and 200, come with me.

(*The immigrants gather up their bundles and go out. They turn at the door to wave.*)

*The Children.*—Goodbye, Stansilaus.

*Stansilaus.*—Goodbye. Don't forget to come to my concert. (*He sits down, holding his violin in his hands.*)

*Chita (From the door).*—Goodbye.

*Fydor.*—Goodbye, Chita.

(*MARTA looks at him reprovingly and adjusts her hat self-consciously.*)

*Jan (Calling after them).*—Tell my son that I come next. (*They do not hear, and he turns to MARTA.*) You do not think he will get tired of waiting, Marta?

*Marta.*—Why should he? We have to wait our turn. Everyone must wait their turn.

*Jan.*—But he is a very busy man. They should have given me a lower number. My son will not like it.

*Fydor.*—How many years is it that your son has been in America?

*Jan.*—Twenty years.

*Fydor.*—That is a long time.

*Marta.*—How did it happen that you did not come too?

*Jan.*—All cannot leave. Some must stay. Besides, my wife she was afraid. It was so far. Twenty years . . . It seems like yesterday when he left with his bundle over his shoulder, and now . . .

*Fydor.*—And now you come with a bundle over your shoulder, eh?

*Jan (Proudly).*—To be sure I have brought a few things

with me, but I shall not be needing them long. My son he will buy me fine American clothes—trousers, made with creases in the front, a fine white shirt and a collar for feast days.

*Marta.*—You will need more than one. In America the men wear white shirts every day, with fine silk ties fastened with diamond pins, like the American who was in Matchin last year.

*Jan.*—Well, whatever is right my son will see that I have. Everything American he has in his house, everything of the best.

*Fydor.*—And what will you do in America? Will you help your son in his shop?

*Jan.*—I do not know. I would be glad to, but my son says that in this country only the young men work, and he has already a smart young American to help him. Still . . . I would not like to be idle.

*Marta.*—No doubt there will be plenty for you to do around the home, taking care of the stock, cutting wood, mending fences.

*Fydor (Laughing).*—She thinks America is like Matchin. Do you not know, Marta, that in America there is nothing of that sort to be done. Everything is done by machinery, and everything comes out of a can, even the milk.

*Jan.*—Yes, that is so. In my son's house, everything is worked by a current. You press a button for whatever you desire. When his wife wants to make a dress for the children, she presses a button and the dress is made, no sewing by hand.

*Marta.*—How can that be? Everyone must sew by hand.

*Fydor.*—I have never heard of anyone sewing by machinery, but perhaps it is true.

*Jan.*—Of course it is true and much more. When they want food, they press a button and it arrives.

*Marta.*—All cooked?

*Jan.*—That I cannot say, but it arrives in the kitchen on something they call a silent waiter.

*Marta.*—No wonder then that the women are all beautiful. They have nothing to do.

*Fydor.*—Except take care of the children. That cannot be done by machinery.

*Marta (Slowly).*—No, that is the same everywhere for those who are lucky enough to have children. Has your son, children, Jan?

*Jan.*—Four. All boys, but one. It is for that he wishes me to come.

*Fydor.*—Ah yes, so that the children may see their grandfather. That is fine.

*Jan.*—I have brought them all toys, the finest I have ever carved. I do not come to them empty-handed. It is a long journey tho, a long journey. I would not have come had not my son wished it, had not he wished that his children should have an American grandfather.

*Martha.*—You are going to take out your papers then?

*Jan.*—Yes. It is for that my son sends for me. He does not wish any foreigners in his family—only Americans.

*Fydor.*—A fine thing too. Marta and I, soon we shall be Americans, and in time, if we are lucky, we shall have children who will be Americans.

*Marta.*—America is a fine country for children. There they are all taught by the government to be ladies and gentlemen, and are punished if they work.

*Jan.*—Perhaps someday you will come to see my son's children, and his fine house. They have there a machine which plays the most wonderful music, music like Stansilaus, only much finer.

*Fydor.*—Come now, Jan, machines do not play fine music. Many things are possible in America, but not that.

*Jan.*—It is the truth I am telling you. Violins, harps, and even voices make music on his machine.

*Marta.*—Stansilaus, Stansilaus, come. You should hear this.

*Stansilaus (Rising).*—I would like best to hear my number called, but what is it?

*Fydor.*—Jan is trying to tell us that in his son's house there is a machine which makes music like yours.

*Jan (Nodding).*—Only finer.

*Stan.*—It is not possible.

*Marta (Smiling).*—You make the finest music in the world, eh?

*Stan.*—I do not say that, but my music is good—better than any machine. Have I not played for the Americans on the ship, and are they not ready to help me, once I get into America? Americans do not help musicians who play like machines.

*Fydor.*—We were only joking you, Stanislaus. We know there is no machine that makes music like yours.

*Jan (Stubbornly).*—My son has one.

*Marta.*—His son has everything. He has more than the king.

*Jan.*—Ah, I see you do not not believe. I myself scarcely believe, but soon I shall see, if that man ever comes back to call my number—I shall see.

*Stan.*—Why is he so slow? Everyone else is already in America. Why must we wait?

*Fydor.*—By this time, I could have a position, but no—I must wait for a number.

*Marta.*—If I were only there, I could be looking for a house with buttons to do all the work. It is hard waiting here just outside the door.

*Jan.*—Yes, when he comes, when he calls us, I shall see everything; the fine house with the silent servant, the machine that makes clothes and the one that makes music. I shall see my son, and his children who will soon have an American grandfather.

*Stan.*—It is easier for you than for us. You have only to look, we have work to do. America is waiting for us.

*Jan.*—My son is an American and he is waiting for me. Besides, for how many years have I dreamed of all these things which I am to see? Each thing that he tells me about, I wonder, 'will I ever see it?' and now . . .

*Marta.*—They will all keep. Tomorrow you can see them as well as today, but for us, who knows but those others have already taken the best positions.

*Fydor.*—True—though there are not many men who can work as I can. They will be glad I have come. In Matchin everyone says, 'Fydor loves work like children love sugar.' There, where we work with our hands, I can do the work of three men; here I can do the work of five, for I shall have machines to help me, and I shall receive the pay of five men.

*Jan.*—In my son's house, there is a machine for talking thru the air. If my son leaves his home he does not need to come back in order to talk to his wife or to scold the children. A little bell rings, they all listen, and, in a minute, there is his voice, as plain as mine.

*Stan.*—That is only a telephone. In Braila there are telephones too in the fine houses.

*Marta.*—But in America everyone has them. We shall have one, shall we not, Fydor?

*Fydor.*—In America we shall have everything, everything except hardship—that we have left behind us.

*Stan.*—When I give my first concert, when I stand in the

great hall, with all the people seated before me in broadcloth and fine satin, waiting to hear me play, I shall think for just a moment, for just a moment while they all wait, of my mother gathering fagots all day in the wood, of my sister who will never walk again because she had no shoes the year that the great snow some, of the days of hunger and of cold. I shall think of that, and then I shall play until they forget their fine clothes and their fat purses and remember their souls.

*Jan.*—In my son's house there are chairs that open up to make beds and doors that disappear into the walls. In my son's house there are . . .

*Marta.*—And, Stansilaus, we shall be there, we shall be at your concert, finely dressed like the others, we shall be there to hear you play.

*Fydor.*—The days when there was only black bread in the house, when the ice was white on the river and the fagots for the fire were low—how far away they will seem, when we sit in that great warm hall, with flowers and laughter all about us, and say, 'he was our countryman. He too once lived in Matchin.'

*Stan.*—There is no time to lose though. It is good we are young.

*Fydor.*—Yes, it is good we are young.

*Marta.*—So that when we are old, we will have things of our own to look at.

*Jan.*—My son has a machine for taking pictures. Anything he sees that he fancies, he takes a picture of, and then he puts it in a book where he can look at it whenever he wishes.

*Stan.*—Your son is not the only man from Matchin who has gone to America. To hear you talk, you would think there was no one else.

*Jan.*—Do not be angry, Stansilaus. I do not mean to brag. Maybe it is not so much, but to me it is everything. I have dreamed of these things so long, and now I am to see them.

*Marta.*—Yes, you will see them and you will be an American grandfather and that is a great deal, a great deal when one comes to be your age.

*Fydor.*—Of course it would not content us. It is not merely to see that we have come; it is to be ourselves what your son is—perhaps more, who knows?

*Stan.*—At any rate it will be a long time before we are American grandfathers, eh, Fydor?

*Jan.*—And it will be a longer time before you are the grand-

children of Americans. That you will never be. (*He chuckles.*)  
That you will never be.

(*After a moment they join in his laughter. As they are laughing the Immigration officer enters the room. Seeing him, they stop and look up expectantly. JAN begins to gather up his bundles.*)

*I. O.*—How is this? There are four of you.

*Frydor.*—Yes sir, the last four. Everyone else has been called.

*I. O.*—But that is one more than the quota.

*Jan.*—My son—is he still waiting—have you seen my son?

*I. O.*—How can I tell? I do not know your son. You understand, one of you will have to go back.

*Marta.*—But, sir, I could not leave my husband.

*I. O.*—So you two are married? Well, in that case you had better come through.

*Jan.*—Yes, but they can wait. My son, he is expecting me, and he is very busy, you see . . .

*I. O.*—I have nothing to do with that. I only know that someone has made a mistake and sent over one more than the number allowed from your country.

*Stan.*—How can that be? We all have numbers. See, mine is 201, so I come next.

*I. O.*—Don't ask me how they make such mistakes. It is enough that they make them, are always making them.

*Fydor.*—Our numbers are 202 and 203. It is he (*pointing to JAN*) who they send by mistake.

*Jan.*—My son will be very angry about this. He will have you dismissed if you do not let me through. He is well known, I tell you, in America, and it will not be wise to disappoint him.

*I. O.*—I have nothing to do with these things. I have orders to allow only two hundred and three immigrants to enter from Roumania. I do not care what the tags say, or who they are.

*Marta.*—But what shall we do? You can see that we are first.

*Stan.*—And that *I* am before them.

*I. O.*—Well, I am not going to decide. You have all been passed by the medical examiner. I will go out for a few minutes, and you can decide it among yourselves. I do not want to make any hard feelings, but remember, only three of you can enter—one of you will have to go back.

(*He leaves.*)

*Fydor (Turning to the others).*—That is easy enough to say,

but what is there to go back to? Everything we have has been sold to pay for our passage. There is not even the goat left.

*Marta.*—How they would laugh to see us coming back to the village with empty hands after all our fine talk.

*Stan.*—It is not everyday one has a chance to play for rich Americans on the way over so that they offer their help. If I should go back now, they would soon forget me.

*Fydor.*—It is time too that Roumania should make herself known through her musicians. All the other countries have great musicians. It is our turn now. You must not be the one to go back.

*Marta.*—Fydor speaks the truth. You must stay, you must take your chance now.

*Jan.*—If it were not for my son, I could go back, but he must not be disappointed. It is not as tho any of you had children waiting for you.

*Stan.*—If they had been content to wait twenty years, I would let them wait longer. A career, music—that is something that will not wait.

*Jan.*—Of course you should not go back, Stansilaus—I see that. Frydor and Marta, they are anxious that you should stay too. Is it not so?

*Fydor.*—Yes, we think we should stay. Go, Stansilaus, we will join you soon.

*Jan.*—If you see my son, tell him I will not keep him waiting much longer.

*Stan (Looking at them a bit hesitatingly).*—You understand—it is my career—only for that . . .

*Marta.*—Yes, yes we understand—go.

(STANISLAUS picks up his things and leaves the room.)

*Fydor.*—Jan, your son will prosper just the same if you do not come to him, and he will send you money and take care of you, so that you will be more comfortable in the old country than here in the new.

*Marta.*—At your age everything would be so strange. It is better dream of these things than to have them when you can no longer enjoy them. You would feel awkward and out of place.

*Jan.*—There is only one thing left for me to do.

*Fydor.*—That is right, that is sensible. It is not as though you had work yet to do in the world. You have done your share.

*Jan.*—But I still have something to do, and it cannot wait.



If I were younger, I would go back and come again, but I must see that it is done now.

*Marta.*—There is nothing for you to do in America, Jan. You have said yourself that you will not work, while we . . .

*Jan.*—But I have promised, and it is the only thing I can do. Someday you will understand, and you will know then that I was right in saying that I was the one to stay. You and Fydor can come later, or you can send your children.

*(He walks over and again picks up his bundle which he has dropped.)*

*Fydor (To MARTA).*—It is too bad, Marta, that he should be so stubborn, that he should not see that two of us would have to go back, where there is only need for one.

*Marta.*—I do not like to make him feel badly, but he is only a foolish old man, half childish already, with his talk of magic furniture and music in boxes. Of course, I could go back to my weaving, but it would be years before we could start again.

*Fydor.*—Perhaps not more than a year or two, if I should work in the city, in Braila.

*Marta.*—And in the meantime, all those others will be ahead of us, talking thru telephones, pushing buttons to make their clothes. Have you no love for yourself that you would give up and go back to please a silly old man?

*Fydor.*—It was you who suggested it.

*Marta.*—I? That is likely after I have this fine hat on my head and am already as good as an American.

*Fydor.*—Well then, let us go. He is busy getting his things ready, but it is only natural that husband and wife should stay together. There is no point to two going back when the man says there is only one extra. Jan will see that himself when he thinks.

*Marta (Picking up a bundle).*—We might tell him that we will explain to his son. He does not care himself about coming to America. It is all to please his son.

*Fydor (Picking up another bundle).*—Goodbye, Jan. We will see your son outside and tell him what has happened. He will see that it is not your fault.

*Marta.*—And you, yourself, will be happier back in Roumania, where everything is as it was when you were a boy.

*Jan.*—Yes, that is true except for one thing, that one thing you have forgotten.

*Fydor.*—What is that?

*Jan.*—My grandchildren. They must have an American

grandfather, and how else can it be done? I must be the one to stay.

*Marta.*—But someday we may have grandchildren too, and if we do not stay now they will never be anybody, they will be poor and work in the fields, and never have the things your son's children already have. Surely your grandchildren have enough as it is.

*Fydor.*—You do not think that for three years I work all day and all but a small part of the night so that we may come here. No, you do not think of that, nor that we have lost our son because Marta must work too long in the fields to help us get the money. When one has a son to send his passage, one does not think of these things.

*Jan (Troubled).*—No, I did not think. Perhaps it is right that you should stay, but . . .

*Marta.*—Of course it is, for after all we are young and can make our way in this new world. For you it will be the same whether you go back or stay. That is how it is with old people.

*Jan.*—Yes, when one's family and friends are gone, all things are the same, and until now I had grown used to it.

*Fydor.*—Well, we will tell your son that we have seen you and that you send him your love. Come, Marta, we will be going now.

*Marta.*—And we will write and tell you all about our new home and the wonderful position that Fydor will get in America. It would be a mistake for a man like Fydor, a man who has a quick brain and strong hands to go back to the old country, to give up the chance he has waited so long for, just because the children of a man he has never seen would like an American grandfather. You can see that yourself, Jan.

*Jan.*—Yes, I can see.

*Fydor.*—And besides, what good would it do for me to have bought Marta this fine American hat if we should go back now. I am sure your son would agree if he knew.

*Jan.*—Yes, I understand. There are many reasons. (*He lays down his bundles, picks out a small package and walks over to window, where he stands looking out.*)

*Marta.*—What has my hat to do with our going back or not, I would like to know? A hat is not the most important thing in the world.

*Fydor.*—But, Marta, you said yourself that you would not be likely to go back after you had that fine hat.

*Marta.*—What does it matter what I said? It is on your account that I am willing to let him go back. For myself, I do not care.

*Fydor.*—Perhaps he is not really disappointed. I should not be if I had only come over to be an American grandfather.

*Marta.*—No, that is right. It is quite different with us. Give me the bundle. Let us go.

(*JAN, standing at the window, keeps his face turned from them as they talk.*)

*Fydor.*—Goodbye, Jan. We will write you from America.

(*JAN does not reply.*)

*Marta* (*Going over and putting her hand on his sleeve*).—Do not feel badly, Jan. Think of the Danube, think of the black hawthornes on its bank. They will be turning pink when you get back.

*Jan* (*In a strained voice*).—Here are the toys. Will you give them to my son. Perhaps his children will like them, will understand that their grandfather loves them even if he has never seen them, even if—even if he is not . . . an American.

(*FYDOR and MARTA exchange glances, and MARTA, taking the package, walks back to stand beside FYDOR.*)

*Fydor.*—It was along the Danube, when the hawthornes were turning pink, that we were first together, *Marta*.

*Marta.*—There is nothing lovelier, no sight anywhere in the world. If it had not been that you had this craze to come to America . . .

*Fydor.*—I? Why it was you who were always talking, always telling me how I was wasting myself there, that we could so easily be rich in America.

*Marta.*—Besides, he has no one to go back to, no one but his nephew *Konrad* and his cross wife, where he must share a room with the goat.

*Fydor.*—So long as he had his little farm and his wife, he was not always bragging of his son in America, but always for the last six years, he must buttonhole everyone on the street to tell them his wonder-stories.

*Marta.*—What of it? Was it not all he had to live for? I do not blame him. Look—the poor old man—he is trying to see America thru the window. (*She points to where JAN stands peering out the window thru the lengthening shadows. For a moment they stand silent, looking at him, then turn to each other. FYDOR's bundle slips to the floor.*)

*Fydor.*—After all, we have each other.

*Marta.*—And we are young. We can start again.

*Fydor.*—Even if we do not come, we can send our children.

*Marta.*—And perhaps someday . . .

*Fydor.*—Yes, perhaps someday we will be like him, with only one thing left to do.

*(They look at each other for a moment. Then MARTA lays down her bundle.)*

*Marta (Sharply).*—Jan!

*Jan (Without turning).*—It is all right. I understand.

*Marta.*—Jan, why do you not go? Your son will be impatient.

*Jan (Turning, bewildered).*—Why, I thot . . .

*Fydor.*—See—here comes the officer now to take you. Perhaps your son has sent him.

*I. O. (Entering).*—Have you decided?

*(FYDOR and MARTA nod.)*

*Marta.*—Yes. He is the one to stay *(Pointing to JAN)*.

*Fydor.*—We will go back together.

*I. O.*—All right, only it seems to me . . .

*Marta (Handing JAN his package).*—We have decided. Goodbye, Jan.

*Jan.*—But, but . . .

*I. O. (Goodnaturedly).*—Come along. Your son will be wanting his dinner soon.

*Jan.*—Oh yes, my son is expecting me. *(He follows the officer from the room.)*

*(MARTA and FYDOR stand silent for a moment looking after him, then FYDOR takes his wife's hand and together they walk to the window where JAN had stood looking out a moment ago.)*

*Fydor.*—It is there, Marta—America.

*Marta (Turning away and taking off her hat).*—It is too dark, Fydor. I cannot see it. *(She stands looking at her hat as the curtain falls.)*

# CLAUDIO DE ALAS

POET OF GLOOM

BY WILLIS K. JONES

Apostles of the "Pollyanna" type are not popular among most Latin American people. Among the literary clans, gloom is beauty, and tragedy is the highest form of art. So it is not strange to receive news from the Argentine of a gloom poet whose death brought him more celebrity than his life, and yet whose life was full of romance.

Claudio de Alas, Claude of the Wings, was the pen name of Jorge Escobar Uribe, born in Colombia in 1886. His family ranks high in the history of the nation. His father was for many years Director of Public Ways in the Republic. One of his brothers is Chief of Staff in the army and another is a noted senator. Jorge, however, seems to have been born a revolutionary figure. At the age of fourteen, during the revolution of 1900, he was one of General Avelina Rosas' officers, and one of his poems gives his impressions at seeing some executed spies when he and his patrol were searching the woods for other enemy. For him, this civil war meant the loss of home, for he was practically exiled from the country, and never visited it again.

From some of his writings it appears that he spent a little while in the United States, but it seems impossible to get dates for his stay here. What is certain is that he lived in Ecuador for a time, and then spent some time in Peru, finally coming to Chile to live among a nation given to literature and friendly to genius, whether it be a law-giver like Bello, or poet like Ruben Dario and Claudio de Alas.

Among Santiago's younger writers he found many friends, and that coterie of literary spirits that call themselves "The Ten" welcomed him and helped him as they were helped by him. My first sight of Claudio de Alas was at one of Santiago's cafes where he sat talking to two Chilean writers and drinking granadinas and Salus. He was rather slight and wan. His eyes were bright and alive, in contrast to his somewhat sullen mouth with its short upper lip. His nose was especially noticeable with its prominent, finely chiseled bridge.

Later I visited his study. The room was dark in spite of the

spring sunlight outside. And he seemed dark, too. In the hour or more that we talked, I saw him smile only once, and that was when he stroked the skull on his desk, and told how he had stolen it from a cemetery, leaping over the wall in the moonlight to find it. Perhaps it was to this skull that he wrote his lines "*Ante un Craneo*" so often quoted by University students.

I know you not, offscouring of grim life,  
 You hoary, voiceless proof of nothingness;  
 How many years ago your fire and strife  
 Was dulled by Death in just one brief caress.  
 Naught do those holes that once were eyes aver,  
 There, mysteries of existence left no trace;  
 I only know that in some sepulchre  
 The slowly toiling worms destroyed your face,  
 And that in murkiest depths of sealed Hereafter  
 Death, coveting all things you now despise,  
 Left on your countenance its fearful laughter,  
 And buried shadows deep within your eyes.

Truly a gloomy picture! But, then, death and cemeteries were his obsession. The only pictures that he possessed treated of those subjects. He had a whole drawer full of post cards and magazine illustrations of dead people and views of grave yards. For him, as for Samuel Butler, life was one long process of getting tired, and he tired more easily than most. For the majority of people, somewhere in the middle of life they cease to regard death as a monster and consider him a silent, but friendly companion. Claudio de Alas was always looking forward to the summons to walk with Death.

"Love occupied one half of his life and sorrow the rest," wrote a literary friend of his. One Chilean critic claimed that as a poet he reacted only to voluptuous and sensual poetry. Much of Alas' poetry merits this judgment, but there are exceptions, such as the magnificent *Canto de Bronce al Bronce*, written to Albert of Belgium during the war, or the still longer ode to the warriors of San Martin.

Yet there is no doubt that death figures largely in his poetry. It was with the winning of first prize in the Juegos Florales, in Santiago, Dec. 22, 1914 that he sprang into prominence. These festivals of flowers used to occur yearly in Latin American cities, and were competitions to select the best poet of the year. The bard so honored was presented with a golden arrow and he had the privilege of selecting a Queen of Love and Beauty who would

reign beside him over the carnival which followed. *Psalm de Amor* was the title of the poem Alas wrote for this occasion. It was a theme of love and death, treated in a medieval manner and full of archaisms. The chief character was a page who loved Doña Urraca devotedly, but because of his affection he was thrown into the castle moat and killed. Later Claudio de Alas competed again with *En la Palestra*, in which a lover in a court in Provence was discovered with his lady, and killed by the irate husband.

Mystic love, too, attracted the poet's attention. He became deeply interested in monastic orders, and at last with Honorio Rocado Guinazu, an Argentine author, entered a monastery of the Order of Merced, living for some time with the monks as a novitiate. Some twenty poems were the result, many of them full of deep feeling, but others in a satirical vein.

As a visiting literary man, he was asked to speak before the Atheneum, a literary group of Chile. The first time he chose his fellow Colombian, José Asunción Silva, whose life was filled with misfortunes. At the age of thirty, Silva faced life in poverty, his fortune having been swept away by a revolution. Later a beloved sister died. Silva poured out his soul in a volume of poems, sending the manuscript to France, but the vessel that carried it was lost. Beaten and disheartened, he committed suicide.

The next spring Alas was again invited to speak before the Atheneum. This time Vargas Vila was his subject, another gloomy figure who preached the beauties of suicide so forcefully that at least six readers of his volumes followed his advice and killed themselves. Claudio de Alas summed up Vargas Vila in three words: struggle, grief, glory.

Unamuno, that noble spirit of Spain so recently exiled for his political opinions, used three verbs to describe Silva; *sufrir*, *sonar*, *cantar* (to suffer, to dream, to sing) and these words portray Claudio de Alas, just as aptly. Suffering and grief sound the keynote for most that is lovely in his verse. Like Montaigne, he advocated dying a little every day. He took literally Maeterlinck's advice to speak and think about death occasionally in order to be better prepared to meet it.

In *Fiat-lux*, the poetic foreword of his posthumous book of verse, he gives an explanation and a warning.

With the pure boldness of a statued nude  
This sonorous book I give mankind.

Within it, Death and Sin and Doubt are viewed  
 In words my soul's blood wrote for all to find.  
 Its harmony is boisterously crude  
 Bearing a threat for carping critic's mind;  
 But—Volume of my Life—with life endured  
 Because by soul and hand together 't was designed.

Read not this book, satanical and sad—  
 Read not this book, for Hell in it finds room—  
 Read not this book, which wept for all men had—  
 Hope in its pages, pitiless in gloom  
 Ironic is, depraved, and always sad.  
 Grant that its final page shall be my tomb.

Three publications, were the result of Claudio de Alas' stay in Chile. His volume of poems, *Psalmos de Muerte y de Pecado*, appeared in 1916 with a foreword by Tomás Gabriel Chazal. This is the book upon which much of his literary reputation depends. But he wrote fiction as well. About that time or a little earlier, a peculiarly ghastly murder involving members of the German Embassy in Chile had shocked the capital. Under his real name of Escobar Uribe, he wrote an account of it, virtually a detective story whose denouement depended on the examination of the teeth of the victim found in the burned building. It was so popular that French and English translations were made.

His third volume was hack work. Being out of funds, he agreed to write a eulogistic life of Arturo Alessandri, who was then only a prominent politician, with no idea of becoming president of Chile. Claudio de Alas received the first advance of 5000 pesos (about \$1000) but he could not get into the mood to write the book. Finally, as a last resort, he was locked in a room and his meals were sent in through the window. In seven days he wrote the volume.

5000 pesos additional were given to him, and he went out to find his friends and celebrate. Three days later every centavo was spent. But, as he wrote to Balmaceda, a friend, "Money is humanity's greatest dishonor because with it one can buy anything, even, by means of indulgences, the goodness and forgiveness of God."

But all the time the poet was in Chile, he kept thinking of Rubén Darío who achieved his fame in Chile, increased it in Argentina, and after his trip to Europe, became the commanding figure of modern Spanish poetry. Argentina seemed to be calling Claudio de Alas, too. Finally, when it grew too strong to resist,



toward the end of 1917, he crossed the Andes, sending back to *Zig-Zag*, a literary weekly of Santiago, his description of the Andes, his first impression of the beauty and hospitality of Buenos Aires, and his dream of a future there.

Never was man so disappointed. Even the literary men of Argentina's capital seldom extol it as a literary center. The wonderful newspaper buildings there typify commerce far more than art. The disillusioned poet quickly discovered that he had failed to find his Utopia, but he was ashamed to return to Santiago and determined to fight for recognition. The offer of ten pesos (\$4) for a sonnet was the final blow.

At this time, an English artist whose pictures bear the signature Stephen Robert Koek-Koek, lent Alas a bungalow at Banfield, near Buenos Aires. Here the two men lived through the summer of 1917-8, working on a translation of Wilde's *Salome*. By night he wrote his poetry, but in the daytime Alas and a decrepit collie belonging to the painter went on long walks.

Fall was approaching. He knew the chill gloominess of a South American winter. And then, on March 5, 1918 came his end. Koek-Koek had to go to the city on business. The servant was sent after the newspaper, and Claudio de Alas and the dog were alone in the garden of the little bungalow. Here the poet wrote three letters; one a brief farewell to the Chilean who had written the introduction to Alas's first book of poems; another to one of his brothers directing that Juan José de Soiza Reilly, an Argentine man of letters, be appointed his literary executor to gather his unpublished material into a volume—*El Cansancio de Claudio de Alas (The Weariness of Claudio de Alas)*.

Here is a translation of the third letter, addressed to Koek-Koek:

"Hail, only brother of my heart and mind. Life is too full of anguish for me to go on enduring it. My fatherland lies among the stars: Oscar Wilde is to receive me in that azure realm. I am deeply sorry not to leave my final book completed. I look forward confidently to my destiny because I am in your house; I mean, knowing that you will carry out the following: Find Juan José de Soiza Reilly and my own brother, Alfredo Escobar Uribe, and with them both (laying this charge upon you, the only man equal to me) burn my body at the sea shore. And to my brother only, give the news that a woman has also died in Chile and by her own hand. In short, I love no one now, because I have found

no one worthy of my affection. But you are a dearly loved brother in art. Claudio de Alas."

Then he killed the dog and shot himself. "Poor dog," he wrote to his brother. "He, too, is tired, and his soul will accompany me."

The literary world of Chile was shocked to hear of his death. His melancholic disposition was well known, but no one suspected a man of such poetic promise capable of an act like that. All the newspapers and magazines that came across the Andes to us in Chile said that he died because he had become discouraged. More than one recounted the episode of the ten peso sonnet. But none of them mentioned the letters that he left, and so not until the publication of the posthumous volume of his poetry did there come any refutation to that charge of cowardice.

In the introduction of *El Cansancio* appears Koek-Koek's explanation. The Englishman's theory is that Claudio died because he knew too much, because of loneliness for lack of people of his own mental calibre who could appreciate him. The act was not evidence that he feared life, but that he disdained it.

But in the letter quoted above there is a more obvious reason, when studied beside the poetry he wrote. There is the reference to the woman in Chile who committed suicide.

Almost nothing is known of the women whom Alas knew in Chile. Even the name of the girl whom he chose as his queen in the Juegos Florales is difficult to obtain. In all his poetry, he alludes to only three women. One is a society woman to whom he wrote a sonnet, but there was no love lost between them. Claudio de Alas wrote a poem praising charity and sent it to the president of the organized charity of Santiago. She mailed him twenty pesos in payment. Back came a vitriolic verse emphasizing the fact that he was a poet, not a beggar.

Money caused him to write a poem and a letter to another woman. Tórtola Valencia, a popular dancer, jestingly asked Alas for a copy of his first volume of poems. He laughingly replied that they cost five pesos. The next day she mailed him a banknote for that amount. His answer was a delicate poem to accompany a costly bouquet of orchids.

If we except Julia, his brother's wife, the only other woman to whom Alas wrote a poem was an unknown María. In honor of her came his lovely "Ave Maria," which I have vainly tried a half dozen times to translate. Above the verses he wrote *En ultratumba* (Beyond the grave), but he has given neither place

nor date to allow it to be identified. From a comparative study of other poems, it is barely possible that a "dull sad spot," Campinas de Pelequen, was her home and that she is the "woman who died in Chile and by her own hand," mentioned in his farewell letter. If so, contributory evidence may be found in another poem of Alas', entitled *Cuando escucho el vals Francia* (*When I hear the Francia waltz*). The music mentioned is a sad, monotonous, but very popular composition by Octavio Barbero. The poem was written in Chile in 1916, but on Alas' personal copy was found an additional memorandum dated at Buenos Aires just before his death.

*In a melancholy, silent town, lost among mountains thousands of years old,*

*In the marvellous sweetness of its silence my soul, sick of the miserable whirlpool, found comfort and solitude.*

*And so I wrote this melancholy song, it being the ghostly memory of a loved and lovely woman, far off, who, like a ray of moonlight, roves through every strophe of my little romance.*

Once upon a night of love, of silence, yet of flame,  
 A melancholy singer,  
 A gentle Troubadour,  
 All close muffled from the world in cape of black, I came  
 Thinking on a sweet amour,  
 Thinking on a sweet amour.

And as I looked upon you with devotion  
 Seeing the demon, I beheld the woman, too,  
 And my emotion,  
 And your emotion  
 Were burning flames to light me unto you.

*(These two stanzas are then repeated in reversed order.)*

Oh, sad love that could not last  
 But fled with you  
 And with your song—  
 Lovely song of the past!—  
 A traveler without love and without home, I hie  
 Like other troubadours  
 Hymning amours,  
 But I shall dream your beauty till I die.

And if 't is you who are the first in dying,  
 Along the path your footsteps tread  
 I'll follow close that soul so sped;  
 A singer sad beyond belief  
 I'll weep my grief,  
 I'll weep my grief.

Did his death mean that he was keeping his promise to his unknown lady?

Whatever caused it, his death brought his work instant attention. This need not seem strange to Anglo-Saxons who have seen the death of some of our war poets sweep them into fame. Of course the fate of such men as Seeger had a touch of the heroic to our eyes, but so did that of Claudio de Alas to the South Americans. What we consider a mere vulgar suicide is to them an intellectual resource of the weary minded. Morbid suggestion and animal instinct to us, often take on the humanity of virtue to the Latin. Unwholesome fancy and suicide does not startle them. They consider it a magnificent gesture of romance or of disdain of life. Like the Indians who, according to recent press report, are demanding of the British Government the right to kill themselves, many Latins look upon suicide as beautiful.

The first edition of the posthumous volume of Claudio de Alas' poetry was at once exhausted in the Argentine alone. A second 10,000 copies barely supplied the demand of the other South American nations, and it is only the third printing that is now coming to the United States.

But Alas' popularity is not due solely to his suicide. Many another South American writer did away with himself for one reason or other, but most of them lacked Alas' skill with words. As one Chilean said of him, "He felt deeply and expressed himself beautifully." And it is this beauty of style that marks his poetry, as it marks his recently published novel, *La herencia de la sangre* (The Heritage of Blood) found among his papers, a story with a vigor and sweep in its treatment of modern Santiago life.

Alas is being widely read because he strikes the keynote of the Latin nature and does it well. He is a true Colombian. To his death he cherished the coat-of-arms and flags of Colombia won in a poetic competition. Coester in his classic "Literary History of South America," and Dr. Goldberg in his scholarly "Studies in Spanish American Literature" praise the high quality of poetry written by the sons of Colombia. Claudio de Alas lived to add fresh lustre to that nation, the mother of poets in South America.

# TWO BLACK SHEEP

## A SATIRIC DIALOGUE

BY ARTHUR CORNING WHITE

*Place.* A cheap faculty apartment in an American college town.

*Time.* Almost any afternoon in the past, present and even future.

### SCENE

*As the curtain rises, you look into the kitchen of MR. and MRS. JOHN THORNDIKE. THORNDIKE is instructor of French in Willherst College, Willherst, Massachusetts, though he might, as far as geographical locality is concerned, with equal truth, be an instructor anywhere else. The appearance of this kitchen interior hints that young THORNDIKE'S wife has not yet abandoned herself to those saccharine women's magazines specializing in rhapsodies on floor mops. The lady herself is not at this moment visible, but you see her husband, a young man who, despite his doctorate, still is possessed of plenty of carefully trimmed brown hair and a countenance from which the joy of life has not entirely been obliterated by a year's subservience to superiors of professorial grade. You marvel that his body also still seems to move with a consciousness of life. His coat and waist coat off, he stands by the kitchen table, busily rolling a sticky mass of potential piecrust. Suddenly from the door at the right, opening into the THORNDIKE'S only other room, comes a wail, piercing as the shriek of the typhoon in one of MR. CONRAD'S stories of the sea. JOHN turns toward the sound and calls to his wife in the adjoining room.*

*John.*—There goes the baby! Howling again! Lord! Alice! Alice!

*Alice (Sweetly, from the other room).*—It's nothing, dear. She'll go right to sleep. The poor thing just wants changing. You'll find the diapers in a pile on top of the bread box.

*John.*—You change her, Alice. It's your turn. Here! *(He rumples up a diaper and flings it through the door.)*

*Alice (Speaking to the baby in a friendly sort of tone, not at all sentimental.*—There. There. You leaky cherub. Now you're all right. Go to sleep. *(The infant's whimperings drift off into a*

*drowsy sigh of content. As JOHN finishes the pie and slides it into the oven of the gas stove, ALICE, youthful, lithe, and enchanting, tiptoes in and shuts the door. ALICE radiates what the other faculty women consider an immoral determination to gather rosebuds before frost. Perching herself easily on the stationary washtub, she dangles her dainty feet and silken ankles seductively in view.)*

*John (Looking at the closed door).—It's hot in here.*

*Alice.—She'll be fast asleep in a second and then we can open it again. Nothing wakes her once she gets thoroughly off.*

*John.—Did you see anything startling down town?*

*Alice.—Professor Jones was wearing a pair of trousers that matched his coat.*

*John.—Perhaps he's leaving town.*

*Alice.—I saw Professor Rogers' wife. She's got a new hat. Horrible taste. She was talking in front of the Post Office with old Bean Sills. He's a nice old gentleman, but I wish he'd have his hair cut.*

*John.—He won't. It wouldn't grow again; his head's too dry.*

*Alice.—They were talking about who are to be suggested to the President for advance to professorial rank. Mrs. Rogers, as I passed, said to him her husband wouldn't suggest any instructor in our department who hasn't been able to publish a book of research.*

*John.—That finishes us then. I got a letter from the publishers while you were out.*

*Alice.—They've got to accept your book.*

*John.—But they won't, not unless I pay part of the cost. They'll publish my book if I'll put up a thousand dollars to cover possible loss.*

*Alice.—A thousand dollars! Why, we can't pay the butter and egg man eighty cents. (She opens the door.) Another year on an instructor's salary, and bills will worry you bald and me wrinkled. This is . . . If father'd only . . .*

*John.—He won't though. Your father thinks any man who expects to make a living by teaching prospective business men to love French literature is crazy, and that any woman foolish enough to marry him deserves to suffer the consequences. Your father won't help us. If I'm to get this book published, we've got to raise the thousand dollars ourselves.*

*Alice.—How?*

*John.—Somehow. I don't know yet. You'll think of some*

way. We've got to get the money, for this book of mine on "Recent Phonological Researches in Rabelais" is dull enough to be an academic success, if I can only get it published. I've made the style so heavy nobody can lift it to find the idea underneath. There'll be different interpretations. That'll mean discussion in the reviews and that's all that's necessary. Old Rogers'll have to suggest me for an Assistant Professorship. He probably will as soon as the book's definitely coming out. An Assistant Professorship and a raise of two hundred dollars a year.

*Alice.*—Then we can have real butter instead of oleo and I can have a big jar of complexion cream.

*John.*—The extra two hundred dollars a year'll keep us just above the starvation line until your father dies.

*Alice.*—But what if father doesn't die?

*John (With firm conviction).*—He'll die. Your father may be a hard man, Alice, but he can't be mean enough to keep on living forever.

*Alice.*—But in the meantime? If we can't find this thousand dollars and so get your book published, we'll have to try to get you made an Assistant Professor some other way. There's always the social angle. If we could only give a tea or something! The Rogers'd think we have money and then they'd try to get you advanced to keep us here for social purposes.

*John.*—It's an idea anyway, but I wish we could get the thousand dollars. Still it's an idea. The Grants have got it on us socially, and Grant's my biggest rival. The Grants have a dining room set of solid mahogany, while we've not even a dining room. They've had the Rogers to dinner. All that helps Grant.

*Alice.*—Then let's *us* have the Rogers to dinner. The Grants' chairs aren't real mahogany; they're only stained, and our living room chairs are real, and belonged to your grandmother.

*John.*—Um . . . Yes . . .

*Alice.*—We can say Abraham Lincoln sat on one during the Civil War. He never sat on any of the Grants' chairs.

*John.*—He never sat on any of ours.

*Alice.*—But the Rogers won't know that. They'll be impressed. They're that sort of people.

*John.*—Even granting your Lincoln story gets by, we're up against it anyway. We've only three chairs, if they are real mahogany. There'll be four of us at dinner.

*Alice.*—You can borrow a chair across the hall, and I'll say

our other chairs are being refinished. The real problem is, what shall we have to eat?

*John (Helpfully).*—I'll make a pie for dessert.

*Alice.*—They're wonderful of course, dear, but there's more to a dinner than dessert.

*John.*—Yes, I suppose there ought to be, for company. We might have soup. Soup's cheap and it's filling.

*Alice.*—Oyster stew! I can make it with an onion and a tin of condensed milk with celery salt for seasoning.

*John.*—But oughtn't we have oysters in oyster stew?

*Alice.*—No, that won't do, of course. Oyster stew wouldn't be appropriate. We'll call it cream of celery. They're sure to speak of the food though. Such people do. As soon as they begin to get too interested in what they're eating, you ask Professor Rogers to tell you about his trip to England last summer. That's his soft spot.

*John.*—How do you know that? The Rogers have never called; they merely left their cards when they knew we were out.

*Alice.*—O, I met him the day he addressed the woman's club, the time I allowed myself to be roped in. He's just crazy to tell how he saw the door of the house where Shaw lives. Then Mrs. Rogers will say, "George, tell them about Barrie." And he'll smile that silly way and explain how he once got shaved in the barber shop where Barrie has his hair cut, and so the dinner'll be a great success.

*John.*—Shall we have chicken? The last time I had chicken was at the Phi Beta Kappa banquet at Harvard last year.

*Alice.*—I wonder if you'll ever have money enough to buy your key.

*John.*—I wonder.

*Alice.*—Roast chicken would be good, but it's so expensive. If only we could buy one on the instalment plan. Still, I suppose we can charge it.

*John (Utterly astonished).*—Where?

*Alice.*—At the other store. I've never bought anything there yet, so they don't know us.

*John.*—Sounds good! But it isn't sure. The one sure way to be advanced is to get my "Recent Phonological Researches in Rabelais" published. How are we going to get the necessary thousand dollars? (*They relapse into thought.*)

*Alice (Brilliantly).*—You can cook for it.

*John.*—Alice, have you been drinking the last of our gin?



*Alice.*—Stop. I'm serious. It's just for the summer. These mountain hotels pay ridiculous wages to cooks who can make fancy pastry like yours. Call up the Pine Cone Inn collect. I stayed there once—before I got married.

*John.*—Yes, I know this *is* a rotten change for you. Why particularly the Pine Cone Inn?

*Alice.*—Mrs. Gray, the President's sister at the faculty tea yesterday, was saying she had just come from there and that their pastry was vile. *Ergo*—they need a new pastry cook. Hurry. You can use the Bright's phone across the hall. I think they are out. Speak French, and the manager'll think you're a real, imported cook.

*John.*—I'll try it, but it's wild. (*Exit TOM, only to re-enter preceded by MRS. ROGERS. ALICE hurriedly dumps the pile of diapers inside the bread box.*)

*John.*—Mrs. Rogers, dear.

(*JOHN places a chair for the guest, a chair he has brought in from the other room.*)

*Alice.*—O, Mrs. Rogers! How sweet of you! I'm so sorry to receive you in the kitchen, but our little darling's asleep in the other room.

*Mrs. Rogers.*—Not at all. Thank you, Mr. Thorndike. (*You perceive at once, partly from her dress, mainly from her manner, that MRS. ROGERS is a distinctly ordinary woman. She is obviously conscious of her husband's exalted position as Chairman of the French Department and Custodian of Student Morals.*)

*John.*—If you'll excuse me a moment, I have a phone call across the way.

*Mrs. Rogers.*—Certainly.

*Alice.*—Hurry back, dear. (*Exit JOHN.*)

*Mrs. Rogers.*—I've been meaning to call on you all the year. We like to call on the new people before the year is over, but you know how it is.

*Alice.*—Yes, you must be very busy.

*Mrs. Rogers.*—It is rather tiring. Mr. Rogers' position as head of the department places a certain social responsibility on me. It keeps me very busy. So many functions.

*Alice.*—Yes, of course. Are you going away for the summer?

*Mrs. Rogers.*—O yes, Professor Rogers and I always go away for the summer to England or to, to somewhere, wherever the spirit calls us. Ha. Ha!!

*Alice.*—Ha! Ha! How delightful!

*Mrs. Rogers.*—It's very uncomfortable here in summer. You and Mr. Thorndike will remain here, will you?

*Alice.*—I don't really know. We've talked some of going to Pine Cone Inn in the mountains. My husband has worked so hard on his book that I tell him he must take a rest. The mountains would do him a lot of good.

