

PS 635

.Z9

G372

Copy 1

372

THE

SECRET OF THE PALACE.

A DRAMA,

IN FIVE ACTS,

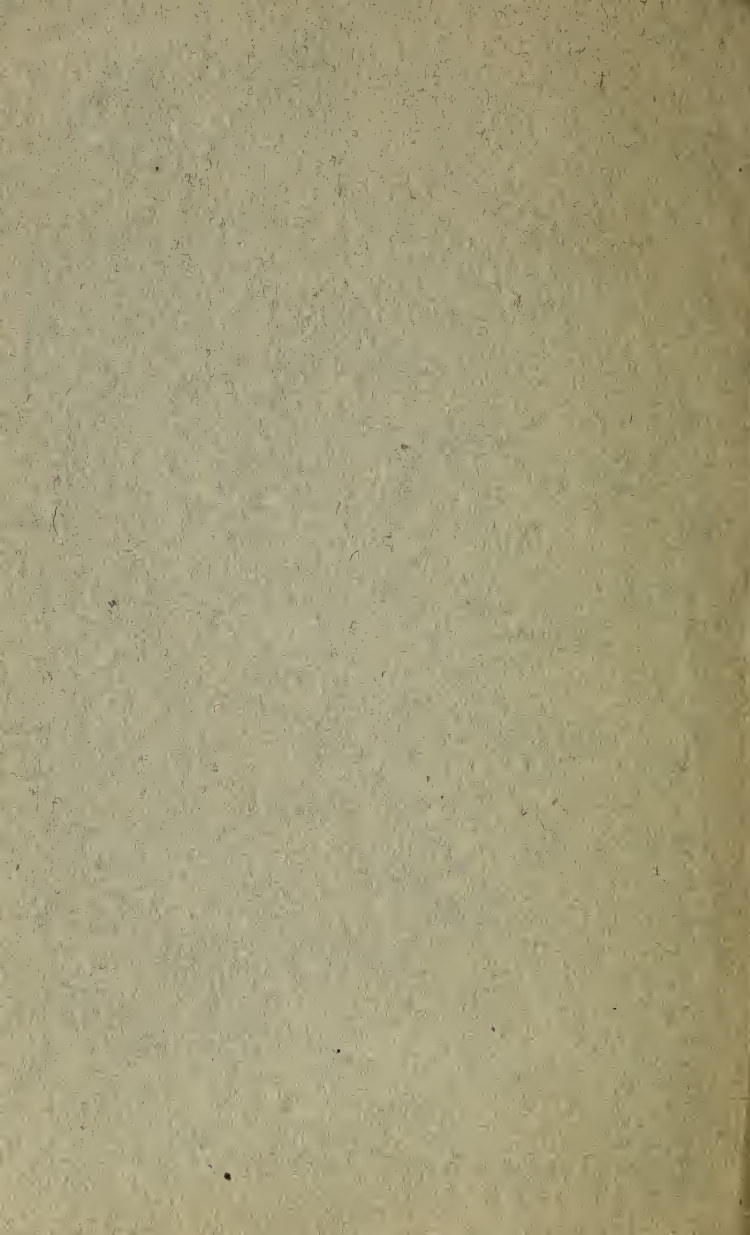
BY PETER GERARD.

Neve minor neu sit quinto productior actu
Fabula.—*Ars Poet.*

Entered according to Act of Congress, in the year 1880, by Peter Gerard, in the Office of the Librarian of Congress at Washington.

English and French copyrights and foreign translations reserved by the author.

PHILADELPHIA :
GILLIN & NAGLE STEAM-POWER PRINTING HOUSE,
Nos. 230-232 South Fifth Street,
1880.



THE
SECRET OF THE PALACE.

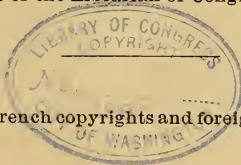
A DRAMA,

IN FIVE ACTS,

BY PETER GERARD.

34
Neve minor neu sit quinto productior actu
Fabula.—*Ars Poet.*

Entered according to Act of Congress, in the year 1880, by Peter Gerard, in the Office of the Librarian of Congress at Washington.



English and French copyrights and foreign translations reserved by the author.

PHILADELPHIA :
GILLIN & NAGLE STEAM-POWER PRINTING HOUSE,
Nos. 230-232 South Fifth Street,
1880.

7

This play contains no allusion to any person living or dead.

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ:

EMPEROR.

MARQUIS (Commandant of the Palace Guard and confidant of the Emperor).

LORENZO (a Captain of the Palace Guard).

COLONEL.

LIEUTENANT.

GOVERNOR OF "THE BASTILLE" (a State Prison).

CHAPLAIN OF "THE BASTILLE" (a monk).

JAILER.

COURIER OF THE EMPEROR.

HIGH IMPERIAL JUDGE.

YOUNG IMPERIAL PRINCE.

GENDARMES.

SOLDIERS.

CHORUS.

EMPRESS.

EVA (a Lady in a forest).

JULIA (a friend of Eva's).

NURSE of the Imperial Princee.

P 5635
24 4 372

THE SECRET OF THE PALACE.

ACT I.

SCENE I.

The private cabinet of the Emperor.

EMPEROR, MARQUIS.

Emp. Sir Marquis, I am in need of your services.

Marq. (kneeling). My devotion, my life are at the feet of your Majesty.

Emp. Without doubt you have heard of the delivery of the Empress?

Marq. Yes, Sir. And my joy was great when I learned that the newly born is a boy. Paris is jubilant and will give him a hearty welcome. They are already making preparations for an immense illumination.

Emp. So, that Paris is contented.

Marq. Yes, Sir; Paris is contented, happy; especially, in learning that your first-born child is a boy.

Emp. I have just told you, that I wanted your services; I want still more, your discretion.

Marq. Your Majesty may rely on it.

Emp. Paris is jubilant, you say, at the birth of a male child. Well, I must tell you, Sir Marquis, that the child is a girl.

Marq. A girl! Oh, is it possible!

Emp. Yes, Sir Marquis, a girl, a Princess; and I want a boy, a Prince; in fact a male successor. However strong may appear my Imperial dynasty, it needs a vigorous sprig to fortify it. To conclude, Sir Marquis, I must have a male infant.

Marq. I understand the state reasons, that your Majesty has so well explained to me.

Emp. Sir Marquis, may I rely on you?

Marq. (kneeling). I repeat it: my life is at the feet of your Majesty. All the torments invented by the Inquisition could not draw from me a syllable of this secret.

Emp. Well, then, procure me a male infant.

Marq. Sir, to-morrow, at twilight, I, myself, will bring to your Majesty a handsome, and I hope, acceptable child.

Exit the Emperor by the right, the Marquis by the left.

SCENE II.

A forest.—At the right a cabin, near which is a child in a cradle. At the left a small enclosure, in the middle of which is a grave decorated with flowers.

EVA, JULIA.

A woman singing is heard in the distance, and gradually approaches. At last Eva appears, carrying branches of wild flowers. Julia arrives almost at the same moment, but by another road.

Julia. From my cabin I heard songs in the distance. Was it you, Eva, who were thus singing?

Eva. Yes, I myself, Julia.

Julia. I have conjectured the cause of your joy. You are happy, are you not, because your dear little boy has just escaped a great danger?

Eva. Julia, you have divined the real cause of my joy.

Julia. I notice, also, that you now seem to like this forest, which formerly was a source of affliction to you.

Eva. Indeed I have become attached to this cabin, to this patch of ground, even to this grave, which I love to decorate with flowers. The habit of a solitary life has taught me to endure it. Heaven knows how cruel this solitude was to me after the death of my husband! This child, my dear little one, was not here, then, to fill my heart and my mind; but, thanks to him and also to you, Julia, time has been, not unpleasantly, passing away.

Julia. Oh! I, also, love this dear child!

Eva. Is he not beautiful, Julia, is he not?

Julia. Yes, indeed. He is a real picture of his father. Ah! he had a narrow escape from those hunters! If the grain of shot, which wounded his hand, had struck a vital part, it would have been the last of him.

Eva. Yes, he ran great danger.

Julia. Let me see his little hand.

Eva. It is perfectly well.

Julia. Indeed! I am glad of it. I see by the two red spots, that the shot has passed entirely through the hand.

Eva. It was fortunate for him the shot went through; had it remained in the flesh, his wound would have been more serious. He will carry through life the mark of this wound; but I am delighted to know, that he suffers no longer from it. *(She kisses his hand.)*

Julia. It is a mark, which, under certain circumstances, would establish his identity. If the Gypsies, for example, were to take him away.

Eva. I hope that Gypsies will never be seen in this direction.

Julia. And that hunters will not come again to endanger our lives. Oh! In speaking of hunters, mother told me, that a nice looking old gentleman, who is very kind and very affectionate, has been asking, who you were. He wanted to know if you were born in this forest. Mother told him, that you were born in a great city. Then he told her, that you have the polished manners and elegant

conversation of a lady of most refined society. He seemed to be much puzzled to find a lady like you in a forest and went out, saying to mother, that he would come back to see you.

Eva. I remember that good old gentleman. (*They hear a bell at a distance.*)

Julia. I hear the bell. Mother calls me. It is supper time. *Eva*, you would do well to take supper with us. I will carry the little one. Mother would like very much to see him. Well, come with me.

Eva. Not this evening, *Julia*; but I will, one of these days, show your mother my illustrious son.

Julia. I am sorry that you refuse.

Exit Julia.

EVA, MARQUIS.

Eva (*is decorating with flowers the grave of her husband, when the Marquis is seen at a distance, disappearing by intervals among the bushes. He comes near Eva, who makes a movement of surprise in seeing him*). Ah! it is you, Sir!

Marq. I have frightened you, Madam. I am, indeed, very sorry for it.

Eva. Do not mind it, Sir. I was startled because I did not hear you coming.

Marq. Well, Madam, how is the little boy?

Eva. I thank you, Sir. He is very well, and his wound has entirely healed. See! (*She shows him the child's hand.*)

Marq. The hunter, who had the misfortune to wound him, will learn of his recovery with great satisfaction. As for myself, I am happy to see this fortunate result. I understood your anxiety.

Eva. You understood my anxiety! And yet, I remember you said you have no children.

Marq. No, Madam. God has not granted me that joy.

Eva. That joy is great, indeed, Sir; it is about the only one which is left to me.

Marq. Madam, how is it, that a lady like you lives in this forest?

