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HENRY HOLT AND COMPANY  
NEW YORK CITY

THE  
FOURTEENTH OF JULY  
AND  
DANTON

TWO PLAYS OF THE FRENCH REVOLUTION

BY  
ROMAIN ROLLAND

AUTHORIZED TRANSLATION  
WITH A PREFACE  
BY  
BARRETT H. CLARK



NEW YORK  
HENRY HOLT AND COMPANY

1918

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## ROMAIN ROLLAND AND THE PEOPLE'S THEATER

It is perhaps a little surprising to learn that the author of *Jean-Christophe* has written at least sixteen full-length plays. Most of these, it is true, antedate the publication of the first parts of his epoch-making novel, but since nothing that comes from the brain of Romain Rolland can fail to possess significance and interest, a brief inquiry into his dramatic writings and theories on the drama will reveal an aspect of the man which has hitherto strangely enough scarcely been touched upon. His plays for a people's theater, and his book of projects, are as integral a part of his development as *Jean-Christophe* itself.

The life of M. Rolland seems to have been a perpetual struggle between conflicting mental forces: for years he read philosophy, and suffered agonies before he at last found himself spiritually; until the completion of *Jean-Christophe* he was a prey to doubts regarding the utility of art and the end of life. He applied in turn to the great master-minds of the world—Empedocles, Spinoza, Michelangelo, Shakespeare, Beethoven, Tolstoy—seeking for a satisfactory philosophy of life. Small wonder, therefore, that his work should bear the imprint of the masters who have at one time or another been his guides and inspiration.

His two years' sojourn in Rome, from 1890 to 1892,

awakened a passionate interest in the Italian Renaissance, which he immediately translated into plays. It is likely that *Orsino*, *Les Baglioni*, and *Le Siège de Mantoue*, plays of the Renaissance, were inspired by Shakespeare, for whose historical dramas M. Rolland professes a decided partiality. The plays are not published, but if we can judge from the fact that Mounet-Sully wished to produce *Orsino*, they must have shown some of the power of the later plays. At Rome he was associated with the aged revolutionist Malwida von Meysenbug, whom he had met at Versailles some time before, and doubtless the story of her eventful life had its part in shaping his ideals. Four other plays—three of them on classical subjects—belong to this period: *Niobe*, *Caligula*, *Empédocle*, and *Jeanne de Piennes*. It is probable that these also belonged to the writer's period of apprenticeship. At the end of M. Rolland's stay in Rome he went to the Wagner Festival at Bayreuth, in company with Malwida.

Even at this time he was already dreaming of a new theater in France, and his theoretical writings of later times bear unmistakable proof of the impression made upon him by the Bayreuth theater and Wagner's epoch-making ideas on art and the people.

After his marriage in 1892 Romain Rolland returned to Italy, where he gathered material for his thesis, which he presented and successfully upheld at the Sorbonne in 1895. His subject was *The Origins of the Modern Lyric Theater. History of the Opera in Europe Before Lully and Scarlatti*. This he published in book form in 1895. But in addition to his uni-



versity studies and his lectures, he found time to experiment with the dramatic form, and in 1896 he published his *Saint Louis*. As this was later included in a volume called *Tragedies of Faith—Les Tragédies de la Foi*—together with two other plays, he evidently conceived it as one of a series of works based upon a single underlying idea.

*Saint Louis* depicts, in the author's own words, "religious exaltation." In *Saint Louis* and the two other plays which accompany it—*Aërt* and *Le Triomphe de la Raison*—"One can observe the presence of the main currents and passions of the French youth of to-day." All three show "the ardor of sacrifice, but a sacrifice which is courageous, militant: a double reaction against cowardice of thought and cowardice of action, against skepticism and against the relinquishment of the great destiny of the nation." But in spite of this "program," M. Rolland is an artist far too austere to write thesis-plays; he has often spoken in contempt of them. Nor did he in the least appeal to the great public; for his plays have as yet not proved acceptable to them. *Saint Louis* is a beautiful poem, not a tragedy after all, but a triumph, for no hero may see the fruits of his labor, and if a temporary failure seems for a moment to cloud the sky, it is only temporary. This is the message of *Saint Louis*. The good monarch who, "dying at the foot of the mountain, sees Jerusalem only through the eyes of his army," is a figure of hope. *Aërt* takes us from the time of the Crusades to "an imaginary Holland of the seventeenth century." Aërt, the son of a murdered patriot, is imprisoned by

his father's assassin; he makes a vain effort to rally the forces of the opposition, and at last, free from all that is vile in life, he throws himself from the window. *Le Triomphe de la Raison* belongs, so far as the subject is concerned, to the Revolutionary plays. As an after-piece to *Le 14 Juillet*, *Danton*, and *Les Loups*, it shows the Revolution "devouring itself"—to translate literally the author's own comment. So far as it depicts the excesses into which faith can lead men, it is a tragedy, but there is an implication of progress in the characters whose fate is bound up with that of the Revolution, even those who fell prey to the blood-lust of the Girondist massacres.

The *Théâtre de la Révolution* includes the three Revolutionary plays I have just mentioned. They were written not as experiments for some vague stage dreamed by the author, but for theatrical production before the people, the masses of France. That they were not wholly successful matters little; Romain Rolland might well refer us to the "moral" of *Saint Louis*: he has opened a new field and laid before his countrymen—perhaps the world—an ideal which may well require half a century to bear fruit. The idea of writing a series of plays on the French Revolution was suggested to M. Rolland by a decree of the Committee of Public Safety, dated March 10, 1794:

1. That the Théâtre-Français shall henceforward be solely dedicated to productions given by and for the people at stated intervals each month:
2. That the building shall bear the following inscription on its façade: PEOPLE'S THEATER, and that the various

troupes of actors already established in the Paris theaters shall be requisitioned in turn to act in these popular productions, which are to take place three times in every decade.

A few weeks later there appeared another decree, inviting the poets "to celebrate the principal events of the French Revolution, to compose Republican plays, and picture for posterity the great epochs of the regeneration of the French, and give to history that solid character which is fitting for the annals of a great people who have fought victoriously for their liberty, in spite of the opposition of all the tyrants of Europe."

"All these projects for Republican art," says M. Rolland, "fell, on the 9th of Thermidor, together with the chiefs of the Republic."

When, early in 1903, Romain Rolland and a few associates began writing for the *Revue d'Art Dramatique* a series of articles on the people's theater, they were merely "following the tradition interrupted by the events of the Revolution; and it was but natural that one of them was led to select the Revolution itself as the natural subject for popular productions. The three plays were to have been part of a dramatic cycle on the Revolution—a sort of epic comprising ten plays. *Le 14 Juillet* was the first page, and *Danton*, the center, the decisive crisis, wherein the reason of the chiefs of the Revolution seemed to waver, and their common faith be sacrificed to personal hatred. In *Les Loups*, where the Revolution is depicted on the field of battle, and in *Le Triomphe de la Raison*, where

it goes out into the provinces in pursuit of the Girondin proscript, it devours itself." Thus M. Rolland.

The remaining plays are three in number, and inferior in dramatic and literary quality to the six just discussed. The first of these is an anti-war propaganda piece, *Le Temps viendra*, published in 1903, and inspired by the Boer war. *La Montespan*, a French historical drama, followed in 1904, and *Les Trois Amoureuses*, also based upon history, in 1906.

In order to grasp the full significance of M. Rolland's plays it will be necessary to consider his interesting book, *Le Théâtre du Peuple*. Ever since the early eighties M. Rolland had been a staunch admirer and in some ways a disciple of Tolstoy. The young Frenchman, however, expressed his doubts to the Russian, and in 1887 Tolstoy wrote a long letter which was, according to one of M. Rolland's biographers, a sort of preliminary sketch for *What Is Art?* And when that astounding book appeared, with its iconoclastic attacks on M. Rolland's idols, he was at first prone to disagree, but *Le Théâtre du Peuple* is ample proof that "literature for the people" had sunk deep into the Frenchman's heart. The theater, in common with most modern art, is a whitened sepulcher, rotten to the core, affected, aristocratic, anti-democratic. The evil is not only in the plays, but in acting and the physical arrangement of the playhouse itself. New plays must be written for the masses, plays which they can understand, plays which bring them together as a class and in which they can participate. M. Rolland



briefly considers the dramatic masterpieces of the world, from Sophocles to the comedies of the boulevard, and finds them, with rare exceptions, unsuited to the people. Even Shakespeare and Schiller are lifeless: they belong to past epochs, and express ideas foreign to the French workingmen of the twentieth century. The playhouses, too, are built for a society divided into classes; these must be altered to suit the workingmen. Says M. Rolland in the preface to the first edition: "Of late there has been an attempt to found a People's Theater in Paris. Already personal and political interests have begun to make themselves evident. But we must unflinchingly destroy the parasites who seek a living at the expense of our theater. The People's Theater is not a fashionable toy; it is no game for dilettanti. It is the imperious expression of a new society, its voice and thought; it is, as a result of circumstances, the war-machine against an ageing and fossilized society. Let there be no misunderstanding: we must not merely open up new old theaters, bourgeois theaters endeavoring to appear new merely by calling themselves people's theaters. We must found a theater by and for the people, a new art for a new world."

Having tested the plays of the past and found them wanting, M. Rolland set himself the task of supplying plays for his projected people's theater. As we have seen, he went to the Revolution, and wrote plays which would appeal to the masses. But these plays must also be acted *by* the people, and M. Rolland proceeded to make the people a character, a great composite crowd,

participating as The People. In *Le 14 Juillet*, The People are the protagonist, and the taking of the Bastille afforded him ample opportunity for utilizing them. In *Danton* they are rather implied until the last act, while in *Les Loups* and *Le Triomphe de la Raison* they hover in the background and determine the course of events: they are always near at hand, although they do not appear on the stage. M. Rolland must of course be a confirmed enemy to our star-system, and there is, even in the hero-play of *Danton*, a fairly even distribution of parts. The effect is at first somewhat disconcerting, and the plays seem a trifle discursive and rambling, but this is doubtless due to the fact that we are accustomed to the Sardou method of handling historical themes. There is no conventional plot, and the love-interest, as developed in such a play as *Patrie*, is conspicuously absent. In its stead there is greater breadth of touch, a solidier framework, a broader canvas; and the artist, we instinctively feel, is better able to depict a great movement like the Revolution than if he were confined to raveling and unraveling a plot. Possibly M. Rolland's ignorance of or disdain for the tricks of the dramatist's trade has lessened the purely dramatic tension of occasional scenes, but, on the other hand, he has drawn characters—Hoche, Desmoulins, Danton, Robespierre, among others—which Sardou and the rest could scarcely have conceived. The lovable weakness of Desmoulins, the dynamic and superhuman power of Danton, have never been so vividly set forth as in these plays, and the Revolution, so often exposed as a series

of more or less exciting events, stands forth as the most human of all stories.

While it is true that M. Rolland recognizes the motive power of the people in the first two plays of his Revolutionary cycle, and while they direct and influence practically every event, he is not blind to the excesses into which they fell, and the last two plays, *Les Loups* and *Le Triomphe de la Raison*, to some extent show the degeneration of the people. *Les Loups* is perhaps, from the purely theatrical viewpoint, the best play M. Rolland ever wrote; it treats of the moral decay of the Revolutionists, and the situation developed is as gripping as any of Henry Bernstein's famous second acts. A former nobleman is suspected of treachery by his fellow officers, and a pretext readily found to kill him. At the last moment one of his comrades discovers that he is innocent; however, in order to conceal the treachery of a successful Revolutionary general, he is sacrificed. *Le Triomphe de la Raison* is similar in theme.

No attempt at dramatic reform, no theory, no ideal—whatever its eventual worth—ought to obscure the fact that all of M. Rolland's plays are unsuccessful from the viewpoint of production. Good reading they undoubtedly make; literature they assuredly are, but they have not pleased audiences for consecutive days, weeks, and months. This does not of necessity damn them, but it should cause us to ask whether or not they belong to that class of hybrids, the closet-drama. M. Rolland's first mistake was in writing plays for a hypothetical and practically nonexistent public. The

first edition of *Le Théâtre du Peuple* concludes with these words: "Do you want a people's art? Then begin by having a people!" France is in many ways an aristocratic country with an aristocratic art; it is but natural, therefore, that all reform should be slower than in younger countries; and M. Rolland in his impatience attempted the impossible. In trying to avoid what was conventional in the French drama, he restricted himself to a more or less formless medium, and the people who saw his plays missed what they were accustomed to see: a well-defined story.

What success would have attended his innovations in another country it is hard to say; what success will attend him if he perseveres, seems easier to predict. The past five years have witnessed a profound change in French thought and art, and perhaps Romain Rolland will once more find his faith justified in a new France where the people shall have a theater of their own. Meantime, his ideas have spread to other lands and there borne the fruit he had hoped would flourish in his own beloved France.

BARRETT H. CLARK.



# THE FOURTEENTH OF JULY

(*LE 14 JUILLET*)

A Play in Three Acts

Pour qu'une nation soit libre,  
il suffit qu'elle le veuille.

LA FAYETTE.

11th July, 1789.

[*Le 14 Juillet* was produced in Paris in 1902.]



*Dedicated to the People of Paris*



## AUTHOR'S NOTE

THE author has sought moral truth in this play rather than anecdotic exactitude. He has seen fit to take greater liberty with the action, which is developed in the poetry of popular legend, than in *Danton*. In that play, he applied himself to the development of the psychology of certain characters, for the whole drama is concentrated in the souls of three or four great men. It is otherwise with the present work: individuals disappear in the great ocean of the people. If you wish to represent a tempest, you must not describe each wave, but a whole angry sea: an exact rendering of details is much less important than the passionate sweeping truth of the whole. There is something false and insulting to the intelligence in the disproportionate place given nowadays to historic anecdotes, tiny incidents, and the dust shaken out of the pages of history, all of which is emphasized at the expense of the human side. It is my ideal to resuscitate the forces of the past, reveal once more the springs of action, and not to offer a cold and denatured miniature to the curious who care more for externals than for the soul of the hero. I have endeavored to make live again the heroism and the faith of the nation in the throes of the Revolution during the Republican epoch, in order that we, a nation of greater maturity and more than ever conscious of the great destiny that awaits

us, may continue and finish the work interrupted in 1794. If we are strong enough to realize this, we are strong enough to do our best toward the accomplishment of our task. The end of art is not dreams, but life. Action should spring from the spectacle of action.

*Junc, 1901.*

## CAST OF CHARACTERS:

|                               |                   |
|-------------------------------|-------------------|
| LA CONTAT                     | GONCHON           |
| LUCILE DUPLESSIS              | DE FLUE           |
| MARIE BOUJU, THE FRUIT-DEALER | BÉQUART           |
| FIRST WOMAN OF THE PEOPLE     | ROBESPIERRE       |
| SECOND WOMAN OF THE PEOPLE    | A MANIAC          |
| FIRST WOMAN                   | A PORTER          |
| SECOND WOMAN                  | A NOTARY          |
| THIRD WOMAN                   | A FRENCH GUARD    |
| A YOUNG GIRL                  | A STUDENT         |
| LITTLE JULIE                  | A VAGABOND        |
| HOCHE                         | A SHOPKEEPER      |
| HULIN                         | FIRST NEWS-CRIER  |
| MARAT                         | SECOND NEWS-CRIER |
| CAMILLE DESMOULINS            | AN ABBÉ           |
| VINTIMILLE                    | FIRST BOURGEOIS   |
| DE LAUNEY                     | SECOND BOURGEOIS  |
| THE MAN                       | THIRD BOURGEOIS   |

### FOURTH BOURGEOIS

The People: French Guards, Swiss Guards, Pensioners, Carpenters, Workingmen, Children, etc.

SCENE: Paris from the 12th to the 14th July, 1789.

Act I. At the Palais-Royal, Sunday morning, 12th July.

Act II. The Faubourg Saint-Antoine, Monday night and Tuesday morning, 13th-14th July.

Act III. The Bastille, Tuesday the 14th July, from four to seven P.M.





## ACT I

[*The Garden of the Palais-Royal, seen from the Café de Foy. It is Sunday the 12th of July, 1789. At the back is the "Cirque"; at the right, a fountain, playing. Between the "Cirque" and the promenades running round the Palais-Royal is a row of trees. The shopkeepers stand before their shops, which are hung with patriotic emblems: "At the Sign of the Great Necker," "At the Sign of the National Assembly," etc. Women, with breasts, shoulders, and arms bare, and wearing immense bouquets, walk about among the crowd displaying their charms. Newsdealers cry out the news; gambling-house keepers appear here and there in dressing-gowns, escorted by men armed with clubs; swindlers brazenly slip between groups of people with their folding tabourets, stop for an instant, display a trick, bring out sacks of silver, then quickly disappear into the surging mass. The crowds are nervously shifting about, sitting at the cafés, jumping up and around, and ready to start at the least disturbance. The crowds gradually increase up to the end of the act, until there is so little room left that the more venturesome climb into the trees. People of all classes are present: starving vagabonds, workingmen, bourgeois, aristocrats, soldiers, priests, women, and children,*

*some of whom play about between the legs of the others.]*

NEWS-CRIERS. Great plot discovered! Famine, famine is at hand! The murderers have come!

THE CROWD [*calling to the news-criers*]. Here! Sst!

A MAN OF THE PEOPLE [*anxiously, to a bourgeois, who is reading*]. Well?

THE BOURGEOIS. My good fellow, they are coming! They're coming! The Germans, the Swiss Guards! Paris is surrounded! They'll be here any minute!

THE MAN OF THE PEOPLE. The King won't let them.

A VAGABOND. The King? He's with them at the camp of Sablons, surrounded by Germans.

THE MAN OF THE PEOPLE. The King is a Frenchman.

THE BOURGEOIS. The King, yes, but not the Queen. The Austrian woman hates us. Her brigand Marshal de Broglie has sworn to raze Paris to the ground. We are caught between the cannon of the Bastille and the troops of the Champ de Mars.

A STUDENT. They won't make a move. Monsieur Necker is at Versailles; he will take care of us.

THE BOURGEOIS. Yes, so long as he remains Minister, we must not lose our faith in him.

THE VAGABOND. But who says he still is? They've dismissed him.

ALL [*protesting*]. No, no, he's still Minister.—

The newspaper says he will remain Minister.—Good! If Monsieur Necker weren't there, everything would be lost.

WOMEN [*promenading about*]. No business today! They are all quite mad. They think of nothing but Versailles.—The little fellow who was with me just now spoke of nothing but Necker.—Say, is it true that that damned Austrian threw our deputies into prison?

THE SWINDLERS [*mysteriously shaking their bags of silver under the noses of the passers-by*]. Fine Sunday morning! Ten o'clock and the garden is full! What will it be soon?—Fine show and a small crop! They're here to get the latest news.—Oh, if you only know how to go about it—!

GONCHON [*to the shopkeepers*]. Now, you fellows, stir yourselves, stir yourselves! Business isn't everything. Of course, business must be carried on, but we must be good patriots, too. Keep your eyes open. I warn you, things are beginning to happen!

A SHOPKEEPER. Do you know something, Monsieur Gonchon?

GONCHON. Careful. Grain is coming. Every one at his post. When the moment comes, give it to those idiots, and howl all together—

A SHOPKEEPER. Long live the Nation!

GONCHON [*hitting him*]. Shut up, you fool. "Long live the Duc d'Orléans!" Then, if you like, both.

CAMILLE DESMOULINS [*who has just come from a gambling-den—excited, laughing and stammering*]. Plucked! They've cleaned me!—I knew it: I said to

myself, "Camille, you're going to get plucked." Now you're satisfied! It's done. Well, I don't have it to do over again. I always foresee the stupid things I am going to do. Thank God, I don't lack a single—anyway, I've killed two hours. What news from Versailles?—Oh, the rascal! They are thick as thieves at a fair. The gambling-dens advertise, "You come in to pass the time." You've got to occupy your hands and the rest! That is why cards and women were invented. They can relieve you of useless money. Now my pockets weigh nothing at all! Who wants to see a brand-new purse? Oh, there's not a piece left.

WOMEN [*mocking him*]. "They stir you up, up, up, they'll stir you up."

CAMILLE DESMOULINS. You bats of Venus, you're very proud, indeed, to have swindled a poor devil like me! But, Good God, he's not angry with you. "I'd lose it again if I had it to lose."

AN OLD BOURGEOIS. The gambler's purse has no strings.

GONCHON. Young man, I see you are in trouble. To oblige you, I will lend you three écus on that chain.

DESMOULINS. Generous Gonchon, do you want to strip me naked like St. John? Leave that to the ladies: they will do very well without your assistance.

GONCHON. You little guttersnipe, do you know whom you are addressing?

DESMOULINS. Gonchon—merely Gonchon! You are a jeweler, usurer, vendor of lemonade, and keeper of a brothel. You are everything: Gonchon, king of the gambling-den keepers.



GONCHON. What do you mean by your "gambling-dens"? I have merely founded clubs where, under the pretext of enjoying themselves by honest and natural means, men may gather and discuss methods of reforming the State. They are assemblies of free citizens, patriots—

DESMOULINS. Where does the *Patrie* come in?

GONCHON. The Society of the Men of Nature—

DESMOULINS. Women of Nature!

GONCHON. A very bad joke. If you haven't enough shame to respect a respectable man, you might at least respect the sign beneath the egis of which stands my house.

DESMOULINS [*without looking*]. What sign? "The Forty Thieves"?

GONCHON [*furiously*]. "The Great Necker"!

DESMOULINS. That is rather hard on him, Gonchon. [*He looks at the sign.*] What is on the other side?

GONCHON. Nothing.

DESMOULINS. I see another picture.

GONCHON. The Duc d'Orléans—two sides of the same head.

DESMOULINS. The front and the back! [*The bystanders laugh.* GONCHON, *with his associates, advances upon DESMOULINS.*] Very well! I advise you not to drive me to crush you with my Pretorian Guard! Do you want a certificate of citizenship? Oh, Janus Gonchon, I make you a present of it. You give bread to every sneak in Paris, and take it from the honest people, so that they have only one desire: to go and fight. *Audax et edax.* Long live the Revolution!

GONCHON. I forgive you, because it wouldn't do to duel with the enemy at our gates, but I'll meet you soon before the men of Versailles.

DESMOULINS. Are they really coming?

GONCHON. Ah, you turn pale?—Yes, the struggle is at hand. The mercenaries from Lorraine and Flanders are in the Plain of Grenelle, the artillery at Saint-Denis; the German cavalry at the Ecole militaire. The Marshal, with all his aides-de-camp, is giving orders for war at Versailles. They are going to attack tonight.

A WOMAN. Good God, what will become of us?

A BOURGEOIS. The bandits! They treat us like enemies!

A WORKINGMAN [*to GONCHON*]. How do you know that? The road to Versailles is cut off. They've stationed cannon at the Pont de Sèvres. No one can pass.

GONCHON. Suspicious, eh? I'll make the first man who doubts my patriotism swallow my fist. Don't you know Gonchon?

THE WORKINGMAN. We don't suspect you.—Don't get excited.—We've too much to do to get into a quarrel with you. We only asked you where you got your information?

GONCHON. You haven't the right to ask me. I know what I know. I have a way of knowing.

ANOTHER WORKINGMAN [*to the First*]. Let him alone; he's all right.

A BOURGEOIS. Lord, what shall we do?

A STUDENT. To the gates! Everybody to the gates! Don't let them in!

A BOURGEOIS. As if they could stop them! Poor people like ourselves, without arms! What do they know of war! Can they keep out the best troops of the kingdom?

ANOTHER. They're in already! And there's the Bastille; it's like a cancer—incurable!

A WORKINGMAN. The vile monster! Who will free us?

A STUDENT. They've already made a company of Swiss Guards retreat today.

ANOTHER. Their cannon are in the Faubourg Saint-Antoine.

A WORKINGMAN. Can't do a thing while we have this bit in our mouths. We've got to take it out first.

A BOURGEOIS. How?

A WORKINGMAN. I don't know how, but it's got to be done.

ALL [*seriously and incredulously*]. Take the Bastille? [*They turn to one another.*]

NEWS-CRIERS [*in the distance*]. Latest news! Desperate struggle!

A MAN [*shabby and pale, with the air of a maniac*]. We haven't anything to fear from the soldiers. They won't attack.

A STUDENT. What!

THE MANIAC. They won't attack. They've got a simpler plan: they'll just blockade us. They'll starve us out.

A WORKINGMAN. Well, if they do it for very long, we'll take the road. We've lost a whole day waiting for bread at the bakeries.

A WOMAN. You can't get grain.

THE MANIAC. It won't arrive tomorrow.

A BOURGEOIS. But what are they doing with it?

THE MANIAC. I know: they've thrown it into the quarries of Senlis and Chantilly to let it rot, and keep us from eating it.

THE BOURGEOIS [*incredulously*]. Nonsense!

THE MANIAC. It's true!

A WOMAN. It is true. In Champagne the cavalry ruined the wheat crop in order to starve us.

THE MANIAC. Worse than that! They poison the bread they give us: it burns your throat and your insides. Twenty people died of it in my part of the city. The order came from Versailles. They want to kill us like rats.

DESMOULINS. Absurd. No king wants to murder his people. Only a Nero would do that, and our king is not a Nero.

THE MANIAC [*mysteriously*]. I know what the matter is: there are too many people, and they've given orders to depopulate the country.

DESMOULINS. You're sick, my friend, you need attention.

A WORKINGMAN. There's truth in what he says, though. The Queen would be glad to see us all dead.