*Mrs. Rogers.*—O, he is writing a book?

*Alice.*—“Recent Phonological Researches in Rabelais.”

*Mrs. Rogers.*—How scholarly! We always like to hear a member of our department is trying to write a book. Have you ever been to the mountains before? The Pine Cone Inn, I understand, is frightfully expensive. I ought to tell you.

*Alice.*—Yes, isn't it. We'll be so glad to really live again. These cramped quarters have been insufferable. But we arrived here so late they were all we could get. (*Enter JOHN.*)

*John.*—O no, Mr. Rogers, you're not going so soon? I'll sit on the stove. I think it's cold.

*Alice.*—Don't. It's hot. The pie's in the oven. I was just telling Mrs. Rogers, dear, we are thinking of spending the summer at the Pine Cone Inn.

*John.*—I've just been speaking with the manager. He can let us have our usual rooms as soon as college closes. We'll go right after my new book gets on the press.

*Mrs. Rogers.*—O, your book is really to be published?

*John.*—There was a little difficulty about royalties, just the usual thing.

*Alice (Proudly).*—But Mr. Thorndike soon made the publisher come round.

*John (Modestly).*—Dear.

*Mrs. Rogers.*—How splendid. But I really must go. What I particularly dropped in for was to ask if you and Mr. Thorndike won't have dinner with us Thursday evening.

*Alice.*—Thank you, we shall be delighted.

*Mrs. Rogers.*—At seven-thirty. So glad I found you both at home. Next time, it won't be long, I hope, I trust I shall see the darling little baby.

*Alice.*—O, I hope so. You've no idea how we adore her. She has just the darlinest toes. You'll be crazy to kiss each one of them.

*Mrs. Rogers.*—Indeed I shall. We'll have lots to talk about, Mrs. Thorndike. I have a sure cure for teething rash. I'll send Professor Rogers around with it. Goodby. (*Exit MRS. ROGERS,*

JOHN *showing her out.*) (ALICE *takes the pile of diapers out of the bread box and folds them, as she lights and smokes a cigarette. Enter JOHN, triumphant.*)

*Alice.*—Did you really get the job as cook? I'm dying to hear.

*John.*—At four hundred dollars a month! Wonderful idea. Then I called up the bank and borrowed a thousand dollars on my summer salary as cook. They wouldn't lend us a hundred last month on my salary as an instructor of French.

*Alice.*—But your book. Now . . .

*John.*—I'll just turn the money over to the publishers and they'll get out the book at once. Alice, you were wonderful with her, especially in the baby stuff. These women here dote on it. Mrs. Rogers'll go straight home and tell her husband the whole thing, all about my book that's really to be published and about how we must have money if we've going to the Pine Cone Inn. He'll get me an advance now sure. Professor Thorndike. How do you like it? Now we'll have enough money to buy the baby some socks and a real beefsteak for ourselves.

*Alice.*—And I'll buy a new teddy.

*John.*—And somehow we'll manage now to keep going till your father dies. Then we'll go off to Europe on a wild artistic bat.

*Alice.*—But do you really think dear daddy will die soon? He's dreadfully healthy.

*John (Resignedly).*—We'll have to take a chance on God.

(CURTAIN)

# LITERARY COOKERY

BY CHARLES A. INGRAHAM

It is frequently remarked that were we to see the culinary details and surroundings of food preparation, we would not be disposed to partake of the tempting dishes attractively served in the dining room. Sitting at the board with congenial company, we do not consider the manipulations which the eatables have sustained in the kitchen,—the matter of greasy frying pans, meat saws, pots, kettles, skillets and frowzy cooks with sweat dropping into the soup,—all this is as far from us as the Dead Sea, while we apply ourselves to the delectable things before us. Much the same conditions are associated with the furnishings and consumption of literature,—if we were present and beheld the author as hour by hour and day by day he steeped his “stuff,” observed how he toiled and perspired at his work, how he wrestled with his chief implement, his typewriter (or range) with its fuel of oil, paper and ribbons, how he spoiled articles and stories in the making, leaving them too long in the oven of his sizzling brain, or not long enough,—if we could have a knowledge of these concomitants of a writer’s kitchen, we would not, perhaps, enjoy so well the literary soups and so forth which he confidently serves to us.

The great requisite of an author’s cookery is materials, without which but little can be accomplished; a man can singly no more write an interesting article, essay or book, or even a story, than can a house-cook devise and prepare a good pudding with nothing more than her own unavailable brains to put into it. Many years ago, having been employed as an assistant editor in a newspaper office, I sat on my first day at my desk vainly endeavoring to evolve something from my befuddled head worthy to go into print; the managing editor, observing my quandary, laid a package of exchanges before me remarking that the way to write was to look through the news and editorial columns of the papers till I found something to set my wits to work. This advice was a boon to me and ever after I found it to be of great value. One’s own little pond of thought and information soon runs dry if it is not continually replenished by rills from other sources, which, meeting and mingling in the mind of the writer

become metamorphosed into a new power and an original creation. To erect a dam across the current of many combined streamlets and to entertainingly or usefully employ the energy thus obtained does not prevent the repeated utilization of the river, nor does it exhaust the stream. The same may be said of authors and the Mississippi of the world's literature—a mighty flood that cannot be even glanced over in the space of a human life:—it is the business of the writer to interrupt some small section of the mighty current and use it to set in motion the machinery of his own creative genius.

A great chef is such not because he has more or better materials than another, but for the reason that he possesses the art of selecting, rejecting, combining, proportioning, seasoning and cooking which but few are equipped with. The main thing in both food and literary cookery is to produce such results as discriminating persons will declare to be good. I am not advocating plagiarism, which is one of the most despicable practices that a writer may resort to; but to take up an idea of an author (which he may have himself purloined) and to develop, cast into a new form, broaden, beautify and intensify it, is no more of the nature of plagiarism than to prepare a historical essay, using of necessity the materials of others, or to write a review of a book, to prove perhaps of greater merit than the work itself. Tennyson, Longfellow, Whittier and many other poets were not plagiarists though a large part of their work is simply made-over and rhymed legendary tales and old romantic fictions. The same may be said of authors generally;—remove from their writings all that they individually represent, that is, the charm of their personalities and their gifts to observe, appreciate and employ the materials they find in life and literature, and there will be little of value remaining.

Shakespeare is the most conspicuous instance that the world affords of the literary capacity of appropriating and transforming the work of others, and though he was an unblushing plagiarist, he was able by the brilliancy of his gifts to ride down all criticism. An adroit reviser of old plays which had been for years passing through the hands of literary tinkers, so great was his dramatic skill and poetic eloquence practiced upon them that his name alone is forever attached to the fame of them. He made abundant use of "Plutarch's Lives" in the writing of several of his dramas and it is interesting to compare them with North's translation of the "Lives" and to observe how, with this rendering before him, he

injected his own richly endowed genius into the phrases of Plutarch. I cite from North's "Life of Antonius," followed by Shakespeare's version in his "Antony and Cleopatra," (Act 2. Sc. 2.)

. . . . "her barge in the river Cydnus; the poop whereof was of gold, the sails of purple, and the oars of silver, which kept stroke in rowing after the sound of musick of flutes, howboys, citherns, viols, and such other instruments as they played upon in the barge. And now for the person of herself, she was laid under a pavillion of cloth-of-gold of tissue, appavelled and attired like the goddess Venus, commonly drawn in picture; and hard by her, on either hand of her, pretty fair boys appavelled as painters do set forth god Cupid, with little fans in their hands, with which they fanned wind upon her . . . There came a wonderful savour of perfumes" . . .

"The barge she sat in, like a burnished throne,  
 Burnt on the water: the poop was beaten gold;  
 Purple the sails, and so perfumed that  
 The winds were lovesick; with them the oars were silver,  
 Which to the tune of flutes kept stroke, and made  
 The water, which they beat, to follow faster  
 As amorous of their strokes. For her own person,  
 It beggared all description: she did lie  
 In her pavillion, (cloth of gold, of tissue,)  
 Over-pictured that Venus where we see  
 The fancy outwork Nature: on each side her  
 Stood pretty dimpled boys, like smiling Cupids  
 With divers-colored fans, whose wind did seem  
 To glow the delicate cheeks which they did cool  
 And what they undid, did."

In literature as in culinary matters, the plain and simple treatment of familiar things is the most wholesome for the consumer. It must not be thought, however, that the baking of good bread or that the roasting of beef in the best manner requires no skill, nor that the most beautiful and influential and lasting literature needs to be enshrined in other than ordinary words dealing with lucid and self-evident trains of thought; for the immortal orations, essays, tales and poems are as unartificial and as transparent as sunlight. But, for appreciating this sort of writing there must be an appetite which can be generated only by strenuous occupation. In the cold and desolate snow fields

of the North, the traveler carries for subsistence only a supply of lard, flour and tea; the flour made into dough with water, is cooked in boiling lard, and with potatoes of tea affords a nutritious meal.

But we are not working so hard as was the custom in the days when great literature was produced; we have lost our relish for plain, good reading and demand that our books and periodicals shall be highly elaborated and mixed creations, or we will have nothing to do with them. In short, we have pampered literary appetities which must be coaxed and cajoled. I have in my library many old books,—printed a century and more ago—and they are without exception, sedate and unadorned in their atmosphere; in looking into them it is impressed upon one that the authors and readers were persons who never smiled. They were written, indeed, for people who were hungry, whose struggling manner of life and thought rendered them receptive of no book which was not intellectually and ethically nourishing. For in the library as in the kitchen, it is the requirement of the consumers that determines the character of the output.

Our analogy limps somewhat when we come to speak of fire—of the generation of heat—for fervor is an element that has no place in the literature of the present generation; or, if it is used it is as a lukewarm, sickening commodity. The expression of earnest conviction is out of date in the United States; natural sentiment of the better sort has been cast out in the cold to perish of neglect, while the angel of sincerity is begging in the streets. No literature can rise to any considerable height of merit, prove itself helpful and long endure unless it shall be prepared by an author possessed with the spirits of conviction and benevolence. Fireless cooking is easily detected in much of our book reviewing, which, though it exhibits culture has no enthusiasm, and whether the fault be in the author or reviewer, there is a lack of the humanistic element without which there can be nothing worthy of the name of literature. Writings of a worldly-wise character, experienced, cautious, sophisticated, may lend a reputation as a scholar and a man of superior culture, but so far as creating him a real and worthy light is concerned, he will be outshone by many a scribbler with a minimum of learning but with an equipment of genuine literary gifts.

The great lack of American literary cookery is the absence of non-nitrogenous, heat producing elements,—fat and sugar that is, ethical nourishment and cordiality, or heart-beat, are wanting.

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DEVOTED TO POETRY AND DRAMA

# Poet Lore

*World Literature & the Drama*

## Winter Number

**The Solstice, A Play in Three Acts**

By K. M. Capek

JUN 2 1925

**The Test, A One Act Play**

By Pierre Chamblain de Marivaux

**The Good Sainte Anne, A Play in One Act**

By Helen Gilbert

**The Plays of Oskar Kokoschka**

By Barrett H. Clark

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# Poet Lore

Editors

CHARLOTTE PORTER, HELEN A. CLARKE, RUTH HILL

WINTER, 1924

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# THE SOLSTICE\*

A PLAY IN THREE ACTS

BY K. M. CAPEK

*Translated from the Czech by E. D. Schonberger*

ACT I: *Twilight*

ACT II: *Midnight*

ACT III: *Daybreak*

## CHARACTERS

OLD KARVAN, *retired.*

JOHN KARVAN, *his nephew, the present incumbent at the pharmacy.*

ANNA, *his wife.*

JULIA, *Anna's sister.*

JOHNNY, *Anna's son, ten years old.*

LITTLE JACK, *Julia's son, five years old.*

MR. HANS, *the old man's son.*

THE DEAN, *brother of the old man, in charge of the parish church.*

ANDREW, *a chemist, employed in the pharmacy.*

GRANNY, *an old woman employed in the Karvan family.*

DOCTOR CROW, *family physician.*

AN OFFICER.

A SEXTON.

FABLE, *A notary.*

*The scene is laid in the garden of the Karvan estate in the town of Potsedin, a small village on the edge of the Bohmerwald.*

*The time is between evening and morning of St John's day,  
—1874.*

## ACT I. *Twilight*

*The garden. In the background an inspiring view of the Bohmerwald. The slopes are covered with a dense forest. Above the forest, on the barren crest of a conical hill, is the ruined castle of Shorfstein. The garden plot is enclosed in a picket fence, with a wicket gate at back C.*

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\*First performance at the Municipal Theatre of Prague, November 5, 1912.  
Copyright 1925.

*At the right is a cottage where the old man is now living in retirement. There are three windows opening towards the audience, and a door approached by three broad steps, opens upon the garden.*

*At center is a shady chestnut. Beneath it a small table and a rustic seat.*

*The left is the sunny side of the garden. Here are some racks for the drying of herbs. This side is open, as the picket extends beyond the left wing.*

*The Karvan home is beyond the right wing, and a walk passing under the old man's cottage, curves off right.*

*The East is on the left hand, West on the right.*

*It is June 24, 8 P. M. The sun has just set in a crimson and gold halo. As the curtain rises, Julia is discovered seated under the chestnut, embroidering on a frame. ANDREW is drying herbs at left. JOHN enters dressed for an outing with exaggerated elegance.*

*John (Approaching ANDREW).—Well, Andrew, how is it coming? Karvan's pulmonary tea, the ninth essence of famous forest flowers? Good, only add a wee bit rose leaf, just enough to give it the faintest scent.*

*Andrew.—But, my dear Mr. Mayor . . .*

*John.—Now Andrew, mayor at the city hall, but here just druggist. I have told you often.*

*Andrew.—Excuse me, sir. But I was about to say that there is very little of this rose stuff. None of the herb women know where to find it, and so we have only the little that our old Granny brings in.*

*John.—Just so there is enough of this Bohmer bloom, see? (He pinches the petals and smells them.) Just a little more sun in the morning—not enough to crumble them again. Just so they are not gathered green. They can't be mouldy. (Goes to JULIA and sits beside her.) What our Latin labeled jars cannot yield, our granny must find in the woods. To be sure I am a modern Pharmacist, and yet I cannot afford to throw away such a well established traditional patent remedy; particularly when it has been handed down for generations. (He whistles lightly, takes a straw, and tickles JULIA on the neck.) And how is the doctor's lady today?*

*Julia (Rising).—Please, brother-in-law, don't do that to me again! It's all I can stand to have you around, but to touch me I felt as if a spider had fallen down my neck. (Sits.)*

*John.—Now, now, now!*

*Julia.*—And don't call me the doctor's lady. Not to my face at least. It's bad enough when it comes from those outside of the family.

*John.*—But there was such a trifle lacking of your being a real widow. And what so nearly happened six years ago may now happen any time you say the word. Dr. Crow is willing . . .

*Julia.*—You mean, *might* be willing, . . . if it were not for little Jack.

*John (Catching JULIA's hands).*—He would never stand in my way, if . . .

*Julia.*—Let go!

*John.*—You'd be mine, Jackie or no . . .

*Julia.*—For God's sake, what are you doing!

*John.*—I could dance for joy only to think of the possibility.

*Julia (Calling).*—Johnny! Perhaps you may be ashamed of yourself in the presence of your own son, if you are not before old Andrew.

*John (To ANDREW).*—Andrew, run down the lane and see that Johnny does not fall into the stream.

*Julia.*—No, please, Andrew, stay where you are. I can call Johnny from here.

*Andrew.*—There is not a spoonful of water in the stream.

*John.*—I have said! (*ANDREW bestirs himself and goes out by the wicket*).—*Julia, dear*—I sent Andrew away because I did not want him to hear what I am about to say to you. (*JULIA rises.*)

*Julia.*—Aren't you sorry for me a little? I know I have to live on you, but surely I *earn* my keep. Oh, I earn it! I love the old man, but what I suffer at his hands! I am willing to suffer anything so long as I may be loved and respected here, and I have to be grateful to you for the home you have given me and my boy; but you have almost untaught me how to be grateful. I don't know what to do . . . tell Ann, or run away. It makes me ill to think of telling her. It is so hideous, so abominable!

*John.*—Please listen to me. I am going to promise you something, and I'll keep my promise. I can't let you run away, because—frankly, this place would be intolerable without you. And I promise I shall not touch you again, not even speak to you alone, until . . .

*Julia.*—Until?

*John.*—Until I see that you have changed your mind about me.

*Julia.*—And you dare to tell me this! What right have I ever given to speak to me so insultingly?

*John.*—Not so loud, please, darling! If you won't, you won't, but you owe us both this much: to keep still about it. Some one may hear.

*Julia.*—Is it possible that you are afraid of your wife? In that case I should be spared the humiliation of telling her myself . . . if she caught . . .

*John.*—Now, dear, now, now! Let me tell you something that will really surprise you. I am in love with you, because I am in love with her.

*Julia.*—What do you mean?

*John.*—I mean it seriously. It is very simple. It is something beyond my control . . . Just look at Ann today—a mere shadow of what she was ten years ago when I married her.

*Julia.*—You are the last one who should hold that against her.

*John.*—I know what you mean, that I have not spared her? Suppose you are right. The fact remains that I carry in my heart Ann as she was ten years ago.

*Julia.*—And Ann as she is today has dropped out, that's quite evident. You no longer love her.

*John (Laughing).*—With the best kind of love . . . platonic.

*Julia.*—How loathesome you are. How do you dare to speak to me like this! You imagine I have to stay here, no matter how you choose to treat me?

*John.*—My dear Julia, you don't understand! I love my Ann in you. Don't you see what a temptation you are to me, being as you are, the living image of Ann as she was years ago when I threatened to kill myself if she did not love me? I tell you, I have to rub my eyes often to realize that you are not she. The same age, the same beauty. You are her second edition.

*Julia.*—You make me laugh, and what you say is not at all to my taste. Your flattery won't turn my head. Moreover, you are wasting precious time with me. What about your coming election? If I were in your place I should worry a little about affairs in the city hall.

*John.*—Don't laugh at me, please. Remember, I do not belong to those who let themselves be moved from their purpose. Once I make up my mind to a thing, I get it. I shall get what I am after at the polls, and here, too.

*Julia.*—Here, too? (ANDREW comes in leading JACKIE across the footbridge beyond the wicket. The child is pulling a toy wagon full of sand. Having entered, he respectfully offers to kiss JOHN's hand, but is rebuffed.)

*Andrew (Guiding the boy).*—There, there, Mr. Driver! Slowly! Let's not tip over.. What if our load should fall into the river, horse and all! Go now, and kiss your uncle's hand.

*John.*—Yes, Julia. (To the boy) No, no, not now!

*Jack.*—Mama, Andrew thinks I am a horse, and that he is a big horse, and that we might fall into the water, when there is no water.

*Julia.*—All right Jackie, go on with your game right here beside mama.

*John.*—Julia, I want you to believe about me what you must must have noticed during all these years—that I am different from other men . . .

*Julia (Vehemently).*—I'll tell you what you are; you are a cynic and you are trying to behave like a brute.

*John.*—Hm, your sister talked just like that once. Once she had no word for me but . . . what you have now, and yet she became—how shall we say—my own. I tell you I had to overcome some obstacles there! When I say that I am different from other men, I mean that I don't mind obstacles. I always find the means for removing them, be it as cynic or brute. (*Again catching her hands*) I shall in time remove this obstacle. I know you, you Lash sisters.

*Julia.*—Sir, how dare you! If you were not holding my hands you would see!

*Andrew (By way of warning).*—I kiss your hand, my lady.

*Ann (With point).*—Oh, I beg your pardon. doctor. I imagined that you were wandering over hill and dale, and here you are amusing yourself with (*Sarcastically*) little Jackie. What about your own son? Isn't this a great deal out of your way?

*John.*—Oh, I shall have time to rest beneath the Shorfstein yet before the young folks return. Their outing is to close with fireworks, and so they won't be coming till after dark. Besides, since the gentle director of my every step seems determined to know, I wished to see, en passant, how Karvan's Pulmonary Flower Tea is being taken care of.

*Ann.*—As if Andrew had not prepared more bloom in his time than you will ever see!

*John (Glancing at his watch).*—Then I'll mosey along. Of



course, I might have gone on Main street, but surely I may be allowed to save a few steps by cutting across the lawn. (*He goes out through wicket, waving his hand.*) Till we meet again.

*Ann (Looking through the window into the cottage).*—What's grandfather doing?

*Julia.*—Sleeping as usual—from noon till evening.

*Ann.*—What a lot of work you've done! No wonder, with such a Celadon to thread the needle for you.

*Julia.*—Please, Ann. I should think you would be furious about it all. (*JACKIE whispers something in ANDREW'S ear, both go out by wicket, and presently ANDREW returns alone.*)

*Ann (Forcing a laugh).*—You don't need my oath on it that I am not. Not even a headache. It only makes me laugh!

*Julia.*—Just so you are not pretending.

*Ann (Laughing hysterically).*—For God's sake, Julia, don't think that I am jealous. I don't care about anything but the good name of the house. All I have in life is the hollow honor of being mistress here, and I must put up a semblance of dignity. The elections are at hand, and our opponents are looking for anything they can dig up against us.

*Julia.*—Ann, if I did not realize how agitated you must be, I should feel insulted. Even so, I do not feel exactly flattered.

*Ann.*—Don't think I haven't eyes. He is to meet the young people on their way home from the excursion, and instead of taking a short cut, he wanders around by the back way, simply to see you. This is not the first time. Every day he seems to have **more** business here about the house than at the drug store.

*Julia.*—Please to remember, before you say any more, that the father of your boy is more loathesome to me than he is to you. That is saying a mouthful.

*Ann (With anxious look toward ANDREW).*—The father of my child?

*Julia.*—The gentleman who has just departed, the community druggist, the village mayor, the honorable Mr. John Karvan.

*Ann (Perceptibly relieved).*—You mean thing! Why should my own husband be loathesome to me? I am afraid people are whispering such things about only too freely. I should be lying if I denied that I *could* love him more to distraction than I do. But as you say, being the father of my boy, the first man in the village . . . since Fate denied me that other one . . .

*Julia (Tenderly).*—That other one! My dear little sister,

who better than I could feel the broken heart behind that cry. I know what floods of sorrow still surge within, even though you have learned to weep without tears.

*Ann.*—It ought to be easier for you to be reconciled to your lot, since *your* beloved doctor died in your arms.

*Julia.*—Are you not reconciled to yours? Your doctor told me—Oh, if he would only keep his distance!—He said, “I know you Lash sisters.” He recalls how you treated him once, and how you treat him now. He has faith that he will conquer me the same way in time. He says that he shall have me, *and he knows us*. Do you understand him?

*Ann.*—The dupe! I swear that I never felt for the man one spark of love.

*Julia.*—But you married him, even while you loved another.

*Ann.*—You have no right . . . You were a mere tadpole then, and you could not possibly understand . . .

*Julia (Gently).*—Oh, yes I can! I remember what happened, and I can interpret with my mature experience. My dear little Annie (*Kisses her*) How often as a child I had stood behind the door and heard you both. And when he was leaving how I would run lest I should be caught eavesdropping. I trembled, my hands were ice, and my eyes were swimming in tears. But one thing I could never make out. No sooner had he run away, than, like a bolt out of a clear sky, you up and married the other man.

*Ann.*—Julia, for the love of God, don’t refer to that again! These shadows of the past . . . let them darken *my* life. You have shadows enough of your own. Let me bear my own burdens.

*Julia.*—My beloved also went away forever—not *into* the world, as yours had, but *out* of it.

*Ann.*—And *your* boy has no father.

*Julia.*—Ann (*Then in an altered tone full of dismay and suspicion.*) Ann!

*Ann.*—Stop! Don’t say it! Don’t even dare to think it! (*She takes JULIA’S face between her hands and looks into her eyes searchingly.*)

(*Enter GRANNY, with a basket of herbs. She is terribly excited. She stumbles through the wicket into the garden, breathless.*)

*Granny.*—Lord Jesus!

*Andrew (Startled).*—So, so, and while you were about it you might have called on the Virgin Mary for *me!* (*Muttering*) The old witch is enough to scare the soul out of a man’s body.

*Granny.*—As if you carried your soul in your mouth, Mr. Andrew!—Humbly kiss your hand, my lady, and yours, too, Mrs. Julia—Holy Mary! In the woods . . . I can't get my breath!

*Andrew.*—If an old woman *will* fly like a young girl, she must expect to get flabbergasted!

*Granny.*—If you had heard and seen what I have, you might have made still better time, seeing that you are such a verdant youth!

*Andrew.*—Likely the warden's dog showed his tongue, and you thought it was at you.

*Granny.*—I want you to believe me . . . in the woods today . . . I caught a glimpse of . . . our Mr. Hans.

*Andrew.*—Mr. Hans? The *late* Mr. Hans!

*Ann (With a shudder).*—What is that, Granny?

*Granny.*—Mr. Hans, the lawful heir of this house.

*Julia (With an anxious look toward the old man's cottage).*—Sh! Not so loud!

*Granny (Unmindful of consequences).*—I tell you I saw him!

*Ann.*—With your own eyes, Granny?

*Granny.*—Not exactly . . . that is to say . . .

*Ann.*—Well, then . . .

*Granny.*—But I heard! God is my witness that I heard!

*Andrew.*—Had you lost your sight that you only heard?

*Granny.*—How could I see when I was sitting in the woods on a stump, and he somewhere below on the highway. But I am not mistaken! No one else ever called me that way." "Granny, grandma, grandmother!" My precious!

*Andrew.*—Perhaps it was the old knight of Shorfstein himself, the robber king of the woods. They say he used to fall for well preserved old ladies like yourself.

*Julia.*—Andrew!

*Granny.*—It was no other but the very one, my Hans. Were I to hear it once in a hundred years, I should recognize that voice at once.

*Ann (Much perturbed).*—You must be mistaken! And, Granny,—whether you saw and heard, or only heard, please don't say a word about it in the village. Do you understand?

*Granny.*—I understand.

*Ann (To JULIA).*—I am sure she is wrong. We have had proofs of his death . . . And yet my knees are all a-tremble.

(ANN and JULIA converse apart. GRANNY adds her herbs to those on the racks.)

*Andrew.*—You child! That man has been killed or frozen in a Siberian outpost. The doctor has had official confirmation of his death in black and white. Mr. Hans is dead, so how on earth could he show himself all at once here at the Shorfstein?

*Granny.*—You can't rob me of my conviction that I heard his voice.

*Andrew.*—Pshaw! You had a dream . . . some hallucination. I had supposed that *you* were the one that haunted the woods, and instead you are running away from other spooks.

*Granny.*—Just listen to the man! Spooks! And I had only to breathe the word, and I might have been the dear spouse of our esteemed laboratory assistant, Mr. Andrew. How many times has this poor spook had to break her basket over the head of this persistent gentleman for his unmaidenly presumption, and how many more times may she need to do it!

*Andrew.*—Basket, says I! You may thank God for the basket! Once when I accidentally broke the large bottle of liquid bronze, how I longed to gild your basket for you. What a figure you might have cut in the woods! But never mind. You may yet find yourself binding sheaves of sand before you shuffle off, old Granny.

*Granny.*—And when I do, I shall engage you to turn the bands for me. (*She goes away.*)

*Ann* (*Showing her sleeves rolled up above her elbows*).—Will you look!

*Julia.*—Calm down a little. Something will happen to you.

*Ann* (*Pulling down her sleeves*).—It's all foolishness, of course! (*Laughing hysterically*) It's a sin to call his poor shadow out of the grave. The cracked old thing!

*Julia.*—But if it were true . . .

*Ann* (*Wildly*).—But the doctor has an official report of his death, corroborated by all manner of ambassadors and consuls. Without that the old man could not have settled the estate upon him.

*Julia.*—Hm, if the doctor . . .

*Ann* (*Wringing her hands*).—Oh, Lord! (*Starting suddenly*) Andrew!

*Andrew.*—At your service, my lady.

*Ann.*—Don't you think you could catch up with your master, and tell him to come right back, that something very important

has happened? Or perhaps you can get your apprentice to do it. He is younger and he can run faster.

*Andrew.*—I fear I could not overtake him if my legs were twice as nimble as the apprentice's. He will be there by this, and he will not be coming back until after the picnic party has broken up. Besides, what would he think of me if I should run up to him and stammer: "Come home, quick, our Granny has had a fright in the woods" Having worked in this laboratory for the last forty years, my record should give me the privilege of making a little suggestion. And so if you permit me to say, and to back it up with my life if necessary: Mr. Hans is dead, and cannot be here.

*Julia.*—Why are you so sure, Andrew?

*Andrew.*—You are my witness how the old man has been talking with him here for years after dark. How many times have you and I listened to him together! He talks with him so intimately it is enough to give a person the creeps.

*Julia.*—That's so. Every night after dark, and lately even before dusk, he seems to hear the voice of his son.

*Andrew.*—Exactly! And could this son come back here and visit him in spirit as he does if his spirit were still in his body?

*Julia.*—Ah, Andrew!

*Andrew.*—Ah, ah, my lady! It isn't so because *I* happen to think it is. Why had he not come to the old man before we received the report of his death? But the very night after—indeed, that very same night—the father was talking to his son. That was the night he had his second stroke.

*Julia.*—You don't know quite everything, Andrew.

*Andrew.*—I know a lot more than I venture to express. Henceforth I shall keep my mouth shut. (*To ANN*) My lady .

*Ann.*—Go tend the flowers, Andrew.

*Andrew.*—There is no more to do than cover them so that they don't take the dew (*As he goes*) If only old Andrew cared to talk! (*A long silence. JULIA begins her embroidery. She stops, giving ANN a searching look. Then checks herself and sews on.*)

*Ann.*—Listen to me, Julia. I am going to meet him myself. I am going to find Hans . . . find out if he really has the presumption to rise out of his grave and to come to trouble the living, to whom he has caused enough sorrow already.

*Julia.*—Are you insane?

*Enter FABLE, the notary, unobserved.* (*He stands at the gate.*)

*Ann* (*Suddenly aware of his presence.*)—Oh, it is you, Notary!

*Fable* (*As ANDREW opens the wicket*).—I kiss your hands, ladies.

*Ann.*—Good evening, Notary. Be so kind as to come in. How you startled me! I could as soon expect death as you, coming from that direction.

*Fable.*—I beg your pardon, but if I am to speak the truth, I feel relieved that you were a little startled. The news I bring is such that it is well to be a little used to surprise.

*Ann.*—For God's love, what more today? Andrew, oblige by asking Granny to bring the lamp. (*Exit ANDREW.*)

*Fable.*—It is the nature of my news made me come by way of the garden. I do not care to meet the doctor just now.

*Ann.*—He has gone to the Shorfstein. But your report, Notary? I am not so alarmed as curious.

*Fable.*—What would you say, my lady . . . if I were to tell you that . . . the son of the old man there, a member of the Polish uprising in '64, captured and carried away to Sakhalin in '70, in which he made a lucky dash for liberty, who has since been residing in Arkansas City, U. S. A., where he won his naturalization papers . . . in other words, that Mr. Hans is now on his way here . . . You don't seem a bit astonished?

*Julia.*—Then Granny was right.

*Ann.*—My dear notary, I can furnish the latest detail,—Mr. Hans Karvan is already here.

*Fable.*—Already?

*Ann.*—Or rather may be any minute. Our Granny saw him a while ago at the Shorfstein. It is probable that he is waiting for night fall.

*Fable.*—In that case you may answer with your own lips the question he sent by me from Paris . . . He came on, as it seems, without waiting for his answer.

*Ann.*—A question . . . I should answer?

*Fable.*—As it concerns you chiefly. Mr. Hans turns to me—not officially to be sure—but still as notary, as his particular friend and counsellor—and friend of the family—to know if Miss Ann Lash is still single. Ah, there, my lady! It seems to me I noted a slight symptom of a start.

*Ann.*—I am not startled, Mr. Notary. . . at least not for the reason you think. Mr. Fable, Hans does not even dream of the changes that have taken place here, in a business way, since he left. And you can imagine how a question like that coming from him at this time . . . when it is a question of what will

happen to us all, if. . . A question cannot be entirely indifferent to me. . . a man, asking his cousin, my husband, if I am married. . .

*Fable.*—And your being that cousin's wife . . . is that matter of indifference to you?

*Ann.*—You used to be chivalrous!

*Julia.*—Ann!

*Fable.*—God forbid, Mrs. Karvan, that I should willingly touch a sensitive spot. I am a friend of the family.

*Julia.*—My dear sister, where are you to get the strength you will need!

*Ann.*—Don't be afraid, Julia. See, I am myself again. You shall see with what perfect poise I can behave.

*(At this moment there comes an impatient knocking at the old man's window.)*

*Ann.*—Oh, Lord!

*Julia (Calling, as knocking continues).*—Andrew! Andrew! *(To ANDREW, who enters right.)* Hurry, hurry, Andrew—grandfather is awake.

*Andrew.*—That's why I am always at hand, my lady. *(Enters cottage and strikes a light.)*

*Ann.*—Does he always act like this?

*Julia.*—If some one should not come at once, he'd break the pane. He has done it more than once. He is terribly frightened of the dark.

*Fable.*—And he is always so . . .

*Julia.*—He is not so cross as he used to be. He is more like a child. He often cries, and last night he could not go to sleep for sheer joy. He was so excited over the approach of St. John's eve, his name day! And over today's picnic! God knows how he keeps track of the day, but he does. This morning he was up early to see the procession from the gymnasium pass by. And now he is waiting for the excursion to come back.

*Fable.*—He still thinks he is the mayor?

*Julia.*—Andrew has to bring him the papers to sign every day. . . Any old wrapping paper satisfies him. He doesn't know any difference.

*(GRANNY enters with lamp in one hand and a table spread in the other.)*

*Granny.*—Are we to have supper out here tonight?

*Ann (Confused).*—What's that? *(Recovering)* Oh, supper! To be sure. Here as usual on St. John's. . . for grandfather's

sake. (*Hand at head, bewildered*) Today we may have one saint. . . one John more . . . There!

(*From the distance comes music of the band playing a Turner's March.*)

*Julia.*—The young folks are back.

(*GRANNY spreads the table.*)

*Fable.*—That means they will be here at once. The procession is turning the corner around the armory, and the breeze is carrying the music this way.

*Ann.*—Granny, please, leave everything for a while and get me my shawl. Hurry! (*GRANNY goes.*)

*Julia.*—What are you up to now?

*Ann.*—I must go to meet my husband. . . if he is coming.

*Fable.*—Certainly he is coming. And you won't have to wait long. If you permit a suggestion from an old friend of the family . . . what will people say if they see you tonight, just as the young man of ten years ago, who turned the village topsy turvy, and you with it . . . what would they say if they saw you running like a wild woman to meet your husband on his way home from the picnic.

*Ann.*—What shall I do?

(*The music grows louder. In the lodge ANDREW is seen taking the old man to the window.*)

*Julia.*—It would be better if the doctor were here. Truly, I should prefer to see him here before the other arrives.

*Fable.*—Well, well, they shall have to meet sooner or later—the present incumbent, and the one to whom the business lawfully belongs—who may still wish to urge his claims.

*Ann (To GRANNY who brings mantle).*—Give it here, quick!

(*Music sounds farther off.*)

*Fable.*—What does this mean? (*All are surprised.*) Just look at that! The procession is turning to the market place, and will not pass by here. That looks like a demonstration against our mayor.

*Ann.*—I must meet him from this direction then!

*Fable (Looking off, back).*—That is superfluous, for here he comes. (*JOHN enters, leading JOHNNY by the hand.*)

*John.*—Come along, and behave yourself like a man. I'll get cross!

*Johnny.*—When everybody is going to the armory, and they are going to play a lot more! All the other boys can go, but I have to come home!



*John (Sternly).*—Not another word! (*Pretense of kindness as he comes nearer*—). Come along, Johnny-papa's big boy.

*Johnny.*—That's all I get for being papa's big boy! Other boys have papas too, and they can stay as long as they want to.

*John (Entering through the gate).*—Is that you, Fable? Good evening. (*The band plays a lively march.*) Just listen to that! That is in honor of the First Voters' League. (*Angrily*) Do you know what the manager said? He said that the procession could not pass this way because it would be contrary to the law that was in force long before the state granted the charter. When I told him that the old man was counting on it, that he stayed awake all night in anticipation like a child, and that he had a right to be humored, seeing that he financed the scheme, he said that he had high respect for the old man, but that it could not be helped. It was settled. I am sure the whole damn league will vote against us! . . . But, what's the matter here? You all act as if you had seen a ghost!

*Ann.*—Perhaps you will look that way too, doctor, when you learn.

*John.*—What is it? What's happened? Can't you speak,—someone?

*Fable.*—I came to tell you that a . . . a . . . guest . . .

*Ann.*—Who is standing on the very threshold . . . .

*John.*—A guest? From a distance?

*Ann.*—From the other world, doctor.

*John.*—From the other world, you say? Then it must be . . . Hans . . .

*Ann.*—Yes, doctor, it's Hans. He had written Mr. Fable that he was coming soon, and instead he is already here. Our Granny heard him in the woods this evening.

*Julia.*—It is strange that you should have guessed so easily, brother-in-law. It was to be expected that you would be the very last one to believe, and yet you do not even say, "impossible."

*John (Moved).*—Why should I say it when you are telling me here that he is sending messages, that you have actually seen him (*Changing abruptly.*) No time for that now. (*Assuming joy.*) You say that Jan is back? My dear cousin Jan! Where is he, let me embrace him!

*Ann (Quietly to JOHN).*—No use, John; you can't keep that mask on for long. We know now that he is still on earth, but

what about . . . (*Pointing to the lodge*) about the two who do suspect each other's presence among the living!

*Fable*.—Precious people, with your permission, I take my leave. You have my message, I can be of no further service, and I am on my way.

*Ann*.—Oh, we beg pardon for neglecting you . . .

*Fable*.—Not at all. Everything is ship shape. I shall take the upper road, if you don't mind. Good night. (*Exit*.)

*John*.—You mean?

*Ann*.—Don't act so innocent! The two that one in there and this one—father and son.

*John* (*Pretentiously righteous*).—Don't meddle with them! We have no right to stand between them!

*Ann*.—And you have never done that before, doctor?

*John*.—Please, please, don't drive me mad! He may be here any minute, and you don't give a man the chance to collect his wits!

*Johnny* (*Suddenly comprehending*).—Mamma, is it that rebel uncle of mine that's coming? I want to see him, I want to see him!

*John*.—Out of the way! You go to bed this minute!

*Andrew* (*Out of lodge window*).—Pardon, but the old man will not stir from the window. He is still expecting the procession to pass this way. He is straining his ears for the music, and they have stopped long ago. I don't know what to do with him. (*He stands so that HANS, entering, sees him first.*)

(ANN is sitting under the tree where she is cut off from HANS' view. JOHN is standing beside her also out of sight. JULIA has strayed up stage and JOHNNY is attached to her.)

*Hans* (*Outside*).—Andrew! Andrew! Could you scrape up a lodging for a poor tramp?

*Andrew*.—For the love of God, if it isn't Mr. Hans! So the old woman was right after all! Upon my soul, it is the very, very Mr. Hans!

*Hans* (*Entering and catching sight of Julia*).—Ann! My Ann! what luck! Is it possible? And how do you happen to be here at our house? (*He embraces her eagerly.*)

*Julia* (*Too astounded to resist*).—No, no, I am not . . .

*Ann* (*Coming into view*).—Stop, you unhappy man, I am Ann! This is my sister, Julia.

*Hans* (*Confused*).—You are Ann? You, Ann? I am Jan, Hans, who has come out of the wide world to his father's house.

*Ann.*—So we have heard.

*Hans (Unable to take his eyes off Julia).*—Your sister! She seemed to me more like . . .

*Ann.*—What a ridiculous mistake!

*Hans.*—How could I have made such a blunder! But you are really Ann? Will you kindly tell me what you are doing at our house?

(*ANN takes HANS by the hand and leads him to the doctor.*)

*John (Boisterously).*—Jan! My dear cousin! Welcome! Welcome!

*Hans (Dashing away his proffered hand).*—Wait a moment! Aha! I begin to catch on! Husband and wife, is it? Oh, that is great! How wonderfully it all worked out! (*He breaks out in wild laughter. His back is to the lodge. His laugh brings the old man out.*) Say, but this is a surprise! I couldn't have dreamed

. . .  
*Old Man (Staggering through the door).*—Julia, Julia! Hans is calling me again! I am afraid!

*Hans (Turning, sees JULIA run to the old man).*—What's this? What! My . . . Oh, my father, and alive? Andrew, this is he, my father, isn't it? (*To him*) Father!

*Old Man (Holding out his arms to HANS).*—My little Hans! So you are back from the picnic, sonny boy? Everybody said that you would never come again, only Julia . . . she promised. You were out a long time, my boy. Weren't you afraid father would use a strap?

*Hans.*—Father!

*Old Man.*—Don't you see how late it is? So late! And it is growing dark! It's so dark! Hans, Jan, where are you? (*Falls into his arms.*)

*Hans.*—Father, father! Is our meeting to be so brief? Father, speak to me! Father!

*Old Man.*—The thing . . . that was . . . you know, my boy . . . you must forgive . . . that . . .

*Hans.*—Help, here, good people, help me!

*Julia.*—For the love of God, will someone stir! Get Dr. Crow, someone! Andrew (*ANDREW starts out right.*)

*Johnny (Weeping).*—Grandfather! Grandfather!

*Julia.*—No Andrew, wait! Let Granny fetch the doctor. You help us here. We must put him to bed. Brother-in-law!

(*HANS, JULIA and ANDREW carry the old man into the lodge.*)

JOHN follows a few steps, but does not go in. Instead, in sudden resolution, he hastens out right.)

ACT II. *Midnight*

Same as Act I. In the lodge of the old man, candles are burning. On the garden table is a lamp. Through the open door of the lodge the DEAN is seen kneeling in prayer. ANN is seated under the chestnut tree, JOHNNY at her side. He is frightened. Holding on to his mother, he throws a scared glance at the death chamber now and again.

A sexton comes out of the lodge, a cassock over his arm, a satchel with paraments over his shoulder. HANS comes after him. The sexton goes out right, ANDREW lighting his way with a candle. HANS comes to the table and buries his face in his hands. JOHNNY seeing his uncle in sorrow is about to approach him.)

Ann (In a sharp whisper, restrains him).—Stay right here!

Johnny (Struggles free of her hand and runs to HANS).—I don't want to! Let me go, mama! (ANN about to pursue, but remains seated.)

Johnny (Caressing HANS' head).—Don't cry so bitterly, uncle.

Hans.—Oh, it's you, Johnny!—I am not crying, see?

Johnny.—I thought you were. Why don't you, when your father died?

Hans.—One does not always cry when one is sad. When you grow up you will realize that often your heart will be breaking when your eyes will shed no tears. Did you love grandpa?

Johnny.—Oh, yes, very much, but they would never let me go to him. Aunt Julia, she loved him very much too. The others, they did not love him so much . . . not so much as we two.

Hans.—How much did the others love him?

Johnny.—Not so well as we two. You see. I had to love him the most of all, because he was my grandfather and my godfather, too.

Hans.—So your name is Jan, also? You are going to celebrate tomorrow?

Johnny.—I am. (Tearfully) Oh dear! Grandpa will never hear my greeting any more and I learned such a pretty one. Aunt Julia found it for me.

Hans.—Never mind, you shall say it to me.

*Johnny.*—But it isn't your name day.

*Hans.*—Oh, yes, it is. I am the Baptist, the same as every other first born Karvan.

*Johnny.*—But it won't fit you. Please don't look in there all the time!—You see, it went like this—Dear granddaddy, my precious old fellow . . . You are not even gray, so how can you be precious old fellow? But I tell you what! I can fix it up, and after I have said it to father, then it can be yours. Only in place of saying precious daddy, I can say "my golden uncle!"