Eva. Political events brought us in this forest. My husband died in it, and my child was born in it. This grave and this cradle attach me to it.

Marq. To have consented to live in this dark retreat with your husband, shows, that you must have been very much attached to him.

Eva. Yes, Sir. His unhappiness had increased my affection for him, and there was no solitude for me where he was.

Marq. Madam, such noble feelings honor you very much. But, at the death of your husband?

Eva. Oh! At his death, the most cruel vacancy was all around me. God alone knows what this solitude, then, made me suffer. Ah! At night, when the wind was blowing through these big trees, I thought I heard voices coming from this grave. Happily for me, two months after my husband's death, I had this child. Oh! Then commenced a new life for me. Feelings unknown to me before rushed into my heart. Tranquillity of mind came back to me, and I noticed no more the moaning of the wind. To-day, must I say it? I think I am attached to this forest.

Marq. Is it possible? You to like this forest? Oh! Madam, this abdication, this renunciation of the world by a lady like you, surpass my comprehension. Ah! leave this solitude, so unworthy of you. Leave this damp and harsh atmosphere; your cultivated mind needs a healthier and higher region. Paris, Madam, Paris is the only place where you should live.

Eva. How, sir, could I live in Paris? I am poor.

Marq. Madam, I am going to speak to you very seriously. It depends on you, if you live in Paris or not. (*Eva looks at him with astonishment.*) To live there in a palace. Yes, in a marble palace. To have there your equipages and your servants in livery. Madam, it depends on you, attractive as you are, (*Eva makes a movement of surprise,*) whether or not you will have there a court, a real court, and the pleasure of seeing at your feet accomplished, brave and chivalric men, from all parts of the world, for whom Paris is the rendezvous. (*Eva moves away a little, lowering her head.*) Madam, is it possible that I have offended you?

Eva. The strangeness of your expressions makes me fear to hear your proposition.

Marq. Oh! Madam, your interpretation of my words afflicts me profoundly. I to make you a proposition, tending to dishonor you, to degrade you? Oh! Madam, deign to believe, I pray you, that you have inspired me with other feelings, and that I have for you, Madam, the truest, the greatest respect.

Eva. I thank you, Sir. If such are your regards for me, you will please pardon my supposition. Your words puzzle me very much. It depends on me, you say, to be rich, to be honored?

Marq. Yes, Madam.

Eva. Well, then, what must I do?

Marq. Give me your child.

Eva. Give you my child?

Marq. Yes, Madam, give me your child. Ah! have no fear for him. The most affectionate and unceasing attentions will be lavished upon him. No child in the universe, in the whole universe, will be more caressed, more cared for, than he.

Eva. The asylums of Paris will furnish you, Sir, with as many children as you may want, and as handsome as mine.

Marq. I doubt it.

Eva (*coming nearer to the Marquis*). You doubt it?

Marq. Yes, Madam; I doubt if there be, in the whole world, a handsomer child than yours.

Eva (*smiling*). It is a great deal to say "in the whole world."

Marq. Do you not think, Madam, that I address you the truth?

Eva. Mothers are inclined to believe their children the nicest in the world; but since I read a fable, entitled, "The Eagle and the Owl," I have no great confidence in my own judgment.

Marq. Do not be too diffident, Madam. There is not, in my eyes, another boy like him. Madam, the hour is becoming late; I must depart. I leave you, very much disappointed at the failure of my proposition. I had already given to my wife a description of your little one, and she will experience great sorrow in seeing me return without him. She is getting old, and I, also.

Eva. It does not seem evident to me.

Marq. I commence to feel the weight of years. Old age is a disease that time does not cure. A child is the joy of this period of life, and is the last reed to which we cling in leaving this world. I repeat it: I leave you, very much disappointed.

Eva. I pity you, Sir, for having so much coveted my child, and regret to disappoint you by saying, Sir, that nothing could make me part with him. I prefer this poor little cabin with him, to a marble palace without him.

Marq. Well, I will insist no more. I fear I will be overtaken by night; I am going; but I am very thirsty, and would be much obliged to you for a glass of water.

Eva. With the greatest pleasure. I very much regret that, in my poverty, water is the only drink I can offer you.

Marq. Madam, it is the only one I desire, at present.

Eva. I am going to the spring, and will be here in a moment.

Marq. Thank you, Madam, I will wait.

Eva. I confide to your care my child.

Marq. I will take care of him in your absence. (*Eva having disappeared, he takes the child.*) Come! heir to the throne of France! Come! they are waiting for you at the Tuileries! (*He goes away with the child.*)

The sky, which had become dark, is riven by flashes of lightning. Thunder is heard. Eva comes back and finds the cradle empty. She enters her cabin; she searches; and finally, she disappears amidst thunder and lightning.

SLOW CURTAIN.

ACT. II.

SCENE I.

An apartment at the Tuileries.

EMPEROR, EMPRESS, AND THE REAL IMPERIAL CHILD, IN A CRADLE.

Emperor. Madam, let us face the situation; let us discard any kind of feeling hostile to the public welfare. The country wants a male successor to my throne, well, let us give it one. Nothing is easier: It is only necessary to put in this cradle the male infant for which I am waiting.

Empress. Why! You are, already, waiting for a male infant! What eagerness, oh my God! You had, then, anticipated the birth of this girl?

Emperor. No; but I gave the order, yesterday, to my faithful servant, the Marquis, to bring me a male child.

Empress. And, without doubt, of noble blood?

Emperor. I have given no especial order about that. I left to him the choice of the subject. The question of "Noble blood" interests me but very little: If the child comes from old and high lineage, nobody will know it. If he is of plebeian blood, the air of this palace will refine it.

Empress. Yes, the air, which has vitiated the hearts of all those who have breathed it!

Emperor. Madam, I love my country more than the infant in this cradle.

Empress. The country will know, Sir, that your heir is not my child.

Emperor. Never.

Empress. It will know it, Sir, do not doubt it. People are not as blind and credulous as you suppose. The time of regal infallibility is over. The low courtier, who bows before us, points out, under the Imperial mantle, the poor mortal stuff of which we are made.

Emperor. They see nothing! They see in us only the dispensers of great favors, the point around which all things centre. In a word we are, for the people, the heart and the head of the nation.

Empress. People will cease to see in you the infallible Monarch, when they will have discovered your artifice. They do not like to be deceived. They prefer truth and honesty, and would accept with favor, if they love me, this child as she is. They would share my sorrow and wait. Sir, think of what I say to you. You are compromising public tranquillity by acting as you do. Then, have you thought of the trial to which you submit me? To be obliged to conceal this dear object, my first-born child! To keep enclosed, in the depths of my heart, my tenderness for her! Oh! the joy of caressing a cherished infant, a joy that God has given, as a consolation, to the poorest of mothers, should I, I, an Empress, be deprived of it?

Emperor. Madam, I understand and share your sorrow. The trial is a hard one; but the good of the country demands from us this sacrifice. I hear some one coming. Probably it is the Marquis. Madam, I pray you, control your emotion and resume your customary manner before him.

Enter MARQUIS.

Marq. I have the honor of bringing to your Majesty the male child, I promised yesterday.

Emperor. Oh! it is a lovely and beautiful child. Sir Marquis, I congratulate you on your selection.

Marq. Sir, what I hear renders me the happiest man in the world.

Emperor. This child is worthy, indeed, of the elevation which is in reserve for him. (*To the Empress.*) Madam, have the kindness to tell us what you think of him? (*The Empress looks at the child without answering.*) Is he not superb?

Empress (aside). He is hideous.

Emperor. Does not his face already reflect intelligence and determination?

Empress. Oh! this hand. Oh! a mark of scrofula.

Marq. Madam, it is a wound. The shot of a hunter. A very small grain of lead has gone through his hand.

Empress. The shot of a hunter?

Marq. Yes, Madam. The accident took place a few days ago. The wound has healed, and time will destroy the last trace of it.

Empress. Apparently, this infant was in a wood to have been thus wounded?

Marq. Yes, Madam, he comes from a forest.

Empress. And you have stolen him?

Marq. Oh! no, Madam, I bought him.

Empress. You bought him! Surely not from his mother?

Marq. No, Madam, he is an orphan. I bought him from an old woman who had adopted him.

Emperor (taking from the cradle the young Princess). Sir Marquis, lay down here, in this cradle, "the Imperial Prince." (*The Marquis puts the babe in the cradle.*) Now, Sir Marquis, take this child. I confide her to you. Give her a good nurse. It is unnecessary to tell you, Sir Marquis, that her origin must remain in the deepest mystery.

Marq. Sir, I understand the situation. (*He makes some steps towards the door.*)

Empress (placing herself in front of the Marquis). Where are you going with my child? What do you intend to do with her?

Emperor. Madam, I have given him all my instructions on the subject; let him leave us.

Empress. Marquis, this child belongs to me.

Emperor. Madam, let us avoid, if you please, any kind of scandal.

Empress. This child is mine.

Emperor. Madam, your child is the one, who lies in this cradle. It is to him, that, henceforth, you will give your care and affection. See in him the heir to the first throne in the world. Behold him

with the country at his feet, and Europe trembling at the sound of his voice! In fact, Madam, your infant, I repeat it, is (*showing the cradle*) this one.

Empress. Sir, I will accept him as my own child. I will respect in him the Imperial Prince. I will affect for him tenderness and motherly love; but, in the name of God, let me have my own child. I promise you to conceal her in the depths of this palace. Oh! I prostrate myself at your feet! (*She kneels before the Emperor in a supplicating attitude.*)

Emperor. Madam, what you ask from me exposes, too much, both of us. Marquis, leave us, with that child!

Empress (rising suddenly and going towards the Marquis). Marquis, do not depart!

Emperor. Marquis, I order you to go!

Empress. Oh! I feel that I am dying! (*She faints in an arm chair.*)

SCENE II.

The garden of the Tuileries.—In front, the garden. In the back-ground, separated by an iron railing, the court and the palace.

EVA, A COLONEL.

Eva (steps painfully, and seems to be weak and suffering. After a moment of hesitation, she rings the bell at the great gate. A Colonel of the Palace Guard comes to her from the outside.) Sir, will you have the kindness to tell me whether the Empress lives in this palace?

Col. Yes, Madam, Her Majesty lives in this palace.

Eva. I am anxious to make known to her an affair of some gravity, and I would like very much to see her.

Col. This is not easy.

Eva. I know it, Sir; but if Her Majesty knew that my only child has been stolen—

Col. Your child stolen!