DESMOULINS. Why so?

THE WORKINGMAN. She's an Austrian. The Austrians have always been enemies of France. She married our king in order to injure us. We can't help being nervous so long as she is here.



THE OTHERS. He's right.—Out of France with the Austrian!

LA CONTAT [*in the midst of the Crowd*]. Why?

THE CROWD. What?—What do you mean?

LA CONTAT [*showing herself*]. Yes, why? Are you mad to say such things about the most charming of women?

THE CROWD. Who dares say anything good of the Austrian here?—Good Lord, why, it's an insult to us!

DESMOULINS [*to LA CONTAT*]. Don't say another word. You'd better get out and not answer them.

LA CONTAT. I am in no hurry.

DESMOULINS. They're gathering strength from all sides.

LA CONTAT. So much the better!

A VAGABOND. What did you say, aristocrat? What did you say?

LA CONTAT [*brushing him aside*]. Don't sniff at me. I said, Long live the Queen!

THE CROWD [*exasperated*]. By God!

A CLERK. There's a girl who needs a good thrashing.

LA CONTAT. There's a face that needn't wait for one! [*She slaps him.*]

THE CLERK. Help! [*Some laugh, others shout.*]

THE CROWD [*gathering round*]. Come and see!—What's the matter?—An aristocrat assaulting a patriot!—Into the river!

DESMOULINS. Citizens, it's only a joke.

THE CROWD [*furiously*]. To the river!

HULIN [*bullying the Crowd*]. Here! [*He stands*

*before* LA CONTAT.] You know me, comrades, I am Hulin. You saw me at work the other day: I smashed in the gate of the Abbey to save our friends the French Guards, who were imprisoned. I'll smash in the head of the first man who comes a step nearer. Respect the women, I tell you! If you want to fight, there's no lack of enemies. Go and find them.

THE CROWD. He's right.—Bravo!—No, he isn't!—She insulted us!—She's got to apologize! On her knees, the aristocrat!—Make her cry Down with the Queen!

LA CONTAT. I won't cry anything. [*To* DESMOULINS.] Help me to get up here. [*She stands on a table.*] If you bully me any more I'll cry Down with Necker! [*Cries from the Crowd.*] I'm not afraid of you. Do you think you can frighten me because you're a mob, and your hundred mouths are yapping at me? I have only one, but I can make myself heard. I'm used to talking to the people. I face you every night: I am Mademoiselle Contat.

THE CROWD. Contat of the Théâtre-Français!—The Théâtre-Français!—Oh, let's see her!—Silence!

LA CONTAT. So you don't like the Queen? Do you want her sent away? Would you like to exile every pretty woman from France? You have only to say the word: we'll pack up and go. See what will happen without us. You really make me laugh, calling me an aristocrat! I'm the daughter of a herring-dealer, who kept shop just under the Châtelet. I work like the rest of you. I am for Necker just as you are. I'm for the Assembly, but I don't like to be bullied, and I

really think if you took it into your heads to try to make me cry Long live Comedy, I would cry Down with Molière! You may think whatever you like: there's no law against stupidity, but then there's no law against those who still have a little common sense. I like the Queen, and I am not afraid to say so.

A STUDENT. Of course: they both have the Comte d'Artois for a lover!

TWO WORKINGMEN. What a lie!—She can certainly talk!

DESMOULINS. Citizens, we cannot ask a queen to speak against royalty. Here is the true queen! The others are make-believe royalty, whose only function is to bear dauphins. Once the little one is born, they have nothing else to do. They live at our expense, and they are costly luxuries. It would be best to send this Austrian fowl back to her coop, from which she was brought at great cost—as if we lacked women in France to bear children! But the queens of the theater! Ah, they are intended to give happiness to the people. Every hour of their life is devoted to our service. Every bit of them is devoted to our pleasure; they belong to us, they are our national property. By Venus of the Beautiful Cheeks, let us defend her, and all shout: Long live the Queen, the true Queen, La Contat! [*Laughter and applause.*]

THE CROWD. Long live Queen Contat!

LA CONTAT. Thank you. [*To DESMOULINS.*] Give me your arm; you're nicer than the others.—Have you feasted your eyes enough? Very well, then

let me by. If you want to see me again, you know the way to the Theater.—What is your name?

DESMOULINS. Camille Desmoulins.—How imprudent of you! I told you—weren't you afraid?

LA CONTAT. Of what?

DESMOULINS. They nearly killed you.

LA CONTAT. The idea! They shout, of course, but they never do anything.

DESMOULINS. You are blind. They are right who say that to despise danger is merely to be unaware of it.

THE CROWD. The little lady has warmth in her eyes!—Elsewhere, too!

A WORKINGMAN. That's all very well, Mademoiselle, but it's not the thing to set yourself against the poor like us, and side with the people who are exploiting us!

THE MANIAC. Lord, she's a monopolist!

LA CONTAT. What! A monopolist!

THE MANIAC. Look at your wig.

LA CONTAT. Well?

THE MANIAC. All that powder! There's enough flour on the necks of the idle rich to feed the poor of Paris!

THE WORKINGMAN [*to* LA CONTAT]. Never mind him; he's crazy. If you have a good heart, Mademoiselle—and I can see in your eyes that you have—how can you defend the cut-throats who want to destroy us?

LA CONTAT. Destroy you, my friend? Who told you that?

A STUDENT. Don't you know? Here's the latest

letter from the Austrian's man, the Jesuit Marshal, the old assassin, the ass decorated with amulets, relics, and medals: de Broglie! Do you know what he says?

CROWD. Read! Read!

THE STUDENT. They have conspired. They want to break up our States-General, take away our deputies and throw them into prison, expel our Necker, sell Lorraine to the Emperor for money to pay their soldiers, bombard Paris and kill the inhabitants. The plot is scheduled for tonight.

GONCHON. Did you hear that? Isn't that enough, or do you want still more to stir you up? Good God, are we to let them stick us like pigs? God Almighty, to arms! To arms!—Luckily, we have a protector; he's watching over us: Long live Orléans!

GONCHON'S FOLLOWERS. Long live Orléans!

THE CROWD. To arms! Let's march against them!

MARAT [*rising from the Crowd, and standing on a chair. He is a small man, and appears nervous and deeply agitated. He stands tip-toe, and then speaks with all his power*]. Stop! You poor wretches, where are you going? Don't you see that the cut-throats are only waiting for an insurrection in Paris to swoop down upon the city? Don't listen to such perfidious advice. That is only a ruse to destroy you. Yes, you, you who excite the people, you who pretend to be a patriot,—who says you are not an agent of despotism, whose business it is to provoke the good citizens and deliver them into the hands of the hordes of Versailles?



Who are you? Where do you come from? Who will guarantee you? I don't know you.

GONCHON. Well, I don't know *you*.

MARAT. If you don't know me, you are a scoundrel. I am known wherever there is virtue and poverty. I spend my nights taking care of the sick, and my days taking care of the people. My name is Marat.

GONCHON. I don't know you.

MARAT. If you don't, you will before long, traitor! Oh, credulous people, absurd people, open your eyes. Do you realize where you are? What, do you gather here to prepare your struggle for liberty? Look, look about you! This is the gathering-place of all the exploiters, all the idle classes, swindlers, thieves, prostitutes, disguised spies, the instruments of the aristocracy! [*Howls, protestations, and the like, from one part of the Crowd, which cries: "Down with him!" and bare their fists.*]

DESMOULINS. Bravo, Marat! Struck the nail on the head!

LA CONTAT. Who is that dirty little fellow with such beautiful eyes?

DESMOULINS. A doctor-journalist.

ANOTHER PART OF THE CROWD. Go on! [*They applaud.*]

MARAT. I care nothing for the howling of these traitors, these accomplices of famine and servitude! They rob you of what money you have left; they drain your strength with their women, and your good sense with liquor! Fools! And you put yourselves in their clutches, and blurt out your secrets to them! You

give yourselves into the hands of the enemy. Behind each pillar, at the corner of each café, beside you, at your table, a spy listens to you, watches you, takes down what you say, and prepares your destruction. You who want to be free, leave this sink of vice! Before entering the supreme struggle, begin by counting your forces. Where are your weapons? You have none. Forge your pikes, I tell you, make your muskets! Where are your friends? You have none. Your own neighbor betrays you. Perhaps the man you shake hands with, is delivering you into the hands of the enemy. And you yourselves, are you sure of yourselves? You are at war with corruption, and you are corrupted. [*Howls from the Crowd.*] You protest? If the aristocracy offered you gold and food, do you dare swear that you would not become aristocrats yourselves? You cannot silence me with your protestations. You will hear the truth. You are too accustomed to flatterers who court your favor and betray you. You are vain, proud, frivolous: you have neither strength, character, nor virtue. You waste your strength in talk. You are effeminate, vacillating, will-less; you tremble at the sight of a musket—

CROWD. That'll do!—Enough!

MARAT. You shout "Enough"! I, too, and even louder: Enough of vice, enough of stupidity, enough of cowardice! Band yourselves together, strike from your midst all who are false to the cause, purify your minds, and gird your loins. Oh, my fellow-citizens, I tell you these truths a little harshly, perhaps, but it is because I love you!

LA CONTAT. See! He's crying!

MARAT. They give you opium, but I pour burning liquor on your bleeding wounds, and I will continue to do so until you realize your rights and your duties, until you are free, until you are happy. Yes, in spite of your frivolousness, you will be happy, you will be happy, or I shall cease to exist! [*He ends, his cheeks streaming with tears, his voice broken with sobs.*]

LA CONTAT. His cheeks are running with tears! How funny he is!

THE CROWD [*half laughing, the other half applauding*]. There's a real friend of the people! Long live Marat! [*They surround him, put him on their shoulders and, in spite of his struggles, carry him about.*]

HULIN [*catching sight of a little girl who is looking at MARAT, her eyes full of tears*]. What's the trouble, little one? You're crying, too? [*The Little Girl keeps her eyes fixed on MARAT, whose bearers have now allowed him to alight. She runs to him.*]

LITTLE JULIE [*to MARAT, her hands clasped*]. Don't cry! Don't cry!

MARAT [*looking at her*]. What is it, little one?

JULIE. Don't be unhappy, please! We'll be better, I promise, we won't be cowards any more. We won't lie; we'll be good, I swear! [*The Crowd laughs. HULIN motions those near him to be silent, and not interrupt the Little Girl. MARAT, who is seated, assumes a different expression as he listens to her. His face brightens, and he looks tenderly at the child, and takes her hands in his.*]

MARAT. Why do you cry?



JULIE. Because you cry.

MARAT. Do you know me?

JULIE. When I was sick, you took care of me.

MARAT [*draws her tenderly toward him, and looks into her eyes, smoothing her hair back from her face.*]

Yes, your name is Julie. Your mother is a washer-woman. You had measles last winter. You were afraid. You cried as you lay in your little bed, because you didn't want to die. [*She turns her head away. He takes the child's head and presses it to his breast as he smiles.*] Don't be ashamed. So, you understood me, eh? You are with me? Do you know what I should like?

JULIE. Yes, and I want it, too— [*The rest of her sentence is lost, as she hesitates.*]

MARAT. What?

JULIE [*raising her head and speaking with an air of conviction that causes the bystanders to smile*]. Liberty.

MARAT. What would you do with it?

JULIE. Give it.

MARAT. To whom?

JULIE. To the poor people who are in prison.

MARAT. Where?

JULIE. There—in the big prison. They're alone all the time, and people forget them. [*The attitude of the Crowd changes. It has become serious; some frown and do not look at their neighbors. They stare at the ground, and appear to be speaking to themselves.*]

MARAT. How do you know that, little one?

JULIE. I know—I've been told. I often think about them, at night.

MARAT [*smoothing her hair*]. But you must sleep at night.

JULIE [*after a few moments' pause, takes MARAT'S hand, and says with passion*]. We will free them, won't we?

MARAT. But how?

JULIE. Go there all together.

THE CROWD [*laughing*]. Ha! It's so easy! [*The Little Girl raises her eyes, and sees the circle of curious onlookers staring at her. She is frightened and hides her head in her arm, which rests on HULIN'S table.*]

LA CONTAT. Isn't she dear!

MARAT [*looking at her*]. Holy virtue of childhood, pure spark of goodness, what a comfort you are! How dark would the world be without children's eyes! [*He goes gravely toward the child, takes her hand, which hangs limp, and kisses her.*]

A WOMAN OF THE PEOPLE [*arriving on the scene*]. Julie! Are you here! What are you doing with all these people?

DESMOULINS. She was addressing the crowd. [*Laughter.*]

THE MOTHER. And she so frightened! What's got into her? [*She goes to JULIE, but the moment she touches her, the little one runs away without a word, in childish rage.*]

THE CROWD [*laughing and applauding*]. Run away, little one! [*Loud laughter is heard at the other*

*end of the Garden.*—Come here! Come along!—  
What is it? They are ducking a countess!

LA CONTAT. Ducking a countess?

THE CROWD. She insulted the people! They're  
ducking her in the fountain!

LA CONTAT [*on DESMOULINS' arm, laughing*]. Let's  
run! How amusing!

DESMOULINS. The most amusing performance in  
Europe!

LA CONTAT. Insolent! What about the Comédie?  
[*They go out laughing. The Crowd surges out. MARAT and HULIN are down-stage alone; MARAT stands, while HULIN sits at a café table. The back of the stage is crowded; some are standing on chairs, watching to see what is happening in the Garden. People walk about under the galleries beyond MARAT and HULIN.*]

MARAT [*pointing toward the Crowd*]. Actors!  
They are not seeking liberty; they prefer plays! To-day, when their very lives are in danger, they think of nothing but performing for each other. I want nothing to do with such people! Their insurrections are nothing but absurd antics. I don't want to see any more of them. Oh, to live shut up in a cave, hear nothing of the noise outside, to be free from the vileness of the world! [*He sits down, his head between his hands.*]

HULIN [*tranquilly smoking, with a look of irony, says to MARAT*]. Come, Monsieur Marat, you mustn't be discouraged. It's not worth it. They are only big children playing. You know them as well as I do:

they don't mean anything by that. Why take it so tragically?

MARAT [*raising his head, says with determination*].  
Who are you?

HULIN. I come from your country—Neuchâtel in Switzerland. Don't you remember me? I know you very well. I saw you when you were a child—at Boudry.

MARAT. So you are Hulin, Augustin Hulin?

HULIN. Right!

MARAT. What are you doing here? You were a clock-maker in Geneva.

HULIN. I led a quiet life there. But I was counting without my brother, who began to speculate. He became imbroiled in some underhanded scheme, signed certain papers—. Naturally, he took it into his head to die, and left his wife and a child of three for me to take care of. I sold my shop to pay his debts, and came to Paris, where I was taken into the service of the Marquis de Vintimille.

MARAT. Then I'm not surprised at your cowardly words. You are a servant.

HULIN. What if I am?

MARAT. Are you not ashamed to serve another man?

HULIN. I see no shame in it. Each of us serves, in one way or another. Are you not a doctor, Monsieur Marat? You spend your days examining people's wounds, and dressing them as well as you can. You go to bed very late, and you get up at night when your patients call you. Are you not then a servant?

MARAT. I serve no master: I serve humanity. But you are the valet of a corrupt man, a miserable aristocrat.

HULIN. I don't serve him because he is corrupt. You don't ask of your patients whether they are good or bad; they are men, poor devils like you and me. When they need help, you must give it and not stop to consider. Like many another, my master is corrupted by wealth. He cannot help himself: he needs a score of people to serve him. Now, I have three times as much strength as I need, and I don't know what use to make of it. Occasionally, I feel I would like to break something just to ease my feelings. If that idiot needs my power, I am willing to sell it to him. We are then quits. I do him good, and myself, too.

MARAT. You also sell him your free soul, your conscience.

HULIN. Who says anything about that? I defy any one to take that from me.

MARAT. And yet you submit. You don't tell all you think.

HULIN. What need I say? I know what I think. It's all very well for those who don't know to cry it aloud from the house-tops! I don't think for others; I think for myself.

MARAT. Nothing that is in you belongs to you. You do not belong to yourself; you are a part of every one. You owe your strength to others, your will-power, your intelligence—no matter how little you possess.



HULIN. Will-power and intelligence are not currency that one may give. Work done for others is work ill done. I have made myself free. Let the others do likewise!

MARAT. There, in those words, I recognize my odious compatriots! Simply because Nature has given them six feet of body and the muscles of an animal, they think they have a right to despise those who are weak and ill. And when after they have reaped their harvests and worked in their fields, they sit down satisfied before their own doors, smoking a vile pipe the nasty smoke of which calms their tiny consciences, they think they have done their duty, and tell their less fortunate brothers who ask for help to "go and do likewise."

HULIN [*quietly*]. How well you know me! You have described me perfectly. [*He smiles to himself.*]

HOCHE [*who comes in. He wears the uniform of a corporal of the French Guards. He carries some clothes over his arm. To MARAT*]. Don't believe him, citizen. He libels himself. He never refuses the outstretched hand of misfortune. Only last week, he took command of us and freed the French Guards who were imprisoned in the Abbey by the aristocrats.

HULIN [*without turning his head, extends his hand over his shoulder*]. Ah, it's you, Hoche? Who has asked for your advice? You're talking nonsense! I was telling you not long ago that sometimes I feel I have too much strength, and then I knock in a door, or demolish a wall. And, of course, when I see a drowning man, I offer him a helping hand. I don't

reason about those things. But I don't lie in wait for people who are going to drown, nor do I throw them into the water—like these people who start revolutions—just in order to fish them out afterward.

MARAT. You are ashamed of the good you do. I hate these people who brag of their vices. [*He turns his back.*] What are you carrying there?

HOCHE. Some waistcoats that I embroidered; I'm trying to sell them.

MARAT. Pretty work for a soldier! Do you mend clothes?

HOCHE. It's as good a trade as tearing them.

MARAT. Don't you blush to steal women's business? So that is what you are doing? You think of your business, you hoard your gold, when Paris is about to swim in blood!

HOCHE [*quietly, and with a touch of disdain*]. Oh, we have time enough. Everything in due time.

MARAT. Your heart is cold, your pulse is slow. You are no patriot. [*To HULIN.*] And as for you, you are worse than if you really did what you brag about! You had a decent healthy character, which you are wilfully perverting.—Oh, Liberty, these are your defenders. Indifferent to the dangers that beset you, they will do nothing to combat them! I at least will not abandon you, I alone. I shall watch over the people. I will save them in spite of themselves. [*He goes out.*]

HULIN [*watching him go, and laughing*]. Our gay associate! He sees everything through pink spectacles. He's a doctor from my country. One feels im-

mediately that he is used to commanding people. He hasn't enough to do in his own business, he must needs treat all humanity.

HOCHE [*following MARAT with his eyes, and with a mixture of pity and interest*]. An honest man. The woes of humanity weigh heavy on his shoulders; they unhinge his reason and his judgment. He is sick with virtue.

HULIN. Where did you know him?

HOCHE. I've read his books.

HULIN. You must have time to waste. Where did you get hold of them?

HOCHE. I bought them with the money I received from these waistcoats—for which he reproached me.

HULIN [*looking at him*]. Let me see. What's the matter? Have you been fighting again?

HOCHE. Yes.

HULIN. Barbarian! Where did you get that?

HOCHE. In the Place Louis XV. I was walking past. The arrogance of those Germans, camping here in our own Paris, got on my nerves. I could not help laughing at them. They fell upon me in a body, but the people there got me away from them. I made a mess of one or two, however.

HULIN. Indeed! That will cost you dear.

HOCHE. Bah! Do me a favor, Hulin. Read this letter for me.

HULIN. To whom is it addressed?

HOCHE. To the King.

HULIN. Are you writing to the King?

HOCHE. Why shouldn't I? He is a son of Adam,



like me. If I can give him some good advice, why shouldn't I? And why shouldn't he follow it?

HULIN [*jokingly*]. And what have you to say to the King?

HOCHE. I tell him to send his troops away from Paris, and to come himself to the city and start the revolution. [HULIN *laughs uproariously*. HOCHE *smiles*.] Your reasons are excellent. Thank you for your advice, but that is not what I want.

HULIN. What, then?

HOCHE [*embarrassed*]. The—the style, you see. And the spelling—I'm not quite sure.

HULIN. Do you imagine he is going to read it?

HOCHE. That makes no difference.

HULIN. I'll see to it, then.

HOCHE. How fortunate you are to have an education! Work as I will now, I can never make up for lost time.

HULIN. Are you really so simple as to think this letter will be read?

HOCHE [*good-humoredly*]. To tell the truth, I don't think it will. And yet it would be very easy for all those fellows who run the government of Europe, to apply just a little common sense, ordinary everyday sense! So much the worse for them! If they don't, it will be done without them!

HULIN. Instead of trying to reform the world, you'd do much better to get yourself out of the fix you're in now. You are going to be reported—perhaps you have been already. Do you know what will be waiting for you when you return to the barracks?

HOCHE. Yes, but do you know what is waiting for the barracks when I return to them?

HULIN. What?

HOCHE. You'll see.

HULIN. Now what are you plotting? Don't get excited. Don't you think there's enough disorder as it is?

HOCHE. When order is injustice, disorder is the beginning of justice.

HULIN. Justice! Justice consists in *not* demanding of things what they cannot give. You can't make over the world; you must accept it as it is. Why demand the impossible?

HOCHE. Poor Hulin, do you know everything that is impossible?

HULIN. What do you mean? Let the people do merely what they can do, and you will see whether or not the world can be made over!

HULIN [*his hand on HOCHE's shoulder*]. Ah, you are ambitious. You dream of dominating the people!

HOCHE. You ignorant colossus! Fine ambition, that! Do you think I have the spirit of a corporal? [*He looks at his uniform.*]

HULIN. Disgusted, eh? What's the matter with you? You seem very happy today. Are they going to make you a sergeant?

HOCHE [*shrugging his shoulders*]. Happiness is in the air.

HULIN. You're not hard to please. There is famine. Imminent massacre. Your people are about to be destroyed. And you, what are you going to do?

You will have to march against those you love, or else be killed with your friends.

HOCHE [*smiling*]. Very well, then.

HULIN. You think it very well? The thunderbolt is above you; everything is ready to crumble. . . . Roll, thunder! Truth, burn the night!

HULIN. I am not afraid of the storm. Everything I have told you, comrade, doesn't make me any more afraid. I am not afraid for my own skin. But I don't see even the first rain-drop. If your eyes are better than mine, show me! And wherever there is a good blow needed, be assured I shall be ready. Lead me, show me the road; what must I do?

HOCHE. There is no settled plan. Watch and see what happens. When the storm comes, hold fast and run with it. Meantime, let us proceed as usual—and sell our waistcoats. [*The Crowd again inundates the stage. Cries and laughter are heard. An Urchin of four or five is carried on the shoulders of a huge Porter. LA CONTAT, DESMOULINS, and the rest follow them, laughing.*]

THE URCHIN [*screaming*]. Down with the aristos, the aristocracks, the aristaustrians!

HULIN. Now what are they playing at? Ah, their favorite amusement: abusing the aristocrats.

THE PORTER. Attention, Voice of the People! What shall we condemn them to? Hey, there, Monsieur, don't you hear me, Leonidas? What'll we do to Artois?

THE URCHIN. The pillory!

THE PORTER. And Polignac?

THE URCHIN. A flogging!

THE PORTER. And Condé?

THE URCHIN. The gallows!

THE PORTER. And the Queen?

THE URCHIN. To the—! [*The Crowd bursts into loud laughter, cheering the Urchin, who cries aloud, inflated by his success. The Porter continues on his way with the boy.*]

LA CONTAT. The dear child! He makes me die laughing.

DESMOULINS. Let's follow them. Bravo, terror of the aristos!—Messieurs, young Leonidas has forgotten one of our friends, Monsieur de Vintimille, Marquis de Castelnau.

HULIN [*to HOICHE*]. Listen, he's speaking of my master.

DESMOULINS. We surely owe him something. The Marshal has just appointed him guard over the Bastille, with M. de Launey, and he has promised that within two days, we shall go and ask pardon of him, barefooted and with ropes round our necks. I propose that one of us make a present of his rope to that friend of the people.

THE CROWD. Burn him! He lives near! Burn his house—his furniture—his wife—his children!

VINTIMILLE [*appearing in the midst of the Crowd, cold and ironic*]. Messieurs—

LA CONTAT. God save us!

HULIN. Hoche! [*He takes hold of HOICHE's arm.*]

HOICHE. What's the matter?

HULIN. It's he!

HOICHE. Who?

HULIN. Vintimille.

VINTIMILLE. Messieurs, M. de Vintimille's upholsterer asks permission to speak.

THE CROWD. Hear the upholsterer!

VINTIMILLE. Messieurs, you are quite right in wishing to burn that blackguard aristocrat, who makes game of you, despises you, and who goes about saying that dogs ought to be whipped when they show their teeth. Burn, Messieurs, by all means burn, but I warn you, take care that the flame of your just fury does not scorch you, and demolish what is yours along with what is his. Let me ask you first of all, Messieurs, whether it is right to ruin M. de Vintimille and those who ruin him—his creditors, that is? At least allow me to beg you to spare the furniture, which belongs to me, and for which the scoundrel has not paid a sou.

CROWD. Take back your furniture!

VINTIMILLE. I am encouraged, Messieurs, by the success of my request, to make another, this time on behalf of the architect of the house. He has been no more successful than I in extracting écus from the pocket of M. de Vintimille; and he asks you to consider what harm you would do him in destroying his only security?