*Ann.*—Johnny, you must not impose on your uncle. It is not right for you to be so talkative when uncle is in mourning.

*Hans.*—Why so considerate?

*Ann.*—Come on, sonny, it's past your bed time.

*Johnny.*—I shan't go.

*Hans.*—Just leave him here. Those few innocently prattled sentences have a remarkably refreshing effect on me.

*Johnny.*—You were always saying that uncle would never come again, and here he is. Only we two—we were certain you would come.

*Hans.*—Who are "we two?"

*Johnny.*—Aunt Julia and I.

*Hans.*—So? Aunt Julia and you?

*Ann.*—That's enough for this time, Johnny. The boy has such a fond disposition, there will be no comforting him when you leave.

*Hans.*—But no one has said that I would leave. Look here, I have just arrived, have not yet spent a night under the paternal roof, and you are talking of my leaving.

*Johnny.*—Don't go away again, uncle, please! (*Half asleep*) Stay here at the store. Father can dismiss the assistant and hire you in his place. I will love you even more than I loved granddaddy.

*Ann.*—Johnny, not another word!

*Johnny (Falling off).*—Aunt Julia always said . . .

*Ann.*—Surely you would not for one moment consider staying at this house, or even in the village.

*Hans.*—I have reasons for as well as against.

*Ann.*—The motives that brought you, cannot possibly prompt you to stay . . . You must be entirely disillusioned

. . .

*Hans.*—To just which of my motives do you refer?

*Ann.*—In particular to the one mentioned in a certain letter written to Mr. Fable.

*Hans.*—So you know about that?

*Ann.*—Only this afternoon the notary paid us a visit. Of course, he was most discreet; he came when conditions were entirely favorable. I served out my sentence of despair this afternoon. Bitterness came only tonight.

*Hans.*—Bitterness? What do you expect me to reply to that? It is true that I came only out of one motive, the one mentioned in the letter.

*Ann.*—In that case your friend should have received some such letter long ago. (*Softly*) Some one else, too, might have received a line or two. As it is you have let the years slip by without taking the slightest interest in that matter.

*Hans.*—I couldn't! I swear to you, I couldn't! Not that I forgot. Not entirely. Not the Polish battlefields, not the Russian transport, not the horrors of Sakhalin were sufficient to make me forget. When I found myself at liberty again, I imagined the memories were less insistent, but they kept calling, The last five years in America! They were worse than the rebellion, worse than the prison. On my honor, I never had a half day's peace. All this time I felt upon my chest the weight of an alien fist. I had to fight to ward it off—to break through the handicap of my foreign birth. When I boarded the ship, I began to hear more and more clearly the bells on our village church. And when I landed at Havre, I could see the village tower. From Paris I wrote to Fable, but even before my letter reached the postoffice, I was seized with uncontrollable longing. I forgot all at once my government office, and the same train that carried my letter carried me. The train crawled! My heart kept climbing into my throat, I was so impatient.

*Ann.*—Impatient! And yet you arrived on foot.

*Hans.*—Yes. On the Bavarian border I was smitten with a fear that all my hopes were vain. I left the train and walked the rest of the day. Even when I arrived on the outskirts of the village I dared not come here at once. I caught sight of Granny in the woods, but she took fright at my voice.

*Ann.*—Are you sure that your disappointment is as sore as it might have been?

*Hans.*—Quite! What a blow! I am not sentimental, but what I found here would shake a backwoodsman. Ann, dead to

me forever. My father, whom I had considered dead for many years, alive; only to die in my arms!

*Ann (Smiling with veiled bitterness).*—Your greatest disappointment though was, ha, ha, ha,—this evening, when you found Julia in your arms. How you opened your eyes when you beheld the real Ann. It was wonderfully gratifying to me to know that the hugs and kisses she got were really intended for me.

*Hans.*—The error was easy. Your sister is the living image of you as you were the evening I went away—the very picture of you I had been carrying with me over the four quarters of the globe.

*Ann.*—It must have been a very light burden, seeing that you carried it so long without complaining about it.

*Hans.*—Besides, the mistake was only momentary.

*Ann.*—It lasted long enough to satisfy all concerned. I noticed Julia did not object . . . By the way, that's an idea! One way to make up for the lost Ann. Julia will agree I am sure, and Ann will give you both her heartiest blessing.

*Hans.*—Poor Ann, how you must have suffered to be able to talk thus! I owe Julia nothing. I made her no promises as I have you.

*Ann.*—You took your promises seriously, didn't you? If you did not come after ten years to boast of her, we might not even have known that there was a Mrs. Hans . . .

*Hans.*—Keep on, you can't hurt me now. But I wish you to understand that there is no one . . . that I have been all these years alone.

*Ann.*—You needn't tell me that you would still be interested in me . . . as I am now . . . if that were still possible. I know what I look like.

*Hans.*—I swear to you that I would! My faith has survived ten years.

*Ann.*—And I am sure you hadn't any time for faithlessness.

*Hans.*—Look here, Ann! Here lies asleep before us the ocular evidence of your faith, a beautiful grown boy! In order that he be as old as he is it was necessary that your faith have a violent and sudden end, ten years ago.

*Ann.*—Don't go a step farther! Don't trample on the innocent! What right have you to blame me? You went away forever and I had nothing left. For me and for the rest of us you were dead.

*Hans.*—Ann!

*Dean (Entering from the death chamber).*—Ah me!

*Hans (To ANN).*—This is not the last word between us on the subject.

*Dean.*—Right behind the door lies the yet warm corpse of your father! The return of the Scriptural prodigal was not so tragic as yours, Jan; and I, though your uncle, have no word of welcome.

*Hans.*—Don't exert yourself, uncle.

*Dean.*—Your arrival has cost me the life of my brother.

*Hans.*—Uncle!

*Dean.*—It would have been better for you, for me, for everybody, had you indeed perished in Siberia!

*Hans.*—Fortunately, you were the last person from whom I expected a welcome, and I assure you that your welcome is not what I came for. Since unavoidable circumstances have made our meeting necessary, I wish to remind you that I am no longer a boy of twenty-two, cursed by your anathema, but a Man!—a man that has traversed three-quarters of the globe. I would warn you . . .

*Dean.*—You warn me? Against what, for God's love?

*Hans.*—Not to urge me too far. Not to compel me to ask for a settlement of accounts between us.

*Dean.*—There is nothing to settle, my son. Not between you and me. But there is some one may force you to settle whether you will or no.

*Hans.*—If you mean God, I can take care of that, I assure you, my reverend sir! My God lives in my conscience and that is at peace. But pray don't you aggravate the load you have saddled on me. It lacked mighty little of your accusing me of the death of my father.

*Dean.*—Had I done so, should I have been far wrong? You came home, they tell me, and your father died. After so many years that evil deed of yours bore its fruit of destruction.

*Hans.*—I shall permit no one to sit in judgment over my deeds, least of all you. My evil deed! True, it did not square with your laws and hypocritical regulations, but I have never regretted the deed. It was necessary to save the man between whose temple and the mouth of a gun there was scarcely the distance of a span. I saved that man, and I do not begrudge the price I had to pay later.

*Dean.*—Your generosity was wasted, my boy, for that same



public servant on whom you poured it out, met his fate later. He has proved the curse of our family, himself cursed . . .

*Ann.*—He was my father, please to remember, sir!

*Hans.*—It is true? He did not escape his fate?

*Dean.*—By his own hand. When this worthy treasurer reached the second time for government funds, and more extensively than the first time, there was no sentimental fool here willing to ruin his own life and plunge the pharmacy on the verge of ruin by forging a draft for him.

*Hans.*—I implore you, uncle! Spare the daughter's feelings, at least!

*Dean (To ANN who is weeping).*—Yes, yes, my dear, you have cause to weep! Fortunately, you need not weep over yourself and your son, like the daughters of Jerusalem. How about that, Mrs. Karvan?

*Ann.*—I beg you, sir!

*Hans.*—Sir!

*Dean.*—You are both to blame and you may weep together over the dead.

(*JULIA and DOCTOR CROWE have come out of the lodge and stop on the veranda.*)

*Hans.*—My father died in my arms, and his last words were not of forgiveness, but a plea to be forgiven.

*Dean.*—Still it was his grieving over you that killed him.

*Dr. Crowe.*—I beg pardon, worthy sir, for allowing myself to make one suggestion. So far as I have been able to learn from those present at the fatal meeting, the old gentleman died rather of joy at seeing his son again than of surprise.

*Julia.*—We all know that the old gentleman looked upon Mr. Karvan as dead. So did we all.

*Ann.*—Not only looked upon, we were all certain that he was dead.

*Hans.*—How could you be certain?

*Ann.*—We had proofs—written reports, and an official confirmation came to us here at the store.

*Hans.*—So? I must see that document at once. Where is my cousin? I feel the scales gradually falling off my eyes. Where is the doctor? Surely he is not hiding from me?

*Dean.*—Remember, Jan, that nearby lies the body of your father, and that it is necessary to observe a certain decorum, even if we ourselves are incapable of the proper respect. The house of the dead should not be desecrated by the quarrels of the living.

*Hans.*—I acknowledge my error. But I wish I might shriek loud enough to wake him and explain how it happened that we were robbed of each other for all those years. For I had, you understand, *proofs* that my father was dead.

*Ann.*—From whom?

*Hans.*—From the present incumbent.

*Julia.*—I felt there was something like that!

*Hans.*—Where did he go? Where is he? I must have him here. I am only surprised that the thing had not dawned on me before.

*Johnny (Waking and crying out).*—Who was that shouting? Mamma, I am afraid! Where am I? (*To HANS*) Oh, I see! (*He throws his arms about his uncle's neck.*) And poor grandpa died! (*Dozing*) Don't be so . . . angry . . . uncle . . . (*Sleeps.*)

*Dean.*—I am surprised that the boy should take to him so; he is usually very shy.

*Julia.*—It is as if they had known each other all their lives.

*Ann (Confused, takes JOHNNY from HANS).*—You must come to bed now, baby.

*Dr. Crowe.*—Beg your pardon, ma'am, but allow me to suggest that it might be better for him to sleep right out here, and to keep as nearly awake as possible. He would only rave in his sleep till morning.

*Ann (Wrapping him up in a shawl).*—No, no, it's no use you see. He is asleep again. He is worn out after the excursion.

*Julia (To HANS, who is walking about).*—Don't torment yourself this way, Mr. Karvan, it can't be helped now. The body is ready for the casket. He is as handsome, our dear grandpa, as if he was alive. Come and look at him, you haven't seen him for so many years. The sight of him will do your heart good.

*Crowe (To HANS).*—Allow me to introduce myself, Dr. Crowe, the local hospital physician.—

*Hans.*—John Karvan, dentist, Arkansas City.

*Crowe.*—So we are in a measure colleagues, aren't we? I happened to take the position of the beloved of this lady here. He came to such a tragic end! (*He pats JULIA's shoulder.*) Don't protest, my dear lady, I repeat. She is an angel, sir, and the whole city of Potsedin will bear me out in the opinion. Her sacrificing devotion to the deceased is exceedingly well known in general, and to me in particular.

*Hans.*—Is that true! You were of service to my poor father before as well as after death. I shall not forget.

*Julia.*—That's nothing to talk about. That is my calling, and it happened to be my assigned duty in this house until last evening.

*Hans.*—I thank you, too, doctor, for all you have done here.

*Crowe.*—Please, please, how could I help doing for the dear old physician who established the pharmacy, and through it maintained such valuable public service. Surely he deserves special consideration . . . Allow me to take my leave. It seemed foreordained that I should be called upon again before daybreak. I beg you to accept my heartfelt sympathy.

*Hans.*—Thanks, heartily, doctor.

*Julia (Leading HANS to lodge).*—Come, Mr. Karvan.

*Crowe.*—I take my leave of you, sir Dean. You have my deepest sympathy for the loss of your brother.

*Dean.*—Thanks, thanks, it is much safer for him under the Shadow of the Almighty, than here among the lies of men . . . I shall have to go, too, in a minute; I have an officium at seven.

*Crowe.*—I kiss your hand, my lady. It would do the little fellow no harm if you should let him sleep here in the garden all night. On a hot night like this it would be better, indeed. I take my leave, respectfully. (*Exit.*)

*Dean.*—My dear, you seemed touched by the words about your father I had occasion to pronounce a while ago. Believe me, although I am extremely sorry, I feel that I am unable to take back a syllable of what I said. I do not feel obliged to apologize for my . . . for my . . . perhaps, tactless remark.

*Ann.*—My dear sir, if my father was indeed guilty, he was his own most severe judge, and he satisfied the demands of justice.

*Dean.*—So, so, that is the very thing I meant to say.

*Ann.*—And I believe it would be more in keeping with your high office of love if you should rather pity and forgive.

*Dean.*—For a deed like his my office should and must not feel any compassion. Your father, forgive me, was a godless unbeliever all his life, and by his own judgment upon himself he did not atone for, but he rather added to his burden of sin. The one evil was born of the other. And now, behold! There lies the latest victim of the original sin, my brother!

*Ann.*—Your brother! For almost ten years this brother has been dead to you. From the day of our marriage you never

crossed this threshold until now. That is how dear your brother was to you.

*Dean.*—As to your marriage, you understand well enough, my dear. And your threshold, is it? Who knows how much longer you will be able to call it yours? To all appearances the man in that room does not behave as if he meant, without some protest, to allow himself again to be forced out of his patrimony. You know it legally belongs to him, this estate of yours.

*Ann.*—It is all the same to me.

*Dean.*—Oh, no, it isn't!

*Ann.*—Whose fault is it? Whose fault that Hans has not been settled here for the last ten years as the lawful heir to the property, instead of being first a Polish rebel, then a Siberian exile, and now a seeming outcast? Don't you know that he told me all, the last night he was here? His father offered to forgive him, but you, his uncle, stood out against him like adamant. If it had not been for you, Hans would be in his rightful place to-night.

*Dean.*—And as for you, since it did not pan out with one Karvan, you had to take the other?

*Ann.*—As my father said, you would never forgive me if you had to use your office to marry me to a Karvan.

*Dean.*—Yes, yes, he was right I am a Karvan myself. I knew that the ceremony was most urgently necessary in order that the disgrace with which you overwhelmed our family name might not overflow into the streets of Potsedin.

*Ann.*—That is too much!

*Dean (Pointing to JOHNNY).*—That little fellow was with you at the altar.

*Ann.*—Oh, Sir!

*Dean.*—And the ceremony was necessary to spare the little one a life long disgrace.

*Ann.*—Oh!

*Dean.*—For he, too, is a Karvan. A John Karvan, whether he be the son . . .

*Ann.*—I pray you, do not finish that sentence.

*Dean.*—Of the one or of the other Karvan.

*Ann (About to swoon).*—My God!

*Dean.*—So, so! You see, my dear Mrs. Karvan; we ought to be able to come to terms without any trouble. What's this? Take care, take care. You must brace up!

*Ann.*—It's nothing now. It has passed. You win, most

reverend sir. What a reward must be awaiting you in that other life!

(JOHN *rushes in from the right. He is excited, evasive, conscience-stricken. He talks rapidly.*)

John.—What is this? What are you doing? We need some kind of a collapse from you to cap the climax!

Ann.—It is nothing, don't worry.

John.—Just so it's nothing.

Dean.—It is no wonder that the nerves should give way a little before the onslaught of such events . . . such a revival of memories!

John.—It does seem a little precipitate, that flood. What a surprise! And what a blow!

Dean.—Just so it ends with the blow, my dear John.

John.—One never can tell. I should sooner have expected my own death. Death came and the old man is . . . I pray you, where is this death dealer . . . this returned prodigal?

Dean.—John you are a poor dissembler. Don't pretend! You don't need to tell us that there is a single detail of what has been going on here in this garden that has escaped you.

John.—What is this boy doing here this time of night? Off to bed with him, and with you, too.

Dean.—You are not holding well together, John.

John (*Head in hands*).—But the little chap must get some rest. I will have my orders obeyed. (*Calling*) Andrew! (*To ANN*) And you go with him.

Ann.—You know perfectly well that I am going to stay here.

John (*Shaking JOHNNY*).—Andrew! Andrew!

Ann.—Not so rough, if you please! The child is disturbed enough as it is. (*To ANDREW who enters.*) Andrew, will you please carry Johnny to bed?

Andrew.—To be sure, to be sure. What else have I been playing at but nurse around here since he was born!

Ann.—And tell Granny to stay with him till I come.

(*As ANDREW goes out with JOHNNY, JULIA and HANS come out of the lodge.*)

Hans.—Again from the bottom of my heart I thank you for what you have done for the dear old man. (*About to kiss her hand.*)

Johnny (*Hearing HANS' voice, calling*).—Uncle! Uncle! (*ANDREW takes him.*)

Julia.—No, no, please. Not that!

*Hans.*—I shall never forget what you have done for me

*John.*—My dear Jan.

*Hans (Astonished).*—You here at last? Where have you been hanging out?

*John.*—I had gone to fetch this worthy gentleman, here.

*Hans.*—Good thing you came back. I have a number of things to ask you.

*John.*—All in good time, but first permit . . .

*Hans.*—All in good time! For God's sake, man, have you not had time enough? Will you explain . . .

*Julia (Indicating the death chamber).*—Mr. Karvan.

*Hans.*—You are right. I shall control myself if it chokes me. John, you have done some awful things to me.

*John.*—Be careful what you say, cousin. Weigh well every word before you speak.

*Hans.*—Will you tell me how it is possible . . . but no . . . no—it's too horrible!

*John.*—Go on, I'll stand your fire!

*Hans.*—What's the use of asking you. You wrote me that father died six years ago.

*Dean.*—So, so?

*John.*—As there is a God above me, cousin, you lie! There was not one word about death in that letter.

*Hans.*—Do you wish me to show it to you? To be specific you wrote: I am sorry to report that your father succumbed to a paralytic stroke last night.

*John.*—And didn't he? For fully nine months he lay without so much as moving a muscle. And ever since he has lain around, never even rising to his feet without help. Now, poor fellow—now he is free. Now he fares better, my never-to-be-forgotten second father. (*Wipes eyes.*)

*Dean.*—John told me that you were corresponding. So, so!

*Hans.*—But this is not all. It seems that I was given out . . .

*Ann.*—Permit me a word. It occurs to me that I can throw some light on the subject. If it was that second troke father had, it's no wonder that John wrote what he did. We all expected father to go any minute.

*John.*—Exactly! Dr. Crowe himself announced that he could not last a week.

*Ann (Speaking, but catching herself).*—But still . . .

*Dean.*—Still? It seems, my lady, that something has loomed up before your conscience that is not easily banished?

*Ann.*—Oh, nothing at all . . . only I can't get it through my head . . . there must have been some carelessness somewhere.

*Dean.*—What sort of carelessness can't you get through your head?

*Julia.*—There are things none of us can get through our heads. When was it that grandfather had his second stroke? Was it not the moment brother-in-law announced . . .

*Ann (Sharply).*—Julia, don't meddle.

*John.*—I pray you . . .

*Julia (Continuing).*—When he brought the official confirmation of Mr. Hans Karvan's having been shot while fleeing from a Siberian prison!

*John.*—I broke the news as cautiously as I knew how.

*Julia.*—But if it was after that . . . after that that you wrote to your cousin, brother-in-law . . .

*Hans.*—Is this the order of events?

*Dean.*—From which it would seem that he knew Hans was still living while he was trying to convince his father that he was dead.

*Hans (Catching JOHN by the throat).*—You coward! You intolerable villain! (*ANN shrieks.*)

*Julia.*—Oh, Mr. Karvan, surely you would not so far forget yourself.

*John.*—Let me go! Would you strangle me?

*Dean.*—Back, you madman!

*Andrew (Re-entering, hastening to JOHN's assistance).*—Mr. Hans! Mr. Hans! What on earth possesses you? Recall yourself! You cannot do this! This is the mayor!

*Hans (Holding JOHN until JULIA puts her hand on his shoulder)*  
—Andrew? You old dog!

*Ann.*—Dear God!

*Dean.*—No unnecessary panic please.

*Andrew.*—I guess I *am* that, Mr. Hans. Only an *old* dog would have stood it around here as I have done. For forty years I have drudged around here. Choke me if you must choke somebody, but not the mayor!

*John.*—This to me! Me! It is me he would lay his hands on.

*Julia.*—You let yourself go pretty far, Mr. Hans.

*Ann.*—It is all your fault, Julia.

*Hans.*—You are right. Forgive me, Andrew I was hasty.

*John (Still shouting).*—To assault me! Me, the head of the community.

*Dean.*—Don't howl so loud or you may rouse the community.

*John.*—How shouldn't I howl when he assaults me in my own house and half smothers me?

*Hans.*—If this had been in the States a gun would have settled your howling.

*John (To ANDREW).*—What are you gawking around here for? Go tend to your own business. (*Aside to ANDREW.*) Just hang around close, see? (*Exit Andrew.*)

*Dean.*—You are both defamers of the good Karvan name. The old pharmacy from which we have all sprung has seen many troubles of one kind and another, but never till today has it witnessed a fist fight in the presence of the dead.

*Hans.*—A while ago you almost accused me of being responsible for the death of my father. Now confess which one of us comes nearer being the murderer, he or I?

*Dean.*—I am always on the side of justice. You, John, have much to answer for if you do not clear yourself of this accusation.

*John.*—Not until I have had satisfaction for this unprovoked assault which I have sustained under my own roof.

*Dean.*—With regard to the ownership of the roof, things may go somewhat dubiously just now.

*John.*—Were I owner only till tomorrow noon, I am master here till then.

*Hans.*—And you really imagine that you can repair the damage you have wrought by this made to order noise!

*John.*—As far as this place is concerned, you and I have done. You shall answer me somewhere else.

*Hans.*—It is a long way yet before we have done with each other. It will please me to answer you here, or anywhere. But right here I am telling you that I see to the bottom of your rotten soul! You got the official confirmation for father in order to inherit his business. I know now that you had been playing me for that long before I left the country.

*Julia (To ANN who is sobbing).*—Ann, dear, please go and lie down. You'll catch your death here.

*John.*—The document is legitimate from the opening word to the seal. You may see it yourself in the morning.

*Hans.*—It must have been easy to get the signed statement



from Sakhalin, but by all the devils, you see that I am here and alive!

*John.*—But I was obliged to accept the report, and so was everybody else hereabouts. Even the city council.

*Hans.*—But still you knew where to write to me afterwards, to me—dead.

*John.*—That was the only way I knew to get a confirmation of the report. I was thoroughly convinced only after I had written and had received no answer.

*Dean.*—Well, why then did you not answer?

*Hans (After reflection).*—I was busy flying from Sakhalin at the time.

*John.*—So there. And you are leaping at my throat like a Bengal tiger, after all I had tried to do for you.

*Ann.*—That is only the truth, Mr. Karvan; when the sad news came my husband was utterly dejected.

*John.*—Out of consideration for the fact that I have been acting here in the pharmacy as your special representative, for that I am to get out of here tomorrow, a beggar. And for taking care of your father, of my dear uncle, to the hour of his death! And in all these years I have not brought any disgrace on the family as you had once done. I can point to ten years of respectable family life here in Potsedin, for which I have enjoyed the trust of my fellow citizens. This reverend gentleman knows it.

*Dean.*—The trust of our fellow citizens is firmly rooted in this house and in this dispensary.

*John.*—For all of which I am insulted before the members of my family, and before my employe. Tomorrow, the whole village will be wagging with it.

*Dean.*—Be silent! The most important thing now is what to do next. My dear Hans, you are not saying a word. I know that it is only right you should have your heritage, but what would the municipality say? An American dentist proposing to establish himself here as a practicing physician. What are you thinking about all this, Jan? Am I not worth a word from you?

*Hans (Who has been sitting with head in his palms, now rises and takes a small vial out of his pocket. He holds it out towards JOHN.)* What is this? Do you recognize it?

*John.*—I can't see it, but as a practicing pharmacist I suppose I should recognize any bottle any where, even in the dark. A pharmacist should recognize a bottle as easily as a twenty dollar bill. What is it?

*Hans.*—Did you ever hold this particular bottle in your hand?

*John.*—I have held hundreds like it in my hand. Am I expected to recognize one out of that number!

*Hans.*—And you have no memory of what was in this one?

*John.*—You ask too much of me.

*Hans.*—Oh, not at all. You are not anxious to recognize this one.

*John.*—Oh, please leave me alone!

*Hans.*—You remember the night . . . it was at this very gate . . . I sat waiting for you to bring me word from the conference over me between my father and uncle.

*John.*—Why all this history, pray?

*Hans.*—You came to me there and pressed into my hand this bottle as a mute message from the patriarchal stems of our house. An eloquent bit of advice for me to take on the road with me.

*Ann.*—What is in the bottle?

*Hans.*—Laudanum! Not much, to be sure; but still enough to put all of us here to sleep for ever.

*Ann.*—For the living God!

*Julia.*—Ann!

*Dean.*—And this actually happened?

*Hans.*—To the letter as I report it, sir!

*John.*—Such prattle! Such fantastic fabrications!

*Hans.*—More than once has the cork been out of the vial, particularly on the Russian etapes toward Sakhalin. Today I am glad I had denied myself the refreshing potion, that I have been able to bring back to you this token of remembrance, because this moment brings me a measure of reparation for my suffering. I return the gift to you with a hearty thank you.

*John (Taking the vial which HANS has placed on the table).*—Permit me . . .

*Hans (Stopping him).*—Just a minute, no hurry! There will come a time for everything.

(ANN catches for the vial, but JULIA, who has been watching ANN's every motion, snatches it from her hands.)

*Julia (Emptying the bottle into the grass).*—What on earth would you do with it, Ann? A thing like that! Away with it. (She flings the bottle away.)

*John.*—You should not have done that, sister-in-law.

*Julia.*—I did it for Ann.

*Dean.*—I ask you, unhappy boy, whether you regard me or

your father capable of sending you such a thing. I give you my word that I never left your father's side all that night. The money to cancel the forged draft, and the money for your journey came from me, but of this horrible thing I knew nothing.

*John.*—But I tell you all this is folly! It was a boy's joke to test his will power.

*Julia.*—Such jokes are sometimes called removing obstacles, is it not?

*John.*—I did offer him the vial, but if Julia had not destroyed it just now, I should have swallowed the contents myself to prove it was nothing harmful. Laudanum from the back yard pump! And he carried it over three quarters of the globe. Ha! Ha! Ha! That's good!

*Dean.*—John, do you really think that any one of us four will ever believe that?

*John.*—You may all believe what you wish.

*Dean.*—Be still! The more you talk the more clear it is that silence would serve you best. (*To HANS.*) My poor boy! From henceforth I shall neither praise nor blame the deed with which you ruined your own career and the family honor. The arrow which was meant for you alone has struck beside you. I regret the words I spoke a while ago in refusing to welcome you. You have been robbed of more than you may ever know. So again after ten years, I bid you welcome.

*Hans.*—And he, the robber, is to be permitted to sit on his booty? He robbed me of everything—of my father, of my heritage, and almost of my life.

*Dean.*—Peace, peace, Hans! Consider well your motives, and their consequences. If you try to repair your fortunes now, you will not only ruin yourself but others as well. You might even erase the name of Karvan forever from the archives of Potsedin. Forgive and forget, even though he is unworthy. There, there!

*John.*—If it is necessary I can buy out the business with cash.

*Dean.*—And return to your newly adopted country. You no longer belong here, God be with you, Jan! I should like to remain and hear the last word between you two, but I feel that this night has cut deep into the roots of my own life. I cannot stand much any more. (*Kisses him.*) If I should not live till morning, God bless you! I beg that Andrew escort me a little on the way. (*He waves a blessing toward the lodge, and JULIA leads him off.*)

*John (After a pause).*—Well, Hans, what do you say to my proposal?

*Hans.*—You mean that you actually dare?

*John.*—I am sure it will be best for both of us to come to an immediate understanding. Every minute lost is to be regretted, not so much on my account, but on yours. The money is ready.

*Hans.*—Now we have finished. This is the last word for the present.

*John.*—Just as you say. So you are not sorry later.

*Ann (As JULIA returns).*—Mr. Karvan, I don't know just what to say after all that has happened. I feel very much depressed. Yet I must not forget. I am the mistress of the house . . . I think everything will yield to reason in time. When you care to retire, Mr. Karvan, the couch is ready. Granny is waiting. She will show you.

*Hans.*—With you under the same roof? Not a single night! I remain here in the garden.

*Ann.*—Be sure that your words will never cause you a pang when you recall them.

*Hans (Kindly).*—I mean I shall stay here with Andrew and watch beside father. There is very little of the night left anyway. Tomorrow, or rather, this morning, everything will be decided. I shall report to you what takes place.

*John.*—I hope you do not think I am afraid of you, rebel. You can't do a thing to me tomorrow, you Siberian outlaw. You do not stop to think of one thing. You are a fugitive from military service. Do you know what that carries with it? You have evaded military duty in the Austrian army as a conscript. Do you know what that means for you? It means that unless you disappear before daybreak, you may tomorrow be resting under the roof with the Austrian Eagle floating above it.

*Hans.*—Go, go on! But remember that I am quick tempered.

*John.*—Only take care, Hans, that you do not *go on* before I do.

(JOHN and ANN go right. JULIA stands a moment in a thoughtful attitude. JOHN is heard off, laughing and saying, "He thinks!" JULIA steps to HANS quickly as he stands with his back to her. Then she stops and thinks. Finally she turns and resolutely hastens away.)

ACT III. *Daybreak*

*Scene, as in Acts I and II. The glow in the East shows St. John's eve about to give way to St. John's day. In the death chamber the lights are perceptibly lower. On the garden table the lamp is beginning to flicker.*

*As the curtain rises, JOHN is standing at the lodge window, gazing at the body of his father. Presently he turns and advances to the centre. He seizes a grip sack off a knot of the tree where it has been hanging and throws it on the bench for a pillow. ANDREW is hanging a padlock on the wicket and locking up.*

*Hans.*—Listen to me, Andrew—come a little closer. What do you get for defending your honorable master last night when I had him by the throat?

*Andrew.*—Before the living God, my dear Mr. Hans, I did not save him! It was Miss Julia, and she used very little force. A bare touch of her fingers and your grip was off. Your hands are made of steel, Mr. Hans,—you might as safely pick up the pestle of a mortar.

*Hans.*—But you held me valiantly, Andrew. At least I know now what to expect of you if it comes to a show down between me and him.

*Andrew.*—No, no!

*Hans.*—Shame on you, Andrew! You join forces with the pharmacist against me,—me you used to carry on your back when I was a baby.

*Andrew.*—Oh, Mr. Hans, I would never do that! If the mayor had leaped at your throat, then I should have defended you.

*Hans.*—Your policy is to stand by the one who happens to be master and mayor, is that it? Just remember that I could, if I chose, be master here from this minute.

*Andrew.*—That you could not, Mr. Hans, not today, nor tomorrow, nor ever.

*Hans.*—I want to know why you think so.

*Andrew.*—There is no chance of your getting your rights because that fellow will not give way. He always gets what he goes after. Oh, dear!

*Hans.*—I see! That's why you hold out with him against me. You have no faith in my getting what I set out after?

*Andrew.*—You don't understand me. You see, I have been working here for forty years, and pretty much on my own terms,

as it were. My whole duty has been to see to it that the business does not suffer any serious loss. If, as you say, you should become master here, then it becomes my plain duty to stand up for you as I stood up in his defense a while ago. And I'd be a lion in your defense, Mr. Hans!

*Hans.*—Well, that makes it different. There, there! What a noble creature you are, to be sure. For that, you may now go to bed and get some sleep. I shall do guard duty here myself till morning. I am at the end of my rope myself, and I may close my eyes for a minute here on the settee.

*Andrew.*—On this hard bench? I pray that you take the couch in my room.

*Hans.*—That's kind of you, Andy, but you know yourself how often in the past years I got all the sleep I needed on this bench in this garden.

*Andrew.*—Very well, then. Good night, and God bless you.

*Hans.*—One moment, Andy. My throat is parched. Would you bring me a glass of water before you retire? (*ANDREW takes glass from table and goes.*) No one has set 'em up to me here since I came. With the exception of the perfume from Karvan's Pulmonary Tea, I have had nothing to sustain me since yesterday noon. (*Takes glass from ANDREW and drinks.*) To your good health! Great water! Tastes as good as when I was a boy.

*Andrew (Overcome by emotion, falling at his feet).*—Oh, Mr. Hans! My golden Mr. Hans!

*Hans (As ANDREW attempts to kiss his hand, embracing him and kissing his cheek).*—This is just the way you always spoiled me, you old bear!

*Andrew (Tearful).*—I spoiled you?

*Hans.*—Run away to bed. In the morning we shall have a long talk.

*Andrew.*—God give you a sweet good night!

*Hans.*—But we've said that several times already.

(*ANDREW puts out the lamp and goes out R. A moment later the shrill note of a guinea hen announces advancing day.*)

*Hans.*—Ha, that sounds more like good morning.

(*HANS lies down on the bench, using his grip for a pillow. As he drops off almost instantly, JULIA comes in from the house. She is wrapped in a thick kimona. She steps up to JAN, and speaks softly. Seeing that he is asleep she bends over him tenderly, but suddenly starts with a cry and tries to retreat. He has thrown his arms about her in a strong embrace.*)

*Hans (Out of his sleep).*—Ann! My Ann! (*Waking*) I beg your pardon! Now I know where I am. For a moment I had forgotten. You are not Ann, but the doctor's widow.

*Julia.*—I was expecting . . . I thought . . . I was sure you were not asleep, but you were and all at once you awoke.

*Hans.*—And frightened you terribly. Strange that I should again call you by your sister's name. The first time it happened it was broad daylight, and this time it is twilight.

*Julia.*—I know I should not have come here, but I wanted so much . . . My chief fault is that the moment anything occurs to me, I want to carry it through without thinking ahead to the consequences. This is what occurred to me just now: That you are here, sleeping, while you ought to be far away (*from here*) beyond the Bavarian mountains. I must warn you that brother-in-law intends no kindness toward you.

*Hans.*—Let us not talk about him, please; I have had all I can stand of him for one day. He calls me an outlaw, a fugitive, and I must agree with him, because it is the truth.

*Julia.*—He is capable of anything! You remember what he said about the Austrian Eagle? It is very evident that he is planning to turn you over to the magistrates. So why are you waiting here?

*Hans.*—It will not be the first time in his life that he tried to get me out of his way. I can always linger till the last moment, and then make a brave dash for liberty. I'll be off in time, you'll see. But now let's talk about yourself, Mrs . . .

*Julia.*—I am not a Mrs. I am not really a widow.

*Hans.*—I took you for the widow of the late interne.

*Julia.*—That is only a sort of charity name to satisfy town gossip.

*Hans.*—On my honor, I don't comprehend!

*Julia.*—Mr. Karvan, I don't know why it should be so, but there is nothing so important to me at this moment than that you should hear from my own lips all that I shall tell you. Before you go . . . Of course, my history cannot be of interest to you, and so my sad tale will be brief. (*Hesitating.*) Johnny, Ann's boy, *him* you have seen. If you should stay till tomorrow you would see another little fellow running around here, my little Jack. He is only five.

*Hans.*—And this little Jack?

*Julia.*—He is mine and I am unmarried.

*Hans.*—You poor girl, I begin to understand.

*Julia.*—Don't pity me, that would be worse than being laughed at. I should not have confessed this to you, but it seemed to me that I could not bear your finding out from others.

*Hans.*—Tell me everything.

*Julia.*—I loved the doctor; that he did not become my husband is neither his fault, nor mine.

*Hans.*—Some higher power . . .

*Julia.*—Yes, Doctor Hill was an interne in the local hospital, and second in charge at our pharmacy. It is here that I met him. We had already announced our wedding day, but just then the catastrophe fell. Some gypsies from Bavaria brought an infectious disease, they were isolated and quarantined by order of the Emperor, and Dr. Hill was detailed to attend them.

*Hans (As if remembering his own case).*—And the evening before he left you said goodbye here in the garden?

*Julia (Surprised).*—How did you know that?

*Hans.*—You have only to add that your parting took place on this very settee, with only old Andrew yonder tending the bloom racks and acting as chaperon.

*Julia.*—So he told you?

*Hans.*—Oh, no! The old rascal is as silent as the grave. I only guessed. In that one experience you and your sister are exactly . . .

*Julia.*—You talk that way, too?

*Hans.*—Who else has been talking that way?

*Julia.*—One whom I detest from the bottom of my heart. But why you?

*Hans.*—You will understand when you learn my motives for coming home. But to return to your doctor—I have already guessed that he died at his post.

*Julia.*—Yes, he took the contagion, and died in my arms. Oh, that was terrible; but it was still more terrible when . . .

*Hans.*—When little Jack came!

*Julia.*—Then everybody began calling me the doctor's lady, and every one knew that I had not been married. (*HANS laughs bitterly.*) How can you laugh at me?

*Hans.*—Don't be angry, my dear girl!

*Julia.*—Even you seem to see only the laughable side of my misery. The smile that even you cannot suppress I have felt in the eyes of all, as they soberly addressed me as Mrs. Doctor. They all knew and yet they did not dare to hint at anything that might be disrespectful to this honorable house. You cannot



conceive what a hell I have lived through here. I have been like a plaything under everybody's feet, to be kicked about from place to place. But now that poor grandfather is dead, I can run away at last, thank God! (HANS *smiles again.*) Please, please, don't laugh at me! Your smile is very unbecoming to you on a night like this.

(ANN *has approached unobserved. She stops to listen.*)

Hans.—This night, although we are watching at the death-bed of my father, is so full of irony, so laughably in keeping with the fate of my entire life, that it seems impossible for me to reflect upon it without a smile. It is true—it is the account of your experience that constitutes the main cause of my mirth.

Julia.—In that case I shall never cease to regret the confidence I placed in you.

Hans (*As she turns to go.*)—No, no, don't go! I must talk to you. Your doctor . . . he loved you very much? (*She nods.*) I know. It cannot be expressed in speech. Any one who has been in heaven and then descended into hell will understand us . . . No one else can. As your doctor loved you, I loved your sister, and I carry in my memory a night of parting

Julia.—I was sure of that since yesterday.

Hans.—That night Andrew played the spy for us to warn us of my cousin. He guarded us well . . . from him, but not from ourselves. At dawn I had to leave the country.

Julia (*Unable to suppress her emotion, points to the death chamber.*)—And he . . .

Hans.—But love is stronger than death! I carried mine in my heart through all the horrors of the battle fields and the Siberian exile. Meanwhile at home my cousin thrived on my absence. I find him a pharmacist and mayor, enjoying all that should have belonged to me. . . . Son of my father, husband of my wife . . .

Ann (*Coming forward.*)—And father of your son.

Julia.—Ann, dear!

Hans.—You came just in time to take the words out of my mouth. Any one might have guessed, and yet the sharpest man in Potsedin has remained blind.

Ann.—And you are joking at the most serious moment of your life. You are still only wild Hans of the drug store.

Hans.—I am not joking, Ann! That is only a sort of exultation, a kind of tragic enthusiasm. Everything seems but a wild

dream of St. John's Eve. Come here, both of you. Look up there in the sky. You see those five stars there in the milky way? That's Cassiopeia. That is our constellation—ours and our children's. In those stars our fate is hidden. Before they begin to pale, I shall know their secrets.

*Ann.*—You inveterate dreamer! I come to you with a most serious purpose and you begin talking about the stars.

*Hans.*—I know what you came to say. You wanted me to know that it did . . . that it takes a long time for the mother to win over the woman.

*Ann.*—Mother over the woman?

*Hans.*—Exactly; for before you allowed the mother in you to speak, you had to overhear what your one time lover had to say to your sister.

*Ann.*—And he was saying so much, was carrying things so far, that it is a wonder the mother in me, and the sister, had not spoken sooner.

*Hans (Smiling).*—Who knows to what good end all this may not lead! Meanwhile, we, there in the sky . . .

*Ann.*—Oh, please, come down from your sky! Leave your stars up there for a minute and listen to what I have to tell you. If the time were not so precious, if daybreak were not coming on us apace, I should not have shouted this thing out before Julia as I did. What we three know, we must keep a profound secret. My husband must never suspect. . . . For the child's sake. And for that very reason, I ask you to go away from here before those stars of yours begin to fade. You must go at once!

*Hans.*—It is only for that reason that I feel like staying. Surely, I have a right to see him again! My son! To hold him in my arms, to kiss him! Do you hear! My son!

*Ann.*—You kissed him for the last time last night. The poor boy loves you as if he knew . . .

*Hans.*—Last night I acted out of blind instinct, now I must hold him in full certainty. Don't you see how I must feel?

*Ann.*—It is ridiculous to yield to such feelings. I must be the judge of these things, and I have a right to command in this matter. I earned this right by sufferings far greater than any you could have undergone in Siberia. Do you suppose it was such a trifle to become the wife of that man? A man I hated as intensely as I loved you.

*Hans.*—Yet how gamely you went through it!

*Ann.*—Hans, the night you left me . . . I . . . I

became a fallen woman. It was soon after that I realized . . . that I had to act quickly. Not for my own protection—I could have borne anything on my own account—but for the sake of your son.

*Hans.*—Through deceit,—subterfuge . . .

*Ann.*—A bitter, bitter subterfuge! I had to act as if I really loved the man!

*Hans.*—You should have waited. You see, it would have come out all right.

*Ann.*—That's easy advice today. But, Hans, don't you really think in your own heart that I did something stronger, and finer than wait? The honor of your professional dynasty is intact; your name is unsullied; your son will one day succeed to the throne of his fathers in dignity and honor.

*Hans.*—I don't deny . . .

*Ann.*—I acted as I did by compulsion, and if I have sinned, my atonement has been bitter enough to satisfy the most exacting deity. For never in all those years I have ceased to love you! Do you hear, Hans? Never!

*Hans.*—Ann!

*Ann.*—While you were still supposed to be alive, I thought of you constantly; and the better I loved the more I had to hope that you would never return!

*Hans.*—So you are sorry we met again on earth?

*Julia.*—Why will you keep on bruising each other's hearts!

*Ann.*—You are mistaken, Julia. It is not my heart speaking now. Last night, when Hans came in, and flung himself on you like a dragon ready to devour you, I guessed what had happened, and my heart cried out once in bitter anguish. Afterwards, when he beheld his real Ann, his face showed such a shock of disappointment that . . .

*Julia.*—Annie!

*Hans.*—Forgive me, Ann! There was not the least . . .

*Ann (Bracing herself for the lie).*—At that moment, I swear, my heart went out like a weak flame. It will never glow again. (*Putting off his outstretched arms.*) No, Hans! If there is any future life possible for us three, it must be achieved by our breaking every natural human tie woven for us in the past. You must leave your son with me here, and take Julia with you.

*Julia.*—What's that you are saying? Are you going mad?

*Ann.*—What has been written in the stars from the beginning of the world . . .

*Hans.*—Ann, I thank you.

*Julia.*—I can't comprehend what is happening to me!

*Ann.*—I want no thanks, not at this time: but I shall be eternally grateful to you when you are beyond the mountains, far away under those stars there. (*A note of the meadow lark.*) Only hurry! Day is almost here! You must be gone before light!

*Hans (To JULIA).*—Are you hesitating?

*Julia.*—Oh, Mr. Karvan, what am I to do? I cannot believe that you are willing to become my liberator.

*Hans.*—More than that! In time . . . I am hoping that I may be able to make up to you your loss, my dear Mrs. Doctor.

*Julia.*—If you are joking, it is a cruel joke!

*Hans.*—I mean it most seriously. I don't know whether anything I may possess beyond the seas is worthy of you, but I ask you: Will you go with me? Will you be my wife?

*Julia (Brightening, then sad).*—Oh, but you are forgetting one thing! I am not alone . . .

*Hans.*—What else?

*Julia.*—My little one.