Eva. Yes, Sir, by one of the Palace Guards.

Col. One of the Palace Guards!

Eva. Yes, Sir.

Col. Madam, what you say astonishes me very much. The Palace Guard is composed of brave soldiers, all men of honor, and it is impossible, that there is among them one, degraded enough to commit such a deed.

Eva. Well, Sir, my child was stolen by one of them. I would like so much to see the Empress! "She is a kind woman," they say; besides she is a mother. She will understand my trial, and help me to find my child.

Col. Well, Madam, write to the Empress; ask her for an interview; it is possible that Her Majesty will grant you this favor. You would then have to dress yourself a little better. I do not wish, Madam, to offend you in giving you this advice.

Eva. I know, Sir, that the condition of my clothes renders difficult the audience I solicit; "poor" is synonymous with "criminal." I know, also, that poverty inspires more aversion than pity: I am

sadly experiencing what I say. It will be difficult, for me, to get better clothes. My health is, moreover, in a frightful condition : I have suffered so much from the loss of my child ! Then the long journey I have just made has helped to crush me. To write to the Empress, to await her answer ! How could I wait ? I feel myself dying. (*She goes and sits on a bench. At this moment arrives the young Prince Imperial, with a brilliant escort, preceded by a Piqueur in rich red uniform, and a band of music. The young Prince in an open carriage, lined with gold and velvet. Behind him is a nurse, fanning gently the face of the child. This carriage is drawn by four white ponies, held by two pages. A rich white lap-robe, embroidered with silver, covers the child as high as the vest. He has his hands, gloved in red, placed over the lap-robe ; a foot guard forms a line by each side of the carriage. The Palace Guard present arms to the young Prince. Eva rises to look at him. On seeing the infant she gives signs of great emotion. When the procession is over Eva goes back to her bench.*)

Enter LORENZO.

Lor. Colonel, who is the woman sitting on that bench ?

Col. It is a poor woman, who wants to speak to the Empress. She pretends that her only child has been taken from her by one of the Palace Guard.

Lor. Could this be possible ?

Col. Oh, no. This unhappy woman has her mental faculties very strangely affected. Nobody, in first hearing her, would suppose it. She is very charming in conversation.

Lor. There are, in the world, great varieties of mental alienation. In my opinion, we have, all, a touch of it. Between the wise and the crazy the distance is short. This woman may go astray on one subject, and have rational ideas on all others. She seems to be suffering.

Col. She has just made a long journey, in order to see the Empress, and is exhausted by fatigue. She seems, also, to suffer from hunger. A little help would not be misplaced.

Lor. Well, let us put her in a condition to fight against hunger, at least for a few days. (*Both put their hand in their pocket, and Lorenzo throws in the lap of Eva two big pieces of silver.*)

Eva (*raising her head*). From a Palace Guard ! (*She throws away, with force, the two pieces.*)

Lor. (*going to her respectfully*). Madam, you will excuse my offense ; it was caused by your attitude on this bench. My desire to be useful made me act too hastily.

Eva. If I am not mistaken, you are a Palace Guard ?

Lor. Yes, Madam, I have the honor to belong to that legion.

Eva. I would rather die than accept any help from a Palace Guard.

Col. (*to Lorenzo*). Captain, I think we would do well to keep at some distance. (*They step away.*) I told you, that her ideas were not very lucid.

Lor. Did you remark with what haughty indignation she threw away the pieces ?

Col. And still she suffers with hunger ; I believe her to be in extreme distress. She is going to die on that bench.

Lor. If it is true, that her child has been stolen from her, I can understand her hatred and despair. I would like to know who that woman is. (*She rises.*) Where is she going? She directs her steps towards the palace. What is she going to do in that direction?

Eva (*enters the court by the great gate, which was left half open, after having made some steps in the direction of the palace*). Farewell, Palace of the Tuileries, hearth of frantic luxury, which produces crime! Farewell, Temple of Favor, where the courtier enters only by crawling! Farewell, Mighty Monarch, for whom people are but food for powder. (*In saying these last words she repasses the gate and, turning towards the Colonel and Lorenzo.*) Farewell, great slaves in livery; beautiful Palace Guards who steal children, farewell, farewell!

Lor. Indeed that woman puzzles me! The poor wretch can scarcely drag herself along.

Col. She will expire in the street.

Lor. Colonel, that woman excites my commiseration. I am going to follow and have her assisted. (*He follows her.*)

SLOW CURTAIN.

ACT III.

SCENE I.

Two garrets separated by a curtain.

Eva (at the rise of the curtain, she is standing in the middle of her room). Oh! I am hungry, I am starving! Strange presentiment! I have, all my life feared death by starvation, which I am now realizing. Of all deaths, that of hunger has always appeared to me the saddest. I do not, however, experience any great pain; but I feel that my end is near. I feel it by the fever, which consumes me, by the delirium, which confuses my ideas. (*She drinks some water and goes to a closet, that she inspects.*) Nothing! (*She wipes the cold sweat which trickles on her brow.*) Oh! this moisture of my brow is the sweat of death! (*She sits down.*) Oh my God, before whom I shall soon appear, watch over my stolen child! (*At this moment somebody knocks at the garret door.*) Come in!

Enter LORENZO.

Eva. Oh, a Palace Guard! Go away, Palace Guard! let me die alone!

Lor. Permit me, Madam, permit—

Eva. Go away, I tell you! Do not disturb my last moments! Oh, my God, is this the consoling angel you send me to soften my agony? A Palace Guard! Oh! you will make me drink the bitter cup to the dregs!

Lor. You think, Madam, that a Palace Guard has stolen your child?

Eva. I told you so; Yes, a Palace Guard, a man who wears your odious uniform.

Lor. Could you, Madam, recognize the man who stole your child?

Eva. Yes, Sir; the ignoble expression of his features is engraved forever in my memory.

Lor. Well, Madam, as the number of Palace Guards is very limited it will be easy to find the man, and, when once found, I will denounce him as unworthy of remaining in the legion, to which I have the honor to belong. I understand the despair and the hatred which have taken possession of you, and I offer you my services to discover the author of your trouble.

Eva. It is too late: I am dying.

Lor. Madam, your misfortune and the noble manner, in which you bear it, deeply interest me. I have discovered in you an honest and elevated nature, that infamy has exasperated. I am body and soul at your service!

Eva (throws on Lorenzo a scrutinizing look and, after a moment, of silence, says): If your words do not cover a new snare, I have to pray you, Sir, to forgive my harshness. My ideas are not very clear: I have suffered so much! Despair, fatigue, hunger.

Lor. Hunger! Permit me to leave you a moment only. I will come back in a minute! Madam, cease to afflict yourself, we will find your child!

Exit Lorenzo.

Eva (alone). Who is that man, who, when all seems to be forever lost to me, comes to revive hope in the depths of my heart! Ah! can I, crushed down as I am, be again restored to health!

Lor. (a milk pot in one hand, and a napkin containing biscuits, cups, &c., in the other). I bring you milk and some biscuit and, in a moment, they will come with wine and provisions.

Eva. Sir, your kindness moves me, even to tears. (She wipes her eyes.)

Lor. (presenting to her a cup of milk). They will bring us in a moment something more substantial. (*Eva* drinks but half of the cup.) Madam, empty your cup, that I may fill it again.

Eva. I would ask you, Sir, not to insist too much: this cup of milk is all I could take, at present. I must proceed cautiously, Sir; any excess would kill me: for three days I have taken nothing but water.

Lor. Three days! Is it possible? The trial has, indeed, been long and cruel.

Eva. I was dying when you came in. It seems to me that I drink life in drinking this milk.

Lor. Well, then, let me fill your cup. Drink a little more of it.

Eva. Oh! I would like, Sir, but I must proceed cautiously and by degrees. I feel already a great deal better.

Lor. Well, well, I am glad to hear you say that. It makes me feel better, also.

Eva. I thank you for your generous words. You, Sir, who are a soldier, you must have occasionally suffered with hunger?

Lor. Oh! yes, Madam; but my longest privation lasted only thirty-six hours. I had not then as much prudence as you now have; I took a square meal which almost killed me. I had a delirium, and thought, indeed, that all was over with me. Oh! yes, Madam, I have several times suffered with hunger. A soldier's life, you know, is composed of excess and privation. When in the field they promise us double rations, but their double ration is often no ration at all. I hear somebody coming. I believe it is the caterer, who brings the supper, and, also, some provisions.

Eva. I am confused, Sir, by your generosity.

Lor. Please, Madam, never speak of it. (At this moment the caterer arrives who, with the help of *Lorenzo*, arranges dishes on the table, bottles of wine, &c. During this time two servants bring a large basket filled with bread, a barrel of flour, several hams, cases of wine, boxes of sardines, provisions of all kinds, and at last a basket of fruit, which is put on the table. When the caterer and the servants are gone, *Lorenzo* takes a place at table, opposite *Eva*.)

Eva (looking at the provisions). It seems to me, Sir, that you have acted with too much prodigality.

Lor. I will tell you, Madam, that these provisions are intended for two. If my project meet with your approbation, I will come every day and take a repast with you.

Eva. Rest assured, Sir, that it will be a great happiness for me.

Lor. Thank you, thank you. Then it is understood that every evening I will come and take supper with you. I will confess,

Madam, that I like a household where some attention is given to the table. A good table is for me a sign of civilization. I like to enjoy, without excess, the pleasure of a meal, artistically prepared. I also like the wine of Bordeaux, which I consider the most wholesome of all liquids; but I do not abuse it; I stop at a certain limit. (*Taking the bottle.*) I see, with satisfaction, that "dear Bordeaux" has not been forgotten. A drop of this claret, Madam, will completely restore your strength. Bordeaux is the beverage of the Gods: it cures physical and mental sufferings in promoting health and happiness. Permit me, dear lady, to fill your glass. (*He fills up Eva's glass, then his own.*) Madam, I drink to the complete restoration of your health and the near discovery of your child.

Eva (*touching his glass with her own*). I thank you, Captain, may Heaven hear your good wishes.

Lor. It will hear them, Madam; yes, it will hear and grant them. We will find the little fellow, the absence of whom makes you suffer so much. I feel confident that we will find him. You will excuse, Madam, the simplicity of the meal; it is composed of two dishes only, oyster soup and meat jelly.

Eva. Captain, it is more than I need.