CROWD. Save the house!

VINTIMILLE. And as for his wife, Messieurs—why burn what belongs to you? His wife is of the people. The Court, the city, the clergy, the middle-classes, have often appreciated her splendid qualities. She



possesses a liberal mind, and she recognizes no privileges: the three orders are equal in her eyes. In her person she realizes the perfect union of the nation. Let us do honor to so rare a virtue. Messieurs, let us show mercy for Madame.

DESMOULINS. Mercy for Notre Dame!

THE CROWD [*laughing*]. Yes, yes, mercy for Madame!

VINTIMILLE. Really, Messieurs, I am taking advantage—

THE CROWD. No, no!

VINTIMILLE. Finally, Messieurs, if you burned M. de Vintimille's children, would you not tremble to vie with our tragediennes?

THE CROWD [*laughing*]. Long live the children! Ha, ha!

VINTIMILLE [*in a changed tone*]. As for him, burn him, Messieurs, burn him, burn him. And, let me tell you, if you don't burn him, he will burn you! [*He steps down from the chair, and disappears into the Crowd, who laugh and shout, and applaud him.*]

LA CONTAT [*going quickly to VINTIMILLE*]. Run quickly! They might recognize you!

VINTIMILLE. Hello, Contat, were you there? What are you doing in such vile company?

LA CONTAT. Don't make fun of the dogs until you are well out of the village.

VINTIMILLE. Oh, not every barking dog bites. Come!

LA CONTAT. Later.

VINTIMILLE. I shall meet you at the Bastille.

LA CONTAT. Very well: at the Bastille. [VINTI-MILLE goes out.]

HOCHE. The rascal! What effrontery!

HULIN. A mixture of courage and nasty vileness.

HOCHE. Often to be observed in our "betters."

HULIN. This one made his fortune by marrying one of the late king's mistresses; and the same man wins honor at Crefeld and Rosbach.

AN OLD WOMAN SHOPKEEPER. What do you mean with your talk all the time of burning and hanging and stirring things up? What'll it bring you? I know well enough you'll not do a blessed thing about it. Then why talk so much? Will it make your soup taste better if you cook a few aristocrats? They'll run off with all their money and we'll be more miserable than ever. You see, you've got to take things as they come, and not believe those liars that tell you you can change things by shouting. D'ye know what I think? We're wasting our time here. Nothing's going to happen, nothing *can* happen. You're threatened with famine, war—the whole Apocalypse. I tell you, it's all invented by the newspapers that haven't anything else to print, and by spies who want to stir things up. There's just a misunderstanding with the king, but it'll be all right if we go about our business. We have a good king: he's promised to keep our good M. Necker, who's going to give us a Constitution. Why don't you believe it? Isn't that good common sense? Why isn't it, eh? I believe what they say, and I was just as foolish as you: I wasted four hours here. I'm going now and sell my turnips.



THE CROWD [*approvingly*]. She's right.—You're all right, mother. Let's go home.

HULIN. What have you to say to that?

HOCHE [*with a smile*]. She reminds me of my old aunt. She talked about patience the moment she set to beating me.

HULIN. I think she talked good common sense.

HOCHE. I ask nothing better than to be able to believe her; and I find it so natural that reason should prevail in her mind that if I listened to my own counsel, I should even allow my enemies to make reason triumph; but, you see, experience has too often disabused me. All I have to do is to open my eyes; I see Gonchon and his band closing shop. They do nothing without a motive, mind you, and I am very much afraid that this sudden quiet is only the lull before the storm. At base, no one believes that this calm is natural; they all stayed, even the old lady. They try to delude themselves, but they can't. They have all caught the fever. Listen to the voice of that crowd! They don't shout, but hear the murmurs! Like the rustling of leaves. The breeze before the rain. [*He seizes HULIN'S hand.*] See! Look! Hulin—here, here—  
[*A great confused murmur comes from the Crowd at the back of the Garden, and then bursts forth like a clap of thunder.*]

A MAN [*out of breath, his hat gone, his clothing in disorder, runs in, and cries out in terror.*] Necker is exiled!

THE CROWD [*excitedly, hurrying to the Man*]. What! What! Necker!—It's a lie!

THE MAN [*shouting*]. Necker is banished! He's gone, gone!

THE CROWD [*howling*]. Kill him! He's a spy from Versailles! Kill him!

THE MAN [*terror-stricken, as he attempts to free himself.*] What are you doing? You don't understand! I say that Necker—

THE CROWD. To the fountain! The informer! Drown him!

THE MAN [*howling*]. Me?

HOCHE. Let's save him, Hulin!

HULIN. You'd have to strike down twenty to save one. [*They try in vain to break through the Crowd, which bears off the unfortunate Man. ROBESPIERRE then rises from the Crowd and stands on a table. He makes a gesture indicating that he wants silence.*]

HOCHE. Who is that thin little fellow who's trying to talk?

DESMOULINS. That is Robespierre, Deputy from Arras.

HOCHE. Shout, Hulin, and make them keep still!

HULIN. Listen! Listen to Citizen Robespierre! [*At first ROBESPIERRE trembles. He is not heard amid the confusion. Some cry, "Louder!"*]

DESMOULINS. Speak, Robespierre.

HULIN. Don't be afraid. [*ROBESPIERRE looks at him with a timid and disdainful smile.*]

DESMOULINS. He's not used to speaking.

HOCHE. Silence, comrades!

ROBESPIERRE [*composing himself*]. Citizens, I am Deputy to the Third Estate. I have come from Ver-

sailles. That man spoke the truth: Necker has been exiled. The power is now in the hands of the nation's enemies. De Broglie, Breteuil, Foulon: Carnage, Rapine, and Famine, are now the ministers. This means war. I have cast my lot with you.

THE CROWD [*terrified*]. We're lost!

DESMOULINS. What shall we do?

ROBESPIERRE. Let us know how to die.

HOCHE [*with a shrug*]. Lawyer!

HULIN. Speak to them, Citizen Deputy.

ROBESPIERRE. What is the use of talk? Let each one consult his own conscience.

HOCHE. They are mad with terror. If they're not made to do something, they are lost. [ROBESPIERRE *takes manuscripts and printers' proofs from his pocket.*]

HULIN. What's he going to read? Don't read! One really human word is worth a thousand from those papers!

ROBESPIERRE [*opens out his papers, and reads in a quiet, but cutting tone*]. "Declaration of Rights."

HOCHE. Listen!

ROBESPIERRE. "Declaration of Rights, proposed to the National Assembly, yesterday, Saturday July 11: The National Assembly proclaims abroad to the Universe and under the eye of the Supreme Being, the following rights of man and citizen:

Nature has made men free and equal—" [*A thunder of applause, which drowns out the rest of the sentence.*]

"Every man is born with inalienable and indefeasible

rights: liberty of thought, the care of his honor and his life, the complete freedom of his person, the pursuit of happiness, and resistance to oppression." [*The applause is redoubled.*]

HOCHE [*drawing his saber*]. Resistance to oppression! [*Others follow his example, and in a moment the Crowd bristle with arms.*]

ROBESPIERRE. "Oppression exists against the social order, when even a single member of it is oppressed. There exists oppression against each and every member of the social order, when the whole is oppressed."

GONCHON. Are they going on with this? They must be got out of the way. If the army comes, they ought to go somewhere else and get killed! [*He speaks to his associates.*]

ROBESPIERRE. "The Nation is sovereign." [*A shout is heard. The Crowd are terrified and listen in fear and trembling.*]

HOCHE. Hulin! The storm at last!

A VOICE [*terrified*]. They're coming! They're coming! The cavalry!

ONE OF GONCHON'S MEN [*in a strident voice*]. Run for your lives! [*Great confusion and shouting.*]

HULIN [*leaping upon the man who just shouted, and striking him on the head*]. Good God! [*To ROBESPIERRE.*] Continue! [*ROBESPIERRE tries to go on, but his voice fails him. HOCHE jumps up on the table beside ROBESPIERRE, and reads with enthusiasm, which stirs the Crowd.*]

HOCHE. "The Nation is sovereign, and the government is its work.—When the government violates the

rights of the nation, insurrection in that nation becomes the most sacred of duties.—Those who make war upon a people in order to arrest the progress of its liberty, ought to be attacked by all, not as ordinary enemies, but as rebel slaves who have lifted a hand against the Sovereign of the World, which is Mankind.” [*Amid the wild acclamations, DESMOULINS, hair waving in the wind and eyes aflame, jumps up on the table from which HOCHÉ has just stepped down.*]

DESMOULINS. Liberty, liberty! It is now flying just above our heads. It bears me along with its sacred whirlwind. On to victory! Let us march with the wind of her wings! The day of bondage has passed—passed. Stand up, and let us send back the thunderbolt against the scoundrels who have the army! Against the King! [*The Crowd shouts: “Against the King!”*] Look at me, spies! You are hidden here, I know. It is I, Camille Desmoulins, who incite Paris to revolt! I fear nothing: no matter what happens, they will never catch me alive. [*He displays a pistol which he has taken from his pocket.*] The only catastrophe I fear is to see France enslaved! But we shan’t see that! It will be free with us, or die with us. Yes, like Virginius we will stab her with our own hands, rather than allow her to be violated by tyrants. Brothers, we will be free! We are already free! Against the Bastilles of stone we will offer our breasts, the unconquerable fortresses of Liberty! Look! The very heavens open, the gods are on our side. The sun tears open the clouds. See, the leaves on the trees tremble for joy! Oh, leaves that quiver with the life-



blood of a people that is now awaking to life, be our rallying emblem, our pledge of victory; you are the color of hope, of the sea, of young and free Nature! [*He breaks off a small branch from a chestnut tree.*] *In hoc signo vinces.* Liberty! Liberty!

THE PEOPLE. Liberty! [*They crowd about DESMOULINS, embracing and kissing him.*]

LA CONTAT [*putting leaves in her hair*]. Oh, young Liberty! Bloom in my hair and flourish in my heart! [*She throws handfuls of leaves to the people.*] Friends, deck yourselves with the cockades of summer! [*The Crowd strip the trees of their leaves.*]

THE OLD WOMAN SHOPKEEPER. Against the King! He was right! You must go to the King!—On to Versailles, my children!

HULIN [*pointing to the OLD WOMAN and LA CONTAT*]. Now *they* are more excited than the rest!

HOCHE. You'll have a hard time stopping them!

THE PEOPLE. To the Champ de Mars! Before the people of Versailles! We'll show them!—Scoundrels! They thought they could down the people of Paris!

THE OLD WOMAN. I'll have their hides! I'll show those nasty Germans who's master!

DESMOULINS. They have banished our Necker. Now we banish them! We want Necker to remain. We will show the world what we want.

THE PEOPLE. Let's parade in honor of Necker!—Here's his portrait, in Curtius' shop, among the wax figures. Let's carry it in triumph!—The shop's closed!—Break it in!

GONCHON [*to his followers*]. Let's take advantage of the occasion!

A FOLLOWER OF GONCHON. Monsieur Gonchon! They're stealing everything!

GONCHON. Never mind! You do the same!

THE SHOPKEEPER. But they're coming into my shop!

GONCHON. Can't keep them out. [*He enters the shop and shouts with the rest of the Crowd. Those outside run here and there. In a moment, swords, sticks, pistols, and hatchets are seen flourishing in the air.*]

THE PEOPLE. Easy, now! No disorder, comrades! —Hey, there, run away to school, lad! This is no child's play! This must be serious! We must inspire the tyrants with the sacred terror of the nation. [*A bust of Necker is carried out of the shop, hugged close to the breast of the athletic Porter. The Crowd gather around him.*] Off with your hats! Here is our defender, our father! Cover him with crêpe! The *Patrie* is in mourning! [*GONCHON and his followers come forth from the shop with the bust of the Duc d'Orléans. They assume the same attitudes of solemn dignity as the others. The People pay no attention to them.*]

HULIN. What's that?

HOCHE. Our friend Gonchon's patron, the Citizen d'Orléans.

HULIN. I'm going to break in his head, and those of his bearers.

HOCHE [*smiling*]. No, no, let them be. Let them compromise themselves.



HULIN. Don't you know him?

HOCHE. An Orléans? He who knows one, knows them all. He's a vicious vermin, who has caught hold of the robes of Liberty, and tries to harm her. He needs a slap, and he will get it. Let him alone.

HULIN. But what if he take away our liberty?

HOCHE. That misshapen brat? He'd better take care that she doesn't take away his head! [GONCHON and his followers cover d'Orléans' head with crêpe. A procession then forms, in absurdly solemn order. Silence. All at once, the OLD WOMAN SHOPKEEPER comes in beating a drum. A formidable shout arises.]

THE PEOPLE. Forward! [*The procession starts. First comes the drummer, followed by Necker's bust, which the Porter carries on his head. He is surrounded by men armed with sticks and hatchets— young men, elegantly attired in silks, wearing jewels and watches, and armed with cudgels and swords; French Guards with drawn sabers; women, first among whom is LA CONTAT, clinging to DESMOULINS' arm. Then comes GONCHON, who carries Orléans' bust, followed by the shopkeepers of the Palais-Royal. Then the rest of the Crowd. A great silence, broken now and then by the low hum of the vast crowd. In the distance, shouting is heard; it grows nearer and nearer, and finally passes through the whole line like a tremor of passion. Then silence for a moment.*]

HOCHE [*to HULIN, pointing at the People*]. Well, Hulin, are you convinced now?

HULIN. Absurd. That disorderly mob! Attack

an army? They're all going to be massacred. There's no sense to it. [*He follows the procession.*]

HOCHÉ. Where are you going?

HULIN. With them, of course.

HOCHÉ. Old comrade, your instinct is better than your head.

HULIN. You see that, do you? Do you know where those blind people are going?

HOCHÉ. Don't bother about understanding. They know: they see for you.

HULIN. Who?

HOCHÉ. The blind. [*The lugubrious roll of the drums is heard in the distance. The People march out slowly. Silence.*]

## ACT II

[Monday night, July 13-14. It is two or three o'clock in the morning.

*The scene is a street in Paris, in the Faubourg Saint-Antoine. At the back, towering above the house-tops, stands the great bulk of the Bastille, the turrets of which, engulfed in the black night, soar up into the sky, and seem to strain higher and higher as dawn approaches. To the right, at the corner of a street, is LUCILE'S house. A convolvulus twines itself about the balcony support, and clammers along the wall. The street is lighted by candles, placed on the window-sills. Sounds from blacksmith shops—hammers pounding on forges, are heard, and from time to time the tocsin of a church, or occasionally a far-off musket-shot. Workingmen are constructing a barricade of wood and stone at the street corner, under LUCILE'S window.]*

A MASON. Only a few more stones now.

A WORKINGMAN [*with his bed on his back*]. Here, use this. It's my bed.

THE MASON. Are you sleeping here?

THE WORKINGMAN. I will before long, with a bullet in me.

THE MASON. You have a sense of humor.

THE WORKINGMAN. If the brigands pass here, we won't need anything. Our beds are made elsewhere.

A CARPENTER. Help me stretch this cord.

AN APPRENTICE. What for?

THE CARPENTER. To trip the horses.

A PRINTER. Hey, Camuset?

ANOTHER. Yes?

THE PRINTER. Listen.

THE OTHER. What?

THE PRINTER. Don't you hear?

THE OTHER. I hear anvils. They're making pikes in all the blacksmith shops.

THE PRINTER. No, not that. There— [*He points to the ground.*]

THE OTHER. There?

THE PRINTER. Yes, under the ground. [*He lies down, with his ear to the ground.*]

THE OTHER. You're dreaming!

THE WORKINGMAN [*lying down*]. Sounds like mining.

THE OTHER. Good Lord, they're going to blow us up!

THE CARPENTER [*incredulously*]. Nonsense!

THE WORKINGMAN [*still on the ground*]. They've hidden millions of pounds of powder there.

THE OTHER WORKINGMAN. That's why we can't find any.

THE CARPENTER. Do you think an army can go about underground like rats?

THE WORKINGMAN [*still on the ground*]. They've

got underground passages leading from the Bastille to Vincennes.

THE CARPENTER. Fairy tales!

THE OTHER WORKINGMAN [*rising*]. I'll have a look in the cellar, anyway. Are you coming with me, Camuset? [*They both go into a house.*]

THE CARPENTER [*laughing*]. In the cellar? Ha, ha! They're looking for a pretext to wet their whistles! Now, let's finish our work.

THE MASON [*looking behind him as he works*]. Good God!

THE CARPENTER. What's wrong?

THE MASON [*looking toward the Bastille*]. That—that! Every time I look at that thing, it weighs down on my back—that Bastille! It catches in my throat.

THE CARPENTER. One looks under ground, and the other in the air. Don't look around; go on with your work.

THE MASON. Makes no difference: I feel it. Like as if some one was standing behind me, with his fist raised ready to hit me.—Good God!

THE VOICE OF A BOURGEOIS. He is right: we are watched by cannon. What good is all this going to do us? In a flash it could knock that all down like a house of cards.

CARPENTER. Oh, no.

THE MASON [*pointing toward the Bastille*]. You damned monster! When are we going to get rid of you!

THE CARPENTER. Soon.

OTHERS. You think so?—How?



THE CARPENTER. I don't know, but it's so. Courage, now! It's a long lane that has no turning. [*They set to work again.*]

THE APPRENTICE. Meantime, we can't see a thing.

THE CARPENTER [*shouting toward the houses*]. Hey, up there! You women, look to your candles! We've got to see tonight!

A WOMAN [*at a window, re-lighting candles*]. How is everything getting along?

THE CARPENTER. Well, more than one will leave his carcass here before they get past.

THE WOMAN. Are they coming soon?

THE CARPENTER. They say Grenelle is running with blood. You can hear shots from the Vaugirard section.

THE OLD BOURGEOIS. They are waiting for daylight before entering.

THE MASON. What time is it?

THE WOMAN. Three. Listen, the cocks are crowing.

THE MASON [*wiping his brow with his sleeve*]. Got to hurry! Lord, how hot it is!

THE CARPENTER. So much the better.

THE OLD BOURGEOIS. I can't do another stroke.

THE CARPENTER. Rest a little, Monsieur. Nobody need work any more than he can.

THE OLD BOURGEOIS [*bringing a paving-block*]. I want to put this in place, though.

THE CARPENTER. Take it easier. If you can't gallop, trot.

THE WOMAN. Have you got your muskets yet?



THE CARPENTER. They keep putting us off at the Hôtel de Ville. A few hundred bourgeois there take everything.

THE MASON. Never mind. We have knives, and sticks and stones. Anything is good to kill with.

THE WOMAN. I've got a lot of tiles, broken bottles, and glass here in my room. Everything's near the window—dishes, furniture, everything. If they pass this way, I'll smash them!

ANOTHER WOMAN [*at her window*]. My kettle's been on the fire since dinner. The water's hot enough to boil paving-stones. Let them come! I'll boil them!

A VAGABOND [*with a gun, speaking to a Bourgeois*]. Give me some money.

THE BOURGEOIS. No begging here.

THE VAGABOND. I'm not asking for bread, though I am starving. But I have a musket, and not a sou to buy powder with. Give me some money.

ANOTHER VAGABOND [*a little drunk*]. I've got money, much as you like! [*He pulls a handful of money from his pocket.*]

FIRST VAGABOND. Where did you get that?

SECOND VAGABOND. I took it from the Lazarists when they pillaged the convent.

FIRST VAGABOND [*seizing the other by the throat*]. Do you want to dishonor the people, you pig?

SECOND VAGABOND [*trying to break away*]. What's matter? Are you crazy?

FIRST VAGABOND [*shaking him*]. Empty your pockets!

SECOND VAGABOND. But I—

FIRST VAGABOND [*emptying his pockets*]. Empty your pockets, you thief!

SECOND VAGABOND. Haven't we the right to rob the aristos any more, eh?

THE OTHERS. Hang him! Hang him!—Hang him on the sign-board!—A flogging is enough!—Ask pardon of the people!—Good!—Now, get out! [*The Vagabond runs away.*]

FIRST VAGABOND [*setting to work*]. He ought to have been hanged—for an example. There will be others like him. To be exposed to such nastiness—keep company with thieves! It's nasty.

CAMILLE DESMOULINS [*entering, in his usual absent-minded idle way*]. A spanking will be enough for you. [*They all laugh and set to work again.*]

THE PEOPLE. Well, let's finish this.

DESMOULINS [*looking at the house and the workers*]. My Lucile is there. I've just been to see her. The house was empty. They told me the family went out to dinner with relatives in the Faubourg Saint-Antoine. They've been blockaded!—Well, I should think so! A splendid fortification! Scarp and counter-scarp, everything perfect. They are besieging the house. But, my friends, we have to demolish the Bastille, and not construct another like it. I don't know what your enemies will think, but it is in any case dangerous to your friends: I've just gotten my feet tangled up in your strings, and I almost stayed where I was.—This cask won't stand. You must put back the paving-blocks.

THE CARPENTER. Do you work as well as you talk?

DESMOULINS [*gaily, as he takes up a block*]. I can

work, too. [*From the top of the barricade, where he now stands, he can touch the window of the house. A light is seen moving inside. DESMOULINS looks at it.*] She is there!

THE OLD BOURGEOIS. Provost Flesselles is a traitor. He pretends to be one of us, but he's in communication with Versailles.

THE MASON. He's the one who organized the Bourgeois Militia; it pretends to defend us, but it tries to tie our hands. They're all Judases, ready to sell us.

THE CARPENTER. That only teaches us not to depend on any one but ourselves. But I've known that for a long while. [*During the above, CAMILLE lightly taps the window, and calls "Lucile!" The light disappears, and the window opens. LUCILE'S pretty face, with her lovely teeth and winning smile, appear at the window. Each puts his fingers to his mouth, a warning to be careful. They converse by means of lovers' signs. Each time the workers raise their heads from the barricade and look in her direction, Lucile quickly shuts the window. But two workingmen catch sight of her.*]

A WORKINGMAN [*pointing to DESMOULINS*]. What's he doing anyway?

SECOND WORKINGMAN. The little fellow's in love. Don't bother him!

FIRST WORKINGMAN. He'll fight all the better for it. The rooster will defend his hen. [*They continue working, from time to time glancing up good-naturedly at the lovers. But they always observe caution, in order not to interrupt them.*]

LUCILE [*in an undertone*]. What are you doing there?

DESMOULINS. It's a fort to defend you. [*They look at each other and smile.*]

LUCILE. I can't stay any longer. My people are here.

DESMOULINS. Just one moment!

LUCILE. Later. When every one has gone. [*LUCILE listens.*] They're calling me. Wait. [*She blows a kiss at him and disappears.*]

THE MASON [*looking at the barricade*]. There, that's done—and well done, I may say.

THE CARPENTER [*slapping DESMOULINS on the shoulder*]. Don't work too hard: you'll come down with pleurisy.

DESMOULINS. Each one has his work, comrade. After all, this barricade here is the result of my talk.

THE MASON. What are you talking about?

THE CARPENTER. Do you work with your voice?

DESMOULINS. Was neither of you at the Palais-Royal yesterday?

THE CROWD. The Palais-Royal?—Listen to that!—Are you the little fellow who called us to arms, and gave us our cockades? Are you Monsieur Desmoulin? Wonderful speech!—How well you spoke! I cried! Fine little fellow!—Monsieur Desmoulin, let me shake hands with you!—Long live Monsieur Desmoulin! Long live our little Camille!

GONCHON [*enters, in the uniform of a Captain of the Bourgeois Militia, followed by his patrol.*] What the



devil are you doing there? What's all this talking! You're disturbing the peace! Make way, there! Go back home!

THE PEOPLE. There's that damned Bourgeois Guard again!—Down with them!—Disturb the peace? That's good!—We're defending Paris!

GONCHON. That's not your affair.

THE PEOPLE [*indignantly*]. Not our affair?

GONCHON [*with vehemence*]. That's not your affair. That's our business, and ours alone. We are the Permanent Committee on defense. Damn you, get out of here!

DESMOULINS [*coming close to him*]. Why, it's Gonchon!

GONCHON [*stumbling*]. Ten thousand devils! For God's sake, what sons of dogs have put up that thing, torn up the street, and stopped traffic! Knock that down, do you hear!

THE PEOPLE [*furiously*]. Knock down our barricade? Try it!

THE CARPENTER. Listen to me, Captain, and attend to what I say. We'll agree to go away and not question the Committee's orders, even though they're given by fools. There must be discipline in war-time; we're willing to submit, but if you touch one stone of our fortification, we'll smash the faces of you and the rest of your monkeys.

THE PEOPLE. Tear down our barricade?

GONCHON. Who said anything about tearing it down? Are we masons? We have something better to do. Make way now!

THE MASON [*in a menacing tone*]. We'll go, but you understand?

GONCHON [*with aplomb*]. I said no one would touch it. No back-talk, now! [*The workers disperse. DESMOULINS lags behind.*] Didn't you hear, you?

DESMOULINS. Don't you allow any privileges to your friends, Gonchon?

GONCHON. Oh, it's you, you damned spouter! Arrest that fellow!

ROBESPIERRE [*entering*]. Sacrilege! Who dares lift a hand against the founder of Liberty?

DESMOULINS. Ah, Robespierre! Thanks.

GONCHON [*releasing DESMOULINS—aside*]. A Deputy! The devil! [*Aloud.*] Very well. You see, it is my duty to keep order, and I will keep it in spite of everything.