*Hans.*—God forbid that I should forget him! Without him my compensation would be incomplete. Having become a father, I shall not leave without a son. You, Julia, shall make up my Ann to me, and your boy, my son . . .

*Ann (As the cock crows).*—For God's love, make haste! Before you get the boy ready . . .

*Julia.*—That's the easiest part of my preparation! (*She runs out right happily. The day is dawning fast.*)

*Hans (To ANN, attempting to embrace her).*—Good bye Ann!

*Ann.*—Not that kind of a good bye! I am afraid of your arms. (*She offers her lips in a long kiss which she herself interrupts.*) No, Hans, don't be cruel. You can't conceal it. Your lips, they cannot tell a lie even in a kiss.

*Hans.*—That kiss has spoken the truth—it was meant for our boy. Kiss him for his uncle . . . a thousand times.

*Johnny (Outside).*—Uncle! Uncle!

*Ann.*—Ah, it's too late!

(*With a joyful cry JOHNNY runs in in his night clothes, leaps into HANS' arms, and throws his arms about his neck.*)

*Hans (Kissing him tenderly).*—My precious boy!

*Ann (To JOHN, who is coming after JOHNNY).*—How could this have happened? I am sure I locked the door.

*John (Coming up hastily).*—That was a smart thing for you to do! He jumped from the veranda into the yard; he could have broken his leg. Johnny! It seemed to me that he limped. (*To HANS.*) You still here? The dew may rust even an old love affair.

*Johnny.*—Are you going to live at our house, uncle? Granny says you have to go away again. I don't want you to go. Do stay, please. Say you will stay.

*Hans.*—No, Johnny, I cannot stay this time. I must go where I came from.

*Johnny.*—Won't you take me with you?

*John.*—You really mean that, Hans?

*Hans (Vainly trying to put JOHNNY off).*—He is hard to

*John.*—So you realize at last . . .

*Hans.*—I realize . . .

*Johnny (Interrupting).*—Please, uncle, wait till I get dressed!

*Ann.*—We might have been spared all this!

*John (With authority).*—Johnny, will you go, or won't you?

*Hans (Firing).*—Let the boy alone! (*Controlling himself.*) He will go of his own accord.

*John.*—If you are anxious as I am to avoid all unpleasant consequences, you have very little time to spare.

*Hans.*—Oh, Johnny is a smart lad, and he sees that it is impossible to take him away from his mother.

*John.*—You know that America is not over here in Bavaria. You must have learned that much in school.

*Ann.*—You wouldn't leave your mother, would you, Johnny?

*Johnny (Quietly crying on HANS' breast).*—Will you send me a revolver, and a tomahawk, and a . . . a calumet?

*Hans.*—You bet your life I'll send them. As soon as ever I get home.

*Johnny.*—But still I'd rather have you stay.

*Ann.*—I foresaw how it would be.

*John.*—If you keep your uncle too long the captain of the guard will come and take him away.

*Johnny (Letting go).*—Because he is a rebel?

*Hans.*—Yes, a rebel, a fugitive, a prisoner, and God knows what more!

*Johnny.*—But you have a revolver. Why should you be afraid?

*Hans.*—Of course, I am not afraid, but it is always better to get along without shooting.

*John.*—It is easy to joke, but if the officer should actually appear, it might be harder to laugh it off.

*Hans.*—You seem more concerned about that than I am.

*John.*—You are fully aware of your danger.

*Ann.*—Mr. Karvan, don't be careless, don't tempt ruin.

*John.*—At least you cannot say that I did not warn you. It was no small number of rebels that the Austrian government turned over to Russia. Please consider that you might find yourself again travelling toward Sakhalin.

*Hans.*—In that case, my suffering would be somewhat eased by the knowledge that I have in my place here such a faithful and worthy beneficiary.

*John.*—Listen Hans! There will be no question about that. I have been thinking about it all night. I have decided that it would be best for me to remain in my present position here for the rest of my life. It is now the one thing or the other: Will you let them take you, or will you go of your own accord?

*Hans.*—Oh, I see your drift. It is not so much my arrest you fear, as the resulting scandal. Last night you promised me a lodging under the Austrian Eagle, and now that you see I am almost willing to go, you are all-fired keen on having me go at once. It must not be said hereabouts that the mayor of Potsedin had a cousin arrested, because he came all the way from America to look after what belonged to him.

*Ann.*—No one could stoop to such a low trick! I hope not even you, John!

*Johnny.*—Oh, dear, you are all quarrelling again!

*John.*—What have I to do with all this? As if I could help it. Already last evening the town was ringing with the news of your return. The authorities will find you without my calling them.

*Hans.*—And just for that I am going to wait now until they come.

*John (Uneasy).*—As you think best.

*Hans.*—I am curious to know how far human cowardice can go.

*John.*—Hans, you suspect me, you are trying to accuse me in your mind of things I am utterly incapable of.

*Andrew (Running in alarmed).*—Mr. Hans, for all the world! Up there at the house is the gendarme with the commissioner! (*Unlocking the gate.*) Hurry out this way before it is too late! This way! We'll be in the woods in ten minutes!

*Ann.*—So it is true!

*Hans (Smiling).*—But my dear Andrew, how should I ever keep up with you? You are in such a violent stride—Besides I have given my word to some one to take her along.

(*JULIA enters carrying JACKIE over her shoulder, asleep. She is dressed for travel, bundle in her hand. The daylight floods her face with a rosy light.*)

*Julia.*—The little fellow will not wake up!

*Hans.*—And here we are.

*John.*—What's that?

*Hans.*—Only this, my lord mayor! Here you behold the American expedition of one Hans Karvan, consisting of three members. This little trio are shaking the dust of their native land off their heels, and are taking the Bavarian flyer at exactly (*Looks at watch*) four-twenty-three. That is, of course, provided our lord commissioner deigns to permit our departure. Here he is. I pray you greet him in your capacity of mayor of Potsedin.

*Commissioner (Entering and saluting).*—I crave pardon, lord mayor for breaking upon you at this unseasonable hour, but official business, you know. It has no bearing on yourself, but since last night you have had a guest . . .

*Julia.*—Good bye, vain dream!

*Hans (Happily).*—Krachmer! Well, well, old comrade, don't you know me?

*Commissioner.*—I know Mr. Karvan, but I regret that my official duty. . . .

*Hans.*—Inasmuch as you come in the name of the law, I beg pardon for presuming on your former friendship, and since I am beyond the big pond also an officer of the law, I sympathize with you in the discharge of your duty. I beg you to glance at my papers.

*John.*—Do your duty, commissioner.

*Commissioner (Reading).*—All English! Aha! Here is something from the consul, and from the embassy. (*Handing papers back.*) That puts a different complexion on the whole affair. (*Saluting.*) Mr. Karvan is travelling as a minister plenipotentary of the United States of America.

*John.*—And his military obligations? They are also no doubt in the best of condition?

*Commissioner.*—We see there a clause from Vienna which has effected an exchange with America,—a sort of general amnesty. Yes, everything is in the best of condition. I take my leave, Mr. Karvan, and I wish you a happy journey.

*(Exit.)*

*Hans.*—I congratulate you, cousin, on your punctilliousness. How happy you seem over my escape from military duty! Are you glad that my affairs are in such good order?

*John.*—There is something here that is not in such good order but I think I am myself competent to put them so.

*Hans.*—What may that be?

*John.*—What is this about Julia? She will go with you, will she?

*Hans.*—We sort of mentioned it to each other didn't we, Julia?

*Julia.*—We agreed since midnight.

*John.*—But as her guardian, surely I ought to have something to say in the matter?

*Hans.*—I am afraid the honor of the ward is not entirely safe with the guardian in this particular case.

*Ann.*—Was that necessary?

*John.*—Even if I permitted it as guardian, I cannot as mayor, just this way.

*Hans.*—What way? As bride and groom? You have such a fine conscience, John! We shall remove this objection at once. *(To JULIA.)* Come! *(He leads her into the death chamber.)* There lies one to whom we owe something.

*John (To ANN).*—So this is what you have been cooking up since last night, is it?

*Ann.*—You may thank your stars that we did!

*John.*—I almost had him! If he had not had that cursed pass!

*Ann.*—Shame on you! You cannot control your evil spirit even to my face. It is lucky for you, for me, for all of us that he is taking Julia with him. It would have been to his advantage to take over your business and marry her here.

*John.*—Viper!

*Ann.*—Julia is your guardian angel. She has taken a curse off this house.

*Johnny (Looking through window into the lodge).*—Mamma,



auntie and uncle are kneeling at the foot of the bed, and auntie is crying.

*Ann (Fiercely).*—Come down from there! (*Pulls him down.*)

*John.*—Why so reasonable! As if he could help it. You have less control than I.

*Ann.*—If you could only guess how far from the thing you think, my thoughts were! You darling boy! (*Clasps him passionately.*) You are all I ever think of.

*John.*—There you go, and a moment ago you could have torn him limb from limb. Come to me Johnny.

*Ann.*—I shan't hurt him. But you just please remember that you and I don't count. It is only his welfare I am living for. And for God's sake don't goad that fellow in there. He may change his mind and then where would you be?

*John.*—He may ask for payment yet.

(*HANS and JULIA come back. He is leading JULIA and carrying JACKIE. His eyes are on JOHNNY in his mother's arms.*)

*Hans.*—Now we are man and wife. We have solemnized our union before him who looks down upon us from the eternal abiding place. Are you satisfied? Now I have I your august permission to carry off your ward? All right. Silence gives consent, and I thank you. Here is my hand at parting, though I had not thought to offer it—farewell! Rule as mayor and physician here in Potsedin for a hundred years; and above all, take good care of your son. He is the heir to the estate and the preserver of the name and fame of Karvan on the store front at the sign of the golden eagle. Now let's hurry. In another minute it will be too late, Andrew.

*Andrew (Entering).*—At your service, my lord.

*Hans.*—Ask the apothecary if you can accompany us to the station.

*Andrew.*—Will not Mr. Hans stay for the funeral? If I may make so bold as to ask.

*Hans.*—In three days I must be on the sea. When you are taking father to the grave, I shall be boarding the ship. It is necessary that I go now—necessary for us who go as well as for those who stay.

*Johnny.*—At least you might hear my best wishes for your wedding before you go.

*Hans.*—All right! If they are not too long. Let her go!

*Johnny.*—My dearest daddy . . .

*Hans (Laughing).*—Now you've fixed it.

*Johnny (Correcting).*—My dearest uncle . . .

*Hans.*—That's more like it, you precious boy.

*Johnny.*—I knew the wish by heart, but I just forgot.

*Hans.*—I accept your wish with all my heart before you recite it, my dear little fellow. (*Kisses him.*)

*Ann (Anxious).*—If you intend to catch that train, you'd better go.

*Hans.*—You are right, by all that's sacred. (*To JULIA.*) Cheer up! We want a bright and sunny face for this journey. Be happy—all of you. (*To ANN, as if to kiss her, but seeing her distress, kisses her hand instead.*) And you . . . (*To JOHNNY.*) I am not saying that we shall not see each other again, Johnny. Now up, and off we go! (*Once more he steps to the window and looks at the body.*) Andrew, just throw three clods on the box for me. You will be my representative at the funeral. If I stay another moment I shall smother. (*Out through the wicket.*)

*Ann (To JULIA).*—Good bye, my Julia, my little sister.

(*All but JOHN speed the parting guests beyond the gate. He remains standing in the full light of the risen sun.*)

*Hans (Already beyond the gate).*—A brief St. John's Eve have I spent in my father's house. What I seemed to have lost last night, I have found again this morning. Between the rising and setting sun . . . Now westward, Ho! Good bye, Potsedin! (*Exit HANS, JULIA, ANDREW, and JACKIE.*)

(*ANN and JOHNNY stands at the gate waving a long good bye.*)

*Johnny (Running to JOHN and throwing his arms around his neck).*—Me he wouldn't, but that kid he takes with him!

*John (Folding him tenderly).*—Never mind, sonny.

(*ANN comes back slowly, and lays her hand on JOHN's head gently. Gratefully surprised, he catches her hand and presses it to his lips.*)

CURTAIN

# THE PLAYS OF OSKAR KOKOSCHKA

BY BARRETT H. CLARK

"My dear man, I insist on your making me beautiful. If I were looking for character, I should have gone to Kokoschka!" The speaker is the heroine in a recent German play, and Kokoschka is the most distinguished of the young German painters. The audiences that attend this play, composed for the most part of peace profiteers, were the sort of people who would boast among their friends of owning a Kokoschka, but could not be induced to have the artist paint *their* portraits. If you want character you will have to go to Kokoschka, only the character he is likely to give you is what you get from a consultation with Dr. Freud: the painter psychoanalyses with a vengeance. To him beauty is only skin-deep and the flesh a silly delusion, surfaces are non-existent and the transitory charm of what we ordinary human beings call "looks," mean nothing to this painter of souls.

His latest biographer tells us that Kokoschka never paints a portrait unless the sitter is "near to him." To the superficial observer, therefore, Kokoschka would seem to have a dangerous circle of friends; he certainly cannot be accused of flattering his subjects.

It is interesting to learn that the most serious of the young Germans, the man who is most deeply impregnated with a sense of the tragedy of human existence and the best equipped to express it, took to painting almost by accident. Kokoschka entered an art school in Vienna at a very early age for the sufficient reason that there was at the time no other visible means of enabling him to pursue what he thought was his life's work: experimental chemistry was the dream of his life. His training at the academy made it possible for him find work as a private teacher of drawing, an employment which was even during the short time it lasted, by no means congenial. Nor was the period that followed this first apprenticeship, for we are told that it was not until recent years that the artist found in his work a satisfactory mode of expression, and made of it the principal medium for the interpretation of the promptings of his mind and soul.

Kokoschka is today thirty-six. He need hardly complain of neglect: his pictures hang in the largest modern art galleries of

Germany and Austria, and in most of the notable private collections; there appears to be little doubt of his pre-eminence in contemporary German art, and his position has been officially consecrated by the age-honored and eminently respectable title of Professor. In spite of which, he continues to excite discussion and to paint presentable canvases.

The restless spirit of the man has never found complete satisfaction in painting and drawing: he is architect, poet, and dramatist, as well. It is said that his first impression of life was a realisation of the tragedy of death. He has never altogether succeeded in emerging from under the shadow of his morbid sensibility, which has affected every product of his creation. It is but natural, therefore, that the futility of human endeavor should have become an integral part of his philosophy. He has not, however, adopted a militant attitude against fate: he considers it his business simply to portray what he sees, to interpret what he feels. His will to express is as deep-rooted as his will to live, for in spite of an extraordinarily over-developed pessimism, he is still young enough to exult in life. In his portraits he has cast aside the ingratiatingly commonplace in order to emphasize the everlasting, and whether or not he has succeeded, it must be borne in mind that his conception of beauty is based upon an almost scientific reading of truth. His best portraits are not portraits at all, they are the terrifying reflections of a tortured soul, macabre variations on a single theme.

His designs for the Breslau Crematorium are *Dances of Death*, much in the spirit of the frescoes at the Campo Santo in Pisa: it is not his business, he would say, to fashion consoling lies about the hideous thing called death. The decomposition of the body is a splendid and stirring symbol of the decomposition of the soul.

Portraits and crematoriums are all very well in their way, but Kokoschka is still not satisfied: he must write plays as well. His four dramas have aroused more heated discussion in Germany than his most daring experiments in portrait-painting. They have been savagely attacked as filthy and absurd, and no less extravagantly hailed as the sublime effusions of a deathless poet and prophet; sober critics have declared them a new gospel for a new order of existence, and other sober critics have frankly confessed that they cannot make head or tail of them.

What business, ask his enemies, has this artist within the sacred precincts of the theatre? A fine painter, of course, but

no dramatist. His business in the theatre, however, is a matter of considerable importance. Whether he knows it or not, Kokoschka belongs to the group of young German dramatists who aim at the presentation on the stage of the human soul bereft, so far as possible, of the accidental externals which have too long constituted the chief baggage of successful professional playwrights. The Kaisers, the Hasenclevers, the Bronnens and Brechts and Unruhs, are attempting, in various ways, to compress within the dramatic form the multifarious savagery of life in all its manifestations. In order to effect this compression they believe it necessary to eliminate from their characters what is most recognisably human, stripping them to the soul, as it were, in order that the soul may appear in all its elemental simplicity. These denuded personages are summary syntheses of characteristics devoid of any very close resemblance to ordinary beings. Scenery, costumes, language, action—all tend to become symbolic, the individual losing his identity because he no longer counts in our non-individualistic world: he becomes typical, a scientifically perfect specimen, the embodiment of passion, an idea, an instinct.

Like most of his contemporaries, Kokoschka is not a professional playwright. He produces nothing that is not the result of a spiritual impulse; he is almost painfully sincere. His plays, like his paintings, appear to have been wrung from him.

*Murderers, Hope of Women* has written at the age of nineteen. In this the earliest of his dramas, the poet has achieved a maximum of effect with a minimum expenditure of energy. The text, including elaborate stage-directions, is just over ten pages, but within that narrow frame is shadowed forth the eternal drama of sex. This compact little drama relates the story of man the conqueror, caught in the snares of woman the seductress, and believing for one brief moment that he has effectually overcome his natural enemy. But the struggle is at most only half won. "I have caught you," says the woman, "and you hold me fast."

A succession of short scenes, a few dialogues in free verse interspersed with quick strange pantomimic gestures, and the play is over. Dialogue is hardly the word for these hysterical outcries, for they are rather the passionate recitals of tortured beings spit forth into the void. The play leaves one in some perplexity: words have been spoken or chanted or shrieked, quick sharp, contrasts made between scene and scene, between character and character, strange fantastic figures have performed antic motions,

all without apparent rhyme or reason. It seems as though the dramatist had not troubled to digest his ideas and arrange his plot; the material appears to have been too heavy for the slender vehicle intended to carry it. But a careful examination of the text will show that the poet has over-refined, that he has so selected and condensed and arranged that the drama is too highly conventionalised, too compact for immediate understanding. He had so much to convey that he is, seemingly, unwilling to burden the spectator with anything but a synthetic syllabus of the whole. In striving to exhibit the antagonism between the eternally masculine and the eternally feminine, he has overstepped the mark, and the result is little more than a briefly dramatised Strindbergian maxim.

Four years later came *The Burning Briarbush*. This, like the earlier piece, was not produced until after the war. The "Young Germany" movement found in this play and in *Job* a call to arms, though it is open to question whether the most enthusiastic members of that revolutionary organisation were able to grasp the poet's destructive doctrine in its entirety. If they had they would perhaps have realised that their prophet was leading them not to spiritual freedom, but into the dark paths of uncertainty and pessimism.

This second play is more elaborately developed than the first. The arbitrary methods employed in *Murderers, Hope of Women* are here discarded for the more malleable processes of a mature artist. As in all the plays, we have here a sharply defined antagonism between the feminine nature and the masculine.

In *The Burning Briarbush*, woman is a shadowy creature striving to "realise herself" through man, a familiar Strindberg figure, destructive and parasitical. She perceives that in her efforts to rise to the spiritual level of man and flatter his pretensions to moral pre-eminence, she tends to lose her power over him: in becoming like him she must needs relinquish her most effective weapon against him: the sex-appeal. In order therefore to triumph, she abandons her acquired spiritual qualities and becomes an animal. Man, at once seeing an opportunity to act the redeemer, and drunk with his own splendid idealism, stoops to her level in order to "save" the woman. The match is an unequal one and woman easily overcomes the fatuous male.

The struggle of the sexes, according to the gospel of Kokoschka, is primarily a struggle with one's self. The ebb and flow of spiritual life is marked by aspirations toward a seem-

ingly impossible goal, and reversions toward animality, always symbolised by woman.

*Job* is the most significant of the poet's plays. It was written the same year as *The Burning Briarbush*. This diabolical farce, a curious composite of burlesque and tragedy, marks the culminating point of Kokoschka's philosophy of life. In the few brief pages of the text he has succeeded in revealing the secret recesses of the soul of man seeking for light and love. Job's quest for truth is a bitter comedy played in a mad phantasmagoria, accompanied by the dancing fires of hell.

Once again man's soul is put to the test of woman's sensuality: "You have placed your wife too high in heaven, And only when she falls can you see her on the ground."

And once again man is seen in the foolish role of idealist. The ruthless yet ingratiating casuist, Herr Kautschukmann, becomes the lover of Job's wife Anima, and between the two Job is brought to a ridiculously tragic end. Anima leads both men by the nose, while the parrot (has this bird ever had a *speaking* part in any other play?) comments, chorus-wise, on the action of the farce.

Anima is portrayed with rather more care than Kokoschka usually employs on his personages; the full extent of her destructive selfishness cannot be shown with a few strokes of the pen. In *Job* the woman is exhibited first as a shallow creature attempting to realise herself now through her husband and now through the unscrupulous Kautschukmann. The Biblical Job, compared with this twentieth century product, was comparatively happy: he at least knew that what he suffered was an affair between him and God. The world was simpler in the good old days.

*Orpheus and Eurydice*, written in 1918, is the longest and least successful of the plays. It is remarkable chiefly for the serenity of its atmosphere. It is, like the preceding works, a dramatic embodiment of the struggle of the sexes, though it is lacking in the tragic bitterness of *The Burning Briarbush* and *Job*. But the long speeches, the undramatic action, and the absence of striking incident, have all contributed to prevent its success on the stage.

Kokoschka has striven to create in drama form precisely what he has created on canvas, a spectacle of the essence of life as he sees and feels it. He has not been altogether successful. To begin with, he has never realised the limitations of the stage. In one way this is not a very serious matter, for Kokoschka is the sort of man for whom arbitrary limitations do not exist; where he

fails is in using the drama as a medium for a highly personal type of philosophy, and only too often has he allowed a genuinely theatrical scene to be ruined, simply because he wished to speak in his own person, instead of letting his situation speak for itself.

But in spite of his failure to use the drama for purely dramatic purposes he has learned that as an art form it can be made to express certain elemental truths about human nature that until now have had no place in the theatre. The world of today is not so simple an affair as it seemed to be only a few years ago: sensitive souls like Koskoschka are not content to reproduce superficialities or repeat the optimistic commonplaces of their predecessors; they will dissect the human animal and make a show of him, stripping him bare of pretence and hypocrisy. The spectacle is not a pretty one, and we turn aside, perhaps to dream of fairer men and women and happier times. You are at liberty to do that if you please, Koskoschka seems to say, but if you do, you are out of place in the modern world.

## BEYOND

BY A. H. WARE

If I believed that you were living on  
In some sweet paradise remote from death,  
And that between us there were but a breath,  
How swift I'd follow you where you are gone!  
Fools say they live who die: the wise say naught.  
I hope, despairing. Endless is my thought.  
No voice by night to break the watch I keep!  
No hand to wake me from my bitter sleep!  
If you are living, wherefore are you dumb?  
Why should I suffer when you feel no pain?  
Call me but once, and straightway will I come,  
Leaping the grave to feel your kiss again.



# GIOVANNI ALFREDO CESAREO, THE SICILIAN POET

BY ANNA BENEDETTI

*Io nacqui dove il ciel ride sereno  
Sul'isola felice, occhio de' mari,  
Dove fervendo mescono  
Le lor grida a'mattini umidi e chiari  
Il molle Jonio e il fumido Tierreno.*

G. A. Cesaro, "Poesie-Sicilian"

Giovanni Alfredo Cesareo comes of an ancient noble family of Spanish descent. He was born at Messina on the 24th of January, 1861, and has been these twenty-five years a professor of Italian literature in the University of Palermo. A full crop of silver grey hair; dark, penetrating, yet smiling eyes, shining beneath dark bushy eyebrows; a firm chin under curved lips; a youthful characteristic gait, enhanced by sober elegance of dress;—there goes the outward man. A clear resounding voice, now lowered to mellow undertones, now shrilling and sharp, at the service of a witty, outspoken mind; there goes the professor, whose Keatsian theory on creative art has, at last, rid modern Italy of the traditional error of judging Italian art through the spectacles of German critics. Professor Cesareo asserts that truth is not the reality of the phenomenon, as it may be reconstructed in its absoluteness by the philosopher and the scientist, but rather that beauty which is ideal truth, visible only to the unfettered poet, to whom it is given to see through space and time. In this we have a glimpse of the critic.—Now to Cesareo, the poet.

All of his poems, published hitherto, are included in the two volumes edited by Zanichelli, entitled respectively *Poesie* and *I Canti di Pan*. The source of Cesareo's poetry is life, and so striking appears its dramatic rendering, that we cannot help feeling that we are unfolding a true tale of human life and suffering.

Love is one of the themes of Cesareo's poetry; intense love, youthful passion, blind to everything else but to the beauty of the woman beloved.

It is sad to feel in one's heart the daily falling of the leaves of love as if it were a rose-bush letting its light petals go at the blowing of the first wintry gale.

Am I deluded? What of that? but I love! Am I deceived? Well!  
 but I love!  
 I love the fresh joyful smile, which spreads upon your mobile face, as  
 does the breeze upon the waves.\*

It is right to state at once that, in spite of the voluptuousness of some of these poems, we have such tenderness and masterly power of dealing with human frailty, such depth of emotion, as to raise them far above the level of erotic songs. With love goes sorrow, sorrow lying too deep for tears, now finding its way out of the proud, sad heart, with a mocking laugh, then melting softly away to be mingled with the unceasing melancholy of the Autumnal tide, washing the shore with monotonous, mournful motion.

Dimly a bell in the great silence moans like a human voice; clear, woeful, measured, the knell breaks through the Autumnal night. Not a leaf breathes in the wood of the dead roses, but from every threshold of heaven the stars eagerly crowd to peep and spy. At the unknown call this poor heart of mine, that no one consoles any more, trembles for tender pity, and I feel choked by the sweet emotion.†

Cesareo's elegiac power, the true poetry of sorrow, is to be found in *Pianto fraterno*, written in memory of his brother Placidus, who died in the earthquake of Messina, 1908, when the city was shaken by the unknown power of the deep, and her people were buried by thousands under the overwhelming ruins. In *Glorologi di Messina*, the poet finds in the fact that many of the clock-towers of the city remained upright over the wreck as weird, spectral witnesses to the desolation around, an image of death and eternity.

Was there a time, in which these clocks marked another hour than this? The lurid hands are still stretched on the dial, pointing for ever and everywhere to the same hour. Now and again, in the direful silence, there is almost the echo of a broken sigh! This is the hour, this one! And from this hour we kept motionless and silent forever!‡

*Suspiria de Profundis* is an elegy in which the father mourns for his nineteen-year old son who, succumbing to the hard toil of a soldier's life, missed the glory of death on the field of battle.

Not in the trenches did he fall shaken by the clatter of the fiery grape-shot, the smoke of which is white; or at the head of his squad, climbing

\*G. A. Cesareo—*I Canti di Pan*. Page 58.

†G. A. Cesareo—*I—Canti di Pan*, Page 68.

‡G. A. Cesareo, *I Canti di Pan*, Page 179.

silent and swift to the disputed hill, whence the foe, volleying, dislodges. He missed his fortune, but not the pure faith, shining in his bright, clear eyes, and not the dauntless, unfailing will.\*

The stormy youth of our poet, his happy fatherhood, with none yet missing from his household, his patriotism, the mourning for the dead, the soaring of the unfettered soul, made free by sorrow and by active sympathy for human suffering and crowned by new faith and hope, all are elements compounded in an harmonious whole in the work of this great poet. Having learned the truth that only he who has known *how to suffer and be strong* is called to dry the tears in other people's eyes, Cesareo breaks into the song of consolation.

They live on! Autumn will boast again of some late rose upon the widowed bush, some fleeting dawn will furrow the sky with its lively carols. (*Quale he fuggitiva aurora sochera il cielo con suoi trilli gai*). May the remaining life, falling to your lot, be useful unto others! The old, rugged elm will grow green anew, when crowned by leafy vine-branches.  
Nothing of what is done is lost!†

It has been said that a poet's heart is like the sensitive hollow shell lying on the sea-shore, answering to every call of the waves. It is this delicate responsiveness ever perceptible but never unanalyzable, which we feel in the poems collected under the title *Breviari d'Amore*.

*La Belfiore* is the tragedy of a life. Lorenzo Cordova us a sculptor, passionately fond both of his art and of the beautiful Veronica Belfiore, a poor swallow with a broken wing, whom he had saved from a life of shame.

O dear home of ours! O solitary shelter guarded by Love and Art!

Exclaims Lorenzo, when remembering the bliss he has forever lost. Little by little, the woman had seemed to find and give happiness to her great and loving friend, but the fiend lurked in the shade. She betrayed Lorenzo and he killed her. Cordova speaks before his judges:—

I was Lorenzo Cordova, a sculptor, and with my own hands I killed the unhappy woman, who was called Veronica Belfiore.

The sadness of that *was* is thrilling. We feel at once that we are

\*G. A. Cesareo, *I Canti di Pan*, Page 147.

†G. A. Cesareo, *I Canti di Pan*, Page 208.

not before an ordinary crime, prompted by a wild passion. The moral values are reversed; the standpoint is actually shifted, and the wronged one is not the dead, but the living, who has suffered through this crime more than the sinful woman, whose delicate breast has been torn by the fatal blow. The woe-stricken man has related with tender words his meeting with the woman, their life in common, his hopes, her sin, the pardon that followed her first remorseful coming back, and then again her debasing folly and his own crime.

She was there with her glassy eyes fixed upon me, mine, all mine, faithful to me in the everlasting immobility of death. By her bed-side I lit two candles, then I sat on the edge of her bed, near her, and I spoke long of the cruel life, of her kisses which made me so proud, alas, of this mad love of mine, and I wet her dear visage with my tears. Then I vowed, for that rifted sweet heart of hers, that I would live only for her, feeding on my sorrow. Nor on the scaffold should you see me, O judges, for I would have punished myself with my own hands, if it were not that never have I felt my whole being, from its very roots more desperately her own than now; while in the atoning sleeplessness of the prison, she appears to me, tall in the shadow, but more beautiful and more melancholy, with few tears; a new being altogether; while with composed motion, she gives me to kiss the red rose under her breast.\*

Cesareo's love for solitude and quietness is one of the striking notes we can detect throughout his poems; but the solitude he loves is not the absence of human beings, still life, silence, but the haunting mystery of the unknown which reveals itself to our sensibility, when we are most alone, and therefore in closer contact with our inner self, while our eyes, blind to the outward world, are keenly looking within.

*Lo Specchio* illustrates this introspective mood. An old looking-glass hangs from the partition wall of a room. The greenish, blemished glass reflects dimly the surrounding objects, and seems a wide watery eye, open on a world unknown. High silence is everywhere.

What is there lurking behind, and gazing at me? Waning phantoms glide, as light as wings on the embossed frame. Am I dreaming, or in unnatural silence do I hear the heaving of a sigh?†

Phantoms seem to walk about, and, mingling shadowy hands with shadowy hands, they break through the seeming reality of the dream. The sensation has been transformed into feeling; the

\*G. A. Cesareo, *Poesie*, Page 349.

†G. A. Cesareo, *Poesie*, Page 300.

feeling into image, and one sees through the eye of the poet the crowding visions of the past, hidden in every human breast.

Cesareo has also written drama. In his *Francesca da Rimini*, the tragedy of love, which Dante has shrined in beauty, the construction is good, the characters are strongly delineated, but, though our poet possesses the dramatic instinct, he seems to lack in this tragedy, (which belongs to the first period of his literary activity) the practical craft of the writer for the stage. He has mastered this difficulty in the Sicilian plays he wrote of late, which have been performed with great success and are true representations of the passionate soul of the Sicilian people, of their gallant loves, their hates, their revenges and their devotion to old customs and traditions.

The faultless technique of his verse, the originality and fascination of the themes, the mysterious spell cast upon everything by the Oriental bend of his mind, the magical charm of nature, alive with the dreams of ancient life and lore, even the fling of defiance which adds to the intense, sheer force of his personality, make of GIOVANNI ALFREDO CESAREO one of the best poets of modern Italy.

## THE FIRST STAR

BY RUTH E. HOPKINS

The first star  
Is a diamond-pointed dagger;  
It slits the cool grey silk of evening,  
That wraps me like a dress;  
It pricks my bosom's skin  
With the clear point of its coming;  
It plunges deeper—  
Stabbing my heart to silence  
With its singing.

# THE TEST

BY PIERRE CHAMBLAIN DE MARIVAUD

*Translated from the French by Willis K. Jones*

*Few would consider among modern playwrights a man born in 1688, but Pierre Chamblain de Marivaux ought certainly to have this distinction. His comedies are produced today in France, not because they are those often dull things called "classics," but because the modern French theatre-goer enjoys them even more than did the original audiences who saw in them only a pleasing escape from the persistent imitations of Molière.*

*The 18th century in France was a period of comedy. LeSage was introducing his newly-rich financiers, Beaumarchais was poking witty fun at contemporary society, and a half dozen others were making names for themselves. But of all the dramatists of the period, only Marivaux created a style so essentially his own that it needed Voltaire's coinage of the word "Marivaudage" to describe it. His sphere is love—not the Racine-like psychological treatises, but a simple, sincere love between young people that charms in spite of its affected outpourings, and that has proved a model for such dramatists as de Vigny and de Musset, who fell just short of their master's genius for creating humorous characters. Many another ambitious playwright has tried to reproduce Marivaux's style, only to find the result pitiful drivel.*

*Not alone as a writer of sparkling comedies is Marivaux known. As an essayist, he published a series of Spectator papers. As a novelist, he gave proof in his two unfinished books of ability even surpassing, according to some authorities, his skill in the drama. So high was his position in the world of letters that in 1743 he was made a member of the French Academy where for the remaining twenty years of his life he exerted his influence. And today no study of the high points of French Literature is complete without a detailed examination of the man and his writing.*

*"L'Épreuve" (The Test) was first played on Nov. 19, 1740 by the Italian Troupe which had only recently been recalled by the Regent after their expulsion from France by Louis XIV. It is one of the last of the thirty-two plays that Marivaux wrote, and one of the six that are in the permanent repertoire of the nationally endowed theatres, LaComédie Française and L'Odéon, where they are per-*

*formed several times each year, proving more popular now than when they were first written, and keeping the name of Marivaux ever before the French nation. As M. Deschamps well said, "He counted naively on posterity which indeed has done him justice."*

## CAST OF CHARACTERS

MADAME ARGANTE

ANGELIQUE, *her daughter*

LISETTE, *a servant*

LUCIDOR, *in love with Angelique*

FRONTAIN, *Lucidor's valet*

BLAISE, *a young farmer of the village*

*The action takes place in the country home of LUCIDOR, a short distance from Paris.*

## SCENE I

LUCIDOR, *and FRONTAIN dressed in his master's riding habit and boots*

*Lucidor.*—Let's come in here. You've just arrived?

*Frontain.*—Yes, I stopped at the first hotel I came to and asked them the way to the chateau following the directions you wrote me, and here I am dressed the way you said. What do you think of my appearance? (*He turns around.*) Could you recognize your valet? But don't you think my air is a bit too gallant?

*Lucidor.*—You are just the way I want. Did anyone see you as you came in?

*Frontain.*—I didn't see anybody except a youngster in the garden. And then you turned up. And since I'm here, what do you want to do with me and all my elegance?

*Lucidor.*—To suggest you as a husband for a very pleasant girl.

*Frontain.*—Is that so? Well, sir, I'm afraid you're the one that's full of pleasantries.

*Lucidor.*—What? Oh, no, you're mistaken. This is a serious business for me.

*Frontain.*—Well, in that case I needn't be afraid of anything.

*Lucidor.*—You know that I came here nearly two months ago to look over this estate which my agent bought for me. I found in the chateau a certain Mrs. Argante who is the caretaker,

a country woman of moderate means. This good lady has a daughter who quite fascinates me and it is for her that I wish to suggest you as a husband.

*Frontain (Laughing).*—The girl you love! Your confidence in me is charming. There will be three of us, then. You treat this affair like a game of piquet.

*Lucidor.*—Don't make any mistake, I mean to marry her myself.

*Frontain.*—Yes, I understand. After I have married her.

*Lucidor.*—Won't you let me explain? I'm going to introduce you as a rich friend of mine to see if she loves me enough to refuse you.

*Frontain.*—Oh, that's another story; and that being so, there's something that worries me, too.

*Lucidor.*—What's that?

*Frontain.*—As I was passing through the village, near the hotel I saw a girl who stood on a doorstep talking. I think she didn't see me. She looks like a certain Lisette whom I knew in Paris four or five years ago, while she was working for a lady whom my master often visited. I didn't see her more than two or three times, but since she was good-looking, I used to flirt with her every time I had a chance, and a girl never forgets a thing like that.

*Lucidor.*—You're right. There is a village girl at Mrs. Argante's house by that name who did spend some time in Paris with a country lady.

*Frontain.*—My soul, sir, that little flirt will remember me! There are certain things about men that one never forgets.

*Lucidor.*—The only thing I know of to do is to bluff it through and persuade her that she is mistaken.

*Frontain.*—When it comes to bluffing, I'm right there.

*Lucidor.*—Aren't there any men who look enough like you to cause a mistake?

*Frontain.*—Let it go. I'll be my own double, that's all. But will you let me say something?

*Lucidor.*—Go ahead.

*Frontain.*—Even though you are in the prime of life, well educated, and intelligent, it seems to me that your plan is a bit childish.

*Lucidor (Angrily).*—How's that?

*Frontain.*—Just a minute! You are the son of a rich merchant who has left you more than a hundred thousand dollars income, and you can well claim to move in the best society.



Ought you really to marry this girl you mention? For one as rich as you, it seems to me that you could do better.

*Lucidor.*—Keep quiet, you don't know what you're talking about. It's true that Angelique is only the daughter of a simple country farmer, but by birth she is as good as I am. Besides, I'm not in favor of these high society marriages. She is so charming in every way and I see in her, despite her youth, such honor and virtue, and she has so noble a character that, if she loves me as I think she does, I'll never love anyone but her.

*Frontain.*—What's that: if she loves you? Isn't that already decided?

*Lucidor.*—No, there has never been a word of love spoken between us. I have never told her I loved her, but my every action has proved it, and each gesture she makes is an expression of most tender and sincere thoughts. Three days after I arrived I became sick, rather dangerously ill. Then I saw how uneasy she became, alarmed, more changed than I was. And at times when her mother could not see her, I noticed tears running down her cheeks. And after I got well, things went on the same way. I began to love her and she loved me, too, without confessing it, but yet without trying to keep it a secret from me. Her simple, honest, and pure heart knows no other way.

*Frontain.*—Then why didn't you, who knows more about love than she, put in a word of love first? It wouldn't hurt anything.

*Lucidor.*—The time for that hasn't come yet. Though I am sure of her love, I have a right to know whether it is I or my money that she loves. That is what I shall discover by the test I'm going to make. I can still consider what is between us as love, and there is where I have an advantage.

*Frontain.*—That's all very well, but I wish you would leave me out of it.

*Lucidor.*—Why?

*Frontain.*—Why? Put yourself in this girl's place and open your eyes and you'll see why. It's a hundred to one chance that I succeed.

*Lucidor.*—Nonsense! If you succeed, I'll let the world know that you are only a valet. Did you bring the jewels?

*Frontain (Fumbling in his pocket).*—Yes, they are all here.

*Lucidor.*—Since no one saw you come in, you had better go before whoever it is I see in the garden comes. Get yourself fixed up and don't return for an hour or two.

*Frontain.*—Well, if you play in bad luck, remember I warned you. (*He leaves.*)

## SCENE II

LUCIDOR, and BLAISE *who enters humbly, dressed like a rich farmer.*

*Lucidor.*—He is coming toward me. He seems to have something to tell me.

*Blaise.*—How d'ye do, sir? Well, how're things going? Ye're looking good today.

*Lucidor.*—Yes, I'm feeling well enough, *Squire\** Blaise.

*Blaise.*—It seems to me your sick spell has done ye good. Ye look s' ruddy an' rugged. I'm glad to see it, sir.

*Lucidor.*—Much obliged for that.

*Blaise.*—Ye know, I always like to see good men in good health. Health is desirable, especially yours which is more desirable than any other.

*Lucidor.*—You're right in being interested in me; I should like to do something for you some time.

*Blaise.*—Well now, I'm glad o' that, fer I'd jist come t'ask a favor.

*Lucidor.*—Let's hear it.

*Blaise.*—Well, ye know, sir, I'm a right frequent caller on Mrs. Argante and her daughter. Angelique's a sweet girl, to say the least.

*Lucidor.*—She certainly is.

*Blaise (Laughing).*—Ha, ha, ha! The fact is, if it's all the same to you, I'd like to marry her sweetness.

*Lucidor.*—You mean that you love Angelique?

*Blaise.*—Aye, th' critter has me going. When I'm around her I lose what little sense I got. Come daytime, I think of her, an' at night I dream about her. I got to cure it somehow, so I come here to see you about it whether because of the honor an' respect they has fer ye (*savin' yer honor,*) if it wouldn't bother ye any, you'd speak a couple of words to her mother fer me, 'cause I need her help.

*Lucidor.*—As I understand it, you want me to ask Mrs. Argante to let you marry her daughter. But how about Angelique? Does she love you?

*Blaise.*—Does she! Every time I talk to her about it, she

\*The French *maitre* means an independent Farmer. The Translation "Squire" is used in The New England sense, as "Colonel" is used in the South.

laughs right out loud, and leaves me standing there. That's a good sign, isn't it?

*Lucidor.*—Neither good nor bad; but anyway, since I know Mrs. Argante a little better than you, and you, the son of a farmer yourself, are the owner of quite a bit of land—

*Blaise.*—An' 'cause I'm still a young feller, only about thirty, of a frolicsome nature, a regular Robin Goodfellow—

*Lucidor.*—It could be arranged except for one difficulty.

*Blaise.*—Which one?

*Lucidor.*—In return for the care that Mrs. Argante and her family gave me during my illness, I had intended to arrange for her to marry a rich young man who is to come here soon on a visit, and who wants to marry a country girl of good family, without worrying how much money she has.

*Blaise.*—The devil ye say! Then ye've done me a dirty trick with yer arrangements, Mr. Lucidor. Ye've been mean an' underhanded and trait'rous. But I s'pose it's all right. Only I'm as much yer neighbor as anyone else, so don't go helpin' the one against the other. And to think that I was afraid you was goin' to die, an' came twenty times to ask "How is he?" or "How isn't he?" An' when you was terrible sick an' I brought the doctor twice to bleed ye, an' he's my own cousin, too, as you know, my first cousin. My mother is his aunt, an' an' darn it! It ain't the right thing to do.

*Lucidor.*—Your relationship to him had nothing to do with any obligation I have toward you.

*Blaise.*—Without countin' them five thousand francs that y've took from me like it was a cent, an' I'd ha' got 'em by marryin' her.

*Lucidor.*—Don't get excited. Is that all you want? Why, I'll give you twelve thousand to marry someone else and to make up for the troubles I've made.

*Blaise.*—What? Twelve thousand francs in hard cash?

*Lucidor.*—Yes, I promise it to you, and you won't need to give up thinking of marrying Angelique. Instead I insist that you make your request to Mrs. Argante.—I insist, do you understand?—because if she is fond of you, I should be very sorry to deprive her of a man whom she loves.

*Blaise (Rubbing his eyes in surprise).*—But—but, he talks like a prince. Twelve thousand francs! I feel weak. I'll never have such luck again. Well sir, I kneel before you, because you're nothing more nor less than a prodigy.

*Lucidor.*—It's not necessary. No more compliments if you please.

*Blaise.*—After I've been so rude, so brutal. But tell me, king that yeh are, if it happened that Angelique should love me, 'd I get the girl an' the twelve thousand, to onct?

*Lucidor.*—That's not the idea. Listen to me: I want you, as I said, to propose to Angelique, without considering any man I'm going to suggest. If she accepts you, since I have done nothing to hurt your love, I give you nothing. If she refuses you, you get the money.