Lor. There is in this soup only the tender part of the oyster, the most digestible portion. I think, Madam, it will have a very salutary effect. (*He serves her with a plate of soup.*)

Eva. Oh! enough, enough, Sir.

Lor. I remember, that, after an exchange of starving prisoners our doctor, who was a man of great experience, ordered for them an oyster soup of this kind.

Eva. It is delicious, indeed.

Lor. I think, Madam, you can now, without danger, increase the quantity.

Eva. I would commit a very great imprudence. Please, Captain, do not insist any more. To-morrow I will augment my rations. What I have taken has already done me a great deal of good. I feel my strength coming back.

Lor. What you say makes me the happiest man in the world. Here is, Madam, a second dish, which is equal to the first. It is a meat jelly.

Eva. Allow me, Captain, to serve myself. (*She takes very little of the jelly.*)

Lor. Oh! at this time your caution goes too far. You neglect also the beverage of the Gods.

Eva. I am afraid of it.

Lor. (*raising his glass*). Permit me, Madam, to drink once more to the promotion of your welfare and happiness. (*He empties his glass and remains standing.*)

Eva. Thanks, Captain. You have just said to me, *apropos*, of this beverage of the Gods, that you have command enough over yourself to stop at a certain limit.

Lor. Yes, Madam, at the natural limit. I like natural limits and equilibrium. (*He staggers a little*) I mean the European equilibrium.

Eva. Captain, your toasts to my good health and happiness have been so numerous, that you ought to be now very near the limit.

Lor. I have proposed several toasts, it is true. Believe me, Madam, that your health is to me dearer than my own.

Eva. Believe me also, Sir, that I will never forget your kindness to me.

Lor. Madam, do not speak any more of it. The fact, that you have changed, for the better, your feelings for me, has caused such a flow of joy, that I could not resist the current, which has carried me beyond the limit.

Eva. Do you not think, Captain, that a little rest would be beneficial to both of us.

Lor. Yes, Madam, I think you need a good night's sleep, and I, also. The beverage of the Gods has had on me this evening an unusual effect. My ideas are strange. The equilibrium (*he staggers a little*) of Europe seems to me somewhat threatened. Well, I will see you to-morrow. (*Shaking hands.*) I wish you good-night and pleasant dreams. I wish it from the depths of my heart.

Eva. I thank you, and hope that we may both realize your wish.

Lor. (retracing his steps). I come back to tell you, Madam, not to torment your mind any more. We will find the little fellow; we will find him. Good-night.

Eva. I thank you, Captain, good-night. *Exit Lorenzo.*

Eva (alone). May Heaven verify his prediction. The words of this generous officer have brought back to my mind peace and serenity. Is it possible that I may again see my little one. This young Prince Imperial is his living portrait. Oh! if this Prince were my son. I will soon put a stop to my speculations; I will, again, go to the Tuileries. I feel a sort of drowsiness taking possession of me. Oh! I wish I could sleep. (*She throws herself on a sofa. The gas is lowered. The theatre is almost in darkness. The figure of a child, tendering his hands to Eva, is seen at the end of the stage.*)

Eva (rising). Oh! I have just seen my poor child offering me his little hands. Oh, my God! Hunger comes to torment me again; but I will resist it. Let us put aside these dishes, which excite too much my appetite. (*She takes away the dishes.*) Sleep seems to take possession of me. I will go into the adjoining room. If, at last, I should have a good night? (*She disappears in the other room. The scene changes.*)

SCENE II.

The garden of the Tuileries.

EVA, A LIEUTENANT, A COLONEL, THE CROWD, &C.

Eva, who is seen walking about, then stops and is looking through the gate, in the direction of the palace, when she perceives the Prince Imperial. He is this time in a baby carriage, and surrounded by an escort of soldiers. When the Prince Imperial is in the middle of the stage, she rushes and takes off the glove of his left hand. She is immediately arrested. The crowd surrounds her.

Lieu. Madam, I arrest you in the name of the law! Soldiers, take hold of this woman and prevent her escape.

Col. (who, hearing the noise, had come from the guard-house, aside), Ah! it is the crazy woman of yesterday. (*To Eva.*) What! you again!

Lieu. Colonel, this woman has just taken off one of the gloves of the Imperial Prince.

Col. Madam, what you have done is grave and serious; more serious than your imprecations of yesterday. This deed is under the law an outrage upon the Majesty of the heir to the throne.

Eva. And if the heir to the throne is my son?

Col. (*aside.*) Poor woman! (*To Eva.*) In that case the offense would cease to exist. Madam, your movements about these premises commence to excite my suspicion; still I once more consent, considering there is no bad intention on your part, to set you at liberty; but remember, Madam, that, if I again see you near the palace, I will have for you no kind of indulgence. Soldiers, let her go. (*She disappears.*) (*To the Lieutenant.*) Human beings are, indeed, exposed to a great variety of insanity. That of this woman is a sad and persistent one, and of a nature to inspire commiseration. I see the Empress coming in this direction. I have to speak to Her Majesty. Please leave me alone with her.

Enter EMPRESS.

Emp. Colonel, I have just seen, from the palace, a gathering of people. What was the cause of it?

Col. A poor woman, a kind of weak-minded creature, approached too closely the young Imperial Prince and was arrested; but, not discovering in her any malicious intention, I ordered her set at liberty.

Emp. You have acted very well, indeed.

Col. This woman comes frequently around the Tuileries. Yesterday I had another scene with her: She wanted to speak to your Majesty, and insisted on an interview.

Emp. And you refused it to her?

Col. Certainly.

Emp. Is her insanity of a dangerous character?

Col. Madam, I do not know, indeed. She is, to me, a very strange person. She is peculiarly elegant in conversation. It was, after some time, only, that we discovered, by the incoherence of her ideas, that she was affected with mental alienation.

Emp. I regret, Colonel, that you have refused her the audience she desired. For many persons, for the insane especially, an Empress is almost a divinity. Colonel, could you believe it? I receive letters, in which they express, to me, feelings so great, so exquisite, that they come near adoration.

Col. I understand, Madam, why they express to you such feelings.

Emp. I know too well my weakness to understand, that I do not deserve them. I only want to speak to you of the effect, which is produced on certain persons by the title of Empress. An audience given to that woman, might have tempered her ideas and brought back calmness to her mind.

Col. Madam, I appreciate the reasons just developed by the kindness of your Majesty's heart, but this woman was, besides, so poorly clothed, that——

Emp. Oh, Sir! this second reason is weaker than the first. Is this a cause that she should not have access to the palace? Colonel, I want you to know, for your direction, once for all, that "Poverty" has in my eyes a claim, a sacred claim to our sympathy, and, that any audience solicited by the poor is to be always granted. Are we not all exposed to poverty? God has placed it before us as an eternal threat! The greatest of this world—Kings themselves—are exposed to it. Colonel, I do not wish it to be said that the cabinet of the Empress has been, for the poor, an impregnable fortress. I hope, Sir, you have understood me.

Col. Madam, the orders of your Majesty will be carefully executed. (*He bows and retires.*)

Enter LORENZO.

Lor. (aside). Oh! I see the Empress! I must speak to her! But this wine of last night, this beverage of the Gods, has given me the headache. My hair pricked all night! Never mind! I belong to the legion of braves! (*He goes slowly towards the Empress, staggering a little, and places himself at her left.*)

Emp. (after a silence of some length). Captain, do you wish to speak to me?

Lor. Oh, Madam! If I only dared to do it! Your Majesty will excuse my hesitation. I was last night under the influence of moving circumstances, and I yet feel somewhat agitated; but the well-known kindness of your Majesty emboldens me. (*Short silence.*)

Emp. Well, Captain, I hear you.

Lor. I stand in need of all my bravery, and the indulgence of your Majesty to commence my recital.

Emp. My indulgence is granted.

Lor. I thank you, Madam. Well, I would like to obtain a certain favor from your Majesty.

Emp. What are your claims, young Captain, to the favor you expect from me?

Lor. (somewhat embarrassed). Madam, first deign to allow me to tell you that I love you! that I adore you! that your Majesty has inspired in me the noblest, the purest feelings.

Emp. You must belong to the legion of braves, indeed, to speak thus.

Lor. Oh! I pray your Majesty to excuse my awkwardness. I had the honor to say to your Majesty that I was last night under the influence of very moving circumstances. Deign, Madam, forget the words which have just escaped me. I intended to say, that when my thoughts dwell on your Majesty, they are inspired with the noblest, the purest feelings.

Emp. Well, young Captain, your apology is accepted. Please continue your recital.

Lor. On the eve of the departure of the army for the last campaign, a great farewell dinner was given at the Tuileries to a certain

number of officers. I had the good fortune to be at this banquet, where, by hazard, your Majesty addressed me a few words.

Emp. I remember the circumstances. It was not by hazard, Captain, that I spoke to you. You seemed to be the youngest of all the officers at the table.

Lor. I was the youngest.

Emp. That is the reason why I spoke to you, and addressed you words of encouragement.

Lor. Oh, those words! Those words! What an impression they left on my heart! I had no parents, no family; but from that time I was no longer alone in the world. Your beloved image followed me everywhere, inspiring every one of my actions. I continually saw before me my gracious sovereign. My affection for her was converted into a sort of adoration.

Emp. (*smiling*). Captain, I admire the poetry of your expressions.

Lor. Oh! Madam, do not be offended if I go so far as to express feelings, which will never grow old in my heart. If, against my will, I go beyond the limit of respect I owe to your Majesty, it is because I was last night under the influence—

Emp. "Of moving circumstances." You told me that. Please, Captain, continue your recital and tell me the object of your call.

Lor. In this last campaign, the rifle bullet of a Tyrolian Chasseur struck my breast and passed entirely through the body. There was no need of extracting it.

Emp. I heard of that wound.

Lor. The shock was terrible! I fell as thunderstruck. I thought myself mortally wounded. I felt my life oozing out with my blood. Well, at this hour, God is my witness, my thought—which I believed the last—was of your Majesty!

Emp. I thank you, Captain, for your good sentiments. Now, that I know them, I pray you, never express them to me. Please, Captain, be kind enough to come to a conclusion.

Lor. Well, Madam, I would like to oblige a poor woman.

Emp. A woman! Oh! evidently young and beautiful.

Lor. Indeed, Madam, I do not know, I could not tell. I am attached to her on account of her misfortune, which she bears with noble resignation. I would like to help her, but I am poor myself. Ah! for the first time, I curse my poverty! I could, it is true, borrow some money; but I am very reluctant to run into debt, and I thought I would do better by stating my situation to your Majesty.