ROBESPIERRE. Come with me, Camille. Our friends are meeting in this house tonight. [*He points to the house down-stage, left.*]

DESMOULINS [*aside*]. I can see Lucile's window from here! [*They go to the house, at the door of which, in an obscure entrance, a man is on guard. He is in his shirt sleeves, has bare legs, and carries a musket.*]

THE MAN. Who are you?

ROBESPIERRE. Robespierre.

THE MAN. I don't know you.

ROBESPIERRE. Deputy from Arras.

THE MAN. Show your card.

DESMOULINS. Desmoulins.



THE MAN. The little fellow with the cockade? Pass, comrade.

DESMOULINS [*pointing to ROBESPIERRE*]. He is with me.

THE MAN. Pass, you, too, citizen Robert Pierre.

DESMOULINS [*fatuously*]. Admire the power of eloquence, my friend! [*ROBESPIERRE looks at him with a bitter smile, sighs, and follows him without a word.*]

GONCHON [*going to THE MAN*]. What's going on here?

THE MAN. Make way!

GONCHON. What's that, you rascal? What are you doing here?

THE MAN [*emphatically*]. I am watching over the nation—over the thoughts of the nation.

GONCHON. What are you talking about? Have you any papers? Who stationed you here?

THE MAN. I.

GONCHON. Go home!

THE MAN. I am home. My home is the street. I have no home. You go home yourself. Get off my side-walk! [*He makes a step toward GONCHON with a threat.*]

GONCHON. Ah! No quarreling, now. I refuse to waste my time squabbling with a drunkard. Now, I shall continue on my rounds. These cursed vagabonds! And these barricades—they spring up out of the ground, like mushrooms; and the streets are full of these fellows! They think of nothing but fighting! If they were let alone, there would be no king tomorrow! [*He goes out with his men.*]

THE MAN. Look at those nasty scoundrels, those blue toads, those idiotic fools! Just because they're titled, they think they can make laws for free men! Bourgeois! The moment four of them gather together, they form committees and spoil good paper with their rules and regulations! "Show your papers!" As if we had to have their permission, their signatures, and the rest of it, to defend ourselves when we're attacked! Let every one protect himself! It's shameful to think a man has to let some one else defend him! They tried to make us give up our muskets, and throw us into prison. Can't do that! And those other fools, who think they're being betrayed, and at the first injunction, throw up a barricade out of respect for the constituted authorities and the moneyed classes! They're used to serving, and I suppose they can't get over their old habits in a day. Luckily, there are other wandering dogs like me, who haven't any home, and respect nothing. Well, I'll stay here and keep guard. By God, they won't take our Paris! Never mind if I haven't a thing to my name, it belongs to us all, and we're going to hold on to it. Yesterday, I didn't have any idea of all this. What was this city to me, where I hadn't a blessed hole to crawl into when it rained, or a place to get a crust of bread? What did I care about it? What did I care about any one's happiness or sorrow? But now everything's changed. I've got a part to play; I feel that everything belongs just a little to me: their houses, their money, and their thoughts—I must watch over them; they are working for me. Everybody is equal, equal and free. God, I

always felt that, but I couldn't say it. Free! I'm a vagabond, I'm hungry, but I don't care: I'm free. Free! It makes my chest swell, it does! I'm a king. I could walk over the world. [*He becomes excited as he talks, striding back and forth.*] It's like as if I was drunk; my head's turned—though I haven't drunk a drop. What is it? It's glory!

HULIN [*coming from the house*]. I was stifling in there. I must get out.

THE MAN. Eh, Hulin, what are they doing?

HULIN. Talking, talking. The damned gossips. They're never at a loss for something to say. Desmoulins is making jokes and spouting Latin. Robespierre, with his long face, declares he'll sacrifice himself. They're calling everything into question: laws, the social contract, reason, the origin of the world. One is making war on God, and the other on Nature. As to real war plans, how to protect themselves against danger, not a word! Their counsel is like that in Paris: when it rains, why let it rain!—Devil take these phrasemakers!

THE MAN. Don't blame them. It's a fine thing to be able to speak. I tell you, there are words he uses that catch you way-down inside. They make the shivers run up your spine. They make you cry, they'd make you even kill your father; and they make you feel as strong as the whole world; make you feel like the good God Himself. Each man has his own work to do. They do the thinking for us; we've got to do our part for them.

HULIN. What do you want to do? Look. [*He indicates the Bastille.*]

THE MAN. Lights on the left tower. They're not sleeping any more than we, up there. They're fixing up their cannon.

HULIN. What do you intend to do with them? You can't resist them.

THE MAN. That remains to be seen.

HULIN. What do you mean?

THE MAN. I mean, that remains to be seen. Two small make one great.

HULIN. You are an optimist.

THE MAN. It's my character.

HULIN. It doesn't seem to have agreed with you, however.

THE MAN [*good-naturedly*]. But I am naturally an optimist. Luck and I are not close relatives. As long as I can remember, I never got anything I wanted. [*Laughing.*] Good Lord, I've had bad luck enough in my life! Everything isn't pleasure; life is a mixture. But I don't care: I'm always hoping, and sometimes I'm wrong. This time, Hulin, something good's come to me. The wind has shifted, and luck is with us.

HULIN [*chaffingly*]. Luck? You'd better ask it to warm you up a bit first.

THE MAN [*looking at his naked feet*]. I'd rather wear these shoes than the King's. I'd go this way to Vienna or Berlin, if necessary, to teach those kings a lesson.

HULIN. Haven't you enough to do here?

THE MAN. That won't last forever. When we're

through here, and have cleaned up Paris and France, why not go the lot of us, arm-in-arm, soldiers, bourgeois, Tom, Dick, and Harry, and clean up Europe? We aren't selfish: we don't want all the fun for ourselves. You know, every time I learn something new, I want to tell it to others. Ever since these things began to stir in me—Liberty, and all this damned fine stuff—I feel I've just got to tell it to everybody, and spout it everywhere. God, if the others are like me, we'll do great things. I can already see the ground trembling under our feet, and Europe boiling like wine in a vat. People are falling on our necks. It's like little brooks rushing down to meet the river. We're a great river, washing everything clean.

HULIN. Say, are you sick?

THE MAN. I? I'm as well as a cabbage.

HULIN. And yet you dream?

THE MAN. All the time. It's good, too. If you dream enough, you end by getting something of what you're dreaming about. Hey, Hulin, what do you say? Won't it be a fine march? Aren't you coming with us?

HULIN. As soon as you've taken Vienna and Berlin, I'll keep watch over them.

THE MAN. Don't joke. Who knows?

HULIN. Anything can happen—

THE MAN. Anything you wish for happens.

HULIN. Meantime I'd like to know what's going to happen right now.

THE MAN. That's hard to tell. How are we going about it? We'll see. Sufficient unto the hour is the work thereof.



HULIN. These French devils are all alike. They think of what may happen in a hundred years, and not of the next day.

THE MAN. Perhaps. But then others will think of us in a hundred years.

HULIN. Much good that does you!

THE MAN. My bones thrill already! What troubles me is that in history they won't know my name.

HULIN. You're vain!

THE MAN. Well, I love glory.

HULIN. It's a fine thing, of course. The only trouble is that you can't enjoy it until you're dead. A good pipe is better. [VINTIMILLE enters right.]

VINTIMILLE. The streets are empty. Two vagabonds talking about glory. A little mound of broken furniture, put there by a lot of epileptics. So this is the great revolution! A patrol of guards is enough to put the rabble in its place. What are they waiting for at Versailles?

THE MAN [*getting up quickly and going to VINTIMILLE*]. What's he want?

VINTIMILLE [*ironically, as he glances at THE MAN*]. Is this a new uniform of the Archers? Get out of here, old man!

THE MAN. Who are you? Where are you going at this hour?

VINTIMILLE [*handing him a paper*]. Can you read?

THE MAN. Papers? Of course, I can read. [To HULIN.] You read them. What is it?

HULIN [*after having read*]. A pass. It's all right.



Signed by the Committee of the Hôtel de Ville. Countersigned by the Captain of the Bourgeois Militia, Gonchon.

THE MAN. Good joke! Anybody can buy those. [*He grumblingly allows VINTIMILLE to pass.*]

VINTIMILLE. Of course! Everything can be bought. [*As he turns to go, he throws a coin at THE MAN.*]

THE MAN [*on the alert*]. What! What's that?

VINTIMILLE [*without turning*]. You see. Take it and keep your mouth shut.

THE MAN [*running to VINTIMILLE and blocking his way*]. So you're an aristocrat? You're trying to bribe me?

HULIN [*interposing*]. Don't, comrade, don't. I know him very well. [*He goes to VINTIMILLE.*]

VINTIMILLE [*casually*]. Why, it's—

HULIN. Hulin.

VINTIMILLE. Of course. [*A moment's silence. They look at each other.*]

HULIN [*to THE MAN*]. Let him pass.

THE MAN [*furiously—shouting*]. He wanted to bribe me—he wanted to buy my conscience!

VINTIMILLE. Your conscience? What should I do with it? The idea! I pay for favors done me. Quick! Take it.

THE MAN. I'm not doing favors! I'm doing my duty.

VINTIMILLE. Then it's to pay you for doing your duty. What do I care?

THE MAN. You don't pay people for doing their duty. I am free!

VINTIMILLE. Your duty and your liberty won't feed you. I refuse to argue. Hurry up, now; money is always good, no matter how one gets it. Don't stand there like that; you know you want it. I know you'll end by taking it. I suppose you want more, eh? How much do you want, free man?

THE MAN [*who has several times been on the point of taking the money, jumps upon VINTIMILLE. HULIN pulls him away*]. Let me go, Hulin! Let me go!

HULIN. Stop it!

THE MAN. I've got to kill him!

VINTIMILLE. What's this!

THE MAN [*held back by HULIN, says to VINTIMILLE*]. Get out! Why did you come here, anyway? I was happy, I didn't realize how poor I was. I was free, master of everything. You remind me that I'm hungry, that I haven't a thing, that I don't belong to myself, that a filthy scoundrel can be my master by means of a little money that makes a slave of me because I need it. You've spoiled all my happiness. Get out!

VINTIMILLE. What a to-do for so little! Who gives a damn about your scruples? I'm not asking anything of you. Take it!

THE MAN. I'd rather starve.—You give it to me, Hulin. [*VINTIMILLE gives the money to HULIN, who drops his hand. The money falls to the ground, and THE MAN picks it up.*]

HULIN. Where are you going?

THE MAN. Get drunk—and forget.

VINTIMILLE. Forget what?

THE MAN. That I'm not free. Dirty scoundrel!  
[*He goes out.*]

VINTIMILLE. The pest! There's nothing quite so bad as a rascal like that who develops his self-respect, and is without means to preserve it. Good evening, my boy, and thank you.

HULIN. Thank you. I didn't mention your name, because you'd never have escaped alive. It would have been disloyal of me, and I am an honest man. Anyway, I dislike violence, and I don't believe in revolution. But I am not one of you, and I don't care to bring harm to my comrades. What are you doing here?

VINTIMILLE. You are inquisitive!

HULIN. I beg your pardon, but you are playing with death. Do you realize how people hate you?

VINTIMILLE. I have just been to see my mistress. Shall I change my habits for the sake of two or three madmen?

HULIN. There are more than you imagine.

VINTIMILLE. So much the better. The more numerous and insolent they are, the better, say I.

HULIN. Better for whom?

VINTIMILLE. For us. Our age is rotten with sentimentality. You don't dare do a thing. One dare not give an order for fear of offending this damned liberty of the populace—and shedding a few drops of blood. This effeminacy is the cause of all the disorders of the kingdom. The only cure for so much evil is more evil. A good uprising is what we need. That will be a splendid reason and pretext for putting

them in their place. We are ready. We can do it in a day, and we won't be troubled again for a good fifty years with these insane ravings of philosophers and cheap lawyers.

HULIN. So then, a revolution would do that for you? You don't object to the people having a grand butchery? A few crimes, eh?

VINTIMILLE. Why not? Something that will create quite a disturbance.

HULIN. What if they began with you?

VINTIMILLE. The idea!

HULIN. Do you know what I'd like to do this instant?

VINTIMILLE. No.

HULIN. Don't provoke me!

VINTIMILLE. But you wouldn't do anything, my friend. You are an honest man!

HULIN. What do you know about that? I said I was; I was boasting.

VINTIMILLE. No, no, but you are now. Even if you had said nothing, I could have seen it in your face.

HULIN. Is that a reason why I shouldn't inform on you if I like.

VINTIMILLE. Certainly. You must pay for your honesty by sacrifice. What would you think of yourself, Hulin, if you betrayed me? Would you not lose forever that invaluable possession: your self-esteem? It's not so easy as you think to go against your conscience. As you say, you are an honest man. Good-by. [*He goes.*]

HULIN. He's making game of me. He knows me.

—It's true, those villains will always have the better of us honest people, because they're used to giving orders, and we are not. Then why remain honest, if it's all a fraud? Because we can't do otherwise. Well, it's better so. I couldn't breathe if I were as morally rotten and nasty as they are! I know they'll get the better of us. The day is at hand. But it would have been wonderful to win. They're going to crush us! [*He shrugs his shoulders.*] And—after? [*In the distance is heard the joyous voice of HOICHE, answered by the acclamations of the Crowd. Windows are thrown wide open, and people lean out to see. DESMOULINS, ROBESPIERRE, and their friends come forth from the café where they have been meeting.*]

HOICHE [*enters laughing, and shows his comrades the fortifications*]. Look at this. What Vauban built it, eh? Fine fellows! I could kiss you all! What work they must have put into it! And why? Against whom? Your friends? The enemy will never come. Don't worry.

THE PEOPLE. Long live the French Guards! [*MARAT runs to HOICHE, and bars his way with outstretched arms.*]

MARAT. Stop, soldier! Not another step. [*The Crowd, astonished, press around them to see.*]

DESMOULINS. What's the matter with him? Has he lost his head?

HULIN. Yes, long ago!

MARAT. Surrender your saber! Every one give up his arms!

DESMOULINS. He'll cut himself.



THE FRENCH GUARDS. What's that!—Give up my saber?—I'll give it to you in the belly!

THE PEOPLE. Kill him!

HOCHE. Silence! Let me explain. I know him.—Let me go, friend!

MARAT [*standing on the tips of his toes to take HOCHÉ by the collar*]. Give up your saber!

HOCHE [*quietly freeing himself, and taking hold of MARAT, who squirms*]. What are you going to do with it, son?

MARAT. Keep you from thrusting it into the heart of Liberty.

HOCHE. Do you suspect those who have come to shed their blood for the people?

MARAT. Who guarantees your loyalty? Why should we have confidence in unknown soldiers?

THE FRENCH GUARDS. Break his head, Hoche! [*HOCHÉ quiets them with a gesture, looks smilingly at MARAT, and releases him.*] He is right. Why have confidence in us? He has never seen us at work. [*MARAT, with not a word to say, suddenly assumes an attitude of silent impassiveness.*] Good Lord, it is hard to let yourself be accused when you're risking death for those birds!

HOCHE. Why, he doesn't know us. That makes no difference. [*Good-naturedly.*] But you're mistaken. Marat, you have done well to take such precautions for the people. [*To the People.*] We'll understand each other in a moment. A glance will prove that we are all good fellows, and believe in one another. But he is wise and has given us a lesson in prudence:



this is war-time, and you have the right to demand an account from every one. No one can be excepted.

THE PEOPLE. We know you, Hoche, you're a friend!

HOCHE. Be careful with your friends. [*Smiling*]. That doesn't refer to me. Your uncertain position does not make many friends for you, and what few you have, are not dangerous. But when you become powerful, you will see them flock to you; then you must keep your eyes open.

THE FRENCH GUARDS. That's good advice.—Be prudent, that's right! Trust no one!

HOCHE [*laughing*]. When two eyes please me, I ask nothing more. But I'm a fool, and that's my affair. You have to save the world. Don't imitate me. We are only a few hundred French Guards. Our officers, who know our sympathies for the people, tried to send us to Saint-Denis, away from you. But we left our barracks and now we offer our sabers to you. In order to reassure Marat, divide yourselves into groups of ten or twenty; then each group takes its place in a people's battalion. Then you will be our masters, and we can lead you and train you. Will you come with me, Marat? We can each learn something from the other. You'll see that there are still brave men; and perhaps you will teach me to hunt down traitors—though I think your labor will be lost. [MARAT, *whose eyes have been glued on HOCHE, goes to him and offers his hand.*]

MARAT. I was mistaken.

HOCHE [*takes his hand and smiles*]. How tiresome it must be to suspect people! I'd rather die.

MARAT [*sighing*]. So would I. But as you said just now, it is not for us, but for the nation.

HOCHE. Continue to keep a sharp watch over the people. I don't envy you: my task is much easier.

MARAT [*looking at HOCHE*]. Oh, Nature, if the eyes and voice of this man lie, there is no honesty! Soldier, I have offended you before every one. And before every one, I ask your pardon.

HOCHE. But you didn't offend me. No one knows better than I what a military chief is, and what dangers beset the cause of Liberty. Military discipline makes every man a slave; men cannot like it: we abhor it as much as you do. We have ourselves just broken the blind power that was in our hands. Open your arms to us, make room for us at your tables, give us back our lost liberty, our cramped consciences, our right to be men like you, your equals and your brothers. Soldiers, become again part of the People. And you, People, all of you, become the Army; defend yourselves, defend us, and defend our souls, which are being attacked. Give us your hands, embrace us, let us be but one heart. You are all of you our friends. All of us for all of us!

THE PEOPLE and the SOLDIERS [*in an ecstasy of fraternal enthusiasm, laughing, crying, embracing one another*]. Yes, for you, for you! Our brothers the people! Our soldier brothers!—For all who suffer! For the oppressed!—For all mankind! [*The enthusiasm waxes into a pandemonium, and is increased with*

*cries and cheers from the windows of the neighboring houses.]*

HULIN. Hurrah! Hoche! At last, some one who dispels the sadness!

HOCHÉ [*amiably, to the people who acclaim him from the windows*]. What are you doing there at home? Why shut yourselves in on a beautiful July night like this? Man is sad when he is alone. It is the fetid air of the cellar that breeds suspicion and doubt. Come forth from your houses; you've been shut up too long. You must live now in the open streets. Come out and watch the sun rise. The enslaved city now breathes freely; the cool winds from the prairies are blowing over the houses and the streets that are blocked by our armies; they bring us the salute from the friendly countryside. The grain is ripe, come and reap it.

LA CONTAT. What a splendid fellow! He breathes joy and happiness. [*She goes toward HOCHÉ.*]

HOCHÉ. Ah, there you are, you flower-girl of Liberty! Madame Royalist, who stripped the trees of the Palais-Royal and threw cockades to the people. I knew you would come. Do you at last believe in our cause?

LA CONTAT. I believe in anything you say. With a face like yours—[*she points to his face*] I could always be converted. [*The People laugh.*]

HOCHÉ [*laughing*]. I'm not surprised. I always knew I had an apostolic temperament. Well, take your place, then. We won't refuse any one. Take a pike: a girl like you ought to defend herself.

LA CONTAT. Oh, oh, don't enroll me so quickly! I look on, I applaud, and I find the piece interesting, but I'm not playing this evening.

HOCHE. So you think it's merely interesting? You think it is play? Look at this poor devil, his bones sticking out of his blouse, and this woman nursing her child. Is it amusing to see them starve? You think it a good comedy to see these people, without bread, without a future, thinking only of humanity, and of eternal justice? Don't you think it's at least as serious as a Corneille tragedy?

LA CONTAT. That, too, is only a play.

HOCHE. Nothing is play. Everything is serious. Cinna and Nicomède exist, just as I do.

LA CONTAT. You are strange! Actors and authors construct make-believe things, which you accept as gospel!

HOCHE. You're mistaken, it isn't make-believe for you: you don't know yourself.

LA CONTAT. You make me laugh! Do *you* know me?

HOCHE. I've seen you on the stage.

LA CONTAT. And do you imagine I *feel* what I act?

HOCHE. You can't deny it: your instinct makes you feel. A power is never an illusion; it carries you along. I know better than you what it does to you.

LA CONTAT. What?

HOCHE. What is strong goes with what is strong. You will be one of us.

LA CONTAT. I don't think so.

HOCHE. What difference? There are only two

parties in the world: the healthy and the sick. What is healthy goes with life. Life is with us. Come!

LA CONTAT. With you—willingly.

HOCHE. So you won't decide! Very well, we'll see later on, if we have time to think.

LA CONTAT. There is always time for love.

HOCHE. You've been made to think that too often. Do you think our revolution is going to be merely some gallant little story? Ah, you little women! During the fifty years you have been governing France, and had everything brought you, done for you, did it never enter your heads that there might be something more important than your dainty selves? Play is over and done with, Madame. This is a serious game, in which the stake is the world itself. Make way for the men! If you dare, follow us to battle, help us, share our faith, but, by God, don't dare try to shake it. You count for very little beside it. I'm not angry, Contat! I have no time for a flirtation, and as for my heart, it already belongs to some one else.

LA CONTAT. To whom?

HOCHE. To Liberty.

LA CONTAT. I'd like to know what she looks like.

HOCHE. She is a little like you, I imagine. Very healthy, well-built, blonde, passionate, audacious, but rouged like yourself, with beauty-spots—ironic, too; but she *does*, instead of making fun of those who do; and instead of making double-meaning phrases, she breathes words of devotion and fraternity. I am her lover. When you are like her, I will love you. That is all I have to say.



LA CONTAT. I like her, and I will have you. Now, to battle! [*She snatches a musket from one of the People, and declaims with great warmth, a few lines from "Cinna":*

"Thou need'st fear no success which shames thy name!  
For good and evil both are for thy glory,  
And though the plot's reveal'd and thou dost die,  
Thy honor's still intact. Think but of Brutus  
And valiant Cassius, are their names obscured?  
Did these two heroes perish with their plots?  
Are they not honored with the greatest Romans?"

Go, follow them, where honor bids you tread!"

*She rushes into the arms of the People, who wildly applaud her.]*

HOCHE. Splendid! Let Corneille be our guide!  
Wave the torch of heroism before our eyes!

HULIN. Where are you going?

HOCHE. Where are we going? [*He raises his eyes, and looks at the house of little JULIE who, partly dressed, leans out the window, excited and joyous.*]  
Ask that little woman. I want her to give the answer which is in all our hearts. You innocent little one, be our voice, and tell us where we are going?

JULIE [*leaning far out of the window, but kept from falling by her mother,—shouting at the top of her voice*]. To the Bastille!

THE PEOPLE. To the Bastille! [*The Crowd is at the highest pitch of excitement. They gather into little groups—workingmen, bourgeois, students, and women.*] The Bastille! The Bastille! Break the yoke! At last! Down with that stupid mass! Monu-

ment of our defeat and degradation! The tomb of those who dare speak the truth!—Voltaire's prison!—Mirabeau's prison!—The prison of Liberty! Let's breathe!—Monster, you will fall! We'll pull down every stone of you! Down with the murderer! Coward!—Cut-throat! [*They shake their fists at the Bastille, and shout until they are hoarse. HULIN, ROBESPIERRE, and MARAT wildly wave their arms, and try to make themselves heard above the clamor. It is seen that they disapprove of what the People are doing, but their voices are drowned out.*]

HULIN [*at last making himself heard*]. You're mad, mad, I tell you! We'll only break ourselves against that mountain!

MARAT [*his arms crossed*]. I really marvel at you! Giving yourselves all this trouble to free a handful of aristocrats! Don't you know that there are only a few rich men in there? It's a luxurious prison, made especially for them. Let them mind their own affairs. That doesn't concern you.

HOCHE. Every sort of injustice concerns us. Our Revolution is not a family matter. If we are not rich enough to have relations in the Bastille, we can at least adopt the rich people who are as unfortunate as we. Every man who suffers unjustly is a brother.

MARAT. You are right.

THE PEOPLE. We want the Bastille!

HULIN. But, you fools, how are you going to take it? We have no weapons, and they have!

HOCHE. Of course. Let us take the weapons, then. [*Confusion at the back of the stage.*]

A WORKINGMAN [*running in*]. I've just come from the Left Bank. They're all on the move: in the Place Maubert, La Basoche, La Montagne Sainte-Geneviève. They're marching against the Invalides to seize the weapons there—thousands of muskets! The French Guards, monks, women, students, a whole army. The King's Attorney and the Curé de Saint-Etienne-du-Mont are marching at their head.

HOCHE. You were asking for weapons, Hulin. There they are.

HULIN. You can't take the Bastille with a few hundred old arquebuses, or even a few good cannon from the Invalides. You might as well try to split a rock open with a knife.

HOCHE. No, the Bastille can't be taken with cannon, but it will be taken.

HULIN. How?

HOCHE. The Bastille must fall, and fall it will. The gods are with us.

HULIN [*with a shrug*]. What gods?

HOCHE. Justice, Reason. Bastille, you will fall!

THE PEOPLE. You will fall!

HULIN. I'd rather see a few real allies. I don't believe in it. Never mind, it shall never be said that any one got ahead of me. I'll even be the first to march against it. Perhaps you know better than I what must be done, but I'll do it. So, you want to attack the Bastille, you fools? Forward!

HOCHE. By God, you can do anything simply by saying it's possible! [GONCHON *returns with his patrol*.]

GONCHON. Still here! The damned vermin! Chase them from one place and they go to another. So this is how you obey me? Didn't I command you to go home? [*Taking a man by the collar.*] You heard me! I know you, you were here before! You rascal, I've had enough of you, and I'm going to arrest you. I'll arrest you all. It's our business to maintain order. Every citizen abroad at night without a passport is open to suspicion.