*Blaise (Quickly).*—She'll refuse me, sir, she'll refuse me! S'help me heaven, if you want that.

*Lucidor.*—Be careful. I don't want you just because of the money to ask her in such a way that you'll be refused.

*Blaise.*—Mebbe the money has made me foolish; I'm fond of it, I admit, but it's so comfortin'.

*Lucidor.*—I make one more condition to our agreement; that you keep on in your attempts to win her and make her think that you love her.

*Blaise.*—Yes, yeh can count on me, but I sure hopes she don't want me. I thinks, if she had the darst, she'd love you more nor anybody else.

*Lucidor.*—Me, Squire Blaise? You surprise me. I've never noticed it. You must be mistaken. If she doesn't want you, remember to reproach her about loving me. I'm interested to see what will happen. Just curiosity, you know.

*Blaise.*—Don't worry, Mister! I'll scold her right in front of you, jist like you tell me.

*Lucidor.*—And since I don't wish you any harm, I'd like to have you pay some attention to Lisette, for believe me, even without considering the twelve thousand, you wouldn't regret choosing her.

*Blaise.*—When you talk about her, I could love her to death.

*Lucidor.*—I admit that she's a servant of Mrs. Argante, but she's of just as good family as the rest of the village girls.

*Blaise.*—Of course she is. She was born here, too.

*Lucidor.*—Young, and well-formed besides.

*Blaise.*—Charming. You'll soon see that I like her pretty well.

*Lucidor.*—But I must warn you not to tell her you love her until you've finished your part with Angelique. Lisette mustn't know your intentions till then.

*Blaise.*—Leave that to Blaise. When I talk to her, I'll talk so's she can't understand nothin'. That's her comin', d'ye want me to go now?

*Lucidor.*—There's no reason why you shouldn't stay here.

## SCENE III

LUCIDOR, BLAISE, LISETTE

*Lisette.*—I've just learned from the wine-grower's little boy that a visitor from Paris is here.

*Lucidor.*—Yes, it's one of my friends who has come to see me.

*Lisette.*—In which room of the chateau do you want him put.

*Lucidor.*—We'll see when he returns from the hotel where he's gone. Where is Angelique, Lisette?

*Lisette.*—I think I saw her in the garden, amusing herself by picking flowers.

*Lucidor (Pointing to MR. BLAISE).*—Here's a man who fancies her very much and would like to marry her. I'd like to know whether she cares for him. What do you think?

*Blaise.*—Yes, what's your opinion about it, my little brunette?

*Lisette.*—All I can say is that up to the present, there is no place in her heart for you.

*Blaise (Happily).*—None at all? That's what I said. Miss Lisette sure has good judgment.

*Lisette.*—My answer wasn't very flattering, but it's the only thing I can say.

*Blaise (Gallantly).*—Well an' good an' I 'gree with yeh. I like to have folks frank, and indeed there ain't much about me to please sich a girl.

*Lisette.*—It isn't because you aren't worth while, Mr. Blaise, but I'm afraid Mrs. Argante thinks you're not quite well enough off for her daughter.

*Blaise (Laughing).*—That's it, not quite well enough off. The more you talk, the more you say.

*Lisette.*—You make me laugh with your cheerful air.

*Lucidor.*—It's because he doesn't hope for anything better.

*Blaise.*—Yes, that's the way 'tis, an' worst. Everything that comes, I take. (*To LISETTE*). The good sensible girl that you are!

*Lisette.*—He must be crazy; he says things I can't understand.

*Blaise.*—Oh, I wouldn't mind being crazy if I could have Angelique. An' maybe it'll come out so I'll have her, an' mebbe I won't have 'er. Ye got ter consider both sides to guess right.

*Lisette.*—You're a great old guesser!

*Lucidor.*—Well, whatever he is, I have a bit of advice to offer him and good advice at that; he acts like a man of the world, and that's why I want to find out if she cares for anyone.

*Lisette.*—Ever since you've been here, I think she's inclined a little toward you.

*Lucidor.*—Goodbye, Lisette. I'm going to take a walk down the big lane. When Angelique returns, I wish you'd let me know. And as far as you are concerned, be sure I won't return to Paris without making up to you the interest you've shown in my behalf.

*Lisette.*—You are very kind to me, sir.

*Lucidor (Aside to BLAISE as he leaves).*—See that you carry out your agreement with Lisette, Squire Blaise.

*Blaise.*—I'll look out for that, sir.

#### SCENE IV

#### BLAISE, LISETTE

*Lisette.*—That Mr. Lucidor has the best heart in the world.

*Blaise.*—Aye, a great heart, a heart of gold. But on the other hand, how are you, Miss Lisette?

*Lisette (Laughing).*—Eh? What do you mean by asking that? You have taken up strange talk, lately.

*Blaise.*—Yea, I've very strange manners an' they surprise you, what? I don't doubt that at all. (*Musing*) Lord, but you're nice!

*Lisette.*—And Lord! but you are funny with your niceness. How you look at me! You must be crazy for a fact.

*Blaise.*—No ma'am, it's quite the other way. It's with prudence that I look at ye.

*Lisette.*—Very well, look, then. Is my today's face any different from the one I wore yesterday?

*Blaise.*—No, only today I see it better than usual. It looks sort o' different.

*Lisette (Starting to leave).*—Heaven help you!

*Blaise (Stopping her).*—Listen a minute.

*Lisette.*—Well, what do you want of me? I just make a fool of myself to listen to you. They say, too, that you talk about me. I know very well that you are a farmer who doesn't have to work, and I know that I'm not the kind of girl for you. So why bother about it?

*Blaise.*—I want ye to listen to me without understandin', an' I want you to say: "Whee, there must be a deep secret, there!"

*Lisette.*—What secret? You haven't said anything I can understand.

*Blaise.*—It's plain enough, it's all fixed, about us.

*Lisette.*—That's strange. Aren't you keepin' company with Angelique?

*Blaise.*—That's done with.

*Lisette.*—The farther I go the worst confused I am.

*Blaise.*—You're s'posed to be more an' more confused.

*Lisette.*—But why is it that you take such a liking to me? By what strange accident do you see anything extraordinary in me? Up to now you haven't cared whether I was here or not. Am I to suppose that you suddenly fell in love with me? I won't stop you.

*Blaise (Hastily and emphatically).*—I didn't say I loved you.

*Lisette.*—What did you say, then?

*Blaise.*—I didn't say exactly that I didn't love ye; neither did nor didn't, you'll bear witness to that. I've give my word. I get down to brass tacks quick, ye see. There ain't nothin' to laugh about; I didn't say nothin', but I think, an' I keep repeatin' it, that ye're right pleasin.'

*Lisette (Looking at him in astonishment).*—As I see it, if you're not crazy then I have a suspicion that you don't dislike me.

*Blaise.*—Suspect, believe, persuade yourself if ye want to, Ain't no harm in that pervidin' I ain't to blame, an' ye figgered 't out all by yerself, 'thout my help.

*Lisette.*—Well, what about it?

*Blaise.*—Jist the same ye can love me. Fer example, I'll agree if yer heart brings ye to me, don't hold back, and I'll let you do as you like. There's nothin' fer ye t'lose by it.

*Lisette.*—Such a compliment! And what good would I get out of that?

*Blaise.*—Oh, the deuce! I can't say nothin'. I ain't like you are. I don't know how to speak more clear. But here

comes Angelique. Let me drop a word of affection for her, unless it'd change your feelings.

*Lisette.*—My soul, man, your mind is gone, Mr. Blaise. No, I'll not get angry.

## SCENE V

ANGELIQUE, LISETTE, BLAISE

*Angelique (With a bouquet in her hand).*—How do you do, Mr. Blaise. Is it true, Lisette, that somebody has come from Paris to see Mr. Lucidor?

*Lisette.*—Yes, according to what I heard.

*Angelique.*—Did they say whether he came to take Mr. Lucidor back to Paris?

*Lisette.*—I don't know that, Mr. Lucidor didn't tell me anything.

*Blaise.*—It don't look that way. Accordin' to what he said, he wants to marry ye to money first.

*Angelique.*—Marry me, Mr. Blaise? And to whom, please?

*Blaise.*—He ain't named him yet.

*Lisette.*—He is really talking of a fine marriage. He has in mind a man of the world, but he hasn't said who he is or where he comes from.

*Angelique (With a pleased, satisfied air).*—A man of the world whom he hasn't named.

*Lisette.*—I've repeated the very words he used.

*Angelique.*—It doesn't worry me. I'll find out sooner or later.

*Blaise.*—'T ain't me, at least.

*Angelique.*—Oh, I know that. This looks like a real mystery. You're nothing but a man of the fields.

*Blaise.*—Huh, I s'pose the fields ain't in the world. But jist the same I've shown my desires an' don't hide 'em. I announced my name and I shows in public that I'm in love with ye, ye know that.

(LISETTE shrugs her shoulders.)

*Angelique.*—I had already forgotten that.

*Blaise.*—I'm here to remind you of it again. Aren't you a little worried about that, Miss Angelique?

(LISETTE sulks.)

*Angelique.*—Well, hardly.



*Blaise.*—Hardly? It's always something. But at least be careful 'cause I'm beginning to suspect I please you.

*Angelique.*—I wouldn't think of making any suggestions, Mr. Blaise, but I think you're wrong.

*Blaise.*—All right, I see you understand. It's botherin' me, you see, troublesome like. But no matter, don't put yourself out. I'll come back soon to see if ye want me to talk to Mrs. Argante, or if I better shut up. Think it over an' do whatever ye like. Goodbye. (*To LISETTE.*) My, but ye're pretty!

*Lisette (Angrily).*—Fool!

## SCENE VI

## LISETTE, ANGELIQUE

*Angelique.*—Luckily his love doesn't worry me. When he asks mother to let him marry me, he won't get very far.

*Lisette.*—He's nothing but a tattletale, not fit for a girl like you.

*Angelique.*—I'm not paying any attention to him. But tell me, Lisette, did Mr. Lucidor speak seriously about a husband.

*Lisette.*—Yes, of a distinguished husband with a large estate.

*Angelique.*—Yes, very large, if my suspicion is correct.

*Lisette.*—What do you suspect?

*Angelique.*—I'd be awfully embarrassed if I make a mistake.

*Lisette.*—You don't mean you think it is Mr. Lucidor himself with all his possessions?

*Angelique.*—Him? Well, I don't know myself quite what I mean. People dream and have fancies, and that's all. I must see this husband of mine. I won't marry him without seeing him.

*Lisette.*—If it is only one of his friends, it will be an important affair. But that reminds me, he told me to come and tell him when you returned, and he's waiting for me in the lane.

*Angelique.*—Hurry, then! What are you fooling around here for? You certainly are a fine one to carry out your orders. I don't suppose he's there any longer.

*Lisette.*—Look, here he comes himself.

## SCENE VII

## ANGELIQUE, LUCIDOR, LISETTE

*Lucidor.*—Have you been here very long, Angelique?

*Angelique.*—No sir, it was only a minute ago that I learned

that you wanted to talk with me and then I scolded because I hadn't been told sooner.

*Lucidor.*—Yes, I wanted to talk to you about a very important matter.

*Lisette.*—Is it a secret? Shall I leave?

*Lucidor.*—It won't be necessary for you to stay.

*Angelique.*—And besides, I think my mother needs you, probably.

*Lisette.*—Then I'll go.

## SCENE VIII

LUCIDOR, ANGELIQUE

(*LUCIDOR is watching ANGELIQUE closely.*)

*Angelique (Laughing).*—What do you think about when you look at me so intently?

*Lucidor.*—I was thinking that you grow prettier every day.

*Angelique.*—You didn't say things like that when you were sick. By the way, I know that you like flowers and I was thinking of you when I picked this bouquet. Here, sir, take it.

*Lucidor.*—I take it only to give it back. I much prefer to see you with it.

*Angelique (Takes the bouquet).*—And I shall like it better than ever, beginning from this very hour.

*Lucidor.*—You always say just the proper thing.

*Angelique.*—Ah, that is very easy when I'm with certain people. But what was it that you wanted with me?

*Lucidor.*—To give you proof of my friendship for you provided that first you tell me just what your heart thinks.

*Angelique.*—Alas, but that would be very soon finished. I should tell you nothing new. Take away our friendship and as you know well there's nothing else in my heart that I know of. I see nothing there but it.

*Lucidor.*—Your way of talking makes me so happy that I almost forgot what I have to say to you.

*Angelique.*—What shall I do? You will always forget unless I keep quiet; I know no other secret.

*Lucidor.*—I don't like that secret. But let's continue. It's going on seven weeks since I came here.

*Angelique.*—As long as that? How times flies. Well?

*Lucidor.*—I have noticed that several of the young men of

the country have been paying attention to you. Which of them do you like best? Confide in me, won't you, as though I were your best friend?

*Angelique.*—I don't know, sir, why you think I like any of them best. Do I take any notice of them? Or do I look for them? They're just wasting their time.

*Lucidor.*—They certainly are, Angelique.

*Angelique.*—I don't think of any of them since you came, and I'll not think of them while you are here, you may be sure.

*Lucidor.*—Are you just as indifferent toward Squire Blaise, that young farmer who, as he tells me, wants to ask to marry you?

*Angelique.*—He can ask for what he wants, but in a word, from the first to the last I don't like any of them, especially that one who scolded me the other day because you and I talked together so much, just as if it weren't natural for me to prefer your company to his. He's crazy!

*Lucidor.*—If it doesn't displease you to talk to me, my dear Angelique, I'll return the compliment. When I don't see you, I feel very lonely and go to look for you.

*Angelique.*—You don't have to look long, because I return quickly and don't go out often.

*Lucidor.*—As soon as you are back, I'm happy.

*Angelique.*—And I'm—not unhappy.

*Lucidor.*—That's true, I'm glad to see that you are responsive to my friendship.

*Angelique.*—Yes, but unfortunately you don't belong to our village and you will probably return very soon to Paris, a place I don't like at all. If I were you, Paris would have to come and get me before I'd see it again.

*Lucidor.*—But what difference does it make to you whether I return there or not? It depends entirely upon you whether we are both to be there.

*Angelique.*—Both? What do you mean by that?

*Lucidor.*—I mean that I have picked out for you a husband who lives there.

*Angelique.*—Really? Don't fool me, at any rate. My heart is beating so fast! Does he live with you?

*Lucidor.*—Yes, Angelique, we live in the same house.

*Angelique.*—That isn't enough. Honestly, I'll never be easy until I find out more. What kind of man is he?

*Lucidor.*—He's a very rich man.

*Angelique.*—That's not the main thing. What else?

*Lucidor.*—He's just my age and height.

*Angelique.*—Good, that's what I want to know.

*Lucidor.*—Our characteristics are the same. He even thinks as I do.

*Angelique.*—Better and better. I shall love him.

*Lucidor.*—He's a plain man, as unconventional as I.

*Angelique.*—I don't wish for any other kind.

*Lucidor.*—He isn't ambitious for fame, and he wants nothing from his wife but her heart.

*Angelique (Laughing).*—He can have it, Lucidor, he shall have it. He has it already. I love him as much as I love you, no more and no less.

*Lucidor.*—And you shall have his, Angelique. I promise it. I know him so well that it is just as though he should say it himself.

*Angelique.*—Oh, doubtless, and I answer as though he were here.

*Lucidor.*—Ah, with the nature that he has, you are sure to make him happy.

*Angelique.*—And I can promise you that he will not be the only happy one.

*Lucidor.*—Goodbye, my dear Angelique. I must go and get your mother's consent. The pleasure I get out of this marriage does not permit me to delay it very long. But before I leave you, give me pleasure by accepting this little wedding present which I have the right to offer you because of our friendship. They are a few jewels which I sent for from Paris.

*Angelique.*—And I take them because they would otherwise go back with you, and because now we'll be there together. But it isn't the jewels, it is your friendship which is the real present.

*Lucidor.*—Goodbye, sweet Angelique. Your husband will not be long in coming.

*Angelique.*—Hurry then, so that he will get here all the sooner.

## SCENE IX

### ANGELIQUE, LISETTE

*Lisette.*—Well, Miss Angelique, has he told you? To whom are they going to marry you?

*Angelique.*—To him, my dear Lisette, to him, and I'm waiting for him.

*Lisette.*—To him, do you say? Who is this wonderful “him?” Is he here?

*Angelique.*—Ah, you must have met him. He’s going to see my mother.

*Lisette.*—I’ve seen nobody but Mr. Lucidor and he’s not the one who is to marry you.

*Angelique.*—He is, too. I’ve told you so twenty times. If you only knew how we talked together, how we understand each other without his saying, “I’m the man!” But it was all so clear, so evident, so pleasant, so tender.

*Lisette.*—I never suspected it. But here he comes again.

### SCENE X

LUCIDOR, FRONTAIN, LISETTE, ANGELIQUE

*Lucidor.*—I’ve returned, my dear Angelique. While going to your mother’s house, I found my friend who had just arrived, and I thought there was nothing more important than to bring him to you. This is the man. This is the man for whom you are so favorably disposed, the one who, because of the similarities of our characters is almost my double. He also brought me the photograph of a pretty young girl whom they want me to marry in Paris. (*He shows her the picture.*) Take a look at her. How do you like her?

*Angelique* (*With an attitude of despair pushing it away*).—I’m no judge of such things.

*Lucidor.*—Goodbye, I’ll leave you together and I’ll go call on Mrs. Argante. (*He approaches her.*) Are you satisfied?

(*ANGELIQUE, without replying, takes out the box of jewels and gives it to him while looking away. LUCIDOR appears surprised but takes the jewels without question and goes out.*)

### SCENE XI

ANGELIQUE, FRONTAIN, LISETTE

(*ANGELIQUE stands motionless, LISETTE looks at FRONTAIN with surprise, and he seems embarrassed.*)

*Frontain.*—Your overwhelming amazement paralyzes my natural inclination. You discourage me so much that I can scarcely speak.

*Lisette*.—She is motionless, you are dumb, and I am stupified. I open my eyes, I look, and understand nothing.

*Angelique (Sadly)*.—Lisette, who would have believed it?

*Lisette*.—I don't believe it, and I see it all, too.

*Frontain*.—If the charming Angelique will deign only to look at me, I'm sure she'll not be alarmed, and she might even like me. People easily become accustomed to looking at me, I have found. Try it once.

*Angelique (Without looking at him)*.—I can't. Some other time. Lisette, please entertain Mr. Frontain. Excuse me, I don't feel very well and am going to my room.

## SCENE XII

FRONTAIN, LISETTE

*Frontain (Aside)*.—My reputation has failed me.

*Lisette (Aside)*.—It's Frontain himself.

*Frontain (At first aside)*.—Here's where I need to be clever. Well, my dear, what am I to think of so doleful a reception? (*She does not reply, only looks at him. He goes on.*) Well, can't you answer? Are you also going to tell me that that's for another time?

*Lisette*.—Sir, haven't I seen you somewhere before?

*Frontain*.—What's that: "Haven't I seen you somewhere before?" This town make people act familiarly.

*Lisette (At first to herself)*.—Can it be possible that I am mistaken? Excuse me, sir, but haven't you ever been at Mrs. Dorman's house in Paris where I was?

*Frontain*.—Which Mrs. Dorman? In what part of the city?

*Lisette*.—Near Maubert square, on the second floor over a coffee house.

*Frontain*.—Maubert Square! Mrs. Dorman! Second floor! No, my child, I don't know the place. I always take my coffee at home.

*Lisette*.—I'll not say another word, but I swear I would have taken you for Frontain. And I have to use all my will power to persuade myself that I am wrong.

*Frontain*.—Frontain! Why that's a valet's name!

*Lisette*.—Yes sir, but I thought it was my friend—was you, I mean.

*Frontain.*—What! My friend and You all the time. You make me tired.

*Lisette.*—I know I'm wrong, but you look so much like him. But I beg your pardon. I'm always forgetting. But anyway, it isn't my friend—I mean it isn't you.

*Frontain (Laughing).*—I guess the best way out of it is to laugh myself. You are lucky, my girl, for a man of poorer quality and less sense would have been angry. But your mistake doesn't do me any harm; and besides, you would amuse me, if it weren't for the unpleasantness of having a face like that rascal you mention! Nature didn't have to give him a face like mine, and I take that as an insult. But it isn't your fault. Tell me of your mistress.

*Lisette.*—Oh, sir, don't be offended. The man I took you for is very likeable, amusing, energetic and very attractive.

*Frontain.*—Yes, I understand. The resemblance is perfect.

*Lisette.*—So perfect that I can't get over it, and you would be—But there, I'm at it again, the resemblance makes me forget myself.

*Frontain.*—That's nothing. I'm beginning to understand. I see you are not talking to me.

*Lisette.*—No sir, it is to your double. And I want to say that he made a big mistake in deceiving me. I wish with all my heart that you were he. I think that he was fond of me and I regret what he did.

*Frontain.*—You are right, and he was worthy of it, too. (*Aside.*) Some flatterer!

*Lisette.*—And it is peculiar, too. Whenever you speak, I seem to hear him.

*Frontain.*—Well, that's not surprising. People that look alike have similar voices and similar inclinations. He likes you, you said, and I do the same in spite of the extreme distance between our stations.

*Lisette.*—Alas! How happy I'd be to think I found him again.

*Frontain (The first word aside).*—Oh!—I have an idea, my pretty little girl, that you will be repaid for such love. Anyway, you will not lose everything. I'm quite interested in you and will be of service to you. Don't ever marry without first consulting me.

*Lisette.*—I know how to keep a secret. Tell me, aren't you *Frontain*?

*Frontain.*—You take advantage of my good nature. It's time for me to leave. (*And then, going out.*) Phew! What a narrow escape!

## SCENE XIII

LISETTE, *an instant alone; then* FARMER BLAISE

*Lisette.*—I've tested him in every possible way, and I'm sure it's not the same man . . . But there's never been anything like it before. If that were Frontain, and he still loved me, Squire Blaise wouldn't stand the ghost of a show.

*Blaise.*—Well, m'girl, how do I stand with Angelique now?

*Lisette.*—Just where you stood before.

*Blaise (Laughing).*—Aye, t'bad, child!

*Lisette.*—How do you figure that it is too bad, and laugh at the same time?

*Blaise.*—It's because I laugh at everything, little chicken.

*Lisette.*—Anyway, I have a hint for you. Angelique isn't at all anxious to accept the husband that Mr. Lucidor picked out for her and who is here, so in that case, if you go on with your suit, you stand a good chance to win her.

*Blaise (Sadly).*—Do ye think so? That's good.

*Lisette.*—You make me tired with your happy "too bads" and your sad "That's good" and your calling me child and chicken. Now I want to know where you stand. Mr. Blaise, for the last time, do you love me?

*Blaise.*—I can't tell ye that jist yet.

*Lisette.*—Are you making fun of me, then?

*Blaise.*—Come now, ye wouldn't think that o'me.

*Lisette.*—Have you been planning all the time to marry Angelique?

*Blaise.*—The scheme requires it.

*Lisette.*—Scheme! And if she refuses you, will you be disappointed?

*Blaise (Laughing).*—Aye, indeed.

*Lisette.*—Really I'm so uncertain of your feeling. How do you want me to reply to the nice things you say to me? Put yourself in my place, for a while.

*Blaise.*—Put yourself in mine.

*Lisette.*—What is yours? Because if you've told me the truth, you really love me.



*Blaise (Laughing).*—Yes, I suppose so.

*Lisette.*—You shall see that I'm not ungrateful.

*Blaise (Laughing).*—Ha, ha, ha! Ask me some questions so, I can see whether it is all right.

*Lisette.*—What are you doing?

*Blaise.*—Ha, ha! I'm taking no chances. The dear girl! What a shame it is to keep her in doubt.

*Lisette.*—What nonsense you talk! Oh, here comes Mrs. Argante and Lucidor. They seem to be talking about Angelique's marriage to the man who just came. Her mother wants her to marry him, and if she does, as she'll probably have to, it won't be necessary for you to ask to marry her. So please go away.

*Blaise.*—But I ought to stay to see what happens, to carry out my agreement.

*Lisette (Angrily).*—Again! That impertinence of you and your secret makes me angry.

*Blaise (Laughing as he leaves).*—Mebbe it's twelve thousand francs that makes ye angry.

*Lisette (Watching him go).*—Twelve thousand francs! What does he mean by that? I'm beginning to believe he has something up his sleeve.

#### SCENE XIV

MRS. ARGANTE, LUCIDOR, FRONTAIN, LISETTE

*Mrs. Argante (Speaking to FRONTAIN as they enter).*—But, sir, don't try to deny it. It isn't believable that Angelique refuses to agree. It's impossible. (*To LISETTE.*) Lisette, you were there when this gentleman saw my daughter. Is it true that she did not receive him in a friendly way? What did she say? Tell me, was there any reason for such actions?

*Lisette.*—No, ma'am, I noticed nothing out of the ordinary, no more than a natural embarrassment that one would expect of a young girl who, so to speak, is married in an instant. Except for that, you may be sure that there wasn't any trouble at all.

*Lucidor.*—Lisette is right. That is just my idea, too.

*Mrs. Argante.*—Yes, doubtless. She is so young and innocent.

*Frontain.*—Such a sudden marriage proposition would, no doubt, astonish an innocent girl, but it won't hurt her; she has gone to her room because she feels ill.

*Mrs. Argante.*—We shall see, sir, we shall see. Lisette, go and tell her that I want her to come here at once. Bring her yourself, hurry. (*To FRONTAIN.*) You will be kind enough, sir, to excuse her first actions. They mean nothing.

*Frontain.*—Say what you please. It is a mistake to mix me up in an adventure like this. It makes a man feel uncomfortable when he has had to refuse all the debutantes of Paris who threw themselves at his feet, then to endure the disdain of a village girl whom he is willing to marry. Your daughter is entirely satisfactory, and I wish to thank my friend for suggesting her for me. It would be enough, I thought, since she was well disposed toward me, for me to offer my hand and receive hers without any further ceremony.

*Lucidor.*—I cannot possibly see anything to prevent it.

*Mrs. Argante.*—Gentlemen, have patience. Remember that she is little more than a child.

## SCENE XV

LUCIDOR, ANGELIQUE, FRONTAIN, LISETTE, MRS. ARGANTE

*Mrs. Argante.*—Come here, young lady, come here. Don't you appreciate the honor of having Mr. Frontain come here to marry you in spite of your poverty and lack of social position?

*Frontain.*—Strike out that word "honor." My love and breeding disapprove of its use.

*Mrs. Argante.*—No, sir, I mean just what I say.

*Angelique.*—But mother—

*Mrs. Argante.*—Quickly!

*Frontain.*—Don't be harsh with her, otherwise I shall leave immediately. (*To ANGELIQUE.*) You haven't looked at me, adorable girl. You haven't seen me at all. You turned me down without knowing me. Please look and then judge.

*Angelique.*—Sir—

*Mrs. Argante.*—"Sir!" "But mother!" Raise your head!

*Frontain.*—Keep quiet, mother, she is only starting.

*Lisette.*—You're very lucky, Angelique. You must have been born with a silver spoon in your mouth.

*Angelique (Quickly).*—At any rate, I wasn't born a tattle-tale.

*Frontain.*—You're only a little confused, Miss Angelique. Compose yourself and say what you were going to.

*Mrs. Argante.*—I swallow my anger.

*Lucidor.*—This is terribly embarrassing.

*Frontain* (To ANGELIQUE).—Courage, make another effort.  
*Angelique*.—Sir, I don't know you.

*Frontain*.—Acquaintance is made soon enough in marriage.  
 It is an experience where one learns very quickly.

*Mrs. Argante*.—What! Madcap, ingrate that you are!

*Frontain*.—But—but, Mrs. Argante. Your remarks are very rude.

*Mrs. Argante*.—Very well, I'll leave. I can't hold myself in, but I shall disown her if she continues to refuse her obligations like this. Ever since Mr. Lucidor came he has done nothing but spend his time doing good for us. And to complete her happiness he has found for my daughter a better husband than she could hope for, better in kindness, rank, merit—

*Frontain*.—Gentle! Whisper the last part of that!

*Mrs. Argante* (Going out).—Heaven help me, either she accepts him or I renounce her!

#### SCENE XVI

*Lisette*.—Honestly, Miss Angelique, I don't see how anyone can excuse you. Bear in mind, this man is a prince.

*Frontain*.—Without boasting, I can say that this is my first experience in being refused. I'm not used to such bad treatment.

*Angelique*.—Yes, sir, your interest in me is admirable, it is the most wonderful thing in the world. I'm wrong, I'm silly, but please let me say one thing. Since my mother's gone and I feel a bit more bold, it's only right that I have my turn and I begin with you, Lisette. And I want you to keep quiet, understand? There's nothing in this matter that concerns you at all. When it comes time for you to marry, you can do as you please about it, without having me meddle or saying anything foolish or tell you that you were born with a silver spoon, or that you're lucky, or that you're expecting a prince, or any of those other bits of nonsense that you've been saying without knowing the why or wherefore.

*Frontain*.—You're right about her.

*Angelique*.—Your turn is next, sir. You're a gentleman, I hope.

*Frontain*.—That's where I shine.

*Angelique*.—You wouldn't want to cause unhappiness to a girl who never offended you; that would be cruel and barbarous.

*Frontain.*—I am the kindest-hearted man in the world, and you have a thousand proofs of it.

*Angelique.*—That's fine. I'll tell you, then, sir, that I would be very unhappy if forced to marry you. My heart tells me so, feels so. I don't mean you are not pleasant. So long as I'm not your wife, I shall never stop praising you when you are married. I hope you'll not be offended by what I say for it comes from the bottom of my heart. In the first place, it was not I who brought you here. I did not propose it to you, and if I could have, it would not have been any harder to say "Don't come" than to say "Go."

*Frontain.*—Do you mean that?

*Angelique.*—Of course, and the sooner the better. It makes no difference to you. You have no difficulty with girls. When one is rich, they say he has everything he wants. However, unnaturally, I don't care for money. I'd much rather give it away than keep it. That's my peculiarity.

*Frontain.*—It's quite different from the way I am. When do you want me to leave?

*Angelique.*—You're very nice about it. Whenever you please, you may go. It's a bit late now, but it will be all right tomorrow.

*Frontain (To LUCIDOR).*—My dear friend, that's what I call a flat turndown. I accept it, following your instructions, which have governed me so far. And so, lovely ingrate, I shall postpone the last goodbye.

*Angelique.*—Oh, isn't it all over? Goodness, you're determined. (*And when he has gone.*) Your friend doesn't seem to be a very good sport. He asks me when he shall go and still he remains.

## SCENE XVII

*Lucidor.*—It isn't easy to leave you, Angelique, but I'll get rid of him for you.

*Lisette.*—What foolishness. A man who has made his fortune!

*Lucidor.*—There are insurmountable antipathies, and if Angelique is of that opinion, I am not surprised at her refusal, and so I renounce my interest in that affair.

*Angelique.*—Don't misunderstand, please. There are some people who bring us nothing but bad luck.

*Lucidor.*—To bring you bad luck with the intentions I had! And why do you reproach my friendship?

*Angelique (Aside).*—His friendship! The flirt!

*Lucidor.*—Tell me, what is it that you dislike?

*Angelique.*—I? What I dislike? What are you thinking about? Where are the reproaches that I made? Did you ever see me angry? I'm well satisfied with you, you couldn't suit me any better. How is it that you try to get husbands for me when I don't want them? You even sent to Paris for one without my asking you do. That's a little too much. It's true that I left my marriage up to you. But that is no reason for thinking that, because of your kindness, I am obliged to marry right away the first one that you brought from who knows where, all dressed up and ready for the wedding, just because you said so. You needn't think that. I'm very grateful of course, but I'm not an idiot.

*Lucidor.*—Despite what you say, there's something in your tone that I don't understand, and don't deserve.

*Lisette.*—I know and I could tell you—

*Angelique.*—Hum-m-m, where did you get all this information that you have? What were you about to say? Listen here, Lisette. By nature I'm gentle and kind. A baby is more dangerous than I, but if you get me angry, you can be sure that I'll bear you a grudge for a thousand years.

*Lucidor.*—If you don't dislike me, won't you take back this present which I gave you and you returned without saying why.

*Angelique.*—Why? Because it isn't proper for me to have it. Presents and a husband should go together and taking one, I take the other. That would put you in an embarrassing position. Keep them for that charming beauty whose photograph you carry.

*Lucidor.*—I can get her more. Take them.

*Angelique.*—Let her keep them all. I should throw them away.

*Lisette.*—And I should pick them up again.

*Lucidor.*—That is to say that you do not want me to think about getting you married, and in spite of all you've said to me, there's some love secret that you have kept hidden from me.

*Angelique.*—That may be. Yes, that's what it is: I'm in love with a man around here, and even if I didn't have him, I could get one quickly enough to suit my whim.

## SCENE XVIII

LUCIDOR, ANGELIQUE, LISETTE, FARMER BLAISE.

*Blaise.*—I'd like fer to bother ye to find out yer latest decision, Miss Angelique. Are ye goin' ter keep yer lover that jest come?

*Angelique.*—No, let me alone!

*Blaise.*—Ye don't want me, then?

*Angelique.*—No.

*Blaise.*—Once, twice, do ye want me?

*Angelique.*—The insufferable bore!

*Lisette.*—Are you deaf, Squire Blaise? She said, no.

*Blaise.*—Yes, my dear. There, sir, I want ye to see how I love her an' how she turned me down. If she didn't want me, it's her own fault, and I ain't her blame fer it. (*Aside to LISETTE.*) Hello, there, chicken! (*Aloud.*) Ter start with, it didn't surprise me none. Miss Angelique refused two, she'd refuse three, she'd refuse a bushel. There's only one she'd have. All the rest is rubbish t'her, 'cept Mr. Lucidor, just like I guessed from the beginnin'.

*Angelique (Overwhelmed).*—Mr. Lucidor!

*Blaise.*—Uh, huh, Mr. Lucidor. Ain't I seen yer cryin' when he was sick, thinkin' he was goin' ter die.

*Lucidor.*—I'll never believe that. Angelique crying because of our friendship?

*Angelique.*—What, you don't believe it? You'll never be a man to be trusted. To be accused of loving because I cry, because I am kind hearted? I cry about every sick person I see. Why, I cry over everybody who is seriously ill. If my bird should die, I'd cry. Would you say that I loved him?

*Lisette.*—Let it go, let it go at that; because, to tell the truth, I thought the same thing.

*Angelique.*—What? You, too, Lisette! You make me sick and tired. What have I done to you? What! A man who never thinks of me, who wants to marry me off to everybody. I love him, I!—I couldn't stand his love, I who love somebody else. I am miserable enough now, and all this only makes it worse.

*Lucidor.*—But really, Angelique, you're not reasonable about it. Don't you see that it has been our little talks that have given rise to this idea? And that it isn't worth your attention?

*Angelique.*—Ah, Mr. Lucidor, it is only through discretion

that I haven't told you what I think. But I like you so little that, if I didn't restrain myself, I should hate you because of this man whom you brought from Paris. Yes, sir, I would hate you, and I don't know but what I do now. I wouldn't like to swear that I don't, because I used to have a feeling of friendship for you and I don't have now. Is that a symptom of love?

*Lucidor.*—I am ashamed of the unhappiness that I've caused you. Have you any reason for keeping your secret? Since you love another, that's all there is to it.

*Blaise.*—Another lover? The devil! She seems anxious enough to say so.

*Angelique.*—Anxious enough? Well, if you insist, it's the man who just spoke.

*Lucidor.*—I thought so.

*Blaise.*—Me?

*Lisette.*—Aw, that's not true!

*Angelique.*—What, don't I know how I feel? It's he, I tell you, it's he.

*Blaise.*—Aw, Miss, let's not joke. There's no rime or reason in that. Is it my personality that you like?

*Angelique.*—I've said enough. Yes, it's you, cheap as you are. If you don't believe what I say, I shan't worry much.

*Blaise.*—But yer mother'd never consent.

*Angelique.*—Yes, I know that.

*Blaise.*—Too bad, since ye've refused me onc't, I made other arrangements.

*Angelique.*—Well, that's your business.

*Blaise.*—I ain't got a heart what turns like a weather vane. It takes a woman fer that. I thought ye meant what ye said.

*Angelique.*—Then suit yourself, and blessings on you.

*Blaise.*—'Sides, I ain't rich.

*Lucidor.*—Don't let that bother you, I'll fix that. Since you have the good fortune to be the favored one, Squire Blaise, I'll give you twenty-thousand francs to help you along. I'm going to tell Mrs. Argante. I'll come back in a moment with her answer.

*Angelique.*—How they persecute me!

*Lucidor.*—Goodbye, Angelique. At last I shall have the satisfaction of seeing you married to a man of your choice, no matter what it costs me.

*Angelique.*—That man will make me die of grief, I'm sure.

## SCENE XIX

BLAISE, ANGELIQUE, LISETTE

*Lisette.*—That Mr. Lucidor is a regular matrimonial agent! What have you decided to do, Squire Blaise?

*Blaise (After pondering for a moment).*—I think ye're a mighty nice girl, but that twenty thousand's a smart sum.

*Lisette.*—That's a mean trick.

*Angelique (Languidly).*—Are you interested in her?

*Blaise.*—Oh, I've not given her up yet.

*Angelique (Languidly).*—Then apparently you don't love me.

*Blaise.*—Oh, yes, I do. It went away for a minute, but right now I love you dearly.

*Angelique (Still languid).*—Because of those twenty thousand francs?

*Blaise.*—Because of you an' my love fer them, too.

*Angelique.*—You intend to take the money?

*Blaise.*—Lord! What's that you say?

*Angelique.*—If you take the money, I promise I won't have anything to do with you.

*Blaise.*—An' that's another blow.

*Angelique.*—It would be too menial to take money from a man who wanted to marry me to somebody and who insulted me especially in thinking that I loved him, and whom people say I loved.

*Lisette.*—Miss Angelique is right. I approve of everything she said.

*Blaise.*—But listen to reason. If I don't take the twenty thousand, you'll lose me, Miss, because your mother wouldn't think of me.

*Angelique.*—Well, then, if she won't think of you, I wouldn't have anything to do with you either.

*Blaise (Disturbed).*—Is that your last word?

*Angelique.*—I never change my mind.

*Blaise.*—Then here I am, still a bachelor.

## SCENE XX

LUCIDOR, FARMER BLAISE, ANGELIQUE, LISETTE

*Lucidor.*—Your mother consents to everything, Pretty Angelique, I have her promise and your marriage to Squire Blaise



is arranged with the help of the twenty thousand I'm giving him. All that remains is for you to receive her blessing.

*Blaise.*—No, siree. There's something else t' be considered. She don't like the twenty thousand 'cause it's you what gives it, and she won't have me if I takes it, an' I want it if I got ter marry her.

*Angelique (Starting to go).*—And I—I don't want any one, no matter who he is.

*Lucidor.*—Wait, please, dear Angelique. Leave us alone, the rest of you.

*Blaise (Taking LISETTE'S arm. Speaks to LUCIDOR).*—Our first arrangement, is it a go this time?

*Lucidor.*—Yes, I guarantee that.

*Blaise.*—Heaven bless ye, sir! Then I'll marry you, my girl.

## SCENE XXI

LUCIDOR, ANGELIQUE

*Lucidor.*—You are crying, Angelique.

*Angelique.*—It is because my mother will be angry. And besides, I've had enough to make me cry.

*Lucidor.*—As for your mother, don't worry about her. I'll calm her. But please don't make me feel bad by not letting me make you happy.

*Angelique.*—Oh, that's all over. I want nothing to do with a man who makes it seem that I have pursued him.

*Lucidor.*—I'm not responsible for the ideas they have.

*Angelique.*—Nobody ever heard me say that you loved me, and even if I liked you because of all the kindnesses you did and all you've been since you came here, I never abused your friendship. But you've taken advantage of mine, and I am the victim of my own good nature.

*Lucidor.*—Even though you should think that I love you, and believe that I am filled with the most tender affection for you, still you wouldn't be mistaken. (*ANGELIQUE cries all the harder.*)

*Lucidor (Continuing).*—And to prove that you own my heart, I tell you that I adore you, Angelique.

*Angelique.*—I don't know any thing about it, but if I ever loved a man, I wouldn't be likely to go hunting him a mate. I'd rather let him die single.

*Lucidor.*—Alas, if it were not for the hatred of me which you

profess, and rightly, too, I would have proposed myself. But what is it that you have to cry about now?

*Angelique.*—You say I hate you. Haven't I reason to, even if there were no more than for that portrait which you carry around in your pocket.

*Lucidor.*—That picture is nothing but a pretense. It's my sister.

*Angelique.*—I had no way of knowing that.

*Lucidor.*—Here it is, I'll give it to you.

*Angelique.*—What would I do with it if you weren't here any more? A picture isn't a remedy.

*Lucidor.*—What if I stay? What if I ask you to marry me and never again leave you?

*Angelique.*—Well, at least that's what one calls talking.

*Lucidor.*—Do you love me, then?

*Angelique.*—Have I ever done anything else?

*Lucidor (Falling on his knees).*—How happy you make me, Angelique.

## SCENE XXII

*All the actors who arrive with Mrs. ARGANTE.*

*Mrs. Argante.*—Well, sir, what do I see? You are on your knees to my daughter, I think.

*Lucidor.*—Yes, Mrs. Argante, and I'll marry her today, if you consent.

*Mrs. Argante (Delighted).*—Certainly, indeed, sir! It is a great honor that you do us, and it wouldn't displease me to have your friend, Mr. Frontain also stay with us.

*Frontain.*—I'm so goodnatured that I would be willing to wait on the table. (*To LISETTE.*) My queen, since you like Frontain so much, and since I look so much like him, I'd like to be he.

*Lisette.*—Oh, you rascal, I understand, but you are too late.

*Blaise.*—I won't give her up, since there's twelve thousand that's a-comin' our way.

*Mrs. Argante.*—What does that mean?

*Lucidor.*—I'll explain to you all about it when the time comes. Tell somebody to have some violins come from the village, and let's finish out the day with a dance.

CURTAIN

# DAVID PINSKI, THE DRAMATIST

BY CHARLES A. MADISON

In the process of artistic expression the quality of self-criticism—an intuitive-intellectual component—is the invaluable guide. No matter how powerful, noble, and universal the intuitive conceptions of the artist may be, they are in danger of becoming jejune, commonplace, and unconvincing if expressed without the unyielding severity of self-criticism. David Pinski has written several excellent dramas. He is also a critic of no mean ability. Furthermore, in his work he reveals himself as a conscious artist, an artist who appears always to know exactly what he is doing. Yet self-critical guidance functions but little in more than one of his plays. The fact that some of his works have for their basic idea the death of a religion (*The Last Jew*), or the tragedy of motherhood (*Mother*), or the activity of the beast in man (*Better not to be Born*), is to him sufficient proof of their greatness; that these ideas may become vitiated in their expression, banal and without true artistic depth, appears not to enter Pinski's consciousness. This apparent incongruity merely means, however, that the analytical faculty of the critic and the self-critical quality of the artist are not one and the same. When Pinski shows discernment in appraising the work of others, he does so because he has before him ideas not as they have been conceived, but as they are expressed; in his own work, on the contrary, he often is unable to see how marred his ideas have become in their expression because they continue to appear to him as he had first conceived them.