Emp. You do well, Captain, to apply to me. You may always rely on me for such service. I would learn, with great displeasure, that you were in debt. Believe me, remain free of debt in order to remain honest. Here is my pocket-book; if it does not contain enough, write to me.

Lor. Thank you! I thank you for her! I am going to carry joy and hope to her heart! Ah! she also, Madam, will bless your Majesty!

Emp. I experience great pleasure, Captain, in knowing that I can be useful to her. May I know why this woman, excites, so much, your interest?

Lor. Madam, I am attached to this woman because they have just stolen her new-born child, her only child!

Emp. Her only child! A new-born child!

Lor. Yes, Madam, a male child!

Emp. Oh! my God! what do you tell me!

Lor. Oh! excuse me, Madam, for having provoked this emotion. I ought to have known that your Majesty—who is a mother—appreciates the torments of a woman from whom is taken her new-born child!

Emp. To whom, Oh! my God! do you speak of such a thing! Oh! what have you said to me! (*She remains a moment as crushed with emotion.*) Captain, go tell your friend that I understand her situation, and that I will interest myself in her behalf.

Lor. Thanks, Madam, a thousand thanks for her.

He bows and disappears.

Enter EMPEROR.

Emperor. Madam, is it with your knowledge that a woman is searching about this palace for a child which has been stolen from her?

Empress. Yes, Sir.

Emperor. This woman is, without doubt, the mother of our Imperial Prince.

Empress. Very likely.

Emperor. All illusion must cease: the situation is grave.

Empress. You would have done better, as I told you, had you acted honestly, made to the people a candid avowal and left me my daughter.

Emperor. To deliberate on accomplished facts is to lose time. The Marquis was badly inspired when he took that child away from its mother.

Empress. He said to us—the vile imposter—that he bought the child from an old woman.

Emperor. Well, the thing is done. What are we to do, now, with that woman? She seems to be of a daring and decided character.

Empress. I understand, by what I experience myself, in what state of exasperation she must be. Sire, I am becoming tired of the role you are making me play. I feel my brow mantling under this Imperial crown. Lofty crown! I would cast it at my feet. Heaven, alone, knows all the despair and tears it has already cost me. This evening the diplomatic corps comes to salute this child, which is not mine, and I will be obliged to have smiles on my lips, whilst death is in my heart.

Emperor. Madam, Madam, you avoid the question.

Empress. Why did you not leave me where I was born? I was happy. My soul was pure. But here, by degrees, I have fallen to the humiliating office of smiling, complacently, on the bandits, who surround you. The atmosphere of crime in which I am living has destroyed in me all resolution and all correct appreciation of right and wrong. I ought to have made an open disavowal of this infamous substitution. Ah! the punishment due to my weakness has already commenced. My life is henceforth abandoned to despair

and remorse. In my sleepless nights my poor little one appears to me pale and expiring. This night I saw her in the arms of a woman of sinister appearance; saw her offering me her trembling little hands.

Emperor. Well, Well! We are now occupied with the interpretation of dreams! Madam, I told you to have no anxiety concerning your child!

Empress. Where is she?

Emperor. Madam, you have asked me that question twenty times.

Empress. Which you never dared answer! You caused the little one to disappear, and you have not the courage to confess it! You know, Sir, the meaning, at the palace, of the word "disappear?"

Emperor. Madam, let us make less noise; do not attract attention. Even these walls may have ears! You would make, indeed, a good mother of family, but you will always remain a poor Empress. I am waiting for the Marquis: we must deliberate upon the situation.

Empress. You are going to take the advice of that Marquis, who, in my eyes, is the lowest, the meanest of courtiers. It seems, that I always see drops of blood on his hands. Oh! how can you take the advice of such an abject man?

Emperor. Well, Madam, Monarchs need that kind of men: they are the natural supports of the throne.

Empress. I would rather see it in the dust, than surrounded by such villains!

Emperor. I hear footsteps, I think they are those of the Marquis.

Empress. The great executioner of dark designs, the one whose office is to make people "disappear." I leave, in order to avoid expressing to him the horror with which he inspires me.

Exit the Empress.

Enter MARQUIS.

Emp. Marquis, news is bad! The mother of our Imperial Prince is here, roaming about the palace.

Marq. They have just told me that a woman, affected with mental alienation, pretends that the Imperial Prince is her son. From the description given to me of this person there is no room for doubt: she is the woman of the forest.

Emp. Marquis, of all the critical events, which have preceded and followed my accession to the throne, this is the most serious that has yet occurred. If our artifice is discovered, unforeseen and grave consequences may arise. The presence of this woman is, for me, a cause of great apprehension, and I am at a loss to know what disposition to make of her.

Marq. One thing is to be done with her.

Emp. What?

Marq. To make her disappear.

Emp. Can we not purchase her silence?

Marq. She would accept nothing.

Emp. Can we not make her leave Paris?

Marq. She would come back, Sir. The popularity of your Majesty is threatened.

Emp. Believe, Marquis, that I have understood the gravity of my situation. I am reflecting.

Marq. As for myself, all reflections are over. Her disappearance is the only thing to be accomplished, Sir. The dead, alone, are discreet.

Emp. Well, go on and let her disappear. Marquis, I have always relied on your devotion to me.

Marq. (kneeling). Sir, my devotion, my life are at the feet of your Majesty.

Emp. Believe, dear Marquis, that your services are appreciated. I know how much you have at heart the grandeur of the empire.

SLOW CURTAIN.

ACT IV.

SCENE I.

Eva's garret.

Lor. (*knocking at the door*). Madara, open the door, if you please. (*He knocks again.*) My dear lady, it is I. Please open the door. (*He opens the door.*) May I come in? Oh! she is out. This is a disappointment. (*Raising the two curtains.*) I do not see her. It is too bad indeed. (*Going towards the door.*) Come in, my boys, come in. (*Enter two men carrying a big trunk, which they put in the second garret, behind the curtains, and then both disappear.*) I hope she will return before long. My heart beats with pleasure at the idea of her joy. I am anxious to know how she will like the handsome dresses I have bought for her. Thanks to the generosity of the Empress, I will enjoy the pleasure of seeing her in elegant attire. I feel myself attached to this poor unknown woman. Her tattered clothes cover a noble heart. I must see her contented and happy. God alone knows what she has suffered. The confines of Paris contain miseries of all kinds. I hear somebody coming.

Enter EVA.

Eva. Ah! it is you, dear Captain. (*Giving her hand to him.*) I am glad to find you here.

Lor. As for myself, I experience, in seeing you, Madam, raptures of delight.

Eva. Oh! Sir. What expressions you always employ!

Lor. I use words, which my affection for you dictates.

Eva. The exquisite sensibility of your feelings would make me doubt your qualities as a soldier.

Lor. Mother told me, often, that I had the heart of a young girl.

Eva. She knew you well. You employ words of tenderness which are like those used by young girls.

Lor. It is you, my dear lady, who inspires them in me.

Eva. Please do not speak thus, any longer. (*Seeing the trunk.*) Oh! What is this?

Lor. A trunk containing articles of toilet.

Eva. For whom?

Lor. For you.

Eva. For me!

Lor. Yes, Madam.

Eva (*opens the trunk and looks at some articles*). Sir, do not think badly of me if I decline to accept such rich presents. You told me that you never were able to save anything.

Lor. I should be a fool, Madam, to save anything. The government has established for me the Soldiers' Asylum, the Hospital, and the Hospice of Invalids. My future is assured.

Eva. I understand; but you do not answer my question.

Lor. Madam, a soldier and a priest ought to be poor. Ah! it is not I, my dear lady, who would go in the field with government bonds in my pocket, and enrich those who disrobe and rob the dead. Please, Madam, have a better opinion of my judgment.

Eva. Then, Sir, you have borrowed money.

Lor. No, Madam, no! I have never, and I will never place myself in debt. (*Emphatically.*) He who engages his signature engages his liberty and exposes his honor.

Eva. May I tell you, Sir, that you speak like a Magistrate?

Lor. Madam, I am a Magistrate. An officer is a Magistrate.

Eva. You do not like to tell me, that you have received an advance on your pay.

Lor. Madam, I simply applied to a friend of mine, who gave me his port-monnaie.

Eva. You ought to be proud, Sir, of having such friends. This one, very likely, is as rich as generous.

Lor. Among the richest in the world.

Eva. Oh, oh! If it is thus, Captain, I accept the present you offer me. I will confess that nothing in the world could have been more agreeable to me.

Lor. What you say makes me the happiest man on earth.

Eva. Believe, Sir, that your delicate manner of obliging increases my gratitude.

Lor. The joy I experience pays me largely for the little I have done for you.

Eva. Oh! this toilet will serve my project of seeing the Empress, and enable me to penetrate into the interior of the palace.

Lor. All this will now become easy for you. With a silk dress and a good education a woman can go everywhere.

Eva. Captain, I notice your natural tendency for philosophical reflections. Now I am going to adorn myself with these beautiful garments. I would like to be at the Tuileries before five o'clock, in order to witness the return of the Imperial Prince. Well, I will dress myself here, in this adjoining room. Oh, the beautiful and rich dresses!

Lor. At first I intended to buy a mourning dress; but I have an idea that we will soon find the little fellow.

Eva. Captain, you are, for me, an angel of hope and consolation. (*She closes the two curtains, which forms the door of the adjoining room. After a moment, showing herself between the two curtains.*) Captain, I will not make you wait long. While I am dressing myself you will do well to take a drop of that beverage of the Gods.

Lor. I thank you, I am afraid of that beverage. Yesterday it went to my head; I am yet a little nervous.

Eva (*coming out of her room*). It is a reason, why you should, today, take a moderate quantity (*She puts on the table a bottle, a glass and a cork-screw.*) Please, help yourself. (*She disappears.*)

Lor. (*looking at the bottle*). The temptation is great, indeed! Yesterday I went beyond the limit; I would not like to pass it again. Yesterday I was in glory and victory! (*Going toward the mansard.*) My dear lady you are giving me very dangerous advice.

Eva. Oh! Sir, please, please do not come in. Do not come in.

Lor. Oh! excuse my inadvertence. Without intending I was going to pass the limit. But do not be afraid; do not fear from me any joke of the kind. Go on with your dressing. Take your time. (*He uncorks the bottle, fills a glass, which he puts on a plate, with a little of pastry, and goes towards Eva.*)

Eva. Do not come too near, I pray you, Captain. Beware of inadvertence.