HOCHE [*laughing*]. The beast wants to cheat the people!

MARAT. Who is this traitor who pretends to speak for the People? By what right does his odious voice give orders to the Nation? I know that big fellow, with a face like Silenus, puffy from long indulgence, and sweating from debauchery. Does this monopolist believe he has a monopoly over our Revolution? Can he lord it over us as he does over his Palais-Royal orgies? Get out, or I will arrest you in the name of the Sovereign People!

GONCHON [*stammering*]. I—I am the representative of power. I have been appointed by the Central Committee.

THE PEOPLE. We are the power! We appoint the Central Committee! You obey us!

MARAT [*with an air of ferocity which is at bottom nothing more than a sinister buffoonery, assumed to terrify GONCHON*]. We must be careful with these traitors, who associate with the people only in order to betray them. Hoche has well said that if we are not on the lookout, we shall be overpowered. I think

that in order to distinguish those who are the valets of the aristocrats from the others, we ought to cut off their ears, or rather their thumbs. It is a prudent and indispensable measure. [*The People laugh.*]

GONCHON [*tremblingly, to HOICHE*]. Soldier, it is your business to support the law—

HOICHE. That's your business. They won't hurt you. Go ahead, we shall follow.

GONCHON. Follow me? Where?

HOICHE. To the Bastille.

GONCHON. What!

HOICHE. Of course. We are going to take the Bastille. Are you not defending the people, you Bourgeois Militia? Then take you places in the front ranks. Fall in, and don't stop to argue. You don't seemed pleased with the prospect? [*Speaking into GONCHON'S ear.*] I know your tricks, old man; you are in communication with the Duc d'Orléans. Now, not a word, and march straight ahead. I am keeping my eye on you, and I have only to say the word to Marat. It's not day yet, and you might light the way for us, hanging from one of those lamp-posts!

GONCHON. Let me go home!

HOICHE. Choose: be hanged or take the Bastille.

GONCHON [*quickly*]. Take the Bastille! [*The People laugh.*]

HOICHE. Brave man! And now, the people will not allow the Montagne Sainte-Geneviève to outwit us. Let Saint-Antoine not remain idle while Saint-Jacques does her share! Ring your bells, beat your drums,



and call out the citizens. [*To the Electors and Deputies.*] You, citizens, guard the Hôtel de Ville, and see that no treachery is done. Take charge of the bourgeois! Now, we'll gag the beast. [*Points to the Bastille. Little JULIE has meanwhile come from the house with her mother, and stands in the doorway. She then stands on a post to see better, and looks at HOUCHE in silent and passionate admiration. HOUCHE looks at her and smiles.*] Well, little one, do you want to come, too? Consumed with envy, aren't you? [*She holds out her trembling arms to him, nodding, but says nothing.*] Then come! [*He takes her on his shoulder.*]

THE MOTHER. You're mad! Put her down! You're not going to take her into the fight?

HOUCHE. She is sending us into the fight! She is our standard-bearer!

THE MOTHER. Don't take her from me!

HOUCHE. You come, too, mother! No one should stay at home today. The snail must come forth from its shell. The whole city is freed from prison today. We leave nothing behind. This isn't an army at war, it is an invasion.

THE MOTHER. Indeed, it is. If we must die, it's better to die all together.

HOUCHE. Die? Nonsense. You don't die when you expect death! [*The sky begins to brighten behind the houses and the solid mass of the Bastille.*] At last! Day is breaking. The new day, the dawn of Liberty!

JULIE [*who, seated on HOUCHE's shoulders, has been all smiles, excited and quiet, and with a finger to her*

lips, begins singing one of the national songs of the day]:

“ Oh, come, Thou god of Liberty  
And fill our souls this day—”

HOCHE [*laughing*]. Do you hear the little sparrow? [*The People laugh.*] Come, then, with light hearts. Let us march ahead of the sun! [*He takes up JULIE'S song, and begins marching. All the People join in the song. A little flute carries the air. Shouts and enthusiastic cheering resound; bells ring. GONCHON and his trembling Militia are urged on by the jeering crowd, among which LA CONTAT and HULIN are distinguished. Men and women come forth from the houses and join the throng. A tempest of joy. As the People file off, DESMOULINS, following them a way, returns, quickly mounts the barricade, goes to LUCILE'S window, and looks in. During the rest of the act, the noise of the crowd is heard in the distance. A few people continue to come from the houses, but they pay no attention to the lovers.*]

CAMILLE [*in an undertone*]. Lucile! [*The window softly opens, and LUCILE appears, then puts her arm about CAMILLE'S neck.*]

LUCILE. Camille! [*They kiss.*]

CAMILLE. You were there!

LUCILE. Sh! They're sleeping in the next room. I was hidden in there. I stayed all the while. I heard and saw everything.

CAMILLE. Didn't you go to bed at all?

LUCILE. How could I sleep with all that noise? Oh, Camille, how they cheered you!

CAMILLE [*pleased*]. Did you hear them?

LUCILE. The windows shook with it. I smiled to myself in my corner. I wanted to shout, too. I couldn't, so I just stood up on a chair—guess what I did?

CAMILLE. How can I guess?

LUCILE. Guess—if you love me. If you didn't feel anything, then you don't love me. What did I send you?

CAMILLE. Kisses.

LUCILE. You do love me! Yes, I did. Whole basketfuls. Some of them went to those who were cheering you. How they cheered! How famous you've become, my Camille, in one day! Last week, your Lucile was the only person who knew you, who realized how great you were. But today, a whole people—

CAMILLE. Listen! [*They hear the joyful cries of the People.*]

LUCILE. That's all your work.

CAMILLE. I can't believe it myself.

LUCILE. Just by what you said! How did you do it? They told me every one was mad with excitement. I wish I had been there!

CAMILLE. I really don't know what I said. I felt as if I were lifted up into the air. I heard my own voice and saw my gestures exactly as if they belonged to some one else. Every one cried—and I cried with the rest. Then after I finished, they carried me on their shoulders. I never saw anything like it.

LUCILE. My great man, my Patru, my Demos-thenes! And you were able to speak before that great

crowd? Weren't you at all nervous? Didn't you forget what you were going to say? You didn't do as you—sometimes do—?

CAMILLE. What?

LUCILE. You know—like—like a bottle that's too full—and the water can't come out—? [*She laughs.*]

CAMILLE. That's unkind of you! And you show your little teeth like a cat.

LUCILE [*laughing*]. No, no, you know I love you; I love you just as you are. Don't be angry. I see your faults, I even look for them, but I love them. I love your stammering, and I even imitate you. [*They laugh.*]

CAMILLE. Just see what one day has done to these people! What can't we expect of them now! Oh, my Lucile, what wonderful things we shall do together! Now it's started, the thunderbolt is launched; what joy to see it strike here and there, and lay low the tyrants—prejudice, injustice, laws! At last, we are going to smash these maggots, who with their idiotic grins, set themselves up against everything, prevent our thinking, breathing, our very existence! We are going to clean house, and burn the old rags. No more masters, no more shackles! How amusing it all is!

LUCILE. We will rule Paris now?

CAMILLE. We will: Reason will.

LUCILE. Hear their shouting. It makes me afraid.

CAMILLE. That is the result of my words.

LUCILE. Do you think they'll always listen to you?

CAMILLE. They listened to me before they knew me; what power I must have now that they adore me!

They are good people, and when they are at last rid of all the evils that are bearing down on them, everything will be easy and joyous. Oh, Lucile, I am too happy! It's all come so suddenly. No, I'm not *too* happy; that is impossible. But I feel a little intoxicated, after being so miserable.

LUCILE. Poor Camille! Were you so very unhappy?

CAMILLE. Yes, I have had a hard time, and for so long—six years. Without money, without friends, without even hope. I was disowned by my own people, I had to engage in the lowest professions, and turn my hand to anything to earn a few sous—and often not getting them after all. More than once I went to bed without supper. But I don't want to tell you that. Later on— It was wrong of me.

LUCILE. Is it possible? Heavens, why didn't you come to—?

CAMILLE. You would, I know, have divided your bread with me! That wasn't the worst, Lucile. I could do without supper, but to doubt myself, to see no future before me! And then, the sight of you, with your dear yellow curls and brown eyes, in the window opposite mine. How I followed you, at a distance, through the Luxembourg Gardens, admiring your grace, your movements! Ah, my dear little Lucile, you often made me forget my misery, and sometimes made it seem heavier. You were so far from me! How could I hope that some day—? But that some day is here—now! It can't escape me! I have you. I kiss your hands! For they have brought me all the



happiness in the world! The world that is freed through me! How happy I am! [*They kiss, and for a moment say nothing.*]

CAMILLE. You're crying?

LUCILE [*smiling*]. So are you. [*The lights in the windows are extinguished.*] The lights are out; see the dawn! [*The Crowd is heard outside.*]

CAMILLE [*after a moment's pause*]. Do you remember that old English story we read together? About the two children in Verona who were in love in that town?

LUCILE [*nodding*]. Why do you ask?

CAMILLE. I don't know. Who knows what the future holds in store for us?

LUCILE [*putting her hand over his mouth*]. Camille!

CAMILLE. Poor Lucile, do you think you would be strong enough, if ill-fortune—?

LUCILE. Who knows? I might if it were necessary. But I'm afraid for you; you will suffer terribly.

CAMILLE [*nervously*]. You say that as if you really thought it might happen?

LUCILE [*smiling*]. You are weaker than I, my hero.

CAMILLE [*smiling*]. Perhaps. I need love. I can't live alone.

LUCILE. I'll never leave you.

CAMILLE. Never! No matter what happens, let us have everything in common, and let nothing separate us, nothing keep us— [*A moment of silence. LUCILE is motionless, her head resting on his shoulder.*] Are you asleep?

LUCILE [*raising her head*]. No. [*With a sigh.*]  
God spare us those trials!

CAMILLE [*with a skeptical smile*]. God?

LUCILE [*her cheek against the window, and one arm about CAMILLE's neck*]. Don't you believe in God?

CAMILLE. Not yet.

LUCILE. What do you mean?

CAMILLE. We are creating Him now. Tomorrow, if I can believe in what my heart tells me, there will be a God: Man. [LUCILE *closes her eyes and sleeps.* CAMILLE *says quietly.*] Lucile!—She's asleep.

ROBESPIERRE [*coming across the street and catching sight of CAMILLE*]. You're still here?

CAMILLE. Sh!

ROBESPIERRE. You forget your duty. [CAMILLE *points to LUCILE.*—ROBESPIERRE *lowers his voice and looks at LUCILE.*] Poor child! [*He stands still a moment, looking at the pair. The sound of nearby drums awakens LUCILE. She catches sight of ROBESPIERRE and quickly jumps up.*]

LUCILE. Oh!

CAMILLE. What's the matter, Lucile? He is our friend Maximilien.

ROBESPIERRE [*bows to LUCILE*]. Didn't you recognize me?

LUCILE [*still trembling*]. You frightened me!

ROBESPIERRE. I beg your pardon.

CAMILLE. You're trembling.

LUCILE. I'm cold. Good-by, Camille. I'm so tired. I must go to sleep. [CAMILLE *smiles at her and blows a kiss.* ROBESPIERRE *bows.* She disappears,

*after bowing to the men. The dawn has come, and the sky behind the Bastille is richly colored. In the midst of the far-off shouting are heard the first stray fusillades.]*

ROBESPIERRE [*turning toward the noise*]. Come, now. No more love today. [*He goes out.*]

CAMILLE [*descending from the barricade*]. No more love? What then? Is it not love that now arouses this city, swelling every breast, and sacrificing the vast harvest of humanity? Oh, my love, you are not narrow and selfish, you bind me to these men with stronger bonds. You are everything, you embrace the whole world. It is not Lucile alone I love, but the universe. Through your dear eyes, I love all who love, who suffer, who are happy, who live, and who die. I love! I feel the sacred flame within me! It colors the eastern sky above the Bastille. The last shadows are gone, and this will go, too, this nightmare-shadow! [*The Bastille, monstrous and black, stands forth against the bright red sky. The voice of the cannon suddenly rends the silence, and reverberates above the confusion of the people in the distance, the fusillade, the bells, and the roll of the drums. CAMILLE smiles, and faces the Bastille, putting his finger to his nose.*] The wolf howls, ha! Growl, show your teeth! You are doomed! Since the King likes hunting, let us hunt the King!

### ACT III

[*Tuesday, July 14th. The Interior Court of the Bastille. To the left are seen the bases of two enormous towers the tops of which are invisible. Between them are thick masses of wall, rising up like mountains of stone. Opposite is the gate and the draw-bridge leading to the Government Court. To the right, a one-story structure standing against the walls of the other towers. As the curtain rises, the Pensioner BÉQUART and his companions are stationed in the Court, with three cannon. VINTIMILLE, commander of the Pensioners, is seated, bored and indifferent. Swiss Guards enter now and then from the draw-bridge with news of the revolt, which is now heard outside the other gate leading to the Government Court. The rattle of muskets, cries, and the beating of drums are heard without. Occasional smoke clouds rise above the walls.*]

DE LAUNEY [*Governor of the Bastille, enters from the other court, nervous and agitated*]. Well, Monsieur de Vintimille, you see? They are attacking!

VINTIMILLE [*with a touch of irony and weariness*]. Well, Monsieur de Launey, let them attack. What is it to us? Unless they have wings, like the Messieurs Montgolfier, I defy them to make their way in.

THE PENSIONERS [*among themselves*]. Good God!

BÉQUART. Poor devils, they'll be ground to bits: Not one will be left living. Those damned Swiss keep firing on them. It's wrong to shoot down defenseless people like that! Especially when you are in a fort behind good solid walls.

A PENSIONER. Tell me, why are they attacking us?

BÉQUART. Can't tell what's come over them at all. Not like it used to be. Don't understand. They're all mad, this last month especially. Well, anyway, it's too bad to treat them like that. They're not bad. They're people like us.

PENSIONER. Well, it's the order. So much the worse. They had no business doing it.

BÉQUART. Of course. And it's fine to hear that music! I never thought I'd live to see another battle.

DE FLUE [*Commander of the Swiss Guards, entering from the other court*]. Monsieur le Gouverneur, will you please burn the houses in the neighborhood? They can shoot into the court from the roofs.

DE LAUNEY. No, I can't burn private property. I have no right.

DE FLUE. War without incendiarism is like eel without mustard. Very good of you to have these scruples! But when you make war, you must stop at nothing, or else never begin.

DE LAUNEY. What do you think, Monsieur de Vintimille?

VINTIMILLE [*with a shrug*]. It makes no difference to me. Do as you like. They'll never come in here. But if you care to profit by the occasion to clean out



the quarter, together with those idiots who meet there, don't hesitate. Do as you like; it's a matter of no importance.

DE LAUNEY. Let us wait; there is no immediate hurry. We have plenty of men and ammunition; we are not yet reduced to extremes. Are we, old Béquart?

BÉQUART. We're safe till the Last Judgment, Monsieur le Gouverneur. I served under Monsieur de Chevert at Prague forty-seven years ago. The Marshal de Belle-Isle stationed us there. We were a handful in the enemy's country; we were short of everything, and even the city was against us. They could never have dislodged us. And here we have only a rabble of women and shopkeepers, with solid walls between us, and the troops of the Champ de Mars and Sèvres only a step away. We can smoke our pipes and sit with crossed legs.

DE FLUE. The moment you think you're quiet, these frogs of Parisians fly at your throat. Throw a few stones at them and you'll see them jump back in their pond soon enough.

DE LAUNEY. Don't anger them too much.

DE FLUE. Give the rascals an inch and they'll take a mile. Hang the vagabond, or he will hang you.

BÉQUART. They're only poor devils, Monsieur de Flue. You mustn't be too hard on them. They really don't realize what they are doing.

DE FLUE. God, if they don't, I do! And that's enough.

DE LAUNEY. You are thinking only of the success of your battle, Monsieur de Flue. It's another matter

for me: I must think of the consequences. The responsibility is on my shoulders. How do I know what will please or displease the Court. How do I know what it wishes me to do?

DE FLUE. Do you not know an enemy of the King when you see him? Are we not here by order of His Majesty? If we are attacked, is it not His Majesty who is attacked?

DE LAUNEY. No one can be quite sure; His Majesty is never quite sure himself. His enemies one day are his friends the next. I have either no orders at all, or else they are contradictory. Some tell me to resist to the end; others tell me not to fire. Provost Flesselles confided to me that he is with me and that he is deceiving the people. He tells the people he is with them and is betraying me. Whom is he betraying? How can I be assured I am not displeasing the Court while I serve it, and know that it is not laying the blame on me? If it wishes to do something, has it not a thousand ways of doing so? Why does not Monsieur de Breteuil, with his Champ de Mars troops, attack these insurrectionists from the rear?

DE FLUE. Wonderful! What a time they would have!

VINTIMILLE [*to DE LAUNEY*]. My dear fellow, yours be the victory! You are always right. [*He goes to a corner and sits in the shadow.*]

BÉQUART [*who brings him a chair*]. Monseigneur, you are never quite your old sprightly self on days of battle.

VINTIMILLE. They weary me with their continual

discussions. [*Pointing to DE LAUNEY.*] He never knows what he wants; he must always consult every one, and get every one into embarrassing predicaments. What am I doing with such a vacillating person? They've given me a nasty task. There's no honor or pleasure to be derived from these squabbles. It's the business of the police to put down the people!

BÉQUART. It's not very pleasant to have to fire on the poor devils.

VINTIMILLE. You're becoming sentimental! Well, it's the fashion of the day, I suppose. Listen to the skunks out there! Disgusting. What do they want?

BÉQUART. Bread.

VINTIMILLE. Do they imagine the Bastille is a bakery? There they go again! They *are* in earnest. They seem most anxious to live. I wonder what interest they have in life? Their only pleasures are sour wine and unwashed women!

BÉQUART. You know, Monseigneur, that no matter how little one has to live for, one always clings to life.

VINTIMILLE. Oh, really? Speak for yourself!

BÉQUART. Oh, but you have everything to be desired.

VINTIMILLE. Do you envy me? Nothing in it, my boy.

BÉQUART. Nothing in it?

VINTIMILLE. Does that surprise you? You couldn't understand. Nothing! It is just the July sun—it makes me pessimistic.

A SWISS GUARD [*entering from the other court—to DE LAUNEY*]. Monseigneur, they are firing from the

neighboring houses. Some of them are perched on the roofs.

DE FLUE. Well, knock them off. It's only child's play for marksmen like you. [*Outside, HOCHÉ is heard singing the refrain of the song sung in the Second Act*]:

“ Oh, come, thou God of Liberty,  
And fill our souls this day—”

SWISS GUARDS [*outside*]. Forward! To the Governor!

DE FLUE. What's the trouble?

SWISS GUARDS [*entering from the exterior court, driving in HOCHÉ, with JULIE on his shoulders.*] Commander, we caught this—just as he was jumping over the outer wall.

HOCHÉ [*setting JULIE on the ground*]. There you are! And here we are! I told you you would be the first to enter!

JULIE [*joining her hands ecstatically*]. The Bastille!

VINTIMILLE. I don't see the joke? [*They form a circle about the newcomers.*]

HOCHÉ [*quietly*]. Commander, we are envoys. [*The Soldiers laugh.*]

DE LAUNEY. Strange envoys!

HOCHÉ. We have no choice. We've been signaling to you, but you refused to see us. We jumped over the wall; that was the only way to reach you.

JULIE [*going to the Swiss Guards*]. Here they are!

SWISS GUARDS. What do you want, little brat?

JULIE. Are you the prisoners?

SWISS GUARDS [*laughing*]. Prisoners? No, we guard the prisoners.

HOCHE. You are not so very much mistaken. They, too, are prisoners, and more to be pitied than the others. They have lost even the desire for liberty.

DE LAUNEY. Who is this child?

HOCHE. Our good genius. She begged me to take her with me. I carried her on my back.

VINTIMILLE. Are you out of your head to expose the child to such danger?

HOCHE. Why should she not share our risks? She is sure to die if we die. Don't pretend to pity her; your cannon have no such scruples.

VINTIMILLE [*with his accustomed coldness and irony*]. A soldier! A petty officer who has deserted! So this is the envoy they send us? Capital! Well, shoot him. That will end his mission.

DE LAUNEY. One moment. It might be well to find out what they want.

VINTIMILLE. They have nothing to ask for.

DE FLUE. You don't parley with insurrectionists.

DE LAUNEY. Well, let us see: it costs nothing.

VINTIMILLE. Ridiculous. If we allowed them to discuss matters we might seem to be accepting them as equals.

DE LAUNEY. What shameless aberration led you to accept this mission?

HOCHE. The idea of serving both my friends and you.



VINTIMILLE. Do you realize what you have done? Do you know what a traitor is?

HOCHE. Yes, Monseigneur. He who takes up arms against his people.

VINTIMILLE [*turns his back with a shrug*]. Fool!

HOCHE. I beg your pardon, I did not intend to insult you. On the contrary, I come as a friend. I was told I would be shot. Possibly I shall, but really I should be surprised. I have come to try to help you to arrange matters. But if I am shot, well, you know the proverb: "A fine death compensates for a whole life."

DE LAUNEY. What is your message?

HOCHE [*presenting a letter*]. From the Permanent Committee of the Hôtel de Ville. [DE LAUNEY *takes the letter, stands to one side, with two officers, reading it. The Pensioners hold JULIE on their knees.*]

BÉQUART. Why did you take it into your head to come, little one? Do you know some one here?

JULIE. I know a great many.

BÉQUART. Where?

JULIE. In the prison.

BÉQUART. You have nice acquaintances! Who? Relatives?

JULIE. No.

BÉQUART. What are their names?

JULIE. I don't know.

BÉQUART. You don't know? What do they look like?

JULIE. I couldn't say.

BÉQUART. Are you making fun of us?

JULIE. No, no, I know them very well: I've seen them. Only, I can't say—

BÉQUART. Tell us.

JULIE. Mamma lives in the Rue Saint-Antoine, near here. The carriages that go to the prison pass our house at night. I get up and see them—I see nearly all. But sometimes I miss them, and when I wake up, they've already passed.

BÉQUART. Why did you want to see them?

JULIE. Because they suffer.

BÉQUART. It's not very pleasant to see people who suffer. Why do you want to see them?

JULIE [*naïvely*]. Because it makes me sad.

A PENSIONER [*laughing*]. There's a reason for you!

BÉQUART. Shut up! You fool!

THE PENSIONER [*angry at first*]. Fool? [*He reflects a moment, scratching his head.*] True, though!

JULIE [*who sits down and plays with a cannon*]. You're not going to fire on us, are you? [*They do not answer.*] Tell me you won't. Please. I like you. You must like me.

BÉQUART [*kissing her*]. Good little thing!

DE LAUNEY [*shrugs his shoulders, after reading the letter*]. This is unheard-of! Messieurs, this strange message which has been delivered to me by some committee of tramps—this—this Permanent Committee, asks me to divide the guard of the Bastille between the rest of our own troops and the people! [*The Soldiers laugh, the officers rage.*]

VINTIMILLE. Charming proposal!

HOCHE [*to DE LAUNEY*]. Listen to me, Monseigneur. You can prevent the carnage. We hold nothing against you personally, but against this mass of stone, which has for centuries weighed heavy on the people of Paris. Blind power is no less shameful to those who impose it than for those against whom it is directed. It is disgusting to every one who reasons. You who are more intelligent than we, ought to feel that and suffer more than we. Help us, do not fight against us. Reason, for which we are fighting, is as much your own as ours. Give up this prison of your own accord; don't force us to capture it.

VINTIMILLE. There he is spouting about reason and conscience. These Rousseau monkeys. [*To DE FLUE.*] My compliments! You made us a pretty present!

DE FLUE. What present?

VINTIMILLE. Your Jean-Jacques. You might at least have kept him in Switzerland.

DE FLUE. We would have been glad to dispense with him ourselves.

DE LAUNEY [*to HOCHE*]. You are crazy. Did you ever hear of the stronger relinquishing their arms, from sheer good-heartedness, to the weaker?

HOCHE. You are not the stronger.

DE LAUNEY. Do you think these brave men, these twenty cannon, twenty chests of bullets, and thousands of rounds of ammunition, are nothing?

HOCHE. You may kill a few hundred men. But what will that avail you? They will return thousands strong.

DE LAUNEY. We shall be re-inforced.

HOCHE. You will not be re-inforced. You might have been, but you were not. A king cannot murder his people; it would be not only murder but suicide. I tell you, you will be overcome. You display your artillery; you are used to the old-fashioned warfare, but you do not know the way we fight. You do not know what a freed nation is. War is only a game for you, because your hearts are not in it. Since Malplaquet, no one has taken an interest in the *Patrie*. You were friends of the enemy you fought, and were glad of the success of the King of Prussia. Victory is not a necessity for you. But we have no choice: we must conquer. [*To the Pensioners.*] Comrades, I know you well, and I respect you; you are fine old fellows. But when you fought, you were merely obeying orders; you do not know what it means to fight for yourself. [*To BÉQUART.*] You yourself, Father Béquart—we all love you and admire your bravery—when you were at Prague, shut up with the enemy, you only defended your skin. We are fighting for our souls, and the souls of our sons and all the rest who will come after us. Do you hear the crowd outside? They are only a small part of our forces. Millions, all mankind to come, fight in our ranks, and make up that formidable and invisible mass which wins battles.