*The Last Jew* is a good example in point. Short as this tragedy falls from being a work of great art, Pinski regards it as one of his best creations. That he should view it with such love is readily understood. As a child, Pinski believed with the fullness of his soul in Jehovah and Judaism. He studied the holy lore with avidity, and it was believed that he was preparing himself for the rabbinate. But the Russian Jews were experiencing their belated Renaissance in the latter half of the Nineteenth Century, and the adolescent youth came to realize one day, with a cruel suddenness, that his belief in Jehovah was completely gone. At the age of seventeen he regarded himself as an agnostic and revolutionary. It was in the poignancy of disillusionment

that he first conceived of commemorating the death of his religious belief—and what was dead to him he regarded as dead to all others—in tragic song. But he could find no adequate means of expression. For more than a decade the idea lay dormant in his mind. Then came the propitious inspiration. In 1903 the Kishineff massacre took place. In the great grief of the moment Pinski suddenly felt that the *Chooligans* were killing not the Jews but Judaism. Out of this came the form he sought. He will have a pogrom setting symbolize the last moment of the Jewish religion; he will have the true believers personified in Reb Moishe, *The Last Jew*, he will have Reb Moishe put all so-called Jews to the same test that Jews have always passed triumphantly in the previous centuries, and in their failure, and just as Reb Moishe utters his last gasp, announce that Judaism is no more.

The death of religion in the heart of a people is tragic indeed. Yet, *The Last Jew* does not impress one with this tragic import. It sometimes even antagonizes the more critical reader. Wherein lies the cause of this unsympathetic attitude on the part of the reader? In the form in which the basic idea is expressed. An idea so delicate in conception as the death of what is most holy in the human heart can become impressive only when handled with the fineness and sympathy of a Sophocles; otherwise will the reader, especially the modern reader, not be convinced that his faith in God, to which he must instinctively turn in the moment of impending sorrow, may shrivel up and die. How then does Pinski attempt to convince his readers of the truth of this idea? By a test which they will not and cannot accept, because the present is not an age of martyrdom. It is true, Pinski says to them, that only through this test, the sacrifice of one's life for the holy scroll and the synagogue, can the Jew prove, as did the fathers before him, that he still adheres to the laws of Jehovah. But this argument cannot influence the modern Jew. His Jehovah demands no needless sacrifice of life. His religious faith appears less positive only because it is less dogmatic. When Reb Moishe, therefore, goes from group to group of Jews, Jews that are portrayed with unfavorably exaggerated traits, and commands them to enlist in "the army of the Lord" in order to protect the scrolls from the unclean hands of the *Chooligans*, he can receive but little sympathy.

Thus, while to Pinski, *The Last Jew* appears a great play because in its conception it symbolizes to him the tragedy of modern Judaism, the play appears to the critical reader as the

laud expression of a pretentiously misconceived idea. When the tragedy first appeared it achieved a popular success chiefly because it was misunderstood as a "pogrom" play. The like situation is found in *Mother*. In this play Pinski wished to portray the tragedy of motherhood. How is this idea expressed? A widowed mother comes to realize that she is no longer loved by her children as she once was, and she remarries. Her children are very much chagrined at this, and refuse to see her again. And their anger is so boundless, that when their mother comes begging for a reconciliation, they turn from her as from something unclean. Here Pinski sees only the great sorrow of the mother; the reader, on the contrary, sees the unnaturalness of the children's act, and refuses to be convinced. Similarly, in *Better not to be Born*, Pinski wishes to express the idea that man is never free from the instincts of the beast. He has a young man, the son of normal, honest parents and the betrothed of a girl he loves very much, suddenly seized with the beastly impulse to rape a twelve year old girl. In his frenzy he stifles her. Why, asks the young man before he shoots himself, should he pay with his life for a deed he had committed in a moment of madness? And Pinski adds, He who is certain of not being tempted next may be the first to condemn him. The reader, even the sophisticated reader, cannot help receiving an unsavory taste in his mouth at the end of the play.

Faulty self-criticism is the chief shortcoming of the three foregoing plays. Pinski forgets, or fails to realize, that when ideas are incorporated into works of art, they must appear genuinely motivated. The characters who act upon these motives must possess an adequate amount of unique flesh-and-bloodness and at the same time be imbued with a convincing probability. Pinski, however, is too obsessed with the basic idea of some of his plays to hear clearly the reprimands and warnings of his self-critical voice. In *The Last Jew*, no matter how much one may wish to sympathize with Reb Moishe, one cannot help feeling that in his insistent demand for self-sacrifice he appears much like a paranoiac. In the same play, Pinski expresses himself more like the adolescent skeptic than the mature artist when he makes the Rabbi of the town a wily sycophant; for the Rabbi, being here not merely an individual but the representative of a type, cannot help conveying to the reader the unacceptable idea that most Rabbis are sycophants. Likewise, in *Mother*, the bottom falls out of the play because the reader cannot accept the typicality

of the children; these children have not the characteristic cruelty of the daughters of King Lear, but the stubbornness of willful infants. In *Better not to be Born*, the universality of the basic idea becomes inapplicable because of defective expression; for while no man is free from beastly impulses, the inadequately motivated frenzy of the young man only repels the reader—and one should be impelled to sympathise with the emotional experiences of a fictional character.

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Thus far I have discussed what I consider Pinski's chief weakness—his imperfect self-criticism—and its effect upon three of his plays. This defect, however, appears only slightly or not at all in the remainder of his work. *Professor Brenner*, where the elderly artist's Hamletian doubt of the love of his youthful betrothed is depicted with delicacy and increasing intensity; *The Dumb Messiah*—a study of the fleshpot psychology of the Jewish people; *Yenkel the Blacksmith*, containing a spirited struggle between puerility and prudence; *Gabri and the Women*—another study of sensuality, finding expression under unusual circumstances; *Mary Magdalene*—whose fascination no man can withstand, until she meets her master in Jesus; *Nina Morden and her Loves*, containing a study of the woman who hoped to make men richer with the overwhelming greatness of her love, only to find herself their plaything:—these six plays reveal the able dramatist, the conscious artist who succeeds in combining idea and expression into nearly perfect mold.

Three other plays, *The Treasurer*, *Isaak Sheftel*, and *King David and his Wives*, disclose not only the inclusiveness of Pinski's talents, but also his superiority as a dramatic artist. The first Play, pronounced by Professor Baker as one of the best comedies of the present time, is already known to American readers. In it individual character and the state of mind of the poverty-ridden but fancy-fed masses are portrayed with bold irony. Its chief character, the daughter of a gravedigger, shows a sprightliness and a sense of humor possessed only by few fictional characters. What is most important is the fact that she is alive. She at once ingratiates herself in the heart of the reader; he enjoys the joke she plays on the community as much as she herself. The psychological progression of the play—with the exception of the scene where the half-wit is made to play his own little joke with unexpected ready wit—is finely conceived and clearly indicated. The haphazardness and helpless uncertainty of the Jewish masses

are depicted with bold and effective strokes. Though not a great work of art, this comedy is the work of a superior artist.

In *Isaak Sheftel*, the tragedy of the thwarted creative mind is given artistic embodiment. Isaak Sheftel belonged to the class of Jews that was just forming into the modern proletariat. He worked under very unfavorable conditions. His life was spent in the midst of poverty and squalor. But instead of bewailing his pitiable condition in complaint, or forgetting it in drink as did the others about him, he directed his creative mind to the field of invention. He was pathetically unequipped for the task, being without technical education and without the necessary instruments. Still he strived on instinctively and persistently, and in time invented two small machines. A third idea next occupied his mind. It dominated him so completely that he forgot his wife, his children, his job. The inability to bring his new invention to a successful conclusion tormented him cruelly. In the meantime his wife demanded food, his employer—who had most profited from his two previous contrivances—threatened to discharge him, and his acquaintances poked fun at his expense. In a state of distraction he demolished his unfinished as well as his completed inventions, filled himself with liquor, and sought escape from his tormenting self in the loneliness of the forest. Freedom from anguish came to him only when poison deadened his aching heart. In reading the play one forgets that Isaak often appeared as a muddlehead to his wife and friends; that one of the purposes of the author was to depict the industrial change that was taking place in Russia in the last years of the Nineteenth Century; that in his unrealized dreams he is merely one of the many; all these things somehow disappear from the focus of the reader's sympathetic eye, and he sees only the struggle of a noble soul, an artless fledgeling caught in the talons of an unhappy fate, a bound Prometheus. In this drama the Aristotelian catharsis is indeed present.

In the works I have discussed primary emotions other than love were under dramatic scrutiny. Pinski, however, is most the conscious artist in his treatment of love. No impulse, no nuance, no grossness, and no vagary of the sex instinct remains hidden from his keen observation. The sophisticated loves of Nina Morden, the innocent infatuation of Professor Brenner's betrothed, the primitive temptress in *Gabri and the Women*, the superharlot in *Mary Magdalene*, diverse loves as those of Yenkel's, Tamara's, Rivke's, and Rephoel's in *Yenkel the Blacksmith*, and in-

fatuations consciously contrasted as those of the chief characters in *Love's Waywardness*:—these and many other variegated expressions of passion, clashes wherein the sex impulse compels the human heart to respond quickly and decisively, find individual and almost mathematical portrayal in Pinski's work.

In *King David and his Wives*, Pinski rises to artistic greatness as the depicter of the amorous life. This play is composed of five episodes, each portraying a particular crisis in the emotional development of King David. He is shown first as the youthful conqueror of Goliath and the timid lover of proud Michal; next as the leader of a band of outlaws, overcome by the beauty of Abigail; then as the lust-drunk tyrant, taking to himself the charming Bathsheba; again as the elderly king, the satiated husband of eighteen wives and numerous mistresses; lastly as a decrepit old man, amorous to the last, warming his cold and shrivelled body with the warmth of the most beautiful maiden in the land. As episode follows episode one sees the character of David grow to a towering height. First he appears as a meek, pious youth, refusing the love of a haughty princess until fully worthy of it. At this time the love of Jehovah fills his soul. Then he is seen as a mature man, ably directing his followers, but almost compromising his vows to Jehovah for the sake of a beautiful woman. When he next comes upon the scene he is in the complete possession of wantonness. When the prophet Nathan urges him to keep faith with Jehovah, David is only annoyed; is not woman the handiwork of God, and was she not made for man? His will is done; Bathsheba becomes his. But in the very lustfulness of this deed is seen a certain grandeur. David commits sin not because he is sinful, but because his passion is stronger than his will; so much so, that Bathsheba, who at first scorns his overtures, ends in awe of the power which drives her husband to certain death of his own free will. In this act David achieves the sheer heights of human grandeur. In the fourth episode David's hair is already gray. His passionate life has long passed the crest of human fulfillment. He is already a little weary. His wives are now beldames, and his heart is no longer overwhelmed so easily at the sight of women. But he is the complete man still. The last scene brings forth a shrunk, shivering old man. Senility has gotten hold of the body of the great king; not, however, of his amorous heart. And when the young maiden is brought to warm his dried bones, passion again over-



comes him. But his youthful zest is gone. He will only keep her before him, virginal, a temptation, a life stimulus.

I leave unmentioned the remainder of Pinski's writings. I believe that his chief characteristics are to be found in the plays I have criticised. I also think it unnecessary to discuss the Semitic quality of his work, because most of it contains not so much Jewish as European attributes. In this respect Pinski and Sholom Asch are similar—though for contrary reasons; Asch is essentially a paganly naive poet, while Pinski is primarily a cultivated modern dramatist. The importance of Pinski as an artist no one will deny. A faulty self-critical faculty indeed warps the woof of several of his plays; an overabundance of seminal concepts obscures the artistic effect of more than one of his works; an excess of sensuousness, of dramatic enthusiasm, deprives other of his writings from the necessary serenity. But an even greater number of plays reveal Pinski as a dramatist one should take seriously.

## THE CHANGELING

BY BARBARA HOLLIS

You sometimes watch and wonder—  
I've sensed your queer surprise.  
You cannot see the things I see  
For I have gypsy's eyes.

You ask to walk beside me  
And find my pace too fleet;  
I cannot make you understand  
I walk with gypsy's feet.

And then you grieve at learning  
I am not yours—heartwhole!  
How can I hope to make you see  
I have a gypsy's soul?

# THE HAUNTS OF PAUL SCARRON

*“J’ai vaincu la douleur par les ris et les jeux.”*

BY KATHARINE STANLEY-BROWN

Serene and calm souls seem to seep out of existence as gently as they continue in it. But who can really picture death as a final state for the brilliant, the gay, the insouciant, the rebellious? Paul Scarron dead! Paul Scarron—unscrupulous, courageous, pungent, witty soul—and dead these two hundred and sixty years! Forgotten too, for who reads his *Roman Comique* now? Who plays his naughty burlesques? Who knows where he used to live, and what he used to say? Let us step back into the seventeenth century, and pretend that we are no longer pressed and rushed, that our vitality and velocity are chiefly mental as his was, and recall him for a moment.

It is spring in the quiet little town of Le Mans. The meadows round about are carpeted with primroses and bluebells, the thrush and swallow dart from tree to tree, the sun comes out over the peaked housetops shyly and tenderly. Peasants are pouring into the market-place behind the great cathedral, that strange building with a straight and severe Romanesque nave and a Gothic apse bristling with radiating chapels, buttressing, and intricate carvings. Charles de Beaumanoir, bishop of Le Mans, is putting on his gorgeous robes preparatory to reading matins. Beside him stands his protégé, thin, lithe, eager, but with eyes uninspired by the holy music and the old twelfth century glass; with eyes only for the maidens who will soon come to confession. No churchly example is the Abbé Scarron, I fear; but then he is only nineteen. He paints in oils, he plays sweetly on the lute, he can write verses, he dances divinely. What should all this gaiety and talent be doing in the great cathedral, now so solemn and relentless since jongleurs no longer dance before the altar of the Blessed Virgin? The Bishop tries to speak reprovingly to the young Scarron, but alas! he can not. His stories are too good, his jests too broad. The good Bishop drinks this young humor like wine, and takes the Abbé with him everywhere. Scarron, at first merely gay and curious, is rapidly becoming cynical and callous.

It was his father, a "conseiller au Parlement" who shortly after his son's birth in 1610 destined him for the church. It was to this end that he sent him to Beaumanoir at Le Mans. But he had not reckoned on the nature of the lad, nor suspected the enormous talent locked up behind those black, darting eyes. Scarron had not been an Abbe a year when he discovered that he could write. Among all his other gifts this stands out pre-eminently and is being recognized by the literary society of the time. At the neighboring chateaux of Tesse and Lavardin his poems are read aloud to great companies. Marie de Hautefort makes him her protégé, his works are being published. But never does he take them seriously. They are a joke, a gaminerie; he writes that one may laugh, and laughs himself that he has written.

This is very shocking to the artist, good Nicholas Poussin. In 1635, Monseigneur the Bishop set out for Rome, by no means leaving at home his lively young Abbé who might redeem so many dullnesses of the trip. There Scarron, and Poussin and Pierre Mignard met each other and started a lasting friendship. But Poussin could never quite understand Scarron's spirit. Later on he tore up the copies of burlesque plays that the poet sent him, and thought the Abbé was laughing at him when he begged him to paint for him *The Vision of Saint Paul*. That Poussin did it, and beautifully, we can see by the picture now hanging in the Louvre, but he sent it to Scarron with no hope of appreciation.

And yet, there with many others he did Scarron a great injustice. Though the Abbé—now a poet and novelist—could laugh at things the most sacred, could burlesque the classics, then ardently revered, could live with the utmost abandon, he could as well appreciate the tenderest sentiment, the greatest chastity, and the purest art. His writing and talking was often the froth of sheer genius, the bubbling over of abundant wit, and beneath it, hidden from view was a heart full of courage and a mind of clarity and genial appreciation. He is not read indeed, for his works reflect almost entirely save in his *Roman Comique* a farcical spirit of which more than a very little nowadays becomes boring since many of its allusions and causes are now obsolete. But his life reflects the utmost vivacity and courage, and that in the face of crushing and lasting disaster.

In about 1640 Scarron became an incurable paralytic cripple. Despite some rumors that his illness was due to early excesses, and to others that once in order to escape a carnival crowd who

objected to his festival costume (merely having tarred and feathered himself) he took refuge in a swamp and there contracted rheumatism, many have decided that he was cursed with that dreadful disease, tuberculosis of the spine. At any rate from now on he never walked again. The smallest movement was agony to him, and night was one long, wretched staring at the ceiling. Yet did this embitter him or cause him to become morose? Not a bit of it. His spirits rose even higher, his jests became even more pointed. He laughed and joked at the situation, called himself "le roi des malades," and defied other invalids to come and see him and produce symptoms more distressing and blighting than his.

By 1648 he had moved to Paris. At first he lived in the Rue de la Tixanderie near the Place Royal. Now that calm, domestic square, called the Place des Vosges has lost all its former brilliance where court fetes and duels to the death alternated with each other. Then it was the home of the aristocracy, as well as such beautiful creatures as Ninon de L'Enclos and Marion Delorme. Scarron hoped continually for cures, and it was in search of one of these that he left his fashionable quarters for a more modest house on the left bank, on the Rue d'Enfer near the Luxembourg Palace. Here he had a room elaborately hung with yellow damask, and daily as he sat at his inlaid table strewn either with delectable food or sheets and sheets of ink-daubed paper, he held court. Here came the Marechaux de France, the Court, the painters, the players, fashion and finance. The street was continually blocked with carriages, the visits of his friends always overlapped each other. And from the damask hung walls rang such laughter as only French wit can produce. Intellectual, gay and good-humoured the company, but withal dangerous. For the Cardinal de Retz was active here, and many a bitter sarcasm and pungent joke at the expense of Mazarin had its origin in the Rue d'Enfer.

In the earlier days in the Rue Tixanderie the Queen Regent, Anne of Austria, had received Scarron, borne to her on a litter; and was so moved with pity for him that she made him one of her own "Malades," paying him for a while a round number of "ecus" as a pension. But the attacks on her favorite Mazarin were easily traceable to Scarron's racy pen. The Queen was offended, the pension withdrawn, and the poet laughingly accepted this "change of woman's heart." Scarron, daunted was, however, not in the least suppressed and when Mazarin received the dedi-

cation of *Typhon* coldly, the poet promptly changed it to a burlesque on the minister himself. After the "Queen's desertion" of him, ribald pamphlets and unseemly songs upon the Italian favorite became more frequent than ever. This change of fortune did not leave the poet entirely penniless, however, for the Minister Fouquet now proceeded to pay him a pension of 12,000 francs a year, doubtless with no uncertain idea of receiving personal benefit from its results.

There in his exotic rooms Scarron worked incessantly. Between the lively outbursts of company and often while great personages were there, he wrote his plays and poems, reading them aloud and begging for criticism. His plots were usually taken from the Spanish plays of the period, his style was often burlesque to the point of fatigue. But he succeeded, the people clamored for more, and his plays were acted and reacted. When his first play *Jodelet* was produced, Moliere was 23 and had written nothing, Racine was only six. Only Corneille was ahead of him. This play *Jodelet, ou le Maître Valet* took its name from its principal actor, who in the play, though a valet takes the place of his master, an idea borrowed from the Spanish. It would be tedious to repeat his prolific works. They are no longer apropos, and would not be thought remarkably amusing, although many other playwrights have drawn from them. Sodaine was assisted by *La Precaution Inutile*, while the *Vers Hypocrites* inspired Moliere's *Tartuffe*. But undoubtedly the *Roman Comique* is Scarron's greatest work. It is the tale of a troop of strolling players, in the days when the drama went from wayside tent to tavern yard, and when unconventional life and manners were as free and uncomplained of as air. In *Destin* and *L'Estoile*, Scarron created actual people, and his life-long interest in players supplied him with endless curious detail for this story of nomadic life. If anything of Scarron's is still read it is the *Roman Comique*, combining as it does, in almost a Cellini manner, the greatest impropriety with the greatest naïvete.

It was in search of still another cure that Scarron at one time decided to come to America. So absolutely transported does he seem to have been with the idea that I give his verses on the subject in full:

*Il faut porter dans l'Amérique  
Un chagrin si mélancolique,  
Et voir si sous un autre ciel  
Son absinthe deviendrait miel.*

*Là nulle flexion ni goutte,  
Là nul froid que tant je redoute,  
La nuit seulement un vent frais  
Y semble être fait tout exprès  
Contre le chaud de la journée  
Y conserver sa gaieté  
L'automne sa maturité!  
Et l'été, sans brûler les herbes  
Chaque mois y donne des gerbes  
Et tous deux des fruits ravissants  
A la fois murs, nes et naissants!*

But that plan was given up, and as "cure" after "cure" failed to ease the pain, Scarron ceased struggling to get well, but redoubled his efforts to live well. It was at this time, one day in the year 1650, while he sat in his armchair surrounded by books and papers, that a stranger was announced to him. She was a young girl of 14 who came with an introduction from a friend in order to tell Scarron about the West Indies where he thought of going. But she was so gauche, so ill at ease that after gazing at the poet for a few moments in awe-struck silence, she burst into tears. This did naught but enhance her beauty, and the worn and cynical novelist felt a flush of tender pleasure in this youthful exhibition of shyness. He drew the girl's story from her. And as she gradually gained courage and wiped away the tears, she told him that she was Françoise d'Aubigné, a grand-daughter of that valiant soldier, novelist and historian Hueguenot Theodore Agrippa d'Aubigné. Her father had died, leaving her mother, her brother and herself penniless, and had it not been for Jesuit alms at La Rochelle they would have starved. She told him more, how she had been sent to her aunt who was a Marchioness at Neuillant, and that there, with a guard on her nose to protect her from the sun's rays, and a volume of the Georgics of Pybac in her pocket to learn by heart, she had cared for the turkeys day by day. She told him too, primly severe in her attitude, that the good Ursuline nuns at Niort had caused her to become "very catholic," and that at present, living in the Rue des Tournelles with her mother, she eked out a living by needle work for fine ladies. Whether her purity touched his heart, or her beauty, we shall not know, but certain it is that shortly afterwards he was writing her beautiful and tender love letters; and in May of 1652, when she was just sixteen and he forty-two, she married him.

Then ensued eight years of pure happiness. For him she was all that was radiant and angelic. He had warned her that

he had nothing to offer her "save immortality," but to her he was wit, charm, enchantment itself. Soon the court which grouped itself about Scarron recognized the skill and finesse in his wife's conversation, and her witty repartees came to be as generally applauded as the poet's own. Her mind, however, was ever against immorality, and when the company became too lively, or the guests were too notorious she would either "search out her little muff" and go for a walk, or retire to her own apartments. Her wishes were always respected, and her success in improving the tone of Scarron's levees was as profound as the failure of Celeste Palaiseau, a penniless lady of good family who, in 1649 lived in Scarron's household and attempted to regulate the gaiety of his parties. Indeed so completely did she dominate Scarron's friends that one of the most scandalous of them wrote in a letter: "If I had to choose whether I would displease her or the Queen, it would be the Queen." At 25, as Madame Scarron, Madame de Scudery wrote of her: She is "tall, with a lovely figure and a fine air of distinction. Her pure complexion was exquisitely white, with hair of a light chestnut, a well-shaped nose, delicately modelled lips, the most charming eyes imaginable . . . Her popularity was therefore due to an unusual combination of the virtue which commands our reverence with the wit and beauty which attract our attention." The virtue became less pronounced perhaps, but the power remained just as great when later in her life Francoise d'Aubigné Scarron became the exacting and unscrupulous Madame de Maintenon. In the various and diverting records of "Queen Maintenon's" subsequent career, the carefree Scarron is seldom referred to, or merely implied as when the lady in her capacity as the governess of Louis the Fourteenth's illegitimate children is mentioned as "the widow Scarron." And yet she deeply loved the crippled poet and sincerely mourned him. The low wainscoted chapel at St. Gervais in Paris, where he is said to have been buried, was the scene of many a mournful pilgrimage on her part. No trace of tombstone or monument remains to be seen, but the touching epitaph he wrote for himself still remains, requesting pity for the first and only time in death:

*Celui qui ci maintenant dort  
Fit plus de pitié que d'endie  
Et souffrit mille fois la mort  
Avant que de perdre la vie.*

*Passants, ne faites pas de bruit,  
Et garde Vous qu'il ne s'éveille,  
Car voici la première nuit  
Que le pauvre Scarron sommeille.*

Poor Scarron sleeps, his works unread, his plays unacted, his mots forgotten. Only a few places wonderingly recall his name, the chapel at St. Gervais, the Place Royale, his home in Le Mans. There the lovely sixteenth century stone house, with its high-pointed tourelle and amusingly decorated gable-end, still bears his name. Behind the wall there is a little garden where Scarron may have paced out his gallant and oft-time ribald verses. The gay little house laughs across the sunny square at the great majestic cathedral. It will laugh on through the years, for it seems to have imbibed something of the irrepressible and enduring spirit of Paul Scarron.

## IN MEMORIAM

BY A. H. WARE

My heart lies buried in this new-made tomb,  
Shut in from life with my beloved dead.  
Ah, that my body lay so close instead,  
Turning to dust beside thee in that gloom!  
The sun which warms this green turf warms not thee,  
Thou can'st not see the grasses o'er thee wave,  
Nor smell the fragrant buds upon thy grave,  
Nor hear my voice, that calls so brokenly!  
Love, let me in, to clasp thy hands and feet,  
To press my lips upon thy shrunken eyes!  
There is than this no paradise more sweet,  
To lie, myself, where my beloved lies,  
And from his narrow bed no more to rise,  
But in long death to share his winding sheet!



# THE GOOD SAINTE ANNE

BY HELEN GILBERT

## PERSONS OF THE PLAY

JEANNE LE BONTE, *a girl of fifteen.*  
MADAME LE BONTE, *her grandmother.*  
MADAME PELWY, *a neighbor.*  
XAVIER CORTEAU, *a young habitant boy.*

*The play takes place in a remote part of Canada.*

*The curtain rises on the kitchen of GRANDMERE LE BONTE'S cottage. A door down R leads into the only other room the place possesses, and another door L Back leads outdoors. Near it is a small closed window. A big tiled stove and woodbox and a little straight chair take up most of the room in the corner R. The Grandmother's chair is drawn down R almost in front of the door. A bench and small table balance it L. A little statue of Ste. Anne on a bracket occupies a prominent place on the wall Center Back. Before it is a small candle burning in a red glass. A couple of pictures of the Sacred Heart ornament the walls. Everything about the room is old and worn, but scrupulously clean.*

*The stage is empty when the curtain rises. JEANNE, coming up the path outside, is heard sobbing. She comes in L, panting from the climb up the hill and rubbing her eyes. She clutches a little bunch of wild flowers in one hand. She crosses stage and peers anxiously thru the door R. The head of GRANDMERE LE BONTE appears around it. She shakes her head sharply at JEANNE, says Sh-h! and withdraws.*

*With a little sound of commiseration, JEANNE turns softly around and tiptoes over to the shrine. Making the sign of the cross, she lays the flowers reverently in offering before the Sainte. Kneels before the shrine.*

*Jeanne (Pattering it).—Glorious Sainte Anne, thou hast shown thyself so powerful in thy intercession, so tender and compassionate toward those who honor thee and invoke thee in suffering and distress, that I cast myself at thy feet with perfect confidence, and beseech thee most humbly and earnestly to take me under thy protection in my present necessities, and to obtain for me the favor that I desire.*

(Enter R the GRANDMOTHER, coming to pray at the shrine, agitatedly fumbling over her beads. Sees JEANNE and stops. Nods, crosses herself, and sits on bench R. Mutters over beads.) Cease not to intercede for me until my request is granted.

(GRANDMOTHER nods.)

*Jeanne* (Very earnestly, looking up at the Sainte).—Make my sister well! Make my sister well! And please Sainte Anne, be soon. Please be soon! Amen. (Springs up, light in her face.) Now she be well! (Turning to the old lady. Exultantly:) You here, Grandemere? I 'ave pray to the Sainte, now she get well! some'ing tell me!

*la Grandemere* (Shaking her head).—'Ow you t'ink thet, Jeanne?

*Jeanne* (Standing by her).—I feel it in my 'eart! I mak' some long prayer. Now I know!

*la Grandemere*.—But Jeanne, wit' all the candle' we have burn' to Sainte, and the cure to bless her, an' mass wit' all the bell', she no better. All the time she turn and cry . . . cry . . . Ah-h! . . . an' such fevaire. W'at you t'ink, Jeanne, maybe we get from beeg citee . . . (hesitation) . . . doctaire?

*Jeanne* (Shocked).—But no! 'Ow you shall say that, Grandemere? 'Ave we not the Sainte? (Indicating the shrine.) The Sainte will make her well!

*la Grandemere*.—She 'ave been seek pretty long time, Jeanne.

*Jeanne*.—Maybe she do not feel so good now, but you shall see! One leetle w'ile—one hour maybe now, we wait . . . Then see what She will do! (Falling on her knees by the old lady.) Ah, Grandemere, w'y will you not bleeve?

*la Grandemere*.—Maybe . . . maybe!

*Jeanne*.—St. Anne can do evert'ing!

(Brisk knock on door L. JEANNE opens it. Enter MADAME PELWY.)

*Jeanne*.—Ah! Madame Pelwy! Entre, voisinne, entre! The GRANDMOTHER rises.)

*Pelwy*.—Merci. (Advancing. (To the GRANDMOTHER) How Anne seem today?

(MADAME LE BONTE shakes her head and falls back into the chair.)

*Jeanne*.—She be better prettv soon. The Sainte have promise'!

*Pelwy.*—You tell not'ing by that. (*To the GRANDMOTHER.*) She is not so good, n-est-ce-pas?

*Jeanne* (*Pushing between them*).—But she better! I show you! (*Runs off R.*)

*Pelwy.*—What she know? Hier, Anne look to me very sick. I see on your face she is not so good today. W'at you mus' do, you mus' have one more mass!

*la Grandmere.*—Another mass? O Mother of Mary!

(*Reenter JEANNE, finger on lip.*)

*Jeanne.*—W'at I tell you? She sleep so nice—so sweet! Lak one leetle bird she lie 'sleep! She 'ave not done that . . . 'ow long, Grandemere? Me, I will watch. W'en she wake, now, she be well! (*And runs off again.*)

*Pelwy* (*With a grunt*).—Hein! I go myself to see! (*Twitches off into room R. and reenters immediately. In exasperation:*) Her head hot. She no better! You will kill her with that child! Mais oui, she sleep . . . but wait! It is too soon to be so sure. Me, I would have another mass. One wit' all the bell.' You cannot do too much.

*la Grandemere.*—You would not bleeve w'at we 've done. Already the cure 'ave read mass four time' . . . we 'ave the light' . . . (*on shrine*) . . . you see . . .

*Pelwy.*—W'at that little Sainte know? W'at you mus' have is one grande mass . . . cure . . . on cathedrale . . . to grande Sainte on high altaire!

*la Grandemere* (*Getting up; Irresolutely*).—Already we have spend for mass too much money. We can spare no more.

*Pelwy* (*Following her up*).—But she no better! 'Ow you t'ink the good Sainte Anne do for you what she will no' do for Madame du Pont? Her Babette, she lie lak Anne, fifteen day' sick. They have more prayer than you to leetle Sainte, an' she not well yet!

*la Grandemere* (*Stopping*).—That sweet child! C'est terrible! How old she be, now?

*Pelwy* (*Counts awkwardly on fingers*).—I think . . . cinq . . . six . . . sev-en. But come. You will 'ave the mass? See (*Gathering up her shawl.*) I shall go for you!

*la Grandemere.*—I have only the money from la petite Jeanne dowree.

*Pelwy.*—Two daughter' are better than one, even wit' grande dowree.

*la Grandemere* (*Takes small box from shelf under Sainte and*

*slowly counts*).—Trois . . . quatre . . . and there!  
(*As the fingers close over it.*) You shall say, "It is for Anne le Bonte, a high mass to Sainte Herself on cathedrale. At once!"

(*Waves her out.*)

*Pelwy*.—Mais oui. I shall go so quick!

(*Hurries out L. MADAME LE BONTE looks into the box, shakes her head over the few remaining coins, carefully closes and replaces it. Sits on chair R and mumbles over her beads. There comes a timid knock on the door L, followed immediately by a much louder one and XAVIER CORTEAU clatters in thru it excitedly waving a small package and shouting:*

*Xavier*.—Jeanne! Jeanne!

*la Grandemere* (*Starting up*).—Sh-h-h! Mon Dieu! Do you not know she is sick?

*Xavier* (*In alarm*).—Jeanne?

*la Grandemere*.—Mais non. The sistaire!

*Xavier* (*Relieved. Takes off his cap*).—W'at she 'ave? Jeanne in there too?

*la Grandemere* (*Coming up to him*).—It is Anne. T'ree day' . . . t'ree night now, she no' eat . . . no sleep . . . not'ing!

*Xavier* (*Staring at the door*).—Cure, he come?

*la Grandemere*.—Yes'day. But she no' change. Today he come, she still the same!

*Xavier*.—You have burn some candle' to Sainte?

*la Grandemere* (*Crossing herself*).—Ah, oui oui. Deux . . . trois . . . ever' day some more, and yet . . . (*shrugs and sighs.*)

*Xavier*.—For la Viele Lizette, on petite village, her ol' bon homme 'ave grande mass, wit' all the bell', an' w'en he was come back home, she was well!

*la Grandemere*.—C'est ca, Xavier! So 'ave we too. But now Madame Pelwy, la bonne voisinne, she get for her one on cathedrale, before the Sainte Herself.

*Xavier*.—Bien. The Sainte will cure her. Is she not name' for Sainte?

(*With bent heads, both cross themselves. In doing so, XAVIER drops his package. Both start to pick it up.*)

*Xavier* (*Snatching it up*).—It is for Jeanne. A gif' from Madame Leevingston'!

*la Grandemere*.—'Ow shall we receive gif's now?

*Xavier*.—It is for Jeanne!

*la Grandemere (With a thought).*—Maybe it is a sign!

*Xavier.*—Mais oui. (*Fearful and delighted.*) We shall get her out, hein?

*la Grandemere.*—Oui, oui. But softly.

*Xavier (Goes toward the door; stops and wrings his cap; goes back to the GRANDMOTHER).*—You do it!

*She (Pushing him up to the door).*—Mais non. Polison. Go on!

*Xavier (Plunges up to it, stammers).*—Jeanne! (*And retreats hastily all the way across stage.*) Enter JEANNE.)

*Jeanne.*—'Ow I shall leave her? W'at you want? (*Demurely.*) Comment vous porte vous, Xavier Corteau.

*Xavier.*—Comment vous porte vous, Mademoiselle Jeanne. (*Holding it behind him.*) I have come to bring you somet'ing. When you know who it is from, you will fly out of the house!

(*The GRANDMOTHER crosses and looks into door R; softly draws it almost together and comes back.*)

*Jeanne (Trying to reach package).*—Tell me, Xavier. Tell! Tell!

*Xavier (Laughs, waves it over her head as she tries to get it. Letting her get it).*—From your friend the American lady!

*Jeanne.*—O! For me! Grandemere, look! (*Examining it, reads.*) Mees Jeanne le Bonte, Lac du Bonnet, Manitoba, Dominion of Canada. (*Laughs; gives it a delighted little shake.*) It is, for sure, Xavier!

*la Grandemere (Trying to look).*—Open! Open! Be quick! (*She sits on bench L. GRANDEMERE beside her. XAVIER watches adoringly from Center. She takes out a necklace of blue beads and holds it up. They all exclaim in admiration.*) O merveille!

*Xavier.*—By damn!

*Jeanne (Holding it up to one and the other).*—Is it not beautiful! (*Turning.*) Surely the Sainte has done this.

*la Grandemere.*—And but wait!

(*Hobbles off into room R. as fast as she can go. Contemplating the necklace, the other two do not notice. She comes back at once, hurrying and delighted!*)

*Jeanne (Starting for the door).*—I show Anne!

*la Grandemere (Preventing).*—But no! It is as you say, Jeanne! She still sleep! Already she is better. You see, Xavier, it was a sign!

(*Crosses herself and mutters a prayer of thanks to the Sainte.*)

*Jeanne (Coming back, picks up a card fallen from the package;*

*spells out the inscription slowly, whispering the words. Cries out sharply*).—She is gone!

*Xavier and the Grandmother*.—Who? Who? What?

*Jeanne*.—Now I t'ink I am dead!

*la Grandemere*.—Tell! What? Who have gone, Jeanne?

*Jeanne*.—My friend!

*Xavier*.—W'at she mean?

*la Grandemere* (*Going round to her other side*).—I do not know. W'at you say, Jeanne? 'Ow the lady go, so quick like that?

*Xavier*.—Who go?

*Jeanne*.—Madame . . . Madame Leevingston' . . . she say . . . (*reading*;) To my little friends Jeanne. To remember the happy summer we spent on Lac du Bonnet . . . Ah . . . h! how terrible' she mus' go! She has not yet climb' up stair' to shrine . . . she has not . . . O w'y mus' she go? . . . W'y mus' . . . !

(*Sobs on the GRANDMOTHER'S arm.*)

*The Old lady* (*Patting her*).—There . . . e! Perhaps she will come back nex' summer, Jeanne!

*Jeanne* (*Examining the paper and the card*).—Mais non. She does not say that. She has gone! She will nevaire come back. In her min' me . . . you . . . all village she 'ave known, they will lak blow out . . . die!

*Xavier*.—But you have still the bead', Jeanne.

*Jeanne* (*Suddenly comforted*).—But yes. (*Clutching it up to her throat*). Part of her will be always here now!

*la Grandemere*.—Come. I put it on your neck. (*Does so*) There!

*Jeanne* (*Solemnly*).—It is mine. For me. To keep always.

*Xavier* (*Wringing his cap*).—It look ver' nice, Jeanne, on your neck lak that!

(*There is a little sound from the room. Both JEANNE and the GRANDMOTHER start toward it.*)

*Jeanne*.—Ah . . . h! . . . and me! I forget l ke this!

(*Starts to run out. The GRANDMOTHER stops her with a smile or the two young people.*)

*la Grandemere*.—But I will go, Jeanne. (*And exits.*)

*Jeanne* (*Crosses stage to bench L. fingering the beads*).—How can I thank the Sainte, Xavier? She give me somet'ing off my frien' to keep for evaire. She mus' go 'way, but I have this.

*Xavier (Across stage).*—I t'ink you lak American lady pretty much, Jeanne. W'y you lak her?

*Jeanne.*—You forget. She was my friend. (*Fingering it lovingly.*) Sometime she 'as wear it on her neck . . . I cannot think yet it can be for me, Xavier. (*Slowly.*) Nobody can take it away.

*Xavier (Watching her).*—No. Jeanne, you are happy, n'est-ce-pas?

*Jeanne.*—Mais oui! Sainte Anne she mak' my sister well . . . I 'ave mos' precious t'ing on earth

*Xavier.*—Jeanne, w'en you happy . . . lak that . . . I t'ink one t'ousan' bird, he sing! (*Enter the GRANDMOTHER.*)

*la Grandemere.*—Jeanne! She wake up now! She want you!

*Jeanne (Springs up).*—I show her now! (*Runs into room, still clutching the necklaces. XAVIER stares disconsolately after her.*)

*la Grandemere (Uneasily, going to window).*—One is happy. (*With a change of tone.*) I not know w'at we shall do, Xavier. She wake no better. Same fevaire . . . she so weak now she cannot turn . . . If this grande mass ease not her soul, God help us! . . . w'at is left? Look Xavier (*Points to door.*) If you see Madame Pelway come back so soon. (*He starts. Off stage a bell strikes. Both start, and listen. He stops. She whispers.*) Mon Dieu! (*Sharply.*) Count! (*She counts on fingers in growing fear and apprehension, whispering it.*) Trois . . . quatre! . . . Cinq! . . . Six! . . . Sept . . . .(*Silence.*)

*Both.*—Babette! (*Cross themselves and murmur under the breath.*) May their souls with the mercy of God rest in peace.

*la Grandemere (Sinking down on a chair, hides her face).*—Mary Mother, the poor neighbor! (*Sobs.*)

*Xavier (Awkwardly. Going up to her).*—Maybe she 'ad not the grande mass, lak you. (*Steps are heard outside.*) Ah, there! Now I 'ear her come! (*He opens the door. Enter briskly MADAME PELWY.*)

*Pelwy.*—Ha! Comment vous porte vous, Xavier Corteau! *la Grandemere (Seizing her hands).*—You 'ave told him? He will have the mass?

*Pelwy.*—Qui. Qui. But yes. At once. Did you hear the bell. La pauvre Babette! How *Anne* seem now?

*la Grandemere.*—Ah neighbor. I am afraid!

*Pelwy.*—Who with her? Jeanne? (*Impatiently.*) But she

is too small! You mus' go yourself . . . (*Sitting L and taking knitting from her pocket.*) or I!

*la Grandemere.*—I will go. (*And hurries off.*)

*Pelwy (With a sly look at XAVIER).*—It seem to me ver' strange it not Jeanne who seek . . . Anne, she name' for Sainte.

*Xavier (Bristling).*—Hein? Not Jeanne! (*She laughs. He adds to cover his embarrassment.*) The good Sainte will cure her.

*Pelwy (Clicking her needles).*—Babette had prayer' too. Babette . . . (*Shrugs and rolls up her eyes.*)

*Xavier (Uncomfortably).*—But we 'ave a sign. From Madame Leevingston' . . . some bead' . . .

*Pelwy.*—You tell me so, Xavier!

(*Enter JEANNE, unobserved by XAVIER, still wearing the necklace. PELWY goes on in apparent unconsciousness.*) Too bad they had not'ing to offer the Sainte. You know, Xavier, on high altair it is only the t'ing from the heart that count. I 'ave heard in village of Madame Sinshegrin, her bon homme mos' die. She mak' offering to Sainte, price one charette of hay, an' then he worse! And she give all the money . . . all . . . all she have in house, an' he lie lak dead man. Cure, he say that not it. She 'ave some other t'ing more dear. (*JEANNE clutches her necklace.*) Then she give wedding ring off her hand, and w'en it lie on altair, fevair she break, and he sleep lak enfant!

*Jeanne (Coming forward. Sharply).*—'Ow you say—w'at she hol' mos' dear?

*Pelwy (turns, eyes necklace.)*

*Pelwy.*—Ha! From la grande dame! (*Gets up to get her fingers on it. JEANNE backs away.*) Voila! (*Turns it greedily thru her old hands. Grunts.*) Hein! *Chez nous* we have not'ing so fine, lak that! You put *that* on high altair, I t'ink she get well pretty queek!

*Jeanne (Twitching away).*—Mais non! Mais non! The Sainte will cure her! This was a sign from the Sainte she get better . . . she promise . . . Xavier . . .

*Pelwy (Triumphantly).*—An' how Anne seem? You tell me that.

*Jeanne.*—I t'ink . . . maybe she better . . . she more still . . . she no' turn . . . (*XAVIER starts and cross himself.*) . . . not say . . . no word!

*Pelwy.*—Hein. I will go see. (*Over her shoulder.*) An' she seek so many days too!



*Jeanne (Stung).*—W'y you shall tell me that? 'Ave you take care of her?

*Pelwy.*—*Sacre bleu*, what a tongue! (*And sweeps off stage.*)  
There is a little pause. XAVIER is pulling at his cap. JEANNE fingers her beads unhappily. Holds them up and looks at them and cries out.)

*Jeanne.*—I cannot give it up! Xavier, you do not think I mus'?

*Xavier (Slowly).*—I t'ink . . . we 'ave trust in the Sainte, Jeanne.

*Jeanne.*—It is not some bead, Xavier. It is some of her! You do not t'ink I mus'?

*Xavier (More slowly, wringing his cap).*—I t'ink w'at we said. It is . . . a sign . . . from the Sainte . . . she get well.

*Jeanne.*—You want me to have it?

*Xavier (Takes her in his arms).*—Jeanne, Jeanne! I want you to have everything in the world!

*Jeanne (Still clutching it up to her, looks up at him).*—W'en you say that, some leetle laugh, he run in me lak fire, I not die, never!

*Xavier.*—Jeanne!

*Jeanne (Almost singing it).*—You say I shall no' give it up! You say I shall no' give it up! Xavier, Xavier, say it some more! (*Enter the GRANDMOTHER, wringing her hands and sobbing.*)

*The Grandmother.*—Sh-h! Jeanne, Jeanne! O she is so seek! You will no' talk so much! Jeanne . . . Xavier . . . what shall we do?