Lor. I bring you a little morsel. I request you to take it. I promise you to keep myself at a respectful distance from the limit. (*He passes the plate between the curtains, in lengthening himself as much as he could.*)

Eva (taking the plate). I thank you, Captain. I hope you will now leave me entirely to myself.

Lor. Of course; I am going to read the paper. Take your time, I am not in a hurry. (*He sits down near the table, takes a newspaper from his pocket and reads aloud.*) "More concerning the Imperial Prince," "The Diplomatic Corps."—

Eva (passing her head through). Captain, will you please read aloud? What are they saying of the Imperial Prince?

Lor. (rises and, making some steps towards Eva, reads): "The Diplomatic Corps will, this evening, pay their respects to the Emperor and Empress, and congratulate their Majesties on the birth of a male heir to the throne."

Eva. Were I to prove, that this heir to the throne is my child, my own child, what would the Diplomatic Corps say?

Lor. Oh! Madam, Madam, are you thinking seriously of what you say?

Eva. I have many things to tell you, when I am prepared. (*She disappears.*)

Lor. (goes to the table and fills his glass). I drink to the good health of the Imperial Prince.

Eva (quickly passing her head.) I thank you. I thank you for him.

Lor. Well, well. Do you speak seriously?

Eva. Very seriously.

Lor. (going towards Eva). What makes you believe that the Empress could favor such a deed?

Eva. Captain, please do not forget the limit, the limit. Wait a moment. I will be ready in a moment.

Lor. (goes back to the table and sits down). Well, Madam, I will wait, I am not in a hurry. Take your time! (*Moment of silence. Lorenzo is looking in the direction of Eva's room, when she comes out radiant and beautiful.*)

Eva. Captain, here I am!

Lor. Oh! Oh!

Eva. Well, how do you like the transformation?

Lor. My dear lady, my word for it, you will excite the jealousy of the Empress!

Eva. Please, Captain, do not joke! Tell me seriously if, with this dress, I will be allowed to speak to the Empress?

Lor. Madam, your appearances and your manners will challenge respect and command entrance to the Tuileries.

Eva. I have lived for three years in a forest, and I am diffident of any merit I may possess.

Lor. Cease, my dear lady, to be diffident of yourself. It is manifest that your early education has been solid and refined. The

solitude of the forest has not effaced your early culture which struck me the first moment I saw you.

Eva. The kindness of your heart renders you too indulgent.

Lor. Madam, the feelings I express to you are those you inspire in me.

Eva. I thank you, Captain, my name is Eva.

Lor. Eva! Oh, if you will permit me, I will henceforth call you only by that name.

Eva. Certainly.

Lor. Eva! Eve! Oh in my eyes you are indeed the first woman in the world.

Eva. The allusion is not destitute of wit. Now, Captain, let us speak of a more important affair. I told you that the Imperial Prince is my child.

Lor. Eva, are you certain of it?

Eva. Almost certain.

Lor. Well, my dear lady, my dear Eva, permit me to tell you that the Prince Imperial is not your child. The Empress has a heart too honest, too pure.—The Emperor himself—

Eva. The Emperor!

Lor. Yes, the Emperor!

Eva. Oh, my God!

Lor. Madam, this exclamation surprises me very much.

Eva. Captain, you have just told me that early education always shows itself. I am of your opinion; I also believe that the second part of our life enables us to determine the character of the first. Will you, now, allow me to tell you, Captain, how the first part of your life was passed.

Lor. I would like to know how you could tell me that.

Eva. Well, I venture to assert, that your youth was passed in adoration before the Emperor's image; that you were made to burn incense to the Emperor, as a Deity.

Lor. Well! Well! Who told you that?

Eva. Oh! dear Captain, you, also, were caught in the net, laid for you by the supporters of the Empire.

Lor. It seems to me, my dear Eva, that, for a woman, you have very advanced ideas. They are, positively, in advance of mine. I always thought, that every Monarch desired the good of his country, and has, moreover, a heart like our own.

Eva. Nothing human is left in their hearts. They would immolate to their own interest every one of their subjects. Our tears are, for them, only drops of dew.

Lor. My dear lady! my dear Eva! banish from your mind the idea that the Emperor has caused your child to be stolen, when he could have found, in the asylums of Paris, thousands of children.

Eva. I affirm that the Imperial Prince resembles my child.

Lor. Eva, all the children of the same age bear a resemblance to each other. They are all alike. They are like the colored people. They, also, are all alike to me.

Eva. Captain, please do not try to dissuade me. My little boy is at the Tuileries; it is there that the old Palace Guard went with him.

Lor. Well, let us suppose that he is at the Tuileries; that they have made of him the Imperial Prince, before whom we present arms, should his elevation be, for you, a cause of great despair?

Eva. Indeed not. I even experience a great relief in thinking that he is still alive; but who will love him as I do?

Lor. If I had a boy, I would not be afflicted by seeing him become Emperor. I wish I were an Emperor! Lorenzo the First! Rest assured, Eva, that your friend's name would pass down to posterity.

Eva. You would have, I am certain, a large cellar, filled to the very top with dear old Bordeaux wine.

Lor. Yes, and the largest in the whole world! Indeed, Eva, you are a good guesser!

Eva. And you would, then, invite your friends?

Lor. Perfectly correct! Yes, I would invite them to come and drown their domestic troubles. Ah! were I an Emperor! were I.

Eva. Well, Captain, what else would you do if you were an Emperor?

Lor. What else would I do? Ah! dear Eva! What else would I do?

Eva. Will you please be kind enough to tell me?

Lor. Eva, the first thing I would do would be to make you an Empress!

Eva. I thank you very much for the preference.

Lor. I would have, moreover, a well-furnished table! Three fine meals a day, artistically prepared. The culinary art should be taught in all the public schools of my Empire. I would become the idol of the French cook! Ah! speak to me of the delights of the table! Of all the pleasures of this world, it is the greatest, the noblest, the one which gives pleasure to the Gods, and the only one, of which we are never tired!

Eva. So that, you would wish to be an Emperor only to dine well.

Lor. Not for that alone, my dear Empress, no, no. I would introduce into my Empire a new financial system, which would consist in the complete suppression of all kinds of taxes, and I would, besides, cover the whole country with fortifications, public schools, asylums of all kinds, elevated railroads, electric lights, &c.

Eva. How would you maintain your balance, your equilibrium?

Lor. (*staggering a little*). Oh, as well as possible, of course!

Eva. I speak of the balance between the receipts and the expenditures.

Lor. Oh, that balance! very easily, my dear Empress; very easily. I would oblige our neighbors to keep up that balance!

Eva. Oh, Oh! I understand now; I understand! Well, I propose to take a walk towards the Garden of the Tuileries.

Lor. What will we do, my dear Empress, in that direction?

Eva. The Imperial Prince—my child—will soon return from his promenade.

Lor. And your Majesty wishes to see him?

Eva. Yes, Sir.

Lor. Well, let us go to the Garden of the Tuileries; let us go, my dear Empress!

SCENE II.

The Garden of the Tuileries.

EVA, LORENZO, COLONEL, LIEUTENANT.

Eva. Lorenzo, let us sit on that bench. From here we will see the young Prince, who will soon pass this gate.

Lor. It is the time for his return to the palace. I hear some noise in the distance; I see an escort; I believe he is coming.

Eva. Oh, my God, inspire me!

Lor. Eva, you are pale and trembling.

Eva. My heart beats enough to break! (*Rising.*) Lorenzo, please, wait here a moment. I will soon return; I want to be closer.

Lor. Eva, I notice in your appearance something unusual. What are you premeditating?

Eva. I am determined to put an end to my conjectures! (*She follows the crowd. When the young Prince has passed the gate, Eva rushes out and pulls off the glove of his right hand. After looking at his right hand:*) Oh, my child! my child! It is my child, my own child! (*Soldiers take hold of her.*)

Lieu. Madam, I arrest you!

Col. What is the matter with that woman?

Lieu. She has just taken off one of the gloves of the Imperial Prince; the right-hand glove.

Col. Oh, I recognize this woman. It is the same one who, last evening, took off the left-hand glove of the young Prince.

Lieu. Indeed, it is the crazy woman of yesterday. Her new dress deceived me.

Col. Madam, yesterday you were arrested, and I let you go; but to-day I cannot. Your manner of acting excites my suspicion, and I am going to take orders from the chief officer of this palace. (*To Lieutenant.*) Lieutenant, go and ask for Sir Marquis, the general superintendent. Tell him that I desire his presence here. Madam, sit down on this bench. Soldiers, watch her, and do not permit her to escape. When the escort is gone you will shut up the great gate. (*Everybody soon disappears, with the exception of Lorenzo, who conceals himself behind a bush.*)

Eva (*perceiving the Marquis*). Oh! my God! here is the man who stole my child! (*Rising.*) I recognize him. (*To the Colonel.*) Sir, I pray you, do not leave me alone with this man.

Col. Madam, have no fear.

Enter MARQUIS.

Marq. (*after having thrown on Eva a long and scrutinizing look*). Gentlemen, I desire to learn some particulars concerning this woman, and wish to remain alone with her. (*All disappear. The scene darkens a little. The Marquis and Eva, who is standing, are looking at each other in silence.*)

Eva (*aside*). Oh! I am lost beyond all hope.

Marq. (*in a threatening tone*). What brings you here to Paris?

Eva (*stepping away*). You know too well, Sir, what brings me here.

Marq. Madam, address me with respect.

Eva. I cannot, Sir, I cannot.

Marq. Take care! Take care!

Eva (aside). The gate is closed; no means of escaping!

Marq. Who has given you this new dress?

Eva. What's my dress to you?

Marq. I told you, Madam, to address me with respect.

Eva. I told you, Sir, that I could not!

Marq. I advise you to be humble and submissive. Sit down on this bench, if you please.

Eva. I will not! (*Aside.*) I am lost!

Marq. Do not provoke my anger! I am going to ask you again a question, which this time I order you to answer: Who has given you this dress?

Eva. The one who will avenge my death!

Marq. Your death?

Eva. I know, that you intend to kill me!

Marq. Who told you that I intended to kill you?

Eva. What you have done, Sir, is an assurance of what you will do. But be on your guard yourself! be on your guard; I have an avenger!

Marq. Sit down on this bench.

Eva. I will not. I do not want to be killed on that bench.