DE FLUE. You make me tired. We'll sweep those invisible masses off the earth with a few cannon-shots.

HOCHE. Do not fire. If you do, you are lost. A people is not a regular army; you can't let it loose without dire consequences.

VINTIMILLE [*to himself, as he looks at HOCHE*].

Strange men! How came our France to breed such creatures? They are Germans. Germans? No. I have known Prussians more French than this one. Who has wrought this change?

HOCHE. Remember, there is still chance for coming to an understanding; in a short while, that chance will be lost. The moment you draw blood, it will be too late.

DE FLUE. You had better give this advice to your friends.

HOCHE [*with a shrug, to JULIE*]. Come, little pigeon, they refuse your olive branch. [*He takes JULIE on his shoulder.*]

DE LAUNEY [*to HOCHE*]. Nothing can conquer the Bastille. It may be surrendered, but never taken.

HOCHE. It will be surrendered.

DE LAUNEY. And who will surrender it?

HOCHE. Your evil conscience! [*HOCHE goes out with JULIE, amid a general silence. No one thinks of stopping him.*]

VINTIMILLE [*reflectively*]. Our evil conscience!

DE LAUNEY [*suddenly*]. Well! Why did we let him go?

DE FLUE. He is still in the court.

DE LAUNEY. Run after him and stop him!

BÉQUART. Monseigneur, it is impossible.

THE PENSIONERS [*grunting assent*]. He's an envoy.

DE LAUNEY. Impossible, you rascal! Envoy from whom?

BÉQUART [*gravely*]. The people,



DE FLUE [*to the Swiss Guards*]. Arrest him!

BÉQUART *and the PENSIONERS* [*to the Swiss Guards*]. No, comrades, not that! Don't arrest him!

A SWISS GUARD [*trying to pass*]. That was the command.

BÉQUART *and the PENSIONERS*. Don't you dare go, or you'll have us to deal with!

VINTIMILLE [*watching them, aside*]. Ah, ha! [*Aloud.*] Good! [*To DE LAUNEY.*] Don't insist.

A SWISS GUARD [*entering from the exterior court, to DE LAUNÉY*]. Monseigneur, there is an immense crowd coming out of the Rue Saint-Antoine. They have taken the Invalides, and are dragging along twenty cannon.

DE FLUE. The devil! But we must decide now, or everything will be spoiled. Let us rout the band, or they will defeat us. [*Great clouds of smoke roll up above the outer walls.*]

DE LAUNEY. What is that smoke?

A SWISS GUARD. They've fired the outlying buildings.

DE LAUNEY. Scoundrels! So they want a pitiless warfare? They shall have it.

DE FLUE. Shall we fire?

DE LAUNEY. Wait—

DE FLUE. For what, in the name of God?

DE LAUNEY [*with a questioning look at VINTIMILLE*]. Monsieur de Vintimille.

VINTIMILLE [*rather scornfully*]. I told you what I thought. Do as you like. One word of advice: whatever you decide on, don't change it.

DE LAUNEY. You have a free hand, Monsieur de Flue. Give it to them! [DE LAUNEY, DE FLUE, and the Swiss Guards go out into the other court.]

VINTIMILLE [*meditates with an ironical smile. A few steps from him, the Pensioners are guarding the cannon.*] Our evil conscience! The corporal thinks he has a right to a conscience! He's richer than I. Conscience! It is neither good nor bad. It simply does not exist. Honor, yes. Honor? Under the late King, honor consisted in scheming for him to take one's wife or sister—provided they were presentable—for a mistress, or else in marrying the titled courtesan—honor! And now to have it barked at by this brothel-whelp. Let us not trouble honor. Really, I don't know why I am fighting here. Loyalty? Fidelity to the King? We are too used to clear thinking to be deceived by empty phrases. I have not believed in the King for many a long year. Well, then? [*He shrugs his shoulders.*] Habit, manners, fashion? We know we are wrong, we do not believe in what we are doing, and yet we must go through it to the end and behave correctly, elegantly, in order to conceal the utter uselessness of our existence. [*Great confusion outside. The Swiss Guards suddenly rush back with DE FLUE and DE LAUNEY from the exterior court.*]

THE SWISS GUARDS. They are coming!

VINTIMILLE. What! Who are coming? The people? Impossible!

DE FLUE [*without troubling to answer*]. Quick! Up with the draw-bridge! God Almighty!

DE LAUNEY. To the cannon! [*The Swiss Guards*

*quickly raise the draw-bridge. The Pensioners roll the cannon into place opposite the gate. Immediately after, the Crowd is heard shouting and muttering like an angry sea, just outside.*

VINTIMILLE [*stupefied*]. Are they in! Really?

DE FLUE [*puffing*]. Just in time! The damned rascals! [*To VINTIMILLE.*] Would you believe they could have torn down the outer draw-bridge? You know the perfumer's house next to the outer gate? I told you, we ought to have burned all those houses! There were three or four of them on the roof—carpenters, masons—well, they scaled that wall like monkeys and got to the roof of the guard-house. No one was watching the place. They got to the gate, broke the chains, and the bridge fell right into the midst of the crowd, knocking a dozen of them flat. You should have seen them scramble and shout! The nasty scoundrels! [*The confusion among soldiers and officers has up to the present concealed a group of Swiss Guards some distance away, who bring in a woman prisoner.*]

SWISS GUARDS [*with LA CONTAT in their midst.*] We've made a good capture.

VINTIMILLE [*bowing*]. Why, it's you, Contat? You come to the rendezvous, I see! A silver helmet over your blonde hair, musket in hand; why, you look like the goddess of Liberty herself. So you were curious to come and see for yourself? You will be safe here, and may look around without danger. [*He extends his hand to her, but she hesitates to take it.*] You won't shake hands? We were good friends not very long ago. Are we not still? [*She decides to*

*shake hands.*] Well, what's the matter? You look at me with those great eyes of yours, and you don't say a word? Are you afraid?

LA CONTAT. I—I beg your pardon. I hardly know where I am, and I am not sure whether to consider you as a friend or an enemy.

VINTIMILLE. An enemy? But why? Really, were you fighting us?

LA CONTAT. You know, it's not in my character to be a spectator; I must always play important parts. [*She shows her musket, which a Pensioner takes from her at a sign from VINTIMILLE.*]

VINTIMILLE. You were tired of playing comedy, and you decided to turn to drama. But do you realize, my dear, that your little escapade has put you in danger of spending a few months in Fort-l'Evêque?

LA CONTAT. I risked far more than that.

VINTIMILLE. But you were not in earnest, Contat? You one of these brawlers? [*He scrutinizes her from head to foot.*] No rouge, no beauty-spots. Your hands black—face streaming with perspiration—your hair wet, sticking to your cheeks. You're breathing hard. Muddy to the knees! Covered with filth and powder! What's happened to you? Why, I know you well, and I am sure you never liked that filthy rabble any more than I.

LA CONTAT. No, I didn't.

VINTIMILLE. A love-affair, then? Is he in that crowd?

LA CONTAT. I thought it was that at first. But there is something else.



VINTIMILLE. What?

LA CONTAT. I do not know. I couldn't tell you exactly why I am fighting: but I felt it not long ago. I was ready to cut your throat.

VINTIMILLE [*laughing*]. You always liked to exaggerate.

LA CONTAT. I am not joking now.

VINTIMILLE. But, Contat, you are a woman of sense; you don't do things without a reason?

LA CONTAT. I have a reason, but I can't explain it now. A few moments ago it was so powerful, so clear to me. The feelings of those people thrill me, like the roll of thunder. Now that I am separated from them, I don't know, I don't know what—

VINTIMILLE. You were mad. Confess it.

LA CONTAT. No, no: I am sure they are right.

VINTIMILLE. Right to rebel against the King, kill people, and die for a nothing?

LA CONTAT. They are not dying for nothing.

VINTIMILLE. No, of course not: for Monsieur d'Orléans' écus!

LA CONTAT. My dear, you're the same as ever: you always minimize one's motives.

VINTIMILLE. Money is not a small motive to vagabonds who have none. Can you give me a better motive?

LA CONTAT. Liberty.

VINTIMILLE. What is that?

LA CONTAT. I don't like your ironical smile. When you look at me that way, I don't know what to say. Even if I did, I shouldn't say it. It would be useless:



you could never understand. You may at least listen, and watch.

THE PEOPLE [*outside*]. We want the Bastille!

VINTIMILLE [*coldly*]. Yes, it's curious, very curious.

DE LAUNEY [*in consternation*]. What the devil is urging those idiots on?

THE PENSIONERS [*looking with mingled interest and sympathy through the loop-holes in the gate*]. Women!—Priests!—Bourgeois!—Soldiers!—There, there's that little girl on Hulin's shoulders.—She's kicking her feet like a little devil!

DE FLUE [*talking to the Swiss Guards*]. Good. They're caught in a trap now, between the walls. We can get at them from the towers.

DE LAUNEY. Clear the court! Smash them! [DE FLUE and the Guards run into the Bastille through the gate leading to the towers.]

BÉQUART and the PENSIONERS [*murmuring*]. It's going to be a butchery!—They're hardly armed. And those children—!

THE PEOPLE. We want the Bastille! [LA CONTAT and VINTIMILLÉ have not followed DE FLUE's and DE LAUNEY's conversation. LA CONTAT's attention is wholly occupied with the People, as she listens to their shouting.]

LA CONTAT [*shouting to the people outside*]. Courage! I am the first to take it! [The beat of drums is now heard.]

BÉQUART and the PENSIONERS [*looking out*]. They want to parley again: they're waving handkerchiefs, signaling to us.

VINTIMILLE [*also looking out*]. The Attorney is leading them.

DE LAUNEY. Let's see what they want.

VINTIMILLE. Cease firing! [*The Pensioners throw down their muskets. The drums are heard beating near the moat. VINTIMILLE and some of the Pensioners go up to the right of the gate toward an opening in the wall from which they can overlook the assailants. VINTIMILLE addresses the people.*] What do you want? [*At the same moment a volley is fired from the upper part of the towers. VINTIMILLE turns.*] What the devil are they doing?

THE PENSIONERS and DE LAUNEY [*astonished*]. The Swiss Guards are firing!—Stop them! Stop them! [*Some run to the tower gate and disappear.*]

VINTIMILLE [*having descended again into the court*]. Too late! Pretty piece of work they've done! Listen to those cries! They aimed well. They think we fired from a secret hiding-place. [*The People howl with rage. VINTIMILLE turns and sees LA CONTAT, who has come up behind him and looks at him with hatred in her eyes.*] What's the trouble, Contat? [*She does not answer, but suddenly seizes VINTIMILLE's sword, snatches it from the scabbard, and attempts to stab him. The Pensioners seize her hands and hold her in spite of her heroic struggle to free herself.*] So you wanted to kill me! [*LA CONTAT nods. She keeps her eyes fixed on him, and to the end of scene cannot utter a word, but trembles convulsively, panting like a beast.*] You aren't sane. What's happened? I have done nothing to you. You know they acted contrary to orders.

You yourself saw— Don't you recognize me, Contat? [*She nods.*] Do you really hate me? [*She nods as before.*] Speak to me? Won't you say a word? [*He attempts to touch her, but she pulls back, and struggles again with the soldiers, who hold her hands. She then falls back in a sort of epileptic fit, screaming and moaning. They carry her off. Her cries are still heard. Outside, the People are screaming.*]

DE LAUNEY [*in consternation*]. She's like a wild animal. You would not recognize her.

VINTIMILLE. She is not herself. Something strange and new is in her: the poison of that mob. It's too disgusting. I can't understand it. It's like a wind of bestiality blown from the monstrous part of humanity. [*The Swiss Guards descend from the towers with DE FLUE.*]

DE LAUNEY [*very much excited, goes to meet DE FLUE*]. What have you done? What have you done?

DE FLUE [*fuming*]. By God, I did what you told me to do! You ordered me to smash them, and I have smashed them. It seems you've changed your mind, and you want peace. What the devil do you want me to do?

DE LAUNEY. We're lost now.

DE FLUE. Lost? [*He shrugs his shoulders, and motions to his Guards to roll the cannon into position.*]

BÉQUART and the PENSIONERS. What are you doing?

THE SWISS GUARDS. Three volleys and the court will be empty.

BÉQUART *and the PENSIONERS.* You're not going to fire?

THE SWISS GUARDS. Why not?

BÉQUART. Into the mob? It would be nothing but massacre!

THE SWISS GUARDS. What's that to us?

BÉQUART. They are our relatives, Frenchmen like the rest of us. Put that cannon back, and don't dare fire.

THE SWISS GUARDS. Get out of our way. Let us pass! [*They knock BÉQUART out of the way.*]

THE PENSIONERS. Damned Germans! [*They cross bayonets.*]

THE SWISS GUARDS. Knock them down! These battered scarecrows! They can't frighten us!

BÉQUART. If you advance, I'll fire. [*He takes aim. VINTIMILLE and DE FLUE stand between them.*]

DE FLUE. Down with your weapons! Down, by God! [*He beats them with his cane.*]

VINTIMILLE. Snarling dogs!

DE LAUNEY [*at his wits' end*]. They too are in revolt! They won't fight now! All is lost! [*He rushes toward the citadel and tries to enter.*]

VINTIMILLE [*stopping him*]. Where are you going?

DE LAUNEY [*in desperation*]. To die! But they will die with us!

VINTIMILLE. What are you going to do?

DE LAUNEY. To the basements! Tons of powder! Set it off!

THE PENSIONERS. Don't do that!

DE LAUNEY. I will!

VINTIMILLE. And blow up a large part of Paris? What heroism! It's too ridiculous. You really couldn't do that unless you believed in something! Ridiculous to do it for no reason at all. You mustn't upset the table just because you lose.

DE LAUNEY. But what can I do?

THE PENSIONERS. Surrender.

DE LAUNEY. Never! The King confided the Bastille to me. I shall never surrender! [*He again tries to go, but the Pensioners seize him.*]

THE PENSIONERS [*to VINTIMILLE*]. Monseigneur, you command us!

VINTIMILLE [*coldly*]. Monsieur le Gouverneur is not well. Conduct him to his apartments, and take care of him.

DE LAUNEY [*struggling*]. Traitors! Cowards! [*They carry him off.*]

VINTIMILLE [*aside*]. I was an idiot to get dragged into this! Nothing to do now. I must draw my next card with equanimity. [*Aloud.*] Monsieur de Flue?

DE FLUE. What is it?

VINTIMILLE. Let us draw up our capitulation papers.

DE FLUE. Papers? No, thanks, I'll have nothing to do with them. [*He turns his back. VINTIMILLE writes, leaning against a cannon.*]

A SWISS GUARD [*to DE FLUE*]. They will massacre us.

DE FLUE [*phlegmatically*]. Possibly. [*He sits down on a drum and lights his pipe.*]

THE SWISS GUARDS [*wiping their faces*]. Damned



heat! Can't we have something to drink? [*A Guard gets a pitcher of water, which is passed around. The Guards are together at the left, with their officer; they are indifferent and bored. The Pensioners, opposite, stand about the cannon where VINTIMILLE is writing. They watch with respect every movement he makes. BÉQUART holds the inkstand for him. VINTIMILLE reads in a low voice to BÉQUART what he has written, BÉQUART nodding approval. His comrades repeat the words among themselves, likewise nodding.*]

THE PENSIONERS [*with mingled irony and approval*].  
The lamb has captured the wolf.

VINTIMILLE. I demand their promise that no one shall be harmed.

BÉQUART. It costs us nothing to ask.

VINTIMILLE [*smiling*]. It costs nothing to promise.  
[*He goes to DE FLUE.*] Will you sign?

DE FLUE [*as he signs*]. Fine way to fight!—Well, it's not my affair.

VINTIMILLE. The difficulty is not in writing, but in making them read what we write. [*The Pensioners, approaching the gate, are greeted by musket-shots.*]

THE PENSIONERS. They're desperate. They won't let any one come near.

BÉQUART. Give me the love-missive.

THE PENSIONERS. You'll get killed, Béquart.

BÉQUART. What do I care? I'm not capitulating in order to save myself.

THE SWISS GUARDS. Why, then?

THE PENSIONERS [*pointing to the People*]. To save them! [*Among themselves, scornfully.*] They don't

understand a thing! [BÉQUART advances to the gate.—*The Pensioners shout to him.*] How will you give it to them?

BÉQUART [*pointing to his pike*]. On the end of this spit.

VINTIMILLE [*turning toward the towers*]. Hoist the white flag!

THE PENSIONERS [*shouting*]. Up there, hey! The flag! [*The gate opens. BÉQUART goes up toward the opening in the wall, right of the draw-bridge.*]

BÉQUART [*waving his arms and crying*]. Capitulation! [*He is received by a veritable tempest of shouts and musket-shots. He totters, and shouts out in fury as he shakes his fist at the crowd.*] Pigs! It's for your sake! For you!

THE PENSIONERS [*crowding about the draw-bridge, and shouting outside*]. Don't fire! Don't fire! [*Outside the people are heard shouting, "Don't fire!" then, "Surrender!" This cry increases, and finally voices are heard in heated discussion. After a moment, there is silence.*] Hoche and Hulin are making them put down their muskets. They understand. They are stopping. They are coming up to the moat.

BÉQUART [*leaning out far over the wall, with the letter at the end of his pike*]. Hurry! I haven't time to wait.

THE PENSIONERS [*still looking outside*]. Hulin's bringing a plank. He's throwing it across the moat. Some one's crossing—he's lost his balance! He's falling! No, he's safe now.

BÉQUART [*panting for breath*]. Hurry up! Hurry!

THE PENSIONERS. He's touching the pike. He has the paper.

BÉQUART [*standing upright*]. There! [*Looking at the People.*] Pigs! [*He raises his arms and shouts.*] Long live the Nation! [*He falls back, struck by a bullet.*]

THE PENSIONERS. Pigs! They've killed him! [*Two of them go to BÉQUART'S body, and bring it down to the center of the stage, laying it at VINTIMILLE'S feet.*]

VINTIMILLE [*looking at the body with a mixture of irony and sympathy*]. Honor? To what end?

THE PENSIONERS. Listen! [*Outside is heard the shout of the People accepting the conditions, and the Pensioners repeat:*] Accepted!

VINTIMILLE [*with indifference*]. Inform Monsieur le Gouverneur.

THE PENSIONERS. Monseigneur, he's gone crazy: he's broken all the furniture in his room. He cries like a baby.

VINTIMILLE [*with a shrug*]. Well, I shall take his place to the end. [*To himself, with a touch of ironic bitterness.*] I never thought I should one day have the honor of giving up the royalty of France with these four-century-old walls into the hands of the lawyers. A beautiful duty! To think I should come to this! Well, nothing matters; everything passes, and everything ends. Death settles all accounts. Now we'll give them a little comedy—with the grand manner at the last. [*Aloud.*] Fall in! Form in line! [*The garrison falls into rank; the Pensioners on the right,*

*the Swiss Guards, left. DE FLUE is standing, while VINTIMILLE rises, using his cane to support himself.*] Butt-ends of your muskets in the air! Messieurs, I think I ought to inform you that in spite of the precautions I have taken, there will be some surprises when the enemy makes its entrance. You know they are not a disciplined army. But if they show any lack of military manners, that is no excuse for our behaving likewise. And you, Swiss Guards, in the name of the King, I thank you for your obedience. You deserve more credit than the others. [*He turns his back on the Pensioners and smiles a little.*] As to you, we understand each other. [*The Pensioners murmur approval.*]

DÉ FLUE [*phlegmatically*]. War is war! [*A Pensioner whistles: "Ou peut-on être mieux qu'au sein de sa famille?"*]

VINTIMILLE [*turning toward him, and, with a disdainful gesture*]. You need not trouble to show your glee! It's indecent, my friend.

THE PENSIONER. Monseigneur, I couldn't help it.

VINTIMILLE. Why, you are positively proud to be beaten!

THE PENSIONER [*warmly*]. We are not beaten! They would never have taken the Bastille unless we had wished them to. [*His comrades murmur approval.*]

VINTIMILLE. Do you mean to say that it is we who have taken the Bastille?

PENSIONER. There is some truth in it.

VINTIMILLE. Well—! To your post! [*After a*



*pause.*] Open the gate. Lower the draw-bridge. [*Some of the men open the gate and slowly lower the draw-bridge. The People outside continue their shouting.*] Here, then, comes the new King, ha! [*The draw-bridge is now down. A formidable clamor arises, as the human flood pours in through the opened gate. Men and women, armed with pikes, hatchets, and muskets, surge through. At their head is GONCHON, who is pushed forward, flourishing his saber in the air. HOCHÉ and HULIN make vain efforts to silence the mob. There are cries of death and victory. VINTIMILLÉ takes off his hat.*] Messieurs, the rabble!

PENSIONERS [*suddenly swept away by their enthusiasm, wave their hats*]. Long live Liberty!

VINTIMILLE. Messieurs, messieurs, have you no sense of shame?

PENSIONERS [*with waxing enthusiasm*]. Long live Liberty! [*They throw away their muskets and rush into the arms of the People.*]

VINTIMILLE [*with a shrug*]. Ah, human reason, how frail thou art! Farewell, Monsieur de Vintimille. [*He breaks his sword. GONCHON, at his wits' end, pushed forward by the howling mob—among whom is distinguished the OLD FRUIT-SELLER—fall upon VINTIMILLE, DE FLUE, and their soldiers, dragging them off the stage with shouts and curses.*]

GONCHON. Rip them open!

THE OLD WOMAN. Dogs of aristocrats!

THE PEOPLE. Swiss pigs!—I know these fellows!—The old lame ones!—The enemy! Kill them! They fired on us! [*HOCHÉ and HULIN, who try to stop the*



*People, are brushed aside by them and thrown against a wall. In the midst of the hubbub, MARAT is seen.]*

Long live Marat!

MARAT. My children, what are you doing?

THE WOMEN. Kill! Kill!

MARAT. Kill them? What do you want? Would you eat them? [*Some of the crowd laugh.*]

HULIN. He knows how to handle them: amuse them!

HOCHE. Where is the little girl?

HULIN. The little girl? [*HOCHE runs out to look for JULIE.*]

DESMOULINS [*jumping into their midst*]. Stop, comrades, you're killing prisoners!

THE PEOPLE [*stopping*]. The prisoners?

DESMOULINS. The prisoners of the Bastille. Look at their clothes. We have come to free them!

THE PEOPLE [*doubtfully*]. They're enemies!

HULIN. There are no more enemies.

JULIE [*on HOCHE's shoulders, carrying a branch, extends her arms to the People, and shouts*]. Be merciful to our friends, our friends the enemy.

THE PEOPLE [*laughing*]. Hear the little one!

HOCHE [*putting her down on a cannon, whence she dominates the crowd*]. Shout, child: "All brothers, all friends."

JULIE. Brothers! Brothers!

THE PEOPLE. We are all brothers! She's right!

THE PENSIONERS. Long live the People!

THE PEOPLE. Long live the ancient glory!

THE PENSIONERS [*to JULIE*]. You've saved us, little one!

THE PEOPLE. She conquered you, too, comrades. The little mite took the Bastille.

MARAT. You are our good conscience!

THE PEOPLE. You are our little Liberty! [*They stretch out their arms. The women blow kisses to her.*]

HOCHE [*clapping HULIN on the shoulder*]. Well, Hulin? You everlasting doubter, are you at last convinced?

HULIN [*wiping his eyes, but still a little obstinate*]. Yes, although— [*Laughter from HOCHE and the People drown out the rest. He stops and laughs louder than the others. He looks about him, and catching sight of a statue of the King in a niche by the entrance to the court, he picks it up.*] Down with you! Make way for Liberty! [*He throws the statue down, then runs to JULIE, picks her up and puts her in the niche.*] The Bastille fallen at last! I did it! We did it! We'll do a lot more, too! Let's clean the stables of Augias, rid the earth of its monsters, and strangle the lion of royalty. Our fists will lay low all despotism! Comrades, we shall forge the Republic! We've been held down too long, and now we're bursting our bonds! Roll on, oh, torrent of the Revolution!

THE OLD FRUIT-SELLER [*astride a cannon, with a red kerchief about her head*]. To the King! Here's my horse. I took him. I'll hitch him to my little cart and we'll go to Versailles to make a visit to big Louis! I've got a lot to say to him. Lord, for centuries I've lived in misery, I've been so patient! I'm choking; I must get rid of the feeling. I was a good old

animal! I thought I had to suffer, in order to enjoy riches. Now at last I understand. I want to live, I want to live! I'm sorry I'm so old. God Almighty, I want to make up for lost time! Get up, old fellow, to the Court! [*The gun-carriage is pushed forward by the People, and the old woman, in her helmet and trappings, rides past in triumph.*]

THE PEOPLE. On to the Court! On to Versailles! We've suffered too long! We want to be happy! We'll be happy!

DESMOULINS [*carrying a green branch*]. The forest of Liberty has sprung up from the stones. Green leaves wave in the wind. The old heart of Paris will flower once again. Spring has come!

THE PEOPLE [*bursting with joy and pride, all wave branches, and decorate themselves with green cockades, green ribbons, etc.*]. Free! The Heavens are free! [*The sunset filters in through the draw-bridge opening, and bathes in purple the inner court of the Bastille and the People with their waving branches.*]

HOCHE. Sun, you may sleep now, for we have not wasted our day.

LA CONTAT. Its dying rays paint the castle windows, the branches, the heads and little Liberty, a glowing red.

HULIN. Heaven announces the war.