*Jeanne (Holding her beads).*—I can not! I can not! (*Enter PELWY.*)

*Pelwy.*—Shall I get the priest? Shall I get the priest?

*Jeanne (Turning it over her fingers like a rosary).*—I can not. I can not! Xavier . . .

*Pelwy.*—Jeanne. what you have done! . . . She will die!

*Jeanne.*—Not DIE! The Sainte . . .

*Pelwy.*—You do not love your sister!

*Jeanne.*—But my friend too! (*Clutches her arm.*) You say I give it up, she get well sure?

*Pelwy.*—O ganache, of course! Xavier shall take it. Come Xavier!

*Jeanne.*—Xavier have said he t'ink . . . w'y you not spik, Xavier? Spik NOW!

Xavier.—Jeanne, I—I—O Jeanne—the Sainte . . .

Jeanne.—You have not said that before! Xavier (*Shaking his arm.*) you shall say “no!” NO, Xavier!

Xavier.— . . . Jeanne . . . I can’t (*Turns away.*)  
(JEANNE *hides her face passionately on the necklace. There is a moment of silence. She gives a sob and lifts her head.*)

Jeanne (*Turning to the SAINTE with a queer little courtesy.*)—  
Sainte Anne . . . I have geev . . . it to you . . .  
on my . . . sistair . . . she get well queek! (*Pushes it into XAVIER’S hands and falls on her knees before the SAINTE.*)

Xavier (*From the doorway, shaking his fist at the neighbor.*)—  
I say that was too bad, by damn! (PELWY, *professionally clicking her rosary, sits L.*)

Pelwy.—Hein! I t’ink I say prayer’ for one beeg fool Xavier Corteau! (JEANNE *slowly gets up to her feet and goes over to the window. Presently.*)

Jeanne.—Now Xavier run pas’ house of Peter le Fleur . . .  
. . . now he come on Lucille Sanschegrin . . . now I t’ink  
he come up step’ . . . in door cathedrale . . . (*crosses herself. In growing exultation.*) . . . walk up aisle . . .  
now . . . Now he lay on altair! Ah, Sainte Anne! (*Turns to SAINTE.*) (*There is a little sound from the room. She turns to the window again. Presently.*) I do not see him come back yet. (*The GRANDMOTHER creeps in from the sickroom crying, unable to speak. JEANNE turns. The neighbor jumps to her feet.*)

Pelwy.—She’s dead! (*The GRANDMOTHER nods, falls on her knees before the shrins and sobs, rocking her body forward and back.*)

Jeanne (*Shrilly.*)—Mother of God, No! (*Rushes into the room.*)

Pelwy (*Horrified.*)—And without the sacrement! (*Seizes crucifix from wall and runs out with it.*) (*Reenter XAVIER, panting. At sight of the GRANDMOTHER he throws up his hand as to ward off the sight of her and falls on his knees before the SAINTE. Reenter JEANNE, her hands over her eyes.*)

Jeanne (*Turning on him.*)—YOU LIED!

Xavier (*Up.*)—I did not, by God! I put it there! The priest saw me!

*The Old Grandmother (Sobbing and crossing herself.)*—Ah, she is dead, she is dead! (XAVIER *crosses himself.*)

Jeanne (*Lifts her hand with the gesture for the dead, suddenly stops.*)

Jeanne.—She is not—who is dead—in the house!

*Xavier.*—Who, then?  
*Jeanne (Passionately).*—*The good Sainte Anne! (And hurls  
 the figure down on the floor.)*

QUICK CURTAIN

## VICTORY

BY JANET PRESTON

The hills are dauntless prophets;  
 They bare their breasts to hail,  
 Or beneath a beating noon  
 Lie tremulous and pale;  
 But all the day's fierce, changing moods  
 Leave them unconquered when  
 They fold away their weariness  
 And dream the dawn again.

If I could be as still as they,  
 I might be ready for the Day.

And seers, too, are moths that sleep  
 The winter-long, slow hours  
 In narrow cells that hug the ground,  
 Blind to sun and flowers;  
 For they never dream that these  
 Strait dungeons of their night  
 Are measures of their destinies:  
 Wings are meant for flight.

If I could have such faith as this,  
 I, too, might rend my chrysalis.

# POETRY, MUSIC AND LIFE

BY CLAUDE C. H. WILLIAMSON

*Awake, Aeolian lyre, awake,  
And give to rapture all thy trembling strings,  
From Helicon's harmonious springs  
A thousand rills their mazy progress take.*  
—Thomas Gray.

*Poetry, the hand that wrings,  
Bruised albeit at the strings,  
Music from the soul of things.*  
—D. M. Dolben.

Each age has its own distinctive spirit, its proper virtues, and its proper vices—it has its own sciences, its inventions, its literature, and its policy. In substantial matters the ages are pretty much on the same level. The history of the world is a record of conflict and vicissitude amid the struggle. Peace and persecution, triumph and defeat are chronicled over and over again; brilliant achievements and disgraceful scandals appear on every page; progress is made by means of reverses, and griefs and consolations are as ancient as the garden of Paradise.

Now literature, by its very nature, deals with human life, while physical science, by its very nature, deals with matter which, if it has life at all, has at least no life which is human. The men of science have done great things for us in the last hundred years, but the greatest of all they cannot do. It is not in their province, but in that of the Bible and Homer and Shakespeare and Milton. We hope it will always be possible to pay a right attention, to pay perhaps more than we have paid, to the physical sciences without sacrificing the claims of literature. We are not going to spend all the next generation in the making of explosives; and even if we were, it can only, at the very worst, be a small part of the people whose technical knowledge or ignorance will affect their making.

Poetry is the outcome of a deeply imaginative brooding on life—on the strangeness of sleep and the dreams it brings, on the most curious riddle of death, the loveliness of childhood, the profundity of human consciousness. But this is not the absorption of a mere spectator, of an observant mind and eye taking

notes which may eventually be cashed at the bank of art. It is full of the loving tenderness and passion of an eager and sensitive participant, and springs direct from an individual experience. It will usually be found that people who do not care for poetry have never learned to listen for the music in it, often have never realized that it is there. Verse, far more than prose, speaks to the ear as well as to the mind; it speaks to the mind through the ear as a picture speaks to the mind through the eye; yet how often has any one of us heard verse said so that he would not have preferred reading it to himself? Most will answer never; and that answer proves that the saying of verse is a lost art, an art of which we have to discover the very principles before we can teach it. This, then, must be our first aim; to reveal poetry as melody and to help the children to read it musically, almost as one teaches them to read the melody of a musical score.

To play the piano it is necessary to learn to play notes evenly. Only after that can one learn phrasing and expression. So, to say verse, one should learn to say the syllables clearly and evenly without trying to express what is meant by them. It is for want of this preliminary training in mere technique that we do not even know how verse ought to be said. We begin with the effort at expression before we have learnt our scales, before we know how to speak: for verse clearly demands much finer speaking than ordinary talk, as it is itself much finer speech than ordinary talk. And the consequence is that we either turn the verse into prose with coarse expression or swamp all expression in chanting the verse.

Poets and musicians are of a society in which men will at any moment gather, fighting or controversy or making love or politics, into a quiet room to make music or listen to it. The other world, for them, is not something to which you pay formal compliments in church, or which you try to disprove with the envy of those who have never seen it; it is acknowledged, because known, by all; it shapes gardens as it shapes music and verse; and at any moment they could escape into its peace.

The justification of verse is the stress of thought and feeling which cannot be naturally expressed in any other fashion than in its particular rhythm and music. Just as an impulse of life, delight and happiness makes a child dance and clap its hands, a pretty girl put on bright colours, or, as it is a pleasure to think, makes a blackbird sing at dawn, a nightingale on the edge of the dark, and a foal gambol in a meadow, so with poetry. Pulse of

movement, cadence and rhyme, balance and echo and melody, are even more closely its expression than the meaning of its words. Poets, however, being less instinctive creatures, sometimes mistake the mere desire to write for the impulse. Then emulation, moves them rather than the spirit, and unless at such times their critical powers should come to the aid of their creative, and talent befriend genius, they borrow the decorations of verse for the mere adornment of prose.

When a man of culture buys a picture or a set of tunes for a pianola, not because he likes them, but because he thinks it is art, at most what he enjoys is not the picture or music itself, but the thought that he is cultured enough to enjoy it. That thought comes between him and the picture, and makes it impossible for him to experience the picture at all. And so he is ready to accept anything that the painter chooses to give him, if only he believes the painter to be a real artist. This is bad for the painter, who has every temptation to become a charlatan, and to think of his art as a sacred mystery which no one can understand but himself and a few other painters of his own sect.

In this matter the man of culture is just like the vulgar herd, as he would call them. Their attitude to the arts of use is the same as his attitude to pictures. They do not buy furniture or china because they like them, but because the shopman persuades them that what they buy is the fashion. Or perhaps they recognise it themselves as the fashion and therefore instantly believe that they like it. In both cases the buyer is hypnotized; he has lost the faculty of finding out for himself what he really likes, and his mind, being empty of real affection is open to the seven devils of suggestion. He cannot enjoy directly any beautiful thing. All he can enjoy is the belief that he is enjoying it. . . . The greater the life the greater its demand for poetry. Our lives are still very small for the most part; but if, as we hope, they grow greater after this great experience, they will not be satisfied with photography and picture palaces and newspapers. They will need and demand art and drama and literature, and, still more, poetry, which is the spirit of them all.—(*The Times* Literary Supplement.)

We must remember that thought in poetry is of two kinds, the thought which deals explicitly with the problems of life, and the thought which is implicit in every worthy presentation of life. There is no reason one should be exalted at the expense of the other. Without generalizing on the subject we may roughly say that implicit thought is more proper to lyrical poetry than explicit thought. A poem which is avowedly philosophical is not necessarily more productive of thought than one which

renders a profound emotional or physical experience. If we then ask whether poetry is a matter of fancy or imagination, we reply that it is a reality, though a poetical or musical mood can occur without reference to art. For are we not all conscious of a poetical, pictorial or musical idea which comes to the mind, but for various possible reasons is not thrown into proper shape. Poetry and music should not only weave its spell about its hearer, but never relinquish it. The greater artist is the man who instantly snatches his audience away into his own world, and keeps exploring ever more deeply into the imaginative reasons of his mind. Art is the sun and not the wind to the young traveller, persuading him with its warmth and light to throw away the cloak of dullness. He may never be a poet to the world; but, if he learns to love poetry, he will be one to himself and friends with all others who love poetry. A man whose taste is for bad poetry can only improve it by reading good, plain prose. He must become rational before he can enjoy the real beauties of literature. It has been said that painting, poetry and music are the three ascending stages of man's highest expression. Painting, poetry and music represent respectively the transcription of nature, its translation and its transcendence: they are "respectively the initial, medial and terminal arts." In painting we wake to the consciousness of things other than ourselves; in poetry, to both the thought of self and things other than self; but only in music can we rise from an esthetic self-knowledge to the fuller consciousness of the cosmic Over-Self.

In the realm of active reality plastic art is the material and presentational "what," poetry the mental and methodical "how," and music the causative and moral "why," of universal beauty. They are, respectively, the definite mould and matter, the less definite manner and means, and—from the physical point of view—the more indefinite motive of moral activity. In other words, they constitute deed, design, and desire. Or, to put it otherwise, painting represents the deed as done, poetry the doing of the deed, and music the motive which prompts the will to do. And we might add that, in a still wider connection, the "what" becomes the scientific, the "how" the artistic, and the "why" the moralistic view of reality.

If we ask what is the use of poetry to children and why they are not educated at all if they do not learn to enjoy it, the answer is that, through poetry, they learn to love what they ought to do and to do what they love to do. What poetry expresses in sound

as well as sense, in words that are made flesh, is the permanent and satisfying values of the human mind, not merely those values that are imposed on us by moral training, but those which are a natural appetite of the spirit.

Why should I strive through weary moons  
To make my music true?  
Only the dead men know the tunes  
The live world dances to.

Poetic and musical forms have many points of contact. They are due to a variety of causes: to the fact that similar principles of rhythm and metre control alike the artist in words and the artist in musical sounds, and to the fact that the close association of voice and verse has mirrored poetic forms in the musical organism. Thus the madrigal led to the instrumental fugue, and the song became the "song without words," or the "lyric piece." Again, one may trace a parallel action of a single principle in the two arts without being able to state with certainty that the one influenced the other. One could not say that the poetic rondel produced the musical rondo, for the principle of a persistent return to one idea is found to be the most primitive method of obtaining a musical shapeliness. At the same time it would not be safe to assert that in this instance music has given a form to poetry. The most vital appeal of music is to the emotions—its sanction to be found in the impressions conveyed. Poetry which finds nothing in any way valuable in the world could not even pretend to be poetry at all. Art may be false by suppressing obvious and general values in its search for those which are neglected and obscure. The satirist, ever intent on his own virtue, forgets that there are even yet honest men and women; the ecstatic worshipper sees only a maimed saint, and blots out heaven and earth with tawdry gilding; the psychological novelist, determined to show our democracy with the most morbidly vicious, forgets that there is a windy, outdoor life where brotherhood is natural.

As a people we have shown no great turn for art. We have not produced many great artists, and we have generally admired them for anything rather than their art. Gray, for instance, was an admirable artist as well as a fine interpreter of some of our most universal feelings; but he owes all his popularity to the latter. Tennyson was a master craftsman; but the Victorian public which worshipped him cared nothing at all for that and everything for his domesticity and seriousness, his English



attitude of common sense and compromise in politics and religion. Milton owed his great vogue much to his creative genius, more perhaps to his supposed justifying of the ways of God to men, hardly at all to his consummate mastery of his art. It is perfectly true that literature is in theory no more written with a view to being read in silence than is music. As much as a musician, a writer creates in the medium of sound. Some people can read a symphony from a score, without requiring that it should be performed; some people have so little practice in the reading of a book that they cannot *imagine* the sounds represented by the printed words and need to say them aloud in order to understand. Between the musician who reads a full score in silence, and the child who murmurs to himself the words he is reading, there is every possible gradation of this power to imagine sound; and it may be that the power at its highest is not much more common among readers of books than it is among readers of scores. For those in whom this faculty of hearing with the mind's ear is not extremely acute, reading a poem aloud would naturally heighten appreciation, for they would then first hear it aright.

It has long been obvious to musicians that little light could be shed upon the mental processes by which music is made by anyone who did not himself possess some creative musical capacity; and it has been obvious to the world at large that musicians are rarely equipped with the training in mental analysis and scientific thought which would enable them to conduct an investigation in their own sphere of action. The latter have, in fact, something better to do. As artists they fulfil their highest usefulness when they write music.

You can classify bad pictures or poems, but not good. Each one of those is itself; and so each real human being is himself, and when we can classify human beings, it is because they are not real to us, are not expressing themselves. So a man hates himself when he seems a type to himself, a domestic or any other kind of animal, a subject of natural history. And the artist, in his art, escapes from this animal that he seems to himself in his actual experience and makes an experience in which he is no longer a type but himself. That true self making its own experience is what Mr. Yeats calls the anti-self. It is not a mask, but the throwing off of the mask, the type, as all masks are, which actual experience has imposed on him.

The evolution of music drama from its origin has seen con-

tinual variation in the relative importance of the two elements combined in the product. In the first opera written—an attempt to revive Greek tragedy towards the end of the sixteenth century—the music of Jacopo Peri was wholly subservient to the words of the dramatist Rinuccini. It was a humble start; but the musical element soon gained the upper hand, until, in the flourishing days of the old Italian opera, practically any words could be made to serve the musician's purpose. Gluck's reform restored the dramatic interest, though in his and in Wagner's work, the dramatic development was still sacrificed to the limitations of music's power of definite expression.

Music has a richer power than words to create atmosphere, to depict mood. In this sphere it is pre-eminent; it contributes more to the combined effect than the words. But when it is a question of revealing the development of a particular situation music cannot compete with words, and in such circumstances may gratefully accept the beneficent help that words offer by reason of their more definite meaning. In the perfect form of music drama each element, literary and musical, should contribute of its best, neither encroaching nor putting restrictions upon the essential and characteristic activity of the other.

Non-executive musicians often find classical works dull, because they are interpreted without feeling or intelligence. This affects the listeners. The music does not impress them any more than would the recitation of a fine poem by one who never laid emphasis on important words, and who took no notice of punctuation marks. When a symphony by Beethoven is interpreted by a great conductor, even the general public at once feels the difference between such a performance and one of an indifferent kind.

Every composer since Beethoven's day has shown a desire to create in music something that was wholly out of reach of the musical faculty of former times. It would not be fair to assume that he is falling back upon sounds rejected by those of an earlier generation, for they had been taught to follow the text-book rather than their own instinct, and had they heard deeply and felt strongly, they, like Beethoven, would have made the text-book follow their instinct. Just as there is the religious music of Bach and the religious music of Rossini, so there is the religious painting of Fra Angelico or Ma-Lin, and the religious painting of Correggio and a hundred moderns.

In speaking of the music of speech we may be misunderstood.

Speech always differs from pure music in that the sounds have sense, and that the music of it is only to be reached through the sense. Our complaint against actors is that they do not find their way to the music through the sense, that they are more occupied with their own acting than with what the words mean, and that they act with their voices when they ought to be executing the words of the poet with them. The actor sees that the words express some kind of emotion, and he tries to express that emotion with his voice so violently that he overpowers the sense of the words, and little reaches the audience beyond a vague storm of sound. That is of no matter in a bad play of exciting situations, where the words are nothing. But in a play where the minds of the characters, and their emotions, are fully expressed through the words it means that the actor substitutes his own vague storming for the precise expression of the poet. We know by instinct that poetry by its music can conjure up for us the thing itself, but invested with the poet's idea about it, so that the thing and the idea are one. We read, and there comes into our mind instantaneously the fact itself and the poet's experience of it. But this only happens if we begin by having ears to hear the music; for those who are deaf to that, poetry is only an emptier prose about things of no practical interest; they are like the senior wrangler who asked of "Paradise Lost"—"What does it prove?"

When we say that march music stirs the blood we do it and ourselves an injustice. It stirs something deeper than that in us; for soldiers on the march, singing as they do, are life itself become music, and it is as if a symphony of Beethoven had turned from art into fact. There we see men still men, but all made one in fellowship, with one impulse sounding in their tramp and in their voices. Yet, though they are men, they are no longer individuals, but rather notes of a great tune that are lost in its certainty and singleness of purpose.

What the soldiers of yesterday were doing is exactly what many of the poets of to-day are doing—adapting ancient fashions to modern uses. Perhaps it is straying too far afield to take as instances Tennyson, who re-fashioned a fixed form—blank verse, and spoke it with a voice entirely his own; Swinburne, who made of rhyme and of old feet and rhythms new forces of beauty and significance; Meredith, who took the metres of old nursery rhymes and other familiar forms and said through them things that poetry had never said before. Still less may we instance Shelley, that yet inexplicable miracle, who was content with old forms and

old words and made with them new and celestial fountains of life. The poets of passion and power have never been hampered by rhyme (not even Milton, its most vigorous foe), and established forms.

A poet cannot reach the heart of mankind if his genius is not deeply rooted in his native country. He cannot be true to humanity if he does not remain true to himself and to his own people. The idea of a cosmopolitan poetry is as impossible to conceive as that of the universal language which might express it.

Poetry and Music take us each into its own separate world of spiritual mystery and solitude—a world of space and distance, crystal light and clearest darkness. Beauty haunts it everywhere, its trees and flowers, moons and daybreaks, birds and stars and meadows, and reveals itself where least it is to be expected. It is a beauty afraid of no truth, at home with the common as well as with the rare and delicate, with a child's dolls, fire engine, and creeping jenny, as with the far voice calling, the strangeness of time.

The art of Music deals chiefly in sounds developed for itself alone, which are only indirectly symbolic of other experiences; it may be regarded as the art in which men have gone furthest from the mere reproduction of the data of life to the most purely creative of the arts—Poetry.

Music the fiercest grief can charm,  
 And fate's severest rage disarm;  
 Music can soften pain to ease,  
 And make despair and madness please:  
 Our joys below it can improve  
 And antedate the bliss above.

Consider the beauty of a tune. Music itself is the best means which man has found for confessing that he cannot say what he would say; and it is more purely and rapturously beauty than any other form of art. A tune is the very silencing of speech, and in the greatest tunes there is always the hush of wonder: they seem to tell us to be silent and listen, not to what the musician has to say, but to what he cannot say. The very beauty of a tune is in its reference to something beyond all expression, and in its perfection it speaks of a perfection not its own. Pater said that all art tries to attain to the condition of music. That is true, in a sense different from what he meant. Art is always most completely art when it makes music's con-

fession of the ineffable; then it comes nearest to the beauty of music. But when it is no longer a forlorn hope, when it is able to say what it wishes to say with calm assurance, then it has ceased to be art and has become a game of skill.

When we say that music is sounding architecture, we have to remember that it is an architecture in which pillars and arches and buttresses are not invariable, but protean factors. Architecture and sculpture, in the state of partial ruin, have both a great advantage over fragmentary music. The thesis might almost be maintained that statues like the Praxiteles Hermes or the Venus of Milos gain more than they have lost by being broken. The artistic imagination in us completes the missing curves, and even, perhaps, gives them an ideal beauty that they may not have had in the original; while the sub-conscious emotion of pathos over the broken beautiful thing has probably something to do with our love for it. But music that is incomplete, either through the damage of the ages or through the composer's failure to finish it, is doomed. What imagination among us, given the first couple of pages of the *Tristan* prelude, could supply the third? Who could reconstruct the final pages of the first movement of the *Eroica* symphony from the themes of the earlier pages, as we can reconstruct the Parthenon from what remains of it, or as we can suggest two or three solutions of the problem set us by the missing arms of the Venus? So certain is it that music not completed by the composer has no chance of being completed. The selections of poetry and music in song are a perpetual subject of controversy, and the growing complexity of the musician's recurrences have complicated his problem. A century ago, his difficulty was to simplify musical form sufficiently to make it amenable to the subtleties of a lyric. The great German song-writers of the last hundred years solved that difficulty and created a new era in the tendency to lose melodic continuity in an elaborate texture. A great number of the new light songs fell into that snare. They attempt to say too many things, to follow out each poetic suggestion so clearly, that the train of musical thought gets lost in contributory detail to the poetic thought.

Love is blind in that its eyes rest only on the lovely, whereas criticism or justice needs a bandage to prevent her absorption solely in the wrong pan of her mechanic scales. Milton's inflexible courage and high endeavours, Crabbe's one-sided truth, Crashaw's spiritual devotion; the celestial light and delight of Spenser, Wordsworth's high seriousness, spiritual vigour and a

profound depth of Nature-worship, of Byron's wit and touches of travel, of Shelley's ethereal moods and fund of imagination, and so on, are but the arrows that win home more directly and pierce most deeply, because the metre gives to the poet's words a form which is itself a direct expression of the emotion which the words enclose.

Art selects, and poetry should not consist in the presentation of raw cheeks of life, but as a perception of the hitherto unperceived relations of things. Poetry existed fundamentally in the rhythm of sound and movement, but as the human emotions became more subtle, and the language for their expression resultant more complex, it became an art, regulated by form and law according to the delicate symbols of word-music.

Poetry is an inspiration from youth to age for all that is good and true—art, chivalry, patriotism, love, religion. The more we thirst for beauty, with its purity and peace, its longing for strength, its music to the heart, the more bloodless seems the ordinary hum-drum life. Poetry is to life a benevolent siren, chanting the beauties of its haven to ordinary mortals who are at a loss how to escape from incessant tossing on the high seas. Few indeed are those who have not the poetic spirit. If once the fire of poetry can but leap into our spirits from some burning book, we shall be amazed at the prodigal force and heat that can burst forth, the silent energy, the possibility of consumption. On the silent sea of poetry the poet is free to sail and colonise with the wildest children of his imagination. Human thought and emotion are the greatest things to be found in this world.

Poetry must ultimately be judged by the greatness of the power with which it handles life's greatest and most abiding things—the things which belong to our highest experiences and interests. The very genius of a poet is to select the fittest form in which his song may be sung and to make that form express its utmost. Poetry causes one to make a keen analysis, both subjectively and objectively, as to what, after all, poetry really is. Undoubtedly poetry gains by being suggestive and symbolic rather than photographic. It is almost impossible for a poet to say

I told my secret out,  
That none might be in doubt.

To achieve what is good the poet sings out his own personality: what he sings is what he himself has seen and felt.

So the real business of a critic is to find out what is right, not what is wrong. With such a question a man must not be in a hurry. To use a metaphor, we must bathe and not fish in the waters. If we were a tenth as wise and as beautiful as the poetry we read, the world would be a Paradise. Although poetry will not return health to the sick in mind and strength to the weary in spirit, it will cleanse and revive the cares of a busy life. It is then that our whole life is stirred and thought awakes thought, while the echoes of an intellectual past come with a welcome contrast to the restlessness of a strenuous present.

A feeling, a deep experience, a mood of fiery passion, flushed with enthusiasm and the whole interpretation of the part becomes, in its turn, a part of the thing to be interpreted. Every word must be weighed and measured, and it only yields its full meaning to exact and minute study. The student of poetry must not get lost in a quicksand of theories, but to estimate as far as possible the degree to which it actually conduces an image of perfection. Of course, no critic is so great as to be without limitations. The poet is a seer and an interpreter of life, a searcher of secrets of nature, a seeker after the truth revealed in the light of imagination at almost every point.

It is a truism that most things said in verse seem wiser than that which is said in prose. It is not technique that saves a poet from sterility, but his vision which is prolonged to an infinite extent to that which teaches the inward reasonableness of all spirituality, and proves that everything that we see, sadness and love in the world, is dark, mute and irresponsive, unless and until it is transfigured by the light and truth within us. Plenty of things may be wrong, but it is what is right that really counts. Of course, the more one enjoys the harder becomes the task of criticism. Not only is faith in critical canons apt to fail, but the canons themselves rust and perish. According to William Sharp "the basis of Criticism is imagination; its spiritual quality is simplicity; its intellectual distinction is balance;" but we have wandered far from the days when simple phrases contained simple meanings. When the inspiration comes the instrument should then respond to the fullest measure of its power.

It was once the habit of critics to regard authors generally as the accused in the dock. Now the critics themselves have ceased to pose as the responsible guardians of law and order in literature; and readers sometimes wonder whether criticism any longer implies the existence of something criticised. For criticism is not

the manifestation of a natural or acquired habit of mind, nor a trick or a method, which once attained can be used on any occasion. It is something positive, pervasive, precarious, like health. We must disdain the cheap triumphs of fustian, sentimental and exaggerated criticism: such thoughts are as short as they are cheap. People value for nothing what they can get for nothing, and the very "charm" that wins such easy appreciation may be merely the treacherous *naivete* of a familiar event. Under the stimulus of unfamiliar emotions, the originality and energy of the English spirit blossoms, the sturdy tree of independent thought puts forth flower and fruit. At every point where our poetry rises to great heights the native strain is crossed by another. Poetry is the bridge from another age to our own. In it the whole thought of the age is reflected. History shows us how Chaucer was stimulated by the early Italian Renaissance, Marlowe and Spenser by the later Renaissance, Dryden and Pope by the France of Louis XIV. The French Revolution influenced Shelley and Wordsworth. Of course, none of these men were prophets in the true sense of the word for

The song that nerves a nation's heart  
Is in itself a deed.

Agreement in thought is not essential between the author and reader. Milton has awed and charmed by his austere and lofty genius thousands who share not his Puritanism or latitudinarianism. Pope has been a delight to generations of Protestants. Keble's love of nature has won for him a place in very unecclesiastical households. Cowper's pensive yet humorous voice has attracted numbers whom his Calvinism would have utterly repelled. The melodies of Shelley have entranced many homes which his social theories would have rendered desolate. Our love of Byron is not obliterated by our detestation of his private character. The most high poets not only repay, but require reinterpretation. To each age, to every reader, they appear in a new light and bear a fresh significance.

Romanticism without occult suggestion and mystical colour is foredoomed to failure; freshness and wide joy and pure felicity must mingle their essence with the soul of romanticism.

God on His throne is  
Eldest of poets:  
Unto His measure  
Moveth the whole.



A poem has no right to exist if what it says could be better said in prose. And whether it may be a case of imitation or derivation from a common source, or merely an undersigned coincidence of thought or expression, the various passages thus brought together for the purpose of comparison may serve to explain or illustrate one another.

Poetry demands the services of a life's deep communion, high resolves, and independence of spirit. (But not of the type of the two unfortunate men, John Davidson and Richard Middleton, each of whom died by his own hand, beaten in the struggle for existence). Life will not always go into the channels we have hewn for it; and poetry, being life at its loveliest moments, will laugh at our petty distinctions and go its own way. For poets and poetry, alike, are merely means to an end, to the fuller and more complete realization of life. It stands for the test of life, which must excel, but never fall short of it. Poets care for no half-measures. Like the cavalier-poet, they seem to say,

Give me more love or more disdain  
The torrid or the frozen zone.

The tragedy and comedy of souls is played upon a background tinged with the immense issues of human history.

Unfortunately we do not, as a rule, feel the loving pride in our language which we ought to feel. We neither admire as we should those who can make it yield its richest music, nor hate as we should those who debase and defile it. Poetic language has a sweet and majestic charm.

'Tis he can give my heart a thousand pains,  
Can make me feel each passion that he feigns;  
Enrage, compose, with more than magic art;  
With pity and with terror rend my heart  
And snatch me through the earth or in the air  
To Thebes or Athens, when he will and where.

Such is the standard of the true poet as described by Pope.

The quest of the beautiful is the aim of every true poet. The popular idea that great poetry must necessarily deal with extraordinary and out-of-the-way subjects is the very reverse of the truth. Poetry is great because it deals with ordinary subjects in an extraordinary way.

A little noiseless noise among the leaves,  
Born of the very sigh that silence heaves.

True poets can never lose the sense of hopefulness or the feeling of life's grandeur and worth. Old in years they may be, but they look out upon life with young eyes, as we like to connect youth with innocence. To poets love flies as a white-winged star; to them the outward conditions of the spirit are of small concern, so long as they do not rob the spirit of its natural glory. Poetry lifts the veil for the beauty of the world and throws over the most familiar objects the glow and halo of imagination.

Nowadays we are always sneering at the amateur artist, the minor poet, the painter in water-colours, the singer, the pianist; and for some reason, for the amateur is apt to give himself professional airs or to attempt tasks which only a master could accomplish. What we want is amateur art humbly aware of its own limitations and enjoying itself within them. A girl with a pleasant little voice and some liking for music should be taught to sing simple little songs, and not strained to imitate a concert singer. A boy with some taste for painting should learn to paint neat and naive little water-colours, not great splashy imitations of the masters; and many of us might be minor poets without reproach, if we did not suppose that minor poetry must imitate the passions of major. For what is this contrast between a poet's life and his work but the old division between desire and achievement, between what is and what should be—the old conflict, in short, with the burden of sin? A poet, who has so much more drain on his energies than have most men, pours into his art powers which leave him uncontrolled, helpless, for everyday life. Landor's calm as a writer is the cause of his passion as a man. It is true, we believe, in the greatest this failure is absent, or not so apparent. Michael Angelo and Shakespeare show no such cleavage between art and life; and many are unwilling to believe Boccaccio's statements about Dante, because they do not tally with our picture of the poet of the "Commedia." However that may be, it seems unnecessary to invent a new set of symbols to explain the failures and the glory of human nature: if you find dung at the root of the lily, you may wish it away but you may be sure it has done good work.

Looking over the calm, imperturbable way in which Poetry has taken its splendid passage through the years, there is a certain element of truth in the fact that it is always necessary to see a man's blemishes clearly before his praise can be truly sung. On the other hand, it is always necessary to see a man's cause of praise before his blemishes can be discovered, for it may happen

that what appear to be blemishes are but the natural reverse of his virtues. There is nothing impure in Life or on Earth except the minds of men, and rightly we feel that criticism is the faultiest of all instruments. To say this is not to derogate the function of criticism; for, indeed, all good poetry is ecstasy and we cannot criticise that on the earth but must wait the arrival of some angel to purge our excitements. Analysis is too often the coward's refuge for escaping the responsibility of manly judgment. Of course, it is not always easy to distinguish between pretensions that are justifiable and those which are unjustified; so to praise all achievements in the terms of great poetry is to annul all judgment; yet to reject it because it has been so praised would be to miss a very true source of joy.

Since every moment, however beautiful, would become ugly, were we ever to dwell in it, so would life become ugly were it ever to linger in one of its contingent forms. And because Philosophy, no less than Art, is conditioned by Life, so no particular philosophical system can ever contain in itself all the philosophies; no philosophical system is definite, because Life itself never is. It being impossible to describe music in words—the skein of music can only be unravelled by the use of analogy. Music has been regarded also as a kind of game, with rules which it is worth while learning in order to be able to break them; but this is of little comfort to any but those who know when they are being kept or broken. Again, music is sometimes called in to explain a man's life, to account for his being careless or generous or pernickety, for his eating or drinking or sleeping in a different way from other people. But more often the life is made to explain the music—to show, even, that, given a certain biography, the music could not have been otherwise. This view seizes upon the truth that a man's music is an emanation from his personality, and fondly believes that that is to be sought in his biography, whereas if he made music the great thing of his life it is there that his personality is more likely to be found. It may be remarked that this last is the most difficult way of the five, since whoever adopts it must know many facts, and whoever succeeds must have digested them.

The seer is also a poet of humanity, to a degree which may surprise those who are accustomed to think of him in the other connexion. It is just this contrast between the universal and the accidental, the permanent and the transitory, which makes the spell of his poetry. We imagined him musing over aeons and dynasties, and we find he is a singer of the smallest human things.

No doubt the sense of destiny pervades all his songs, and in a moment we can roll up the curtain which divides the purely human scene from the unseen ways behind it.

In poetry, in fact, the word is made flesh; it is no longer a mere label, but has a life of its own in its own music; it no longer means something, but is something and something to be enjoyed not for its meaning, but for itself.

The people whose temperament is the greatest nuisance to themselves and to their neighbours are people who either have the desire for creative expression without the technique or, possessing the technique yet lack the discipline and the philosophy to interpret the desire rightly.

No one who has read Mill's Autobiography can forget the remarkable chapter in which he describes the spiritual dryness and dejection in which his habit of analysis and his unqualified Benthamism for a time resulted, nor how, in large measure through the influence of poetry—of Wordsworth in particular—he recovered his sanity and strength of will.

Shakespeare, in a famous line, classes together the lunatic, the lover, and the poet. And they are alike in the sense that they all make their escape from the facts of the phenomenal world about them. But there is between them this vital difference. The lunatic's escape is from phenomena which are real, if that word can be used of phenomena at all, to other phenomena which have no existence except in his disordered brain. He is still in the same world of the temporary, the visible, the material—Plato's world of appearance and opinion. But the lover in his way, and still more the poet in his, escape beyond opinion to assurance, beyond appearance to truth, because they are in touch with a world beyond and above the world of phenomena. For the lover, so far as he is purely a lover, neither riches nor poverty, health nor sickness, life nor death, are of any account. He is aware of them, but indifferent to them, his soul being set on things of a purer essence. So, and to a still greater degree, with the poet. In ordinary days and hours he may be a miser or a valetudinarian. But at the moments when he is a poet, he knows that he has seen a glory which can never pass away, that nothing else really matters, either for himself or for the world, and that nothing, perhaps not even his own vices, certainly no external actions or misfortunes, can deprive him of an experience or make it altogether in vain.

"Poetry," says an Irish critic, "is the language of passion

and imagination expressing themselves under control of the laws of beauty." It is a definition which repays attention. By conjoining passion and imagination he suggests the inevitable fusion between impulse, which is personal, and imagination, which is universal, while the proviso "under control of the laws of beauty" insists upon the necessity of rhythm. Imagination controls passion with a sense of spiritual interpretation; it represents objects, as Hazlitt said, as "moulded by other thoughts and feelings into a variety of shapes and combinations of power." Then comes the controlling influence of beauty, which touches the utterance with a burning coal, and sets both emotion and interpretation on fire with the vivid certainty of expression.

Certainly most of us can no more read our poetry rightly by nature than we can play music rightly; ought we not, therefore, to be taught, so that we may enjoy our poetry, and may understand that great secret of form and content which must be understood by all who would know what beauty is, and why it is to be valued? For, just as verse is not an ornament to sense, so beauty is not an ornament to life. Just as poetry is sense at its highest, so is beauty human life, human action at its highest; human life and action become a part of the glory of the universe; man acting that magnificence which he sees in the sunset. But our indifference to the form of poetry is our indifference to beauty, to quality in life; it is a philosophic, a religious dullness, the blasphemy of the insensitive, the deafness of those who will not dance to the piping of God. "The man that hath not music in his soul"—we know what our poet said of him; and we are trained not to have music in our selves; our ears are stopped against it.

For every poet is in love with life, as indeed we all are; but the poet's experience differs from that of ordinary mortals, in being at once more intensely particular and also more intensely universal. He is so intensely himself that he is also part and parcel of ourselves as well. This is indeed the supreme paradox of spirit. The greater its oneness, the more it is shared by others. Shakespeare is pre-eminently Shakespeare because he is half the world besides. Thus, in proportion to our love of poetry, do we find joy in life.

# THE PASSING OF DANA'S PEOPLE

A DRAMATIC CANTATA

BY ANNE THROOP CRAIG

EPISODE I

(In Three Parts)

PART ONE

THE COMING OF THE SONS OF MILEDH

*(In Irish Legendary history the Sons of Miledh, or the Milesians, invaded Ireland long before the Christian era, and overcame another legendary people, the Tuatha Dé Danaan, or Men of Dea or Dana, who had for a long time previously held sway there.*

*On their arrival they were kept from landing at first, through the magic arts of the Tuatha Dé Danaan, whose druids cast fogs and storms over the waters about the shores, and by this drowned many of the invaders, but finally by the power of their own druidic leader, Amergin, the Milesians were enabled to overcome these obstacles and plant their staves on the Irish shore. The Chant of Amergin from which the first verses in the following scenario are developed, is one of the most curious and interesting of the ancient Irish lore, especially that relative to the mysterious druidic cults and their beliefs.)*

## CHARACTERS OF THE EPISODE

AMERGIN, *Chief Druid of the Milesians.*

HEBER

HEREMON

} *Sons of Miledh*

CHORUS of *Followers and Seamen.*

BANBA

FODHLA

ERIU

} *Queens of the Tuatha Dé Danaan in Ireland.*

MAC CUILL

MAC CECHT

MAC GRENE

} *Kings of the Tuatha De Danaan, husbands of the  
above Queens, respectively.*

*Gods and demigods of the Men of Dea*

*The People of the Sidhe (The Fairy People).*

*Their followers, the hosts of Dea (or Dana).*

*The Scene, to be suggested musically, or both musically and spectacularly,—as the context suggests, a wild rocky shore, with suggestion of distant, fertile and beautiful landscape.—*

INTRODUCTION: *The sound of stormy surges is heard, then above it the singing of men.*

Chorus (*Without*).—

Come now the Sons of Miledh  
 Out of the jaws of the surge;  
 Worn with the turbulent wave  
 Driven we come;  
 On the new shining plain,  
 On the foam-dropping shore,—  
 The Sons of Miledh!

Come now the Sons of Miledh  
 Out of the jaws of the surge—

(*They enter, led by AMERGIN. He comes down and places the banner of the Milesians in the sand, while he takes up the hymn and chants alone:*)

#### AMERGIN'S HYMN

I, as the wind of the sea,  
 I, as the flash from the sun,  
 I, as the bull of battles,—  
 Ask now these things,—  
 These are my asking!

Here where we plant our staves,  
 Here where we seal our word:  
 Here may the forests and fields  
 Here may the food-bearing streams  
 Enrich and sustain us;  
 Here may our kings be possessors!

I, the swift eagle, Amergin;  
 I, the swift boar,—  
 Ask now these things;  
 These are my asking!

Who shall spread light on the hills  
 For the gathering hosts?  
 Who shall give Wisdom's fire  
 To Miledh's men?

Who knows the times of the moon,—  
Her circles of passing?  
Or of the sun,—  
His hiding place?

Who should lead Miledh's hosts,  
Except these things be his doing,—  
As a juggler's balls, light and swift in his powers?  
Who should ask Eriu's bounty,  
Except he fathom such wisdom?  
Who but Amergin?

I, as the wind of the sea,  
I, as the flash from the sun,—  
Ask now for Eriu's bounty:  
This is Amergin's asking!

CHORUS

Here where we plant our staves,—  
Here may the forests and fields  
Enrich and sustain us!

Out of the jaws of the surge  
Come now the Sons of Miledh!

*As Amergin chants, BANBA enters with a train of women, Druids and Bards, and stands awaiting chance to address AMERGIN. In BANBA's hair are the leaves of hazel, for the Wisdom of Ireland and for poetic knowledge. MACCUILL is her consort: Lord of Science.*

*FODHLA enters with her train, a distance from BANBA. FODHLA wears a wreath of grain in her hair, for the happy labor of Ireland She waits also. MACCECHT is her King: Patron of the Plow, of Sustenance.*

*As AMERGIN finishes the Hymn, ERIU enters with her retinue. On her breast is a great Sunburst of bright stones, but on her forehead so that its two wings shadow her face on each side, a grey crow, and these two signs are, the one for the sorrows of Erin in the after time, and the other for the shining aspiration of her, that shall come through them all. Her consort is the King, MacGrene, son of Day and of the Sun.*

*At the end of the Milesian's CHORUS, the three queens raise their hands in signal for a parley, and advance to AMERGIN. He*



*meets them with the two Sons of MILEDH,—HEBER and HEREMON, beside him.*

*Banba chants.*—Into the wisdom of our courts we welcome those who come as friends. Into the knowledge of our white-pillared land!

*Fodhla chants.*—Out of our food-bearing fields we nourish those who come as friends. By the labor of our plow!

*Eriu chants.*—From our joy-bringing day, joy is upon those who come as friends. Out of our bright-shining sun!

*The Three Kings enter with their retinues, and range themselves respectively beside their Queens.*

*AMERGIN advances, raising his hand in salute before he speaks.*

*Amergin.*—

There is no friendship for the Sons of Miledh, save where the bestowal is theirs. No Life, no Labor, No Wisdom, save of their giving!

Over the waves of the sea by your deeds our people have perished. The way of Amergin is vengeance!

The brows of Miledh's Sons shall be bright on the Hill of Kings, or dark in the dust by the Cave of the Horned One.

*Macgrene (Advancing).*—On the Hill of Kings there is room for all in peace.

*Amergin.*—For the Sons of Miledh, between the Hill of Kings, and to have it alone,—or be bowed in the Mound of Dark,—there is no middle way.

*Macgrene (Raising his hand).*—It is said! It is done!

*(AMERGIN turns to his followers and raises his staff. They raise and clash their spears and staves with cries, low, then loud and long.)*

*MACGRENE's followers and companions raise their banners and weapons as he turns to them with a signal to depart. A long lamenting cry goes over their host, rather than a cry of triumph. They depart, following their kings, to prepare for battle with the invaders.*

*AMERGIN waits, then with his followers, departs also, on the opposite of the scene. His men sing their CHORUS again in going.*

#### CHORUS OF THE SONS OF MILEDH

Here where we plant our staves,

Here may the forests and fields

Enrich and sustain us;

Here shall our kings be possessors!