Marq. Madam, I told you not to provoke my anger.

Eva (weeping a little). It is hard to die at the hands of a bandit! but I will die in scorning, in cursing you! (*She steps away saying these words.*)

Marq. In scorning, in cursing me!

Eva (stops at the right extremity of the stage and takes off her shawl). You took the child: kill its mother. (*Opening her corset.*) Here is my breast. I am ready. (*She turns her head and closes her eyes.*) Strike! Strike! I scorn you! I curse you! (*The Marquis draws his sword and goes to her, but when he comes near the bush, Lorenzo springs out and places himself in front of him.*)

Lor. Stop, Marquis, stop! Do not step further! Respect this lady; I will defend her. (*Emphatically.*) I will defend her! (*He draws his sword.*) Now, Marquis, the game is between us! (*They look at each other a moment in silence.*)

Marq. Captain Lorenzo, do not forget, that I am your superior officer. I order you to put up your sword.

Lor. I am first going to thrust it through your body! Marquis, stand on your guard!

Marq. Captain Lorenzo, I repeat to you that I am your superior officer.

Lor. You are no longer my superior officer. You are to me but a bandit, an assassin, a coward!

Marq. A coward! What do you say? A coward! I, a coward? (*He rushes treacherously towards Lorenzo, and tries to pierce him with his sword, but Lorenzo skillfully avoids the blow. After a fight of short duration, the Marquis falls mortally wounded. He lets fall his sword, puts his hands in the region of the heart and expires.*)

Eva (who has watched with deep emotion all the phases of the duel, approaches the corpse of the Marquis). He is dead! Dead! Oh! I thank you, Lorenzo; your bravery has saved my life.

Lor. He did not expect to find me here!

Eva. Lorenzo, we would do well to leave these grounds, which fill me with horror!

Lor. Eva, I am unwilling to depart thus. I would like to mention to my superiors the event, which has just taken place.

Eva. Oh! I pray you, Lorenzo, do let us leave this horrible place. If you only knew in what state I am.

Lor. I easily imagine, Eva, in what state you must be after your narrow escape, and the trial to which you have just been submitted.

Eva. If you had come one minute later, all would have been over with me. Oh! I thought I felt in my breast the cold blade of his sword. My nerves are in a terrible condition! Oh! I pray you, Lorenzo, let us leave this place and the sight of this dead body! I feel as if I were dying!

Lor. Well, if it is thus, Eva, we will depart; but in thus leaving I act very imprudently. My precipitate departure may bring the gravest complications. My duty is to give myself up, to surrender myself into the hands of justice.

Eva. Surrender yourself! Do you seriously think of it? Oh, Lorenzo, your imprisonment would be for me a new trial, which, in my present state I could not survive. This will end by killing me. Oh! what a source of trouble I have been to you.

Lor. My duty, Eva, was to defend you, and I thank God for my success in doing it.

Eva. Lorenzo, an idea strikes me. I am going to surrender myself. I will tell the Judges, that it was I, myself, who killed the Marquis. I will tell them that I killed him with his own sword; that I did it in self defense. I will recall to the Judges my entreaty not to be left alone with the Marquis. Oh! I have everything well arranged in my mind. I already experience a sort of relief in thinking, Lorenzo, that I will free you of all trouble.

Lor. I appreciate, my dear Eva, the heroism of your project. You would prefer to sacrifice yourself, rather than see me in the hands of justice. I thank you for the noble intention. An idea struck you, you say; well, an inspiration strikes me. I will not surrender myself. I will write to the Empress. I will state to her why I did not surrender myself. She has so many times, in my critical moments, extended a helping hand, that I have reason to hope that, in this case, she will again protect me. In fact I have decided to be guided by this inspiration.

Eva. You believe, Lorenzo, that the Empress will protect you in this hour of trial?

Lor. I am almost certain of it.

Eva. If such is your confidence in her, let us, then, leave.

Lor. Well it is decided, that we depart. (*He puts on her shawl.*) I am confident, my dear Eva, that you need a good rest, after all the excitement of your narrow escape.

Eva. Well, then, let us go, my dear friend. (*In leaving they pass near the dead body of the Marquis. Eva changes her position at the arm of Lorenzo in order to pass farther off.*)

SLOW CURTAIN.

ACT V.

SCENE I.

The State Prison called "Bastille." The court yard bordered on one side by the prison itself, and on the other by a chapel. This yard is divided in two by an iron railing. On the left is the residence of the Governor, on the right the entrance.

LORENZO, HIGH IMPERIAL JUDGE IN ROBES, GOVERNOR OF THE BASTILLE, LIEUTENANT, GENDARMES AND THE JAILER.

The bell is rung at the main entrance. A Jailer opens the gate. Lorenzo, handcuffed, enters, escorted by Gendarmes and followed by the Lieutenant and the High Imperial Judge in robes.

Judge. Sir, Governor of the Bastille, I have the honor of remitting to you this official document. (*He gives the document to the Governor.*) It is the condemnation to death of this prisoner, Captain Lorenzo, whom I deliver into your hands, to be closely watched and guarded. I especially command, that no one be allowed, under any pretence whatever, to speak to your prisoner. The day and hour of the execution have not yet been fixed; but you will receive, without delay, full instructions on this subject.

Gov. The instructions of the honorable court will be fully enforced. (*To the Jailer.*) Put this prisoner in cell No. 147. (*To Lorenzo.*) Captain, I will give orders that all the care and attention, due to your unfortunate situation, be given to you. As to myself, I will, also, do everything in my power.

Lor. I would like very much, Sir Governor, to say a farewell word to a poor and unhappy woman, whom my departure will, I presume, somewhat afflict.

Gov. Captain, it grieves me to say, that I cannot grant you this favor. You have just heard the formal orders given to me by the High Imperial Judge.

Lor. Well, then, if she come, please have the kindness to tell her that I cannot see her on account of your orders. Her name is Eva.

Gov. Captain, I will do as you request.

Lor. I thank you. Gentlemen, before leaving, I feel obliged to say in defense of my honor as a soldier, that I did not kill the Marquis by surprise or in ambush, as reported, but in a duel. (*Turning towards the Judge.*) I say, "in a duel." It is all I have to say. Farewell, gentlemen! Farewell!

Exit Lorenzo with the Jailer.

Gov. The rigor of military discipline is terrible.

Lieu. And very sad, indeed.

Judge. But necessary; and without which an army could not exist.

Lieu. It seems to me that they ought to have taken into consideration, that Lorenzo has always been a brave and honest soldier.

Gov. I will have, to-morrow, a sad duty to fulfill.

Judge. The Captain was wrong not to surrender himself, especially after having killed his superior in grade. Adieu! Sir Governor.

Gov. Adieu! Gentlemen. Adieu and good-night.

Exeunt all.

The Governor enters his room; the stage remains a moment deserted; the bell of the gate rings; the Jailer opens the door.

Enter EMPRESS.

Her head is covered with a mantilla. She finds herself face to face with the Governor, who, on hearing the bell, had come out of his room.

Emp. I would like to see the Governor of the Bastille.

Gov. I am, Madam, the Governor of this prison.

Emp. Sir, I wish to speak to one of your prisoners.

Gov. May I know, Madam, whom I have the honor to address.

Emp. I am the Empress.

Gov. (*bowing*). Madam, your wishes are orders for me.

Emp. Sir Governor, I wish to see here Captain Lorenzo.

Gov. Captain Lorenzo! Madam, I am obliged to tell, in despair, your Majesty that—

Emp. What! Has he already been executed?

Gov. No, Madam; but I have received from the Emperor a formal order not to permit any one to speak to him.

Emp. I understand, Sir Governor, your delicate situation; but I wish to see him, I assume all responsibility.

Gov. Madam, this declaration of your Majesty is sufficient. (*To the Jailer.*) Go and bring here No. 147, the Captain Lorenzo. (*The Jailer bows and retires.*)

Emp. I have never before seen the inside of this fortress. It is sad to reflect that, after so many centuries of what is called "civilization," we have not seen the last vestige of the last prison disappear. I feel a pressure about my heart at the sepulchral aspect of these dungeons. God alone has known all the sorrows enclosed within these walls, where so many innocent victims have died in despair. These cells are graves where the unfortunate are buried alive, to be abandoned and forgotten by all.

Gov. Madam, I see Captain Lorenzo coming; I will leave your Majesty with him.

Exit Governor. The stage is almost in darkness.

Enter LORENZO.

Lor. Eva, is it you? Oh! dear and unfortunate Eva! Why! you are permitted to see me! it is indeed a consolation; it is an unlooked for boon! I will now die with resignation, since to see you was my only desire. Oh, I thank you for your farewell visit: it will alleviate the pain of my last moments. Heaven alone knows the tender affection I have cherished for you! I had hoped that, as a reward of my devotion, you would have consented, Eva, to become my wife. But God does not order it thus! Eva, I also wished to see you in order to induce you to quit

Paris. They intend to kill you, and destroy, by your death, the last evidence of their crime! As for myself, I am in their hands; no power on earth can save me. The Empress herself would be powerless to help me! Ah, if you could see her before leaving Paris! She is a kind and noble woman! She, at least, has remained pure among the bandits, by whom she is surrounded. Eva, go and see her; tell her, also, that in dying, I bless her!

Emp. Captain, the person to whom you speak is not Eva.

Lor. Oh! a new snare into which Eva must fall!

Emp. Calm your mind, Lorenzo. No snare is intended either for Eva or yourself, on the contrary we are endeavoring to save you.

Lor. Ah! the sound of that voice is not unknown to me; but my recollection fails me. The condemnation which fell upon me was so unexpected, that my memory has suffered. Madam, will you allow me to ask you who you are?

Emp. A friend of yours.

Lor. A friend of mine?

Emp. Yes, a friend true and devoted, who always took an interest in you.

Lor. Oh, you, whoever you may be, I thank you from the bottom of my heart.

Emp. (*coming nearer to Lorenzo*). You thought then that I was going to abandon you in the hour of danger?

Lor. Oh! I recognize the Empress! Madam, the emotion I experience in receiving from your Majesty, this new proof of esteem makes me forget my sad fortune.

Emp. Lorenzo, I have just seen your beloved Eva.

Lor. Is it possible! Why, Madam, you, then, knew her directions.

Emp. No; I had it from the Chief of the Secret Police.

Lor. They know, where she lives! oh, then she is lost, lost!