MARAT. Unlike Him who entered seventeen hundred years ago in the midst of branches, this little child has not come to bring us peace.

DESMOULINS. There is blood on our hands.

ROBESPIERRE [*with suppressed fanaticism*]. It is our own!

THE PEOPLE [*excited*]. It's mine!—It's mine!—We offer it to you, Liberty!

DESMOULINS. To the devil with our lives! Great happiness must be bought.

HOCHE. And we are ready to pay.

ROBESPIERRE [*as before*]. We will pay.

THE PEOPLE [*enthusiastically*]. We will pay! [*The People dance and sing about the little figure of Liberty. Music.*]

LA CONTAT. What joy to be one of you! To love and to suffer with you! Give me your hands! Let us dance, and all be brothers! Sing, for this is your festival, Oh, people of Paris!

MARAT. My dear people, you have suffered so long, you have struggled so long in silence. So many centuries had to elapse before this hour of joy! Liberty is yours. Guard well your conquest.

DESMOULINS [*to the People*]. And now, finish what you have begun. This Bastille has fallen, but there are others. On to the fight! We must fight against the enemies of truth! Against darkness! Mind will dominate brute force. The past is dead! Death itself is dead!

HULIN [*to JULIE*]. Our Liberty, our light, our love! How small you are now! And how frail! Will you have the strength to resist the tempests that lie ahead? Grow, grow, little plant, straight up, and vigorous, and give happiness to the world with your fragrance of the fields!

HOCHE [*saber in hand, climbs to an eminence at the foot of the niche where Liberty stands*]. Be reassured, Liberty, you are safe with us. We hold you fast. Woe be unto him who molests you! You belong to us, and we belong to you. These spoils, these trophies, are yours. [*The women strew Liberty with flowers. The men then lower their pikes, banners, branches, and trophies in her presence.*] But all this is not yet enough: we will give you a deathless triumph. Daughter of the People of Paris, your eyes shall inspire every enslaved nation. We will carry across the universe the great banner of Equality. We will take your chariot into the midst of battles, with the aid of our sabers, our cannon, toward Love, toward the brotherhood of all mankind! Brothers, my brothers! We are all brothers! We are all free! Come, let us deliver the world! [*Swords, lances, branches, handkerchiefs, hats, and arms wave madly, amid the uproar of drums, trumpets, and shouting. The People dance about the figure of Liberty.*]



# DANTON

A Play in Three Acts

[*Danton* was produced in Paris in 1900.]



*To My Father*

## CAST OF CHARACTERS:

ROBESPIERRE  
DANTON  
CAMILLE DESMOULINS  
VADIER  
BILLAUD-VARENNE  
SAINT-JUST  
HERMAN  
WESTERMANN  
HÉRAULT DE SÉCHELLES  
PHILIPPEAUX  
FABRE D'ÉGLANTINE  
FOUQUIER-TINVILLE  
LUCILE DESMOULINS  
ELEONORE DUPLAY  
MADAME DUPLAY

The People, Jury, Gendarmes, etc.

SCENE: Paris, March and April, 1794.

Act I. Desmoulin's home.

Act II. Robespierre's room.

Act III. The Revolutionary Tribunal.

[M. Rolland has suggested lines and "business" for The People in footnotes throughout Act III, but as these are not an integral part of the play and are intended rather as an aid to the producer, I have not deemed it necessary to incorporate more than half a dozen lines into the text.—THE TRANSLATOR.]

## ACT I

[*The home of CAMILLE DESMOULINS. A middle-class sitting-room, furnished in every style, and presenting a fantastic appearance. The walls are hung with licentious engravings of the 18th century. Over the fire-place is the bust of an ancient philosopher. On the table is a small model of the Bastille. A cradle stands in the corner. A window is open. Outside may be seen the gray sky and the rain. CAMILLE and LUCILE, who holds her child in her arms, look out the window. PHILIPPEAUX strides back and forth, glancing out of the window occasionally. HÉRAULT DE SÉCHELLES, seated in an arm-chair by the fire, looks at his friends. The joyous shouting of the crowd is heard outside.*]

LUCILE [*leaning out*]. There they are! There they are! They're passing at the end of the street!

CAMILLE [*shouting*]. Good luck to you, Père Duchesne! Don't forget your pipe!

HÉRAULT [*softly*]. Camille, my friend, don't show yourself.

CAMILLE. Come and see our old friends, Hérault! Ronsin, the general of the clubs; and Vincent, who wanted your head, Philippeaux; and Hébert, the bully, who had supper every evening at my expense; and the



Prussian Cloots, the fair Anacharsis! The last trip of the young Anacharsis! Mankind is in a fine fix now: deprived of its orator! The guillotine is busy today.

LUCILE [*to the baby*]. Look, Horace, look at those naughty men! And Commander Hanriot, galloping with his saber! Do you see, darling?

PHILIPPEAUX. He's too zealous. He ought to be riding on the cart himself.

CAMILLE. It's like a great festival; the people are gay. [*Outside a clarinet is heard playing a grotesque air. The People laugh.*] What's that?

LUCILE. The little hunchback with the cart, playing his clarinet.

CAMILLE. Pleasant idea! [*They all laugh.*] Why don't you look, Hérault? Aren't you interested? You seem sad? What are you thinking about? [*The uproar becomes fainter.*]

HÉRAULT. I was thinking, Camille, that Anacharsis is thirty-eight, and Hébert thirty-five—your age, Philippeaux; and Vincent twenty-seven, six years younger than I—and you, Desmoulins.

CAMILLE. True. [*He suddenly becomes serious, leaving the window and coming to the center of the room. He stands still an instant, his chin in his hand.*]

LUCILE [*still at the window*]. How it rains! Too bad!

CAMILLE [*put out*]. Come away from the window, Lucile. You'll catch cold.

LUCILE [*closing the window, comes into the room with the baby, singing to herself:*]

“Come quick, little shepherdess, gather your sheep:  
The rain is beginning to fall,  
And bring them back safe to the sheepfold again;  
Come quick, or you'll lose them all!”

CAMILLE. Lucile, Lucile, how can you sing that song! I never hear it without thinking that the poet who wrote it is now languishing in prison.

LUCILE. Fabre? That's so. Our poor Eglantine. They shut him up in the Luxembourg, sick as he was! Oh, well, he'll come out.

HÉRAULT. *Pur troppo!*

LUCILE. Now what does that mean? Something naughty, I know.

PHILIPPEAUX. Something sad, and only too true.

LUCILE. Hush, you gloomy men! Fabre will be released, I tell you. Are we not here to help him?

HÉRAULT. Danton himself could do nothing to save him.

LUCILE. Danton, perhaps. But when Camille takes his pen in hand, and writes all he thinks, you'll see the jail gates open of their own accord!

HÉRAULT. For whom?

LUCILE. For the tyrants!

HÉRAULT. Imprudent shepherdess, you had better keep an eye on your sheep! “Bring them back safe to the sheepfold again!” Remember your song. [*A servant enters and takes the baby from LUCILE; then carries him out. LUCILE whispers to her, leaves the room, and returns a moment later. During the entire scene she walks about, busied with various domestic*

*duties, and only occasionally catches the drift of the following conversation.]*

CAMILLE. Lucile is right: we must make the effort. It is our business to direct the Revolution which we have started. This voice of mine has not yet lost its power over the crowd. It has sent fanatics to the guillotine. We were never so strong as today; let us follow up our success: the Luxembourg is no more difficult to take than the Bastille. We laid low nine centuries of monarchy, and we can easily deal with a handful of vagabonds, who derive their power from us, and who use it in order to run the Convention and France in their own way.

PHILIPPEAUX [*walking about agitatedly*]. The rascals! If they only confined themselves to murder! But no, they had to implicate Fabre in the *Compagnie des Indes* business; invented that impossible yarn: Jews and German bankers bribing our friend in order to corrupt the Assembly! They know they are lying, but they cannot satisfy their consciences until they vilify their enemy before they kill him.

HÉRAULT. Our enemies are virtuous: and that is some consolation: to have our throats cut in the name of principles.

CAMILLE. France hates hypocrisy. Let us beat the pedants and thrash Basile!

PHILIPPEAUX. I have done my duty: let each do his. I dragged to light the brigands of the Western Army, the military staff of Saumur. I have a firm hold on their necks, and only the loss of my own head will force me to release it. I have no illusions: I know

what it will cost to attack General Rossignol and his band. The Committee is now lying in wait, but only in order to catch me. I wonder what infamy they are going to saddle me with? I'm all in a fever only to think of it. Let them chop my head if they will, but they must not touch my honor!

HÉRAULT. I'm not so worried as you, Philippeaux. I already know what pretext they have to suppress me. I am so unfortunate as to think that while we may be the enemy of the governments of all Europe, we need not therefore despise every one who does not happen to be French. I had friends abroad, and I did not think it was necessary to break with them, in order to give in to the folly of Billaud-Varenne and others of his ilk. They entered my house, forced the drawers of my desks, stole some letters of a purely friendly nature. But that was enough, and of course I am now a conspirator for the restoration of the King, and receive money from Pitt.

CAMILLE. Are you sure of what you say?

HÉRAULT. Quite sure, Camille. My head is not worth a sou.

CAMILLE. But you must hide.

HÉRAULT. There is no hiding-place in the world for a Republican. Kings hound them, and the Republic sends them to the guillotine.

CAMILLE. You lack courage. We are the most popular men of the Republic.

HÉRAULT. Lafayette was popular, too, and Pétion, and Roland. Capet himself was popular. He who was a week ago the people's idol is now dead. Who can

flatter himself that he is beloved of those brutes? At moments, you think you see in their troubled eyes some faint reflection of your own thoughts. Whose conscience, at least one day in a lifetime, is not in harmony with the conscience of the masses? But that harmony cannot long exist, and it is folly to try to keep it. The brain of the people is a surging sea, alive with monsters and nightmares.

CAMILLE. What big words! We puff out our cheeks to say things to the people, and we say them solemnly, in order that Europe may believe in some mysterious power of which we are the instruments. But I know the people; they have worked for me. The ass in the fable says: "I cannot carry two saddles," but he never for an instant doubts that he can carry any at all. We had trouble enough to make the people start their Revolution; they only did it in spite of themselves. We were the engineers, the agents of that sublime movement; without us, it would not have moved an inch. They did not demand a Republic; I led them to it. I persuaded them that they wanted to be free, in order that they might cherish their Liberty as their own achievement. That is the only way to handle weak people. Convince them that they want something they never thought of, and they invariably want it.

HÉRAULT. Take care, Camille; you are a child, and you are playing with fire. You believe the people have followed you because you were aiming at the same goal. They have passed you by. Don't try to stop them. You can't take a bone from a hungry dog.



CAMILLE. You have only to throw them another. Tell me, don't you read my *Vieux Cordelier*? Does not its voice resound throughout the Republic?

LUCILE. Do you know how popular the last number was? He's had letters from every one—and what weeping, and kisses, and declarations of love! If I were jealous—! They implore him to continue, and save the country.

HÉRAULT. How many of these friends would help him if he were attacked?

CAMILLE. I need no one's help. My writing-desk is enough! This David's sling [*pointing to his pen*] has just overthrown the proud guillotine, the prince of blackguards. I've broken the pipe of Père Duchesne, the famous pipe that like the trumpet of Jericho, after it had thrice been smoked around a reputation, made it fall of its own accord. From this pen went forth the stroke that struck the cowardly Goliath in the head. I made his own people hoot him. Did you notice the pipe-bowls about Père Duchesne's cart just now? That was my idea. It has proved a prodigious success. Why do you look at me?

HÉRAULT. An idea!

CAMILLE. What is it?

HÉRAULT. Do you sometimes think of death?

CAMILLE. Death? No, I don't like to. It's nasty.

HÉRAULT. Did you never think how awful it would be?

LUCILE. How horrible! Fine things to talk about!

HÉRAULT. You are a good, dear, lovable child, and yet you are cruel—like a child.

CAMILLE [*excitedly*]. You really think me cruel?

LUCILE. See, he's crying this moment!

CAMILLE [*deeply stirred*]. True, he suffered. When I think of his agony, his terror, waiting for the end— It must have been atrocious! No matter how vile he was, he suffered like an honest man—perhaps even more. Poor Hébert!

LUCILE [*her arms about CAMILLE's neck*]. My poor Bouli-Boula, you're not going to feel so sorry for a villain who wanted to send you to the guillotine?

CAMILLE [*angrily*]. Yes. Now, why are you attacking me this way? *Si quis atra dente me petiverit, inultus ut flebo puer!*

LUCILE [*to HÉRAULT*]. And you dare say my Camille is cruel!

HÉRAULT. I do, of course. Dear fellow! He is perhaps the cruellest of us all.

CAMILLE. Don't say that, Héroult; I may end by believing you.

LUCILE [*to HÉRAULT, shaking her finger at him*]. Say it's not true: *you* are the cruellest.

HÉRAULT. Well, no, it is not true: *you* are the cruellest.

LUCILE. Very well. I don't mind that.

CAMILLE. What you say troubles me, Héroult. It is true, I have done great evil, but I am not bad by nature. I have constituted myself the prosecuting attorney for the lamp-post. I have no idea what damnable impish instinct urges me on. It was due to me that the Girondins are now rotting in the fields. My *Brissot dévoilé* led to the decapitating of thirty young,

lovable, generous men. They clung to life, as I do; they were made in order to enjoy life, and be happy. They, too, had their dear Luciles. Oh, Lucile, let us go away, far from this butchery that is so terrible to others, and perhaps to ourselves! What if we—you—our little Horace—? Oh, why can't I be a stranger once more to all men? Where can I hide myself from the sight of the world, with my wife and child and my books! *Ubi campi Guisiaque!*

PHILIPPEAUX. You're in the cyclone, and you cannot escape.

HÉRAULT. Don't force him to remain in a struggle which he was not intended for.

PHILIPPEAUX. But as he himself just said, we must do our duty.

HÉRAULT [*pointing to CAMILLE, who kisses LUCILE*]. Look at him: does not Camille's duty seem to be the pursuit of happiness?

CAMILLE. True, I have a wonderful vocation for happiness. Some people are made for suffering, but suffering disgusts me: I want none of it.

LUCILE. Did I spoil your vocation?

CAMILLE. My Vestà, my little one! You are very much to blame! You have made me too happy!

LUCILE. Coward! He pities himself.

CAMILLE. You see, I have lost all strength, all my faith.

LUCILE. How?

CAMILLE. I used to believe in the immortality of the soul. When I saw the misery of the world, I said to myself that life would be too absurd if virtue were not

rewarded elsewhere. But now I am happy, so sublimely happy that I truly believe I have received my reward on earth. So you see, I have lost my proof of immortality.

HÉRAULT. Never try to find it again.

CAMILLE. How simple it is to be happy! There are so few who know how to be!

HÉRAULT. The simpler a thing is, the oftener it eludes us. It is said that men wish to be happy. A great mistake! They wish to be unhappy; they insist on it. Pharaohs and Sesostris, kings with hawks' heads and tigers' claws; butchers of the Inquisition, conquerors of Bastilles; wars that sow murder and rapine—that is what they want. The obscurity of the mysteries is necessary to belief; the absurdity of suffering, to love. But reason, tolerance, love, happiness—bah! Give them that, and you insult them!

CAMILLE. You are bitter. You must do good to men in spite of themselves.

HÉRAULT. That is what everybody is doing nowadays, and the result is nothing to boast of.

CAMILLE. Poor Republic! What have they done to You? Oh, flowering fields, rejuvenated earth, clear air, and bright light of the heavens, clear-eyed Reason has sent packing the sorry superstitions and the ancient Gothic saints from fair France. Young men and women dancing in the meadows, heroic armies, fraternal feeling, impregnable wall against which the armies of Europe in vain break their lances; joy of beauty, noble Panathenais, white-armed maidens, dressed in thin flowing draperies; liberty to live, pleasure that throbs

from sheer joy of living. Fair Republic of Aspasia and the charming Alcibiades—what has become of you? What are you now? You wear a red cap, a dirty shirt; you have a hoarse voice, the fixed ideas of a maniac, the pedantic manner of a school-master!

HÉRAULT. You are an Athenian among barbarians.—Ovid among the Scythians. You will never reform them.

CAMILLE. I shall at least try.

HÉRAULT. You are wasting your time—perhaps your life.

CAMILLE. What have I to fear?

HÉRAULT. Beware of Robespierre.

CAMILLE. I have known him since we were children: a friend may say anything.

HÉRAULT. A disagreeable truth is more easily forgiven by an enemy than a friend.

LUCILE. Stop! He must be a great man and save the *Patrie*. Whoever doesn't agree with me, will have none of my chocolate.

HÉRAULT [*smiling*]. I'll not say another word. [LUCILE goes out.]

PHILIPPEAUX. So you have decided to go ahead, Desmoulins?

CAMILLE. Yes.

PHILIPPEAUX. No truce, then! Press on, drive your quill without mercy. The worst danger lies in this skirmishing warfare you are carrying on. You are satisfied merely to goad them with your arrows; that only gives them more power against you. Aim at



the heart, if you can, and complete the work at a stroke.

HÉRAULT. My friends, I do not approve of your plans, but if you have made up your minds, you must, of course, have every chance in your favor. If we intend to start warfare, Desmoulins' pen—forgive me, Camille!—is not enough. The people do not read. The success of the *Vieux Cordelier* misleads you; it does not reach the people; it has quite another public. You know very well, Camille: you complained that one number was sold at twenty sous. Aristocrats like us buy it. The people know only what the club orators tell them, and they are not on your side. You may write down to the people and try to use expressions you have heard in the markets; you will never be one of the people. There is only one way to influence them: have Danton talk to them. His thunder alone can stir that vast chaos. Danton has only to shake his mane, and the forum is in his power. But Danton does nothing; he's asleep—away from Paris. He doesn't address the Convention. No one knows what has become of him. Who has seen him lately? Where is he? What is he doing? [*Enter DANTON and WESTERMANN.*]

DANTON. Danton swims in debauchery. Danton dallies with the women. Danton's rest is like Hercules'! [*DESMOULINS runs to DANTON and shakes hands with him, laughing. WESTERMANN stands aside, preoccupied.*]

CAMILLE. Hercules still keeps his club, so long as there are monsters to be killed.

DANTON. Don't speak of killing. It's too horrible. France reeks with blood; the smell of dead flesh befouls the air. I just crossed the Seine; the sun was setting, and the river was red. It seemed to flow in waves of blood. If our rivers are so foul, where shall we wash our hands? There are enough dead! Let us build up the Republic. Let the harvests and men grow once more and become a new *Patrie*. Let us love one another and cultivate our fields.

CAMILLE. May some god give us the chance, Danton! We are counting on you.

DANTON. What is it, my children?

PHILIPPEAUX. We need your help to fight.

DANTON. How can I help you? Must I always do everything? You are all alike. Here is Westermann; he is a man; he has fought; he has saved the *Patrie* two or three times; and before he sits down to supper, he cuts a man's throat as an appetizer. I must aid him, too! Do you want me to ride a horse and carry a saber, besides?

WESTERMANN. When it comes to fighting, I yield to no one. Take me out to the battle-field; show me a company to rout, and see how I acquit myself. But to have to speak, answer the mouthing members of the Convention, frustrate the underhanded schemes of that Committee of toads that are always plotting my ruin,—I can't do it. I feel lost in that city; the whole pack snap at me; I can't move; I must stand it and not even try to defend myself. Are you going to let me be devoured alive, and not help me? By God, I once fought for you; we have the same enemies. My cause

is your cause—yours, Danton—yours, Philippeaux, as you very well know!

PHILIPPEAUX. I know, Westermann. It's because you attacked Rossignol, Ronsin, and all the blackguards, as I did, who dishonor the army. And the Jacobins are yelping after us. We shan't desert you.

CAMILLE [*to DANTON*]. We must do something. I offer my pen, and Westermann his sword. Guide us, Danton. You know how to handle the crowd, you understand the strategy of revolutions. Lead us; we have another Tenth of August ahead.

DANTON. Later.

PHILIPPEAUX. You've disappeared from the arena; they are forgetting you. Show yourself. What have you been doing these many weeks, hidden in the country?

DANTON. I have been communing with mother earth, in order to draw new strength from it, like Anteus.

PHILIPPEAUX. Rather you are looking for a pretext to retire from the fray.

DANTON. I cannot lie: you speak the truth.

CAMILLE. What's the trouble?

DANTON. I am sick of humanity. I vomit men.

HÉRAULT. You are not so sick of women, it seems?

DANTON. The women at least are frank enough to be merely themselves and nothing more. They are what we all are: animals. They seek pleasure directly, and never lie to themselves and cover up their instincts with the cloak of reason. I hate the hypocrisy of the intelligence, the sanguinary idiocy of these idealists,

these dictators of impotence, who call the natural needs corruption, and pretend to deny nature, in order to flatter their own monstrous egotism and their mad desire for destruction. Oh, if I could only be a brute, an honest out-and-out brute, with the frank desire to love others so long as they allow me a place in the sun!

CAMILLE. Yes, we fairly reek with hypocrisy.

DANTON. The most odious of hypocrisies: the hypocrisy of the dagger. The virtuous guillotine!

PHILIPPEAUX. We have destroyed Capet, only in order that Talien, Fouchet, and Collot d'Herbois might repeat their persecutions and massacres as at Bordeaux and Lyon!

CAMILLE. These maniacs have established a new religion—an obligatory and lay religion, giving the pro-consuls a free hand to hang, slash, and burn—all in the name of virtue.

DANTON. There is no danger in any state as great as that of the men with principles. They don't try to do good, but to be in the right; no suffering touches them. Their only morality, their only political ideal, is to impose their ideas on others.

HÉRAULT [*reciting ironically*]:

“A man of honor has a higher aim,  
His joy consists in giving joy to others!”

LUCILE [*entering, and continuing the quotation*]:

“The gen'rous man is not so hard to please.  
He jogs along and spurs his fractious beast  
Without inquiring if the poor young thing  
Enjoys himself or not—”

HÉRAULT. Hm! You're well up in your authors!

LUCILE. What of it? Every one knows *La Pucelle*.

DANTON. You are right, my dear. It is the breviary of good women.

HÉRAULT. Did you ever recite it to Robespierre?

LUCILE. I'd never dare.

CAMILLE. Did you ever see him when some one told a nasty story in his presence? His brow contracts; he clasps his hands, he makes faces like a monkey with the tooth-ache.

HÉRAULT. He inherits that from his father, and gets his hatred of Voltaire from Rousseau.

LUCILE [*astonished*]. What! Is he Rousseau's son?

HÉRAULT [*jokingly*]. Didn't you know?

DANTON. Jesuit nonsense! He's more corrupt than the rest. He who slinks off to have his pleasures, usually has very poor morals.

PHILIPPEAUX. Possibly, but if Robespierre loves pleasure he hides it effectively; and he is right, Danton. You parade your pleasures too much. You would sacrifice your fortune for a night at the Palais-Royal.

DANTON. Because I prefer good fortune to bad.

PHILIPPEAUX. Meantime, you are compromising yourself. Public opinion is quick to judge you. And what will posterity say when it learns that Danton, on the eve of a decisive struggle for the State, thought only of pleasure?

DANTON. I don't give a damn about public opinion;



reputation is nothing, and posterity a stinking cesspool!

PHILIPPEAUX. And virtue, Danton?

DANTON. Ask my wife whether mine satisfies her.

PHILIPPEAUX. You don't believe what you say. You libel yourself and play into the hands of the enemy.

WESTERMANN [*bursts forth after attempting to restrain himself*]. You damned gossips and braggarts! Some of them declaim about their virtues, and some about their vices. You can't do anything but talk. Your city is a nest of petty lawyers. The enemy is threatening us. Danton, tell me, yes or no, are you going to do anything?

DANTON. Don't bother me. I've given my life and my peace of mind to save the Republic, but it doesn't deserve a single hour I have sacrificed. I tell you, Danton has at last bought the right to live for himself.

CAMILLE. Danton has not bought the right to be a Siéyès.

DANTON. Am I a draft-horse, condemned to turn the millstone till I drop?

CAMILLE. You have entered a narrow pass surrounded by steep precipices and you cannot turn back: you must go on. The enemy are at hand; if you stop, they will push you over the side. They are already lifting a hand and planning when and where to strike.

DANTON. I have only to turn and show them my mane, and they will fall back in dismay.

WESTERMANN. Do it, then. What are you waiting for?

DANTON. Later.

PHILIPPEAUX. But your enemies are plotting. Billaud-Varenne is saying things against you. Vadier is making jokes about your quick demise. Reports of your arrest are circulating in Paris.

DANTON [*with a shrug*]. Nonsense! They wouldn't dare!

PHILIPPEAUX. Do you know what Vadier says? I hardly dare repeat it. He said, "We'll soon gut that fat turbot."

DANTON [*enraged*]. Did Vadier say that? Well, tell that blackguard that I'll eat his brain, and grind his skull to powder! The moment I begin fighting for my life, I am worse than a cannibal! [*He flies into a rage.*]

WESTERMANN. At last! Now, come!

DANTON. Where?

WESTERMANN. Speak before the clubs, inspire the people, overthrow the Committees, put down Robespierre.

DANTON. No.

PHILIPPEAUX. Why not?

DANTON. Later. I don't want to.

CAMILLE. You're injuring yourself, Danton.