—Out of the jaws of the surge,  
Come now the Sons of Miledh!—

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*Shadows cross the scene, which darkens: The hosts of the Sidhe, led and accompanied by their gods and kings, flood the space with their numbers. They circle and interweave their columns about the scene in swift rhythmic processional, under a multitude of swaying banners. The air blows full of an ominous wind, and soft wild cries from all directions. The hosts of the Sidhe finally close in after the People of Dana, whom they have gathered to aid. Masses of shadow sweep the scene. MILEDH'S Men, heard still, without distantly. The Hosts of the SIDHE become like a white mist through a curtain of dark, as they follow the Men of Dea out of sight.*

DARKNESS OR CURTAIN

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#### THE PASSING OF DEA'S PEOPLE

*(After the battle which followed the parley between the Sons of MILEDH and the Men of Dea, for the supremacy of the island, the Men of Dea, conquered, betook themselves, into the strongholds of the Sidhe, and lived with them as allies, with their gods, from that time forth.)*

GODS and KINGS of the SIDHE appearing in this scene:

THE DAGDA or the DA MOR, the HIGH PRIEST, or Druid King of the Men of Dea, or Dana. (*A god.*)

BODH DEARG (*Bove Derig*) King of the Fairy Dun (or castle) the BRUGH NA BOINNE.

LUGH, LIR, MANANNAN MACLIR; GODS of the Sun and Sea, and kings of strongholds or "duns" of the SIDHE.

MIDHIR: *A King of the SIDHE.*

ANGUS OG, the MAC OC, "the young god,"—of Love and Music.

*His symbols are the harp, and white birds which are "the kisses of the youth of Erin",—of young lovers. He is the son of the DA MOR and BOAND the goddess of Music.*

OGMA: *God of Learning, etc.*

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*The Scene is dark.*

*An introduction of the wailing sounds of nature, winds, storms, and waves. (The moaning of the THREE FATEFUL WAVES of the IRISH SHORE enter throughout as a part of motif.) From these first sounds rise at last the fierce ones of savage battle. When these have run their course rising to terrific ferocity, there is a long moan-*

ing lull, and then follows keening and the laments of men and women.

*A train of people of DANA and of the SIDHE enters bearing on biers the three Queens of the Danaan people.*

*The biers are covered with trailing white linen, and the heavy green boughs of trees.*

*Singing sorrowfully,—the train advances slowly, its groups about the center space moving in solemn rhythms.*

#### LAMENT FOR THE QUEENS OF DANA

*(Chorus. But higher voices distantly, sing the refrains.)*

I:

A wind of woe, and O a wind of woe,  
Is that blows over the lamenting wave  
That the slim hazel tree shall shed its blooms  
Where Dana's praise shall sound not from this hour!

*(Refrain:*

A wind of woe, and O a wind of woe,  
Is that blows over the lamenting wave!

II:

A dire want, and O a dire want  
Is on the ready, food-bestowing field,  
Where the plough, idle, waits Danaan hands  
That come not for the seedtime from this hour!

*(Refrain:*

A dire want, and O a dire want  
Is on the ready, food-bestowing field!

III:

A grievous gloom, and O a grievous gloom  
Great Eriu leaves upon her land betrayed,—  
For the bright sun that's hidden in a cloud  
From the life-giving breast of her, this hour!

*(All, Chorus:*

A gloom and O a sigh and wind of woe  
Is on the Land of the Three Queens this hour:  
That Dana's people vanish like a mist,  
And where they trod, shall want them from this hour!

*(High wailing refrain, echoed and re-echoed.)* ~

—A darkness and a gloom and O a wind of woe  
Is on the Land of the Three Queens, this hour!—

*To this group comes the DAGDA MOR, and with him BODH DEARG and LUGH on white mares, and LIR, and OGMÁ,—the Druid god of Learning. MANANNAN comes with MIDHIR on one side of him, and ANGUS OG on the other.*

*At the signal from the DAGDA, the bearers set the Queens' biers upon the ground. Then ANGUS OG, carrying his harp, plays, and soft musical sounds arise from all about, suffused through the air, while from all directions then, as at a summons, come on the moment the PEOPLE OF THE SIDHE. All these make a softly weaving wall all about the center groups, with silent rhythmical motion and dance.*

*Then ANGUS OG takes the white birds that perch upon his harp, and places them on the lips of the THREE QUEENS. The FAIRY dancers sway nearer all around, and beckon and sing low the Song of the Land of the Ever Living Ones, summoning the Danaan people to be consoled and find refuge in their secret strongholds, forever after.*

#### THE CALL OF THE SIDHE

Over the Pleasant Plain of Many Flowers  
Heavy the fruit-begemméd trees bend down,  
Where is a wood that knoweth no decay!

Knowing not age nor ending of dead clay,  
Bright move the hosts beside the crystal streams;  
Amid the shadowy boughs' sun-crested gleams  
Melodious, call the birds to the shining hours!

Over the Pleasant Plain of Many Flowers,  
Heavy, the fruit-begemméd trees bend down,  
Where is the wood that knoweth not decay!—

*Then slowly the Three Queen Spirits of Ireland arise from their winding sheets, with the Three Birds of Angus on their wrists.*

*With a mist over the scene, and a lovely light through it, the Danaan people go with the People of the Sidhe and their gods, who, the host of them, beckon and retreat, and lead them away, the music of their singing and of the fairy harp of Angus continuing—pervading the air, and slowly and very sweetly dying away, long after the scene is empty of all but a dimming and darkening iridescent mist.*

# FRANKFURT'S DIALECT AUTHOR, FRIEDRICH STOLTZE

*Es will merr net in mein Kopp enei,  
Wie kann nor e Mensch net von Frankfurt sei!\**  
-Stoltze.

BY CLAIR HAYDEN BELL

Partly because of our national youth, but more largely because of our means of communication and the unparalleled fluidity of our population, we in America have almost nothing of the dialectical differences in our language which characterize most of the languages of Europe. While American English has perhaps the least dialectical difference among modern languages, German has the most.† Though German is commonly divided into two main dialects, called, after the topography of the country, High German and Low German, the language is as irregularly spotted and variegated as the political map of the country has always been. And so great is the divergence in these dialects that, despite their philological relationship, a peasant from Schleswig Holstein would have about as much difficulty in understanding a peasant from the Black Forest or from the German-speaking section of Switzerland or Checko-Slovakia, as a Mexican would have in understanding Chinese.

In the Old German and Middle German periods, each author used the dialect of his own tribal stock; even the great representatives of higher literature in the Middle Ages attained only a certain degree of uniformity in written usage. But ever since Luther published his epoch-making translation of the Bible into German (1534), thereby establishing a norm which was increasingly imitated, High German has dominated as the standard literary and spoken language of Germany. It is this standard language that we commonly mean when we speak of German; and it is this standard language which is taught in all the schools throughout Germany, which is spoken by the educated, and which is used by German writers. Nevertheless, the dialects live on in the mouths of the people, and of late they have won increasing recognition in the field of literature.

Despite the securely established supremacy of the High

\*I can't get it into my head how a man can possibly not be from Frankfurt!

†In keiner Sprache spielen die Dialekte eine so grosse Rolle wie in der deutschen.—  
H. Meyer, *Deutsches Volkstum*.

German literary language, there has always been, of course, some slight, sporadic use of dialect in writing. Such products were long of only local significance. Yet, as early as the seventeenth century, J. Lauremberg wrote his humorous Low German poems, and Simon Dach his famous song: *Anke van Tharaw öss, de my geföllt*. This early, too, we find dialectical dialog woven into dramas; persons of the lower classes were realistically characterized by their use of vernacular as in daily life. In the first half of the eighteenth century, whole dramas, primarily *Fastnacht* plays and local comedies, were written in dialect. In this, Pratorius in Hamburg led the way, followed by Arnold in Strassburg and Niebergall in Darmsteadt. The rise of the romantic movement with its interest in everthing *volkstümlich*, accelerated the growing interest in the language of the people. The end of the eighteenth and the beginning of the nineteenth century saw dialect attain its first real recognition as a medium of literary expression of modern German literature. The first great master in this field is doubtless Johann Peter Hebel, whose Alemannic poems (1803) are of permanent literary value. Grubel published his Nurnberger poems in 1802, and in 1830 Hotei's Silesian poems appeared; and still later came the Low German poetic creations of Klaus Groth and Fritz Reuter, the Middle German poems of Nadler and Lenning, and the Upper German verses of von Kobell, Stieler, Stelzhamer, etc. Finally, the novel adopted dialect, and the serious drama, as in the works of Fritz Reuter and Gerhard Hauptmann. Reuter, the novelist (1810-74), and Groth, lyric poet (1819-99), raised the Low German dialect to the plane of a first class literary medium. Other writers were content only to color their style dialectically, and of such coloring modern realism has made rapidly increasing use. We may name, for example, Rosegger, Anzengruber, Auerbach, Gotthelf, Fontane, Frennsen. Thus dialect literature has grown mightily in the course of the last two centuries, and during the last century and a half, scientific interest and investigation have also kept pace.

It is frequently the case that a single village, town, or city has linguistic peculiarities which amount to a dialect of its own; and thus it is with Frankfurt am Main. Rich in commerce, in its legacies of art, architecture, and literary tradition, resplendent with the memory of the picturesque imperial coronations which took place here, famed as the meeting place of parliaments and treaty-makers, renowned as free and independent city within the German empire until seized by Prussia in 1866, Frankfurt

has a glory greater than all these: it is the birth-place of Johann Wolfgang Goethe. Germany can offer no bigger experience to the visitor than Frankfurt affords him when he makes his way to the door of the old house on the Grossen Hirschgraben where the boy Goethe went in and out; when he visits the room where he played theater with his puppets, or regards the window from which the wise old father watched the lad come home from school, in order to see that he did not walk too much with the girls! It is a well-known fact that despite his vigilance, Goethe's early works teem with Frankfurt words and expressions, and that although he freed himself of most of these, he retained some of them to his death; thus proving the force of the adage: "*E Frankfurter verlernt sei Sprach net so leicht, un wann er hundert Jahr in der Fremd is!*"\*

The Frankfurt dialect is a local variant of Middle Rhine Franconian, from which it does not so greatly differ. A passage or two may be of interest as further illustrations of the vernacular. There are, for instance, the verses of G. W. Pfeiffer.

*Kling drum, du Hochdeutsch, als drufzu  
Recht vornehm un gescheid;  
Bei deine Worter bleibst in Ruh  
Das Herz un werd net weit.  
Frankfortisch odder, ach, wie schon  
Dringt des der Seel enein!  
Un wer des net will zugestehn,  
Muss net von Frankfort sein.†*

A similar sentiment is expressed in the lines of F. Battenberg:

*In Frankfort, da redt mer e edel Sproach,  
So kraftig un kloar un verstendlich,  
Des klingt so nadierlich un lebenswoahr  
Un macht am ennanner so kennilich.  
Wer der Sproach ihrn Zauwer nachfihle kann,  
Der allans is e echter un richtiger Mann.§*

These passages reveal the place which the local dialect retains in

\*A Franfurter does not so easily forget his tongue, even if he is away for a hundred years.

†Sound out then, you High German, right distinguished and wise; at your words the heart remains at rest and does not expand. Frankfortish, however, oh, how beautifully that penetrates the soul! And he who is not ready to admit that must not be from Frankfurt.

‡In Frankfurt we speak a noble tongue, so sturdy and clear and intelligible, it sounds so natural and true to life and makes one so clear to another. He who can feel the magic of this language is alone a genuine and real man.

the hearts of the populace, with all their allegiance to the standard High German; and they make clear in a very inadequate way the charm and appeal which the works of a dialect author have for his home locality.

It is interesting to note that the oldest extant literary monument printed in the Frankfurt dialect (*Der Prorektor*, two act comedy, 1794) was written by Friedrich Karl Ludwig Textor (born 1775), a direct cousin, on the maternal side, of the great Prince of Poetry, Goethe. Other names which have won local distinction for their writing in the Frankfurt dialect are Malss (1792), Pfeiffer (1795), Hallenstein (1801), Sauerwein (1803), and Freidrich Stoltze (1816). Of all these, Stoltze stands clearly head and shoulders above the rest. He is Frankfurt's greatest dialect writer.

Friedrich was born in the heart of Old Frankfurt, in the old gabled house "zum Rebstock," a tavern of which his father was host. It was Goethe's cousin Textor, mentioned above, who inspired the lad's interest in the Frankfurt dialect and who gave him regular instruction in the idiom, writing a dictionary and a grammar for his use. Thus it came about that Stoltze developed an ability in his native Frankfurt dialect parallel to his ability in High German.

"Der Goethe" and "der Stoltze" are closely linked in the minds of Frankfurters; they are the two who have immortalized the fame and glory of Old Frankfurt. When, after the fall of the old empire, Frankfurt ceased to be the electoral and coronation town of the German Kaisers, it found in Goethe a loving describer of its former glories. And when in 1849 the proud hopes collapsed which has been placed in the German parliament that met in Frankfurt's Paulskirche, and when in 1866 the old free imperial city lost its independence, the mourning citizens of Frankfurt found in Friedrich Stoltze a comforter who re-animates for them all the memories that were so precious to them, in songs full of unbent citizen's pride, in narratives and farces full of genuine folk humor. His significance as humorist and dialect poet give him a position between the Alemannic Hebel and the Low German Fritz Reuter. In the eyes of Frankfurters, at least, German literature has his equal as poet of the people and for the people only in Hans Sachs and Fritz Reuter.\* Stoltze would have reached more universal and enduring fame if he had

\*Cf Proelss: *Stoltze und Frankfurt a. M.*, Frankfurt, 1905, p. 5; and A. Hammeran, *idem*, p. 373.



not given himself so utterly and unreservedly to his town, its concerns and its festivities. He did not conserve and concentrate his talents, but devoted himself too largely to occasional poetry. In Frankfurt he was the more loved for this, as was officially attested on one occasion when a letter came through the mails, addressed: "To the most popular man in Frankfurt." The post-office forwarded this letter to Friedrich Stoltze, with the following rhyme written upon the envelope:

*Nicht steht es zu der Post, zu richten,  
Wer wohl am popularsten ist,  
Doch nimmt sie an, nach den Gedichten,  
Dass du es, "alter Stoltze," bist.*  
—Kaiserliches Postamt.

Stoltze died in 1891. His collected works appeared in Frankfurt a. M. in the following year, in five volumes. His talent was limited to the lyric and to humorous narrative. Such dialectical products as his are not readable to the general public; unfortunately, too, they are almost untranslatable, for their effect, lying so largely in the dialect to which there is nothing corresponding in our English, seems to elude every attempt to translate. Such an attempt nevertheless follows. Among the most enjoyable of Stoltze's short stories is *The Cap*. This story is partly reminiscent of Stoltze's own biography. The father had planned for him the career of tavern-keeper, looking to him as his successor. Consequently, he insisted upon the youth's undergoing an apprenticeship in business. Fritz surrendered to his father's will only after long resistance, for the zealous pupil of Professor Textor wanted, as does the hero David, to study. And like David, too, Friedrich occasionally distressed his employer by writing his business letters in verse. It is further recorded that Goethe's one-time flame, Frau von Willemer, who was young Friedrich's friend and counselor, and who, herself of a poetic trend, sympathized with the youth's literary aspirations, actually advised Friedrich to run away from his apprenticeship, counting upon the fond father's forgiveness.

#### THE CAP

David was to be a merchant,  
But the plan awaked no joy.  
Father said,—the tyrant man—  
"Yes, you *will*, for that's my plan,  
And we'll not ask *you*, my boy!"

“Medicine, the doctor’s calling,  
Lures you, I am much afraid.  
That I’ll change, or else know why!  
Eh? Don’t ample numbers die  
Now, you rogue, without your aid?”

And David might lament as he would, it was all to no purpose; his father was of a very rigid disposition. And one fine morning he says to David: “David!” says he, “take white soap and wash your whole physiognomy clear back behind your neck-unears, get ready, and dress yourself!” And when David was ready his father says: “David,” says he, “now put on your cap and come along!”

“Where?” says David, “where?”

“Where? There!” says his father. And then David says again: “Father,” says he, “am I standing on the eve of great events this mornin’, or am I *not* standin’ on the eve of great events this mornin’?” And then the Old Man says: “Yes, you are standin’ there,” says he, “or again mebbe you ain’t, till you’re standin’ before the door of Larmeschlager Brothers,” says he.

“Larmeschlager Brothers” says David, and retreated three paces and then a half pace further, and took a very bold and picturesque pose, and raised up his arm together with his hand and in addition to that a finger, and uttered the prophetic words: “So I am not to study the sciences? Really not to study the sciences?—But I *will* study the sciences! Now I just *will* study the sciences! Now I simply *will*!”

“Yes,” says his father, “yes, you’ll study the sciences, but *commercial science*,” says he, “at Larmeschlager Brothers, where you’ll come into a big, blossoming business of nothin’ but flowered calico.”

“*Oh weh!*” says David, “flowered calico!”

“Well,” says his father, “striped calico too,” says he, “and checked calico and dotted calico. And you can become a big merchant, and if you can’t get so far as Rothschild, you can anyhow get so far as Schwab & Schwarzschild.”

And David was led by his father to Larmeschlager Brothers, into the center of the store, where there was a great clatter of talk between the two principals and the many clerks and three apprentices with short sleeves and long pens behind their ears. And they were putting calico onto shelves and into compartments—flowered calico, and checked calico, and dotted calico, and striped calico, until it reached up to the ceiling and down to

the floor. And they stood there playing with boxes and cases and balls, till David opened his two eyes wide, his left eye and his right eye, and says to himself in the deepest depths of his silent reserve: "*Gott!* What a game of calico, what a pretty game of calico! But I got to study the sciences yet!"

And David's father says to the Larmeschlager brothers: "Good morning, gentlemen," says he, "here I'm bringin' you David!"

"Aha, David!" says the Larmeschlager brothers, and they call in a very loud voice from the store back into the office, and call: "Mr. Worms or Mr. Speier!" And then these two come running, both of them, and says: "Sir?" says they. And then Larmeschlager brothers says: "This is the new apprentice, David," says they, "take him back to the office and the copy book."

And David was taken along back to the copy book, and his father says to Larmeschlager brothers: "You gotta have a little patience with David, for David wanted to study."

"Wanted to study!" called out the Larmeschlager brothers; quite astonished and amazed they called out: "Wanted to study!"

"*Stuss!*" says David's father, "what is there in studyin?" says he, "business is business."

"Well," says the Larmeschlager brothers, "we'll have patience with the young man and he'll forget learnin' and'll get a pleasure from the joy in the business."

But David got no pleasure from the joy in the business and conducted himself so foolishly and stupidly in everything,—it can't be said or sung how stupidly he conducted himself. And the Larmeschlager brothers says to one another: "That fellow wanted to study?" says they. "Why, he's so stupid that the geese would bite him, and so simple that the chickens would eat his bread for him!"

But David was only pretending, for he wanted to be driven away. And when stupidity and silliness were of no avail, David applied himself to all kinds of rascally tricks, and in the letters he copied off he drew little human figures with long noses and wrote underneath: "Larmeschlager Bros.," and he lunched off of his copy book and let his bread and butter fall with the buttered side down, now on A. B. C. Goldschmidt in Manchester, now on D. E. F. Rodelheim in London. And upon sealing the letters he enclosed all kinds of malicious greetings and invitations, and wrote

the addresses wrong, and addressed Darmstadt Brothers to Offenbach Brothers, and Offenbach Brothers to Mainz Brothers. And a confusion reigned in the store, till the Larmeschlager brothers threw up their hands and said: "David, David!" says they, "if you wasn't the son of your father, we would show you the door, such a *Lausbub* you are, such a big *Lausbub* and out-of-luck fellow. But take care, David, take care!"

And once one fine day there came two Polacks; but not Polacks who come to beg, but Polacks who come to buy: two rich Polacks. And they looked at the whole store of calico, the flowered calico, and the striped calico, the checked calico, and the dotted calico. And although it was all pretty goods and all new goods, they nevertheless found objections, and they says: "Ain't you received nothin' new? nothin' pretty? Why, it's nothin' but old stuff, what you got on hand!"

And the Larmeschlager brothers were vexed over such Polacks and thought: "Just wait, we'll get you!" they thought. And they says to the two rich Polacks: "Come tomorrow again, for this afternoon fifty cases of English goods are arriving, everything new, entirely new, very new!" And the two rich Polacks says to the Larmeschlager brothers: "We'll come!" says they. And as soon as the Polacks were gone, the Larmeschlager brothers calls to their entire business personnel: "Fetch cases!" calls they, "Cases!"

And everyone rushed into the storage room and brought cases. And in the cases they packed the goods and the calico, flowered calico, and striped calico, and checked calico, and dotted calico. And nailed the cases shut, and baled them, and marked them. And David packed his case, too, and when it was full David took his cap and laid it on top of the goods and nailed the lid over it on the box.

And when the two rich Polacks came the next day and saw all the newly arrived cases, and had the newly arrived cases opened one after the other, all at once the goods pleased them and they says: "Larmeschlager brothers," says they, "them's pretty goods, them's new goods, them we'll take." And the Larmeschlager brothers thought: "Man is made out of imagination." And when the Polacks came to the case that David had packed, they found David's cap. And they says to the Larmeschlager brothers: "How does the cap come into the case?" And then David says: "Give here the cap! It's *my* cap! It fell in yesterday when I was packin' the new goods in the old case!"

And when the two Polacks heard this, they says to the Larmeschlager brothers: "Good mornin!" says they. And they went out and didn't come back again.

And the Larmeschlager brothers grabbed David with two left hands and two right hands and threw him out of the door and threw the cap after him, and says: "Don't let us catch sight of you in our store again, *Lausbub*, don't let us catch sight of you again!" says they. And David came running home with the greatest pleasure and says: "They have drove me away!" says he. "Can't I study *now* yet?"

And David *did* study, and became a great scholar.

## SONNET TO BEAUTY

BY MARGARET TOD RITTER

I am afraid of Beauty—I who knelt  
 Beside a star-entangled lake and felt  
 The golden bubbles at my lips; nor knew  
 I drank a headier wine than wise men do.  
 I am afraid of Beauty—I who held  
 A candle to my spirit and compelled  
 Her signature thereon; how close she came  
 While fashioning the letters of her name!  
 How close she came, so close that I alone  
 Could hear the beating of her heart, could see  
 Her secret smile. O dusk-enchanted wind,  
 I am afraid of Beauty—who have known  
 Her lyric charm, her potent ecstasy,  
 I am afraid—where wiser men are blind.

# STÉPHANE MALLARME

BY ALFRED HIMWICH

To write a language apart, was Mallarmé's sole æstheticism. Every art has a special language—music, painting, sculpture; why shouldn't the poet have his? Setting himself to the task of inventing a language, he found it such a difficult one that it left him little time for writing; we have only twenty sonnets and *L'Après-midi D'un Faune* written in it. And it is upon these and a few more poems that his fame as one of the greatest lyricists of all time, rests.

To the uninitiate, Mallarmé seems a talented manipulator of verse-mosaic—and solely that. That nothing could be more false need hardly be mentioned. In fact one cannot but marvel at the æsthetic passion of the man—for he was more artist than poet—when one remembers that his aim was to capture the most elusive impressions, and to isolate and intensify them. For was not perfect achievement his? Is not each poem the evocation of a passing ecstasy arrested in mid-flight? He was a manipulator with a passionately clear end in view:—absolute perfection. His desire for beauty that would be valid universally was only equalled by his disdain for the murky region of the accidental in art.

Mallarmé took delight in piling up obscuresques between the reader and himself. Everybody has his secret, and it is this obscurity which preserved him from giving that drop of blood which the public craves, but does not deserve. It is partly for this reason that his art is so subtle and formidable. And for another. In his own words: "The most complete work of the poet should be that which, in its final achievement, becomes a perfect music." He endeavored to approach music in his verse; and who can say that he failed? Take for example that exquisite song without words—*Soupir*:

My soul, calm sister, towards thy brow, whereon scarce grieves  
An autumn strewn already with its russet leaves,  
And towards the wandering sky of thine angelic eyes,  
Mounts, as in melancholy gardens may arise  
Some faithful fountain sighing whitely towards the blue!  
—Towards the blue, pale and pure that sad October new,  
When, in those depths, it mirrored languors infinite,

And agonising leaves upon the waters white,  
 Windily drifting, traced a furrow cold and dun,  
 Where, in one long last ray, lingered the yellow sun.

It was the connotative value of words that Mallarmé emphasized:—"To name is to destroy, to suggest is to create." It is for their power of evocation; for their savour; for their value as symbols in short, that words are chosen: and if one but collocate them with care, the floating perfume, the whisper, the poignant cadence are no longer merely expressed, but are—for aye. They are because the effect upon us as we read coincides exactly with our 'reaction' to the things or incidents themselves; and because what we read is faultlessly beautiful."

Mallarmé, the disciple of Hegel, lived in a world of his own in which subject was object. And this second world of his is a sad one. "I should die," says Hérodiade, "were not Beauty already Death." In his agnosticism and the thought of the inevitable doom is to be found the cause of his deep-seated melancholy.

It is thus that Symons concludes in his essay on the poet: "In the course of a few centuries I am convinced every line of Mallarmé will have become perfectly clear, as a corrupt Greek text becomes clear in time . . . Mallarmé can afford to wait; he will not be forgotten . . ."

Of how many moderns can such a prediction be made?

## THE GRAVE OF KEATS

By J. HOMER CASKEY

A crowd of tourists, driving through the "ways"  
 Of Rome, in hasty search, in three June days,  
 For all three thousand years had built and left  
 In ruin, by weariness almost bereft  
 Of reverence, we walked unheeding in  
 The cypress grove, on grass worn dry and thin  
 By others like ourselves. But as we read  
 His epitaph, revealing how he fled  
 The world, in lonely bitterness and pain,  
 We wrote his name in water there again.

# HOME AS THE ROOT OF ALL EVIL

BY ARTHUR WILLIAM ROW

What a splendid title! Don't you think?

The editor said I might be very naughty. This I refused to be so, I compromised and said, I'll just be frank—tell the truth and shame the family! as Shaw puts it.

"Home as the root of All Evil!" sounds like Shaw, I know, but no! it is my very own, born of real, intimate, bitter experience and it is a confession, a plaintive bleat—the wail of a chastened being.

I often wonder that the Christ has any prestige left because of the lurid doings of his alleged followers—the class called "*professed Christians*." Likewise I am amazed at the persistence and perpetuation of such expressions as "sanctity of the home," "sweet amenities of home life," "sacredness of the home circle," "lovely family ties," and so on ad lib and ad nauseum.

Of all the limited and stultifying, deadening influences, give me the *average* home. Mind you, I say the average. Does cannibalistic, malignant rudeness flourish any where quite as cheerfully as in the average home? Does any battlefield boast of more "supreme sacrifices" and mangled limbs, spiritually speaking, and sprained faculties?

This will of course be called—iconoclastic. Maybe it is meant to be more than that. Instead of home being the best place in the world, it is too often a myth, a superstition, a moth eaten tradition and dusty legend.

This assertion is open to ridicule. It will be scornfully denied up hill and down dale. I do not say that all homes or home influences are of this ilk, nor *of course*, do I speak for my friends or from personal experience. Heavens! Present company is always excepted. No! I speak largely from observation and from a survey of "home" life generally as an institution, especially when it results in a fetish, and of course, it is not "home" life that is the root of all evil but—*the lack of it!*

Then comes the break. A break that is fatal. There is no "vista" in home life and vista tends to rhythm and rhythm is the essence of harmonious being.



In these days of the economic independence of women and of easy divorce for all, is it any wonder that people change partners so frequently in the dance of life?

And why is home life so deadly? It is *stagnant emotion*. Life in its essence is vibration, and is colored, illumined and fed by interchange—healthful, magnetic interchange. Hence the rise and immense vogue of Women's Clubs in America. "In my Father's house are many mansions." Home is not necessarily a material thing bound by material walls. It is really a spiritual thing, and that is precisely where too many alleged homes fail. In them is neither spiritual freedom nor the incentive to expand or spread one's wings. It matters little how "devoted" a family circle may be, it is unusual for members of this circle to allow one another the courtesy they joyfully, freely and spontaneously allow a perfect stranger.

The saying "familiarity breeds contempt" finds its most oriental, opulent and finished product in home life. Oh! Home, what crimes are committed in thy name! What agonies of suppression, what unending years of monotony; how canned and stereotyped they reduce the average existence.

I have often wondered just what the Christ meant when he rebuked Martha. Was it not that, "your dusting and sweeping are all right in *their way*, but—really, my dear, you know—*there are other things!*"

Not as many Marthas nowadays as there used to be!

Eh! What?

The Biblical tale of the Pillar of Salt is reminiscent to me on the subject of—"Home as the Root of All Evil." Virtue to the extreme is vice, and anything, adhered to long after its primal usefulness, becomes a pest and an abomination. It is an error to cling to anything beyond its first constructive force. The expression "*smother* love," comes to mind in this connection. The mother is the physical means of the birth of a child—often much more than this, of course, but too often, alas! the greatest deterrent of the mental and spiritual development of the child. How many parents take a really unselfish, impersonal view of their child? How many in their attitude are actuated by other than personal, selfish, biased motives or over worldly ones, or too material ones? How many careers are snuffed out or crippled, or at least injured by the miasmatic-like effect of parents' views and influences.

"Home is the root of all Evil." Alas! it does not end

with being a "root," but persists all through life—maybe into eternity.

Charity is not the only essence that should begin at home but not end there. The sum of the whole thing is, nothing in this life is really final or fatal, but merely casual and constructive. Not an end but a beginning—a birth—a milestone on the way.

Do you remember what Magda said to the pastor in Sudermann's play by that name? "You have sat here, my dear Pastor, day after day, for the past seventeen years, in this heavy close atmosphere, reeking of lavender and cough mixture, while I—*have felt the storm breaking about my head.* If you only knew what life really meant—the test of strength—the taste of guilt—of conquest and of pleasure, you would find yourself very silly with your clerical shop talk."

The difficulties in expressing one's self on this theme are, I know, enormous—but one must break eggs to make omelets, and finally remember, it is the *fetish* of home that I am after and *not the real thing.*

A story of Ellen Terry and Shaw is apropos. When Shaw paid his first call on Miss Terry he found her out, so he was entertained by her daughter, Ailsa Craig. A friend afterward asked Miss Terry if they got along—"Did they get along!" exclaimed Miss Terry. "Heavens! when I returned I found them quarreling *as though they had been married twenty years!*"

A woman of forty I know confides to me she does not wear certain clothes as her husband and family strenuously object to their being "too young."

"*The family*" again!

One could recite endless instances of this what Maeterlinck calls the "tyranny of small minds," and this small mind seems to have its best stamping ground in family life.

'Tis true, 'tis pity!  
pity 'tis, 'tis true.

# FIRST OF THE MODERNS

BY JOSEPH T. SHIPLEY

Clement Marot (1495-1544) was the last medieval and the first modern French poet. Moving by rapid stages up the path his father had laboriously climbed, inheriting honorary offices in the royal household, he became a court favorite. Shrewd enough to abandon the legendary themes, he pictured in his verses the life about him, the ladies and their imperious ways, his own impulses and desires. He was courtly and insolent, gallant and ironical, pious and dissolute, obsequious and defiant—a dandy and a cynic. At heart he was sad. Willing to look through disillusioned eyes and to accept the comfort royal favor bestowed, he had thrust upon him the role of an active participant in the quarrels of the day: poetically, attacked by reactionary and radical, he returned the blows adroitly, overcoming the former through the poems of his days at court and the latter through the psalms of his heresy.

In his early youth, Marot seems to have led a riotous life, that soon was tempered to the more delicately sensuous customs of the court. There he was attracted by Diane de Poitiers, young, beautiful, superbly proud. For a while, perhaps, she dallied with the lad; we may trace, in "My Lady," "Epistle to my Love," "To Selve and Heroet," three stages of courtship: early daring, growing confidence, cynical certainty. But Marot soon wearied the haughty maid; on a charge of eating pork during Lent he was imprisoned for heresy—she was rid of him.

The brief stay in prison developed a latent side of the poet: the skin of an innocent lamb was made parchment, to bear words that would undo a church. With a fund of humor, Marot bought forgiveness from the king; but the reverse of the coins was satire that paid back, first the magistrates, and later, the church. Direct, boldfaced courage Marot may have lacked: he constantly denied any heresy; he fled, writing "Tis better to excuse one's absence than to be burned in one's presence;" he withheld from print whatever might have brought disfavor or harm; but, as frequently, he thrust an unorthodox mood or a savage attack into verse that he knew would be caught up in hostile quarters. This caution and this recklessness were another of the contrasts within the poet, that won him enemies on either side. Calvin was for a time friendly, as Francis I had been; toward the end both with-

drew their support, and the poet died friendless and poor. At the same time his courtly stanzas were being imitated by all who wished royal favor; and shortly after, his translation of the psalms coursed through twenty-five editions in one year, and sixty-two in the next four. His songs were murmured by pages to smiling dames, and chanted by martyrs in the fires of the Inquisition.

The power of Marot in two such disparate fields lay in still another happy duality. He sought, as no French poet before him, for artistic perfection. He avoided the dreariness of long themes, and wove exquisite trifles in freer forms (although he introduced the sonnet to France, he used it but three times). He chose subjects that touched his heart, and thereby revealed his countrymen to themselves. But all these achievements are manifestations of, or are wrought in, a spirit that was thoroughly of the Middle Ages, yet equally of the Renaissance.

Out of the Middle Ages Marot drew the savour of France. Scorning the scholastic attainments of the Latinists, of his poetic duellist Sagon, or of Cretin, Marot absorbed the popular poetry that still survived. He prepared an edition of Villon and of *The Romance of the Rose*. His forms: epistle, epigram, blason, "cock-to-ass," display a malicious fantasy, a gay, rascally, yet discreet pungency that rises from the soil and from the folk-song.

The Renaissance brought Marot a new sense of the importance of man. Hatred of abuse, horror of superstition, were forced on him by direct contact with these elements of medieval life. Learning his Latin comparatively late, Marot accepted the discipline of Latin and Italian translation (which Spenser carried from him to England), yet he was able to avoid the servile imitations undertaken by Ronsard and the others of the Pleaide. To him Martial and Catullus were models urging toward the contemplation of his own times in their spirit; Marot is at once classic and contemporary.

To his fellow Frenchmen Marot thus presented the tradition that sustained them and the novelty that allured. With his feelings directed toward the activity that so closely engaged his interests and involved his life, the growth of Marot's art and the increase of Italian and Latin influence, served but to strengthen the power behind his shafts, to sharpen their points, to direct their aim. The frippery of rhythmic adornment and metrical gymnastics never held him; with a strong feeling to pour forth, he was naturally impatient of whatever might weaken and delay. The scholastic pedantry of the rhetoricians before him, the

classical pedantry of the Pleiade to come, left an interval in which spoke the true spirit of France, in clarity, delicacy, and precision. Its voice was Clement Marot.

### MY LADY

I walked with her who is harsh to me.  
 Cupid, brushing between us  
 Said "Good morrow, Venus . . ."  
 Then blushed to find it was not she.

I said "Don't blush for that slight error's sake;  
 Keener eyes than yours have made the same mistake!"

### EPISTLE TO MY LOVE

I think the best in a friendly relation—  
 Outside of the amorous part—  
 Is the full and frank and free narration  
 Of whatever touches close to one's heart:  
 If ill, all pain twin-borne is slight;  
 If good, each brings a fresh delight.

So I'll let you share a dream I had  
 Last night. Don't think me stupid,  
 But I really dreamt that there, light-clad  
 As an early star, stood laughing Cupid!  
 He was as nude as dawn. He bore the bow  
 And held apart the amorous dart  
 That laid us low.

Coming near me awe-apparalled,  
 While a thousand doves dear-carolled,  
 "Lover," he spoke, "the maiden who  
 Is the only one for you  
 Loves you deep and loves you true  
 Loves you long and loves you wide  
 Loves you all the world beside."

Then with gently stirring wings  
 As the myriad tender things  
 I whisper you at dusk, the god took flight—  
 The god most gracious.  
 Darling, I am tenacious  
 Of his words last night.

At once, dear, I wrote this to you,  
 Beseeching that you call it true,  
 Answering fire of love with fire,  
 Not making Cupid out a liar.

Say, dear, it's true. O happy bed of mine  
 With such a dream of love so blessed in it . . .  
 Its happiness will truly be divine  
 When darling, you yourself are pressed in it!

#### TO SELVE AND HEROET

Why am I beaming? I've good right to boast:  
 Of all the three, Anne says she loves me most.  
 She was but jesting? Words and smiles deceive?  
 I know it well enough—and shan't believe!

#### EPIGRAM ON HIMSELF

I am no longer what I was,  
 Nor ever shall be more;  
 My springtime and my summertime  
 Have scampered out the door.  
 Love, you were the monarch whom  
 I served in spirit and letter.  
 But would I might be born again  
 To serve you better!

#### SONG

Who wishes for joy  
 Come now and behold  
 My fairest of maidens  
 Whom God watch and fold:  
 She brings such delight

To all who may see,  
 Thousand evils take flight—  
 And more, if they be.

The charms of my dear  
 On my spirit indart,  
 The spell of my dreams of her  
 Captures my heart.  
 The glory of her face  
 In dark death doth immure me;  
 But the smile of her grace  
 Is a cordial to cure me.

#### OF LOVE THAT WAS

In the good old days love spread across the land  
 Without great artifice and subtle gift;  
 A mere bouquet—and love—had power to lift  
 The whole round world to love's command,  
 For through the heart's eye they would understand  
 All things. Remember, too, the ways  
 Of love's long intertwining plays:  
 In a score, in thirty years, no love would shift  
 In the good old days.

Now all is lost that love arranged;  
 All tears are feigned, all smiles are false;  
 Love's messengers turn somersaults—  
 And even I have changed.  
 Before I make love any more  
 Love must be made as before  
 And true love find the honest ways  
 Of the good old days.

#### BROTHER LUBIN

To run to the city when no one can tell  
 For some vicious action: that Lubin does well;  
 But to lead a good life or deal fairly with you:  
 These are the things Lubin never can do.

To skilfully steal any thing he can sell,  
 Yours, mine, or the mayor's: that Lubin does well;  
 But to pay when he deigns make a purchase or two:  
 That's one of the things Lubin never can do.

To betray a sweet maiden, in sorrow to swell—  
 Or a wife—or a widow: that Lubin does well;  
 Try to give him some water—does your dog drink it too?  
 That's one of the things Lubin never can do.

Whatever's on the road to hell  
 Brother Lubin will do well;  
 Whatever's friendly, kind, or true:  
 Those are the things Lubin never can do.

(NOTE: The verses above are not literal translations, but free adaptations that aim to convey the spirit of the courtly protestant, the dissolute dandy, Clement Marot.)

## TWO WOMEN

BY EDNA LOUISE SMITH

I see two women in you; one so young  
 That wonder sits forever in her eyes  
 In readiness, a sort of gay surmise,  
 As if the days were bright beads to be strung.  
 As if when on her neck the string is hung,  
 And down the soft curve of her breast it lies  
 She shall not find its weight a sad surprise,  
 Nor looking down, see broken beads among.

I see two women in you; one so old,  
 Knowing all grief and sorrow men have sung,  
 That future years have nothing to unfold.  
 Soft is her voice—and yet an alien tongue.  
 Soft is her hand—and yet its touch is cold.  
 The woman whom I loved was very young.



# MY TREES

By J. HOMER CASKEY

## MESQUITES

Tall firs are wind-breaks, give protecting shade,  
Their fibrous trunks make storm-resisting spars;  
But delicate, filmy mesquite trees are made  
So daisies can look through and see the stars.

## POST OAKS

Though growing in the thin, red, flinty soil,  
With twisted, knotted limbs, symbolical  
Of slow and painful, drouth-defying toil,  
They manage to become symmetrical.

## WILLOWS

The Brazos, on a rampage, washes out  
The fields, lays bare sharp rocks, breaks through its banks;  
But in a year the slender willows, with no doubt  
Of healing, hide them all in close green ranks.

## COTTONWOODS

The white-splashed cottonwoods, from out the gloss  
Of thick-veined leaves, are letting fly their seed,  
As dainty as the milkweed's silky floss,  
Surprising like soft words from stern old men.

## SPANISH OAKS

I read in books of gnarled New England apples,  
Of beeches, birches, pines, and feathery firs,  
Of strange exotic leaves with motley dapples,  
And chestnuts bearing nut-filled, crinkly burs;  
Within my split-wood fire, as it flares and smokes,  
I see the gaudy leaves of Spanish oaks.

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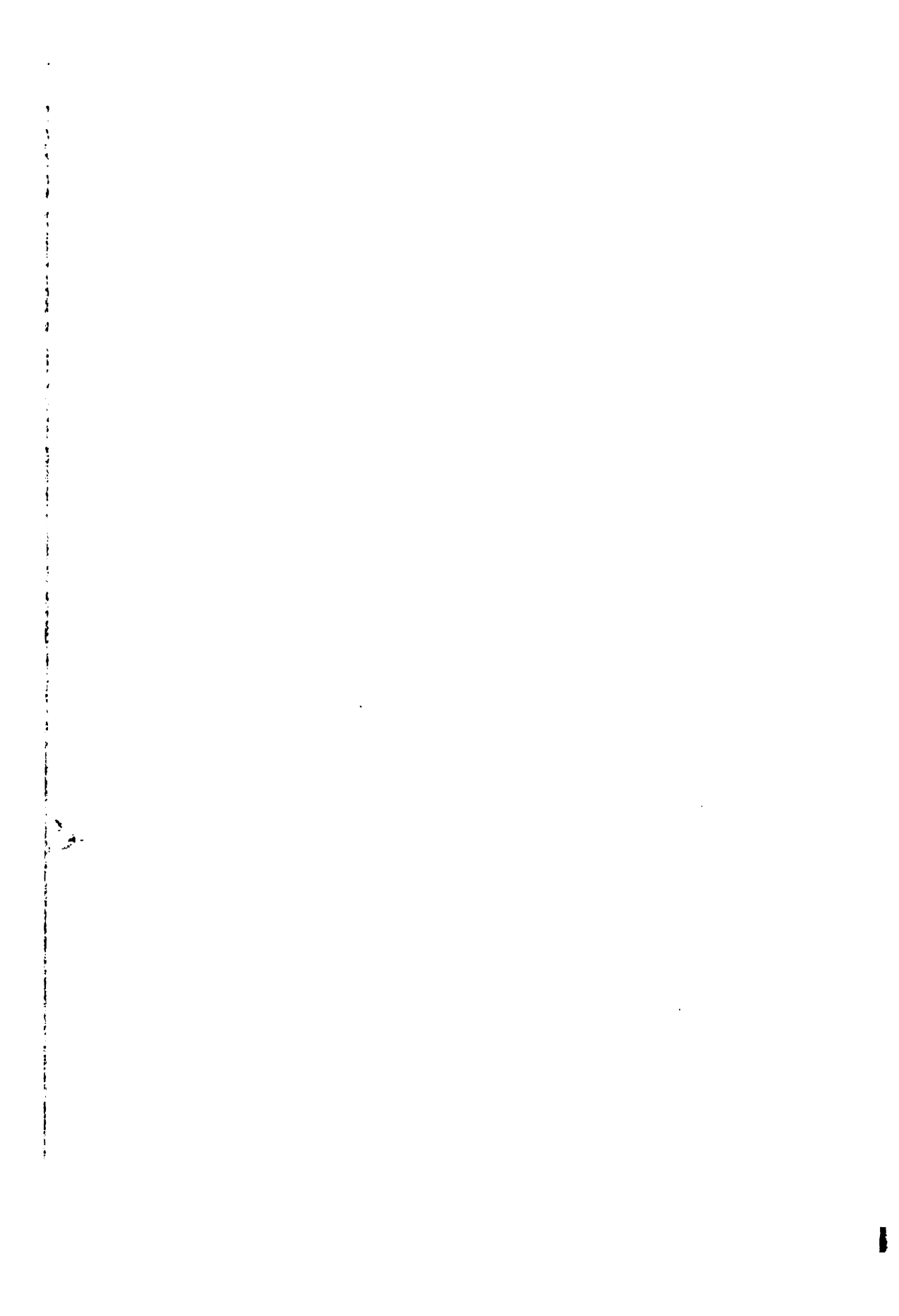
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