Emp. Do not be afraid; nothing unfavorable will happen to her. On the contrary, I gave them an order to look after her. I feel myself attached to that unfortunate and interesting woman. I understand your love for her, and my greatest desire is to see you free and united to her.

Lor. I free! I the husband of Eva! Oh! my God, is not all this a dream?

Emp. Lorenzo, I will try to make the dream a reality, and repair the indignity, with which you both have been treated. This thing is still surrounded by great difficulties. As you have just said: "I am powerless to save you." But an idea came into my mind. I have been thinking, that if you could induce Eva to renounce her child, and to be silent, the Emperor, as a reward for her sacrifice, would set you at liberty. Eva will soon be here. I gave her a letter for the Director of this prison, and she will see you. Let her understand that your freedom depends upon her sacrifice; and tell her, also, that she will have in me a most devoted friend, and that the marble palace, promised her by the villainous Marquis, will not be a castle in the air. Farewell!

Captain, do not give up all hope. At your age, however brave a man may be, he must love life. Farewell! or rather good-night. My friend, good-night. (*She gives her hand to Lorenzo, who kisses it with respect.*)

Lor. May God bless your Majesty for your generous intentions.

Exit the Empress, for whom the Jailer goes to the door.

Lor. (to the Jailer). My friend, I wish to return to my cell.

Exit Lorenzo with the Jailer. The stage remains a moment vacant, when the bell is heard. The Jailer goes to the door, and at the same time

Enter GOVERNOR AND A COURIER FROM THE EMPEROR.

Cour. Is it the Governor of the Bastille I have the honor to address?

Gov. I am the Governor.

Cour. Here is, Sir, a confidential letter from his Majesty the Emperor.

Exit Courier.

Gov. (opening the letter). A confidential letter from the Emperor. (*Reading.*) Sir Governor: To-morrow morning, at the hour of ten, you will cause to be secretly shot the condemned officer, Captain Lorenzo. You will admit nobody to see the prisoner, "not even the Empress." The Chaplain is the only person he will be allowed to see. (*Hearings the bell. The Jailer arrives.*) Jailer, go tell the Chaplain that I wish to see him as soon as possible. (*Looking at the message.*) "Not even the Empress." I have been very prompt in yielding to the demand of the Empress. I hope the Emperor will not make me repent for my deference to her. To-morrow morning, at ten o'clock.—Sad duty! But the order is formal and imperative. I pity the young Captain.

Enter CHAPLAIN, A MONK.

Gov. Reverend Father and Chaplain, I have just received from his Majesty, the Emperor, an order to cause to be shot, to-morrow morning, at ten o'clock, the Captain Lorenzo. Have the kindness, if you please, to give him the last consolation of religion.

Chap. (with unction). I will go and see this criminal. I will prepare him for death! It is the hour of prayer. We will immediately invoke the God of Mercy and ask him to have pity on this miserable man and bring repentance to his heart. May, our humble supplications to the Eternal, obtain for him, the pardon of his crime!

Exit the Chaplain, who goes towards the chapel already illuminated. This chapel is at the left end of the stage. The bell rings. The Jailer goes to the door.

Enter EVA.

Eva (to the Jailer). I would like to see the Governor of the Bastille.

Jailer. Madam, I will call him. (*After having been to the Governor's room.*) Madam, the Governor will be here in a moment. (*A funeral chant with accompaniment of organ is heard coming from the Chapel.* *Eva is looking around, walking, when*

Enter GOVERNOR.

Eva. Sir, I would like to speak to Captain Lorenzo.

Gov. Madam, I regret, very much, that I am unable to comply with your request. No one can speak to him.

Eva. I am bearer of a letter from the Empress.

Gov. A letter from the Empress!

Eva. Yes, Sir, here is the letter. (*The Governor reads the letter, giving signs of great perplexity.*) The Empress wishes me to let you see the Captain, and the Emperor forbids me to do it. I owe obedience to the Emperor.

Eva. I was under the impression that it is always granted, to a condemned man, the favor of seeing persons dear to him.

Gov. This, favor which is generally granted, has been refused to the Captain.

Eva. Why! Did he apply for it?

Gov. Yes, Madam. His first demand when he came here was to be allowed to see a lady, who, he said, would very likely call on him.

Eva. And who, Sir, who is the lady?

Gov. A lady by the name of "Eva."

Eva (*after a moment of emotion*). Oh! Why not, Sir, yield to his prayer?

Gov. Because I have received formal and imperative orders from the Emperor himself, not to allow anybody to see him.

Eva. Oh! what you say is death to me. They even refuse to allow me to comfort his last moments. Oh! my God! And he is going to die for having defended me. Ah! Can it be, Sir, that the Empress herself is powerless to save him?

Gov. The Emperor is the master.

Eva. Ah! Why is he so obstinately angered against him? You know, yourself, Sir, that Lorenzo is not a criminal; that he is a brave and honest soldier, always ready to oblige, and guilty of nothing!

Gov. Madam, my appreciation of Lorenzo is yours.

Eva. Oh! I thank you for those words. Now, Sir, if to-morrow they order you to have this innocent man executed, would you, Sir, would you enforce such an order?

Gov. I must obey.

Eva. Sir, I am only a woman; but I would not obey. No! I would not! I would prefer to die rather than make myself a criminal by executing criminal orders! You have never thought, Sir, that your duty is to refuse, whatever may be the consequences of your refusal. Ah! no Emperor, no man in the whole world would have power enough over me to make me stain my hands with the blood of an innocent man! (*Funeral chant is again heard.*) Oh! this

hymn fills my heart with fright. It seems to me that I am at the funeral of Lorenzo. Sir, what must I do to save my friend? Oh! I pray you, tell me what I must do?

Gov. Madam, may I speak to you without concealment?

Eva. I am ready, Sir, to hear anything.

Gov. Madam, it afflicts me to tell you that nothing can save your friend. He is to be shot to-morrow morning, at ten o'clock. The chant you just have heard is that of his funeral.

Eva. Oh! a fatal dart has pierced my heart! Oh Lorenzo, if my death does not follow yours, I will avenge you! (*She loses consciousness in an arm-chair. The Governor, with the help of the Jailer, carries her to his room. The scene changes.*)

SCENE II.

An apartment in the Tuileries.

EMPEROR, EMPRESS, EVA, HIGH IMPERIAL JUDGE IN ROBES.

At the rise of the curtain, the Emperor is sitting on a throne at the left of the audience. The Empress is at the right. Eva, dressed in deep mourning sits in the centre of the stage. Behind her is the High Imperial Judge.

Judge. Madam, His Majesty, the Emperor, here present, and in the name of whom I have the honor to speak, has charged me to engage you, to renounce your rights of mother over the Imperial Prince. His Majesty will tell you, himself, how he intends to reward this renunciation. Both their Majesties are already attached to your child by bonds which it would be difficult to break. The habit of seeing and caressing him, added to the prestige which is attached to the cradle of the heir to the first throne of the world, has made the child very dear to their Majesties. In a word I will conclude with a solemn question. "Do you renounce, Madam, all your rights of mother, over the Imperial Prince?"

Eva. Never! Never!!

Emperor. Madam, this answer is, for us, a surprise, a great surprise!

Eva. A great surprise! After having reduced me to the state in which I am, wandering and starving, after having made me suffer all kinds of torture, you thought I was going to repay by a sacrifice all your indignities and wrongs against me.

Emperor. Madam, can you name these wrongs!

Eva. My husband died in a forest, hunted down by you! my child was stolen by you! and this morning, at ten o'clock, my only friend was shot by you! and you expect from me a sacrifice? I have nothing for you, mighty Monarch! nothing, but my hatred and my scorn!

Empress (much agitated). Sir, pardon these out-bursts of indignation: she believes that her friend is dead. (*To Eva.*) Madam, your friend is not dead. I have obtained from the Emperor a respite of twenty-four hours! (*To the Emperor.*) Sir, forget her invectives; they are cries of despair. Her distress is indeed very severe.

Emperor. I understand her despair. (*To Eva.*) Madam, your friend is still alive, and will live, if you wish it. It depends on you whether he lives or not; you have only to sign a renunciation of your rights of mother over the Imperial Prince. The freedom of Lorenzo will be the first reward of your sacrifice. Consider the matter a moment, and the Judge will repeat to you the same question.

Judge (after a moment of silence). Madam, do you renounce all your rights of mother over the Imperial Prince?

Eva (rising). Will my friend live, and will he be free, if I give up my child?

Emperor. Yes, Madam, he will live and will be free.

Eva. Then, I renounce my child!

Judge. Please, Madam, sign this document.

Eva (rising). I am so weak! (*The Empress sustains her steps, and helps her to sit at the desk.*) My hand trembles. (*She signs.*)

Emperor (rising). Madam, henceforth see in us faithful friends, who will respect in you the mother of the Imperial Prince. I will give orders that, at all hours the door of this palace be opened to you. You will enjoy in it, but in silence, the sight of your child. Here is now, Madam, a document that the Empress has asked me to deliver to you. (*He gives the document to the Empress, who gives it to Eva.*)

Empress. It is, Madam, the freedom of our mutual friend, Captain Lorenzo. Believe me, my dear lady, I am as happy as you are that he is at liberty; and permit me, Madam, to embrace you. (*She kisses Eva.*)

Eva. I thank your Majesty for all your kindness to me.

Empress. I will now, Madam, to show you our Imperial Prince. Please try to control any feelings of maternal tenderness.

Eva (sustained by the Empress, makes a few steps towards the end of the stage). I feel a strange coldness seizing me. I feel that death has already put his icy hand on me. (*At this moment, two curtains are separated. At the top of some steps, is seen a large pedestal covered with velvet, on which is the Imperial Prince. A nurse in rich attire helps to keep him standing. The child bears an Imperial purple mantle and a crown, and holds in his hand a sceptre. A very bright halo encircles his head, and brilliantly illuminates the end of the stage.*) Oh! dear, dear child! Farewell! Farewell! I feel that I am dying. Oh! Lorenzo, Lorenzo! (*Staggering towards the Empress.*) Madam, please tell him that I bless him! Farewell! (*She falls on the steps, and dies at the feet of her child. The Empress and the High Judge rush to her assistance and put her in an arm-chair.*)

Empress. She is dead, dead! Oh! she deserved a better fate! Disconsolate mother! Unhappy woman! I will mourn thy death!

SLOW CURTAIN.

THE END.

July 14th, 1880.

LIBRARY OF CONGRESS



0 017 199 334 9 ●