WESTERMANN. It makes me rage when I see these good people afraid to act. What fiendish poison is in the air, keeping you people, whose heads are already in the noose, from moving a leg, from fighting, or at least running away? I've done all I could. I leave you; I'll find Robespierre, whom you are all afraid of—Yes, you are, though you joke about it; your very

fear makes him strong—I'll tell him the truth, and he'll see for the first time a man who dares resist him. I'll break the idol! [*He goes out fuming.*]

PHILIPPEAUX. I'm coming with you, Westermann.

DANTON [*quietly, and with a touch of sarcasm*]. He will break nothing. Robespierre will look at him—like that—and it will be over. Poor fellow!

PHILIPPEAUX. Danton, Danton, where are you? Where is the athlete of the Revolution?

DANTON. You are cowards. There is nothing to fear.

PHILIPPEAUX. *Quos vult perdere—* [*He goes out. HÉRAULT rises, takes his hat, and prepares to leave.*]

CAMILLE. Are you going, too, Hérault?

HÉRAULT. Camille, Westermann's style of waging war is not yours, I know. The best thing you can do is to retire altogether. Let them forget you. Why discuss it?

CAMILLE. I must satisfy my conscience.

HÉRAULT [*shrugs his shoulders, then kisses LUCILE'S hand*]. Good-by, Lucile.

LUCILE. Good-by. I hope to see you soon again.

HÉRAULT [*with a smile*]. Does one ever know?

CAMILLE. Where are you going?

HÉRAULT. Rue Saint-Honoré.

DANTON. Are you too making a visit to Robespierre?

HÉRAULT. No: that is where I usually walk. I see the carts pass by.

CAMILLE. I thought you disliked the spectacle?

HÉRAULT. It teaches me not to fear death. [*He goes out with LUCILE.*]

DANTON [*following HÉRAULT with his eyes*]. Poor devil, he's nervous. He blames me for not doing anything. You, too, Camille, would like to blame me; I can see it in your face. Go on, you think me a coward? You think Danton sacrifices his friends for the glory of his belly?

CAMILLE. Danton, why do you refuse?

DANTON. Children! Danton is not built like other men. Volcanic passions stir within this breast, but they are always subject to my will. My heart has tremendous needs, and my senses make terrible demands on me; but the dominating head is there. [*He touches his brow.*]

CAMILLE. But what is your idea?

DANTON. To save the country. Save it at all cost from our sacrilegious quarrels. Do you know the disease that is killing the Republic? Mediocrity. Too many brains are thinking about the State. No nation can stand a Mirabeau, a Brissot, a Vergniaud, a Marat—a Danton, a Desmoulins, a Robespierre. One of these geniuses could have gained the victory for Freedom. But all together, they fight with each other, and France bleeds. I took too prominent a part myself, though I must do myself the justice of saying that I never fought a Frenchman unless my life depended upon it, and even in the fury of the combat I did everything in my power to save the defeated enemy. I do not intend, for personal interest, to enter into a struggle with the greatest man of the Republic—next

to myself. I do not want to depopulate France. I know Robespierre; I saw his beginning, I watched him grow from day to day, through his tenacity, his work, his faith in his ideas. His ambition grew, too, and conquered the Assembly, and all of France. One man alone is a menace to him: my popularity counterbalances his, and his morbid vanity suffers. Often—I must give him credit for it—did he attempt to stifle his instinctive envy. But the fatality of events; jealousy, stronger than reason; my enemies who excited him—everything draws us into the struggle. No matter what the result, the Republic will be shaken to its foundations. Well, it is my place to give an example of sacrifice. Let my ambition sink before his! I have drunk deep of that bitter draught, and it has left a bad taste in my mouth. Let Robespierre drain the cup if he likes. I retire to my tent. I am less resentful than Achilles, and I shall wait patiently until he offers me his hand.

CAMILLE. If one must sacrifice, why should it be you? Why not he?

DANTON [*with a shrug*]. Because I alone am capable. [*After a moment's pause.*] Because I am the stronger.

CAMILLE. And yet you hate Robespierre?

DANTON. I cannot harbor a thought of hatred. There is no hatred in me. That is not a virtue (I don't know what that means), it is only a matter of temperament.

CAMILLE. Aren't you afraid to leave the field free to your enemy?



DANTON. Ah, I know him well: he can carry the play up to the fourth act, but he is bound to ruin the dénouement.

CAMILLE. Meantime, think what harm he can do! Your power is the only balancing influence against this reign of terror and violence. And what about your friends? Will you leave them to the fate that threatens them?

DANTON. I am helping them by allowing my powers a respite. They are now feeling the fear which I have inspired. Robespierre will listen to me, as soon as his jealousy allows him a breathing-spell. And my hands will be free the moment I am no longer the representative of a party, but of all mankind. You must treat men as you would children, allow them the toys they want, in order to prevent their being lost together with you.

CAMILLE. You are too generous. Your renunciation will never be understood. Robespierre will not believe in your sincerity. He is suspicious and he will find some Machiavellian explanation for it. You have every reason to fear that your enemies will profit by your abdication to strike a blow at you.

DANTON. Danton does not abdicate: he is retiring temporarily from the conflict; but he is nearby in case of danger. Don't worry; all by myself, I am the strongest of them all; men like me do not fear to be forgotten; all we have to do is to remain quiet for a while in order that the people may notice what a great difference is made by our absence. Why, I shall even increase my popularity. Instead of disputing the

power with the Achæans, I allow that power to weigh heavy on their puny shoulders.

CAMILLE. The first use they will make of it will be against you. The whole pack of Vadier's men will be down upon you.

DANTON. I'll attend to them! I am used to fighting monsters. When I was a child, I struggled with bulls. This broken nose of mine, this torn lip, this battered face—it all bears marks of their horns. One day I chased some wild pigs through the woods, and they bit my stomach. I'm not afraid of Vadiers. And besides, they are too afraid.

CAMILLE. But what if they did dare? They have recalled Saint-Just from the army in order to reassure themselves. They say they are waiting for his return to begin action.

DANTON. Well, if they push me too far, on their heads be it! I have a thick skin, and I am not easily insulted, but the day I throw myself upon them I shan't stop until the last one is laid low. The dirty scoundrels! I could make a mouthful of the lot of them! [LUCILE runs into the room, goes to CAMILLE, and says in a frightened voice:]

LUCILE. Robespierre! [*Enter ROBESPIERRE, reserved and impassive; he glances about quickly and cautiously, and makes no other movement.*]

CAMILLE [*cordially, but a little ironically, as he greets ROBESPIERRE*]. My dear Maximilien, you come in the nick of time. You have been uppermost in our conversation during the past hour.

DANTON [*embarrassed*]. How are you, Robespierre?

[*Undecided whether to offer his hand, he waits for his rival to make the first step. ROBESPIERRE does not reply, but shakes hands formally with LUCILE and CAMILLE, and bows quickly to DANTON. He then sits down. CAMILLE and DANTON remain standing. LUCILE busies herself as before.*]

LUCILE. How kind of you to find time to come and visit us! And you must be very busy! Sit closer to the fire. There's a fog outside that chills you to the bone. And how are your dear landlords and hosts, Citizens Duplay, and my little friend Eléonore?

ROBESPIERRE. Very well, thank you, Lucile.—Camille, I have something to discuss with you.

LUCILE. Shall I leave?

ROBESPIERRE. No, not you!

CAMILLE [*stopping DANTON, who starts to go*]. Danton is a partner in all my thoughts.

ROBESPIERRE. So they say. But I hesitated to believe it.

DANTON. Don't you like it?

ROBESPIERRE. I don't think so.

DANTON. Well, there is one thing that you can never prevent: people loving Danton.

ROBESPIERRE. The word love is common, the reality rare.

DANTON [*with a sneer*]. It is said that there are certain men who never know it.

ROBESPIERRE [*after a short pause, says coldly, his hands twitching nervously*]. I have not come to discuss Danton's debaucheries. Camille, in spite of my warnings, you insist on following bad advice and giving

in to your own foolish impulses. Your pamphlet is sowing seeds of dissension all over France. You are wasting your mind and destroying public confidence in men who are necessary to the Republic. All the reactionaries are making use of your sarcastic remarks and directing them against the cause of Liberty. For a long time I have combated the hatred you arouse, and twice I have saved you; but I cannot continue forever. The State is alive with sedition; and I have no sympathy for any will that is against the State.

CAMILLE [*hurt*]. Please spare yourself the trouble of thinking of me. Your solicitude is touching, Maximilien, but I need no one's help. I can defend myself, and I can walk alone.

ROBESPIERRE. You are vain. Don't try to answer me. Your stupidity is your only excuse.

CAMILLE. I need no excuse. I have deserved well of the *Patrie*. I defend the Republic against the Republicans. I have spoken freely, and I have spoken the truth. The moment it is not good to speak every truth, there is no more Republic. The Republicans' motto is like the wind blowing over the waves of the sea: *Tollunt, sed attollunt!* It agitates, but raises them at the same time!

ROBESPIERRE. The Republic is not yet, Desmoulins. We are making it. You cannot found liberty with liberty. Like Rome in troubled times, the nation must be under a dictator who shall tear down all obstacles, and conquer. It is ridiculous to maintain that since Europe and every faction menaces the Republic, you have the right to say everything, do everything, and

with word and deed, put weapons into the hands of the enemy.

CAMILLE. What weapons have I given the enemy? I have defended the most sacred things in the world: fraternity, holy equality—the heart and soul of Republican maxims, the *res sacra miser*; respect for misery, which is commanded by our sublime Constitution. I have made men love liberty. I wished to light up the eyes of all peoples with the radiant image of happiness.

ROBESPIERRE. Happiness! There is the fatal word with which you draw to you every form of selfishness and covetousness. Who does not wish for happiness? We are not offering the happiness of Persepolis to the people, but the happiness of Sparta. Happiness is virtue. But you have abused the meaning, and awakened in the minds of cowards a desire for that criminal happiness, which consists in forgetting others, and in enjoying what is unnecessary. A shameful conception! It would soon extinguish the sacred flame of the Revolution! Let France learn to suffer, let her be happy in suffering for the cause of freedom, in sacrificing her comforts, her peace, her affections, for the happiness of the whole world!

CAMILLE [*beginning politely but airily, and at the end becoming clear, forceful, and decisive*]. Maximilien, as I listen to you, I am reminded of a passage from Plato: “‘When I listen to you,’ said the good general Laches, ‘when I listen to a man who speaks well of virtue, a man who is a real man of the people, worthy of what he speaks of, I experience an ineffable



pleasure. It seems to me that he is the only musician who makes perfect harmony; for his practice is in accord with his theory, not according to the Jacobin or Genevese fashion, but the French, which alone deserves the name of Republican harmony. When such a man speaks to me, he fills me with joy, and no one doubts that I am drunk with his talk. But he who sings of a virtue which he practises not, cruelly afflicts me, and the better he appears to speak, the greater aversion do I feel for music.'” [DESMOULINS *turns his back on ROBESPIERRE, who rises, without a word or a gesture, and starts to go. LUCILE, who is concerned at the turn in the conversation, and who keeps her eyes fastened on ROBESPIERRE, takes his hand and tries to pass off the matter as a joke.*]

LUCILE [*pointing to CAMILLE*]. He must always be contradicting, the naughty boy! If you only knew how angry he makes me sometimes! Dear Maximilien, you two are always the same. You used to argue like that when you were at school in Arras. [ROBESPIERRE, *with a glacial look, does not answer, but starts for the door.*]

DANTON [*goes toward ROBESPIERRE—with true sincerity*]. Robespierre, we are all three of us in the wrong. Let us be men, submitting only to reason, and let us sacrifice our petty quarrels for the good of the nation. See, I come to you, I offer you my hand. Forgive my impatience.

ROBESPIERRE. Danton believes a word can make up for his insults. It is easy for the offender to forget.

DANTON. Perhaps I do wrong in offering to be generous to my enemies, but the Republic demands it.

She needs my energy and your virtue. If you dislike my energy, remember that I dislike your virtue. We are quits. Do as I do, hold your nose and save the nation.

ROBESPIERRE. I believe no man indispensable to the nation.

DANTON. Every envious man says that. According to that fine way of reasoning the nation would soon be emasculated.

ROBESPIERRE. There is no power where confidence is lacking!

DANTON. So, you mistrust me? Do you really believe those absurd stories about me? Those wild ravings invented by Billaud-Varenne? Look at me. Have I the face of a hypocrite? Hate me, if you will, but don't suspect me!

ROBESPIERRE. I judge men by their actions.

DANTON. Do you complain of my actions?

ROBESPIERRE. You boast that you feel no hatred—you don't hate the enemies of the Republic, but yet that is what is destroying the Republic. Pity for those hangdogs means cruelty toward the victims. You see, this weakness has forced us to raze whole cities; some day it may mean thirty years of civil war.

DANTON. But you see crime everywhere! It is sheer madness. If you are sick, you must be taken care of, but don't make every one take your medicine. The Republic is killing itself. It is high time to put a stop to that absurd and ferocious Terror which is consuming France. But if you don't hurry, if you refuse to join us, you will soon be unable to stop it;

it will burn you with the rest—or before the rest. Can't you see that the day Danton is not by, you will be the first to be struck down? I am the one who is still protecting you from the fire.

ROBESPIERRE [*turning from DANTON*]. May it consume me!

CAMILLE [*aside to DANTON*]. You said too much, Danton; you wounded his pride.

DANTON. In the name of the *Patrie*, Robespierre, of this *Patrie* we both love so ardently, let us make peace for us all, friends and enemies—so long as they love France! Let this love wash clean all suspicion and all faults! Without it there is no virtue. With it, no crime.

ROBESPIERRE. No *Patrie* without virtue!

DANTON [*menacingly*]. Once more, I ask you to make peace. You must realize what it costs me to make these advances. But I swallow my pride, if I can help the Republic. Give me your hand; free Fabre; reinstate Westermann; protect Hérault and Philippeaux from the infuriated people.

ROBESPIERRE. It is my business to put down crime, not to govern it.

DANTON [*restraining himself with the greatest difficulty*]. So you want war, Robespierre? Think well.

ROBESPIERRE [*impassive as ever, turns his back on DANTON, and speaks to DESMOULINS*]. Camille, I ask you for the last time: will you cease your attacks on the Committee?

CAMILLE. Let it cease to deserve them!

ROBESPIERRE. Submit to the laws of the nation together with the rest.

CAMILLE. I am a representative of the nation, and I have a right to speak for her.

ROBESPIERRE. You owe it an example in obeying the law.

CAMILLE. We know only too well how those laws are made. We are all lawyers, Robespierre; we know what masquerades beneath the majesty of the law. I would laugh seeing us together here, if I did not think of the tears that are shed at the comedy we now play. We cost mankind too much. Virtue itself is not worth the price we pay for it—and crime, all the more so.

ROBESPIERRE. He who could not accomplish this task had no business undertaking it. But he who accepts, should march straight ahead and say nothing, until he falls crushed with its weight.

CAMILLE. I am willing to sacrifice myself, but not others.

ROBESPIERRE. Good-by.—And—remember Hérault.

CAMILLE. Why do you mention Hérault?

ROBESPIERRE. He is arrested.

DANTON *and* CAMILLE. Arrested? He just left this house!

ROBESPIERRE. I know.

LUCILE. What has he done? Maximilien, what is his crime?

ROBESPIERRE. He kept a proscrip in his house.

CAMILLE. He did his duty.

ROBESPIERRE. The Committee has done its duty.

DANTON [*no longer able to restrain himself*]. You

damned blackguard, do you want to cut the throats of us all? You lop off the branches before attacking the heart. Let me tell you, my roots extend way down into the earth, in the hearts of the people of France. You will never pull them out except by killing the Republic. My fall will carry the rest of you along, and the vile vermin that are now gnawing at my feet will be the first to go. Does my patience encourage you? Do the vermin run up my body? I won't stand it much longer! The lion stretches himself! You little rat, you don't know that I could crush you between my fingers if I wished? Hurrah for war, if you want war! The excitement of past conflicts is getting the better of me. My voice has been silent for too long. Once more it will send the nation to fight against the tyrants!

CAMILLE. We'll scale the new Tuileries. The *Vieux Cordelier* will sound the battle-cry. [ROBESPIERRE quietly goes to the door. LUCILE, deeply troubled and unable to utter a word, disappears for a moment into the next room, and comes back with a baby.]

LUCILE. Maximilien! [ROBESPIERRE turns, looks at the little Horace, hesitates a moment, smiles, then takes the baby and sits down. He kisses him, and looks at LUCILE and CAMILLE. Then, without a word, he returns the baby to LUCILE, and goes out. The incident is played without visible emotion, except on the part of LUCILE.]

CAMILLE. Poor Lucile! You're worried?

LUCILE. Oh, Camille, Camille, how imprudent of you!



CAMILLE. You made me nervous just now.

LUCILE. I'm sorry.

CAMILLE. One must say what one thinks. And then— [*With a shrug.*] Oh, I have nothing to fear: he really likes me, and he will defend me.

LUCILE. Still, I'm afraid.

CAMILLE. He is more afraid than we: Danton's voice has proved effective. He is one of those men who need to fear those they love. Well, we must see our friends, and come to an understanding. Let us lose no time. Come, Danton.

DANTON [*who sits, preoccupied*]. Yes. Where are we going?

CAMILLE. To join Philippeaux and Westermann, and save Hérault.

DANTON. Tomorrow—tomorrow.

CAMILLE. Tomorrow will be too late.

DANTON [*very sad—affectionately*]. Lucile, read me something; sing to me; console me.

LUCILE. What is the matter with you? [*She stands behind him and leans on his shoulder. He takes her hand and presses it to his cheek.*]

DANTON. Oh, Republic! Destroying herself! Destroying her own handiwork. Victors or victims, what difference does it make? Victims in either case!

CAMILLE. In either case, victors, crowned with Glory!

DANTON [*rising—violently*]. Come, then, and may the Republic confound the world with the echo of her fall!

## ACT II

ROBESPIERRE'S room in the Duplay house. There are two doors. The walls are white and bare. There is a chestnut bedstead with blue damask curtains with a white flower design. A simple desk. A few straw-bottomed chairs. Some flowers in a glass on the window-sill. Down-stage center is a small stove, with a chair on one side and a stool on the other. The door on the left leads to the Duplays' apartments. The window looks out on a courtyard in which carpenters are working; they are heard hammering, planing, and sawing. ROBESPIERRE sits alone at his desk.]

MADAME DUPLAY [*opening the door*]. Am I disturbing you, Maximilien?

ROBESPIERRE [*with a friendly smile*]. No, Citizen Duplay. [*He offers her his hand.*]

MADAME DUPLAY. Always working! You never went to bed last night!

ROBESPIERRE. I was at the Committee.

MADAME DUPLAY. I heard you come in. It was after three. Couldn't you rest this morning?

ROBESPIERRE. You know I never sleep very much; I have trained my body to obey my head.

MADAME DUPLAY. You promised me you wouldn't sit up any more. You're wearing yourself out;

you'll get sick. And then what would become of us?

ROBESPIERRE. My poor friends, you must get used to doing without me. I shan't always be here, you know.

MADAME DUPLAY. You aren't thinking of leaving us?

ROBESPIERRE [*with sincerity and emphasis*]. No, but I shall leave sooner than you expect.

MADAME DUPLAY. Oh, no; I insist on being the first to leave, and I am in no hurry.

ROBESPIERRE [*with a smile*]. I should feel easier if I knew others were not so dependent on me.

MADAME DUPLAY. Don't you care to have people like you?

ROBESPIERRE. France would be better off if every one thought less of Robespierre and more of Liberty.

MADAME DUPLAY. But Liberty and Robespierre are one.

ROBESPIERRE. That is why I am so concerned about her. I fear for her health.

MADAME DUPLAY [*going to the window*]. What noise they make in the court! I know it must tire you. I told Duplay twenty times to ask them not to begin so early and wake you up, but he said you insisted that everything go on as usual.

ROBESPIERRE. He is right. That regular activity rests me. Work is beneficial to others as well as to oneself. The noise is refreshing to me. I have breathed such vitiated air all night!

MADAME DUPLAY. What work kept you up last night?

ROBESPIERRE. It was not the work, but the worry.

MADAME DUPLAY. You seem preoccupied—as if some great catastrophe were about to happen.

ROBESPIERRE. Yes, a catastrophe.

MADAME DUPLAY. Can't you prevent it?

ROBESPIERRE. Oh, I must bring it about, on the contrary.

MADAME DUPLAY. Of course, I have no right to ask questions, but you mustn't be sad today. We're having a festival. Le Bas and Saint-Just came back from the army last night.

ROBESPIERRE. Saint-Just returned! Good: I need him.

MADAME DUPLAY. And I forgot to tell you: a general came here and wanted to see you, General Westermann. He came before sunrise, but I wouldn't let him in. He said he would come back in an hour. Will you receive him?

ROBESPIERRE. I don't know.

MADAME DUPLAY. He waited a long time in the yard—in the rain.

ROBESPIERRE. Very well.

MADAME DUPLAY. What an awful night! I came in soaked to the skin.

ROBESPIERRE. Where were you?

MADAME DUPLAY. At the Markets. I was waiting in line since midnight. They were pushing so! You had to keep your eyes open, or some one would take your place! The moment they opened, every one

began to fight. I stood up for my rights, and I finally got three eggs and a quarter pound of butter.

ROBESPIERRE. Three eggs for this household? Why, that's nothing at all!

MADAME DUPLAY. One for Eléonore, one for Elisabeth, and one for you—my three children!

ROBESPIERRE. Dear mother Duplay, you don't imagine I shall take bread out of your mouth?

MADAME DUPLAY. You're not going to refuse! It was for you I went to the Market. You're not well; you have a weak stomach. If you could only eat meat! But you won't let us buy any!

ROBESPIERRE. Meat is very scarce, and it must be kept for the soldiers and the sick. We have decreed a civil lent. My colleagues and I must offer a good example of abstinence.

MADAME DUPLAY. Not everybody has your scruples.

ROBESPIERRE. I know: I have seen some of them indulge in feasting amidst all this misery; it horrifies me. Every feast of that kind deprives the country of at least thirty defenders.

MADAME DUPLAY. What misery! No more meat, no more poultry, no more dairy products. The vegetables have been commandeered for the army. And no more fuel. This is the second night that Duplay has stood in line at the coal boat. He's just come in—without a thing. And there is no wood at all. Do you know what they asked me for a cord? Four hundred francs. Fortunately spring is not far off. Another month of this, and we'll all be dead. I never remember so hard a winter.



ROBESPIERRE. You have suffered, all of you, poor women, and you have shown splendid courage. But you must admit that with all the suffering, you felt joys you never dreamed of before: the joy of helping on, no matter how humbly, with the sublime work of freeing the world!

MADAME DUPLAY. Yes, I am happy. No matter what happens, those months of misery will remain the happiest of our lives. What we have suffered are not the ordinary things, the useless things. Every time we fasted it was for the good of the nation. This feeling of pride we owe to you, Maximilien. Last night I was thinking as I was doing the wash; no matter how humble I am, no matter how I may worry about the morrow, and wonder where our bread is coming from, I am working for the nation; nothing is lost; every thing I do counts toward victory. I am marching with you at the head of all mankind!

THE WORKINGMEN [*outside, singing*]:

“ We forge and saw with all our might  
Making muskets for the fight.  
Soldier boys, you'll have enough  
If we have to work all day and night,  
For we forge and saw with all our might.”

MADAME DUPLAY [*smiling*]. They've just filled an order for the Northern Army; they're starving to death, but they're happy.

ROBESPIERRE. Sublime people! How good it is to be one of them! Who could forgive those who try to

corrupt that source of abnegation and sacrifice?  
 [WESTERMANN *is heard muttering outside.*]

MADAME DUPLAY. There's the General. He's getting impatient.

ROBESPIERRE. Send him in. [MADAME DUPLAY *goes out.* ROBESPIERRE *looks into his mirror. In an instant, his face is transformed; becoming hard, immobile, and cold.* WESTERMANN *enters.*]

WESTERMANN. Good God, not a moment too soon! I've been walking up and down outside for the last two hours. It's harder to enter your house than a Vendée city. [ROBESPIERRE, *his hands behind his back, motionless; face stolid, lips contracted, looks WESTERMANN in the eye.* WESTERMANN *stops for a moment, then continues.*] I thought you didn't want to receive me. Desmoulins told me you wouldn't. I swore you would, if I had to send a cannon-shot through the front-door. [*He laughs.*] Pardon my military frankness. [ROBESPIERRE *stands as before.* WESTERMANN, *ill at ease, tries to appear natural.*] Lord, you're well guarded. There's a very pretty girl on guard at the door. She's mending socks. She's hard to deal with—incorruptible, like you! I'd have had to enter over her dead body—! If I were in the enemy's country, that wouldn't have been so bad— [*He gives a forced laugh.* ROBESPIERRE *maintains silence, and twists his hands impatiently.* WESTERMANN *sits down, trying to appear at his ease, while ROBESPIERRE stands.* WESTERMANN *then rises.*] There are some idiots who say that I'm your enemy. I don't give a damn what they say. How can I be the enemy

of virtue? Nonsense! Aristides the enemy of Leonidas? The bastion of the Republic and the rampart of the *Patrie*! Why, they're meant to help each other! Good fellows like us always put the glory of the nation above everything, don't we? We understand, don't we? [*He offers his hand.* ROBESPIERRE *does not move a muscle.*] He won't give me his hand, eh? Won't you, really? Are you my enemy, then? You're planning to ruin me? By God, if I thought that—! Am I a good-for-nothing blackguard to be kept waiting for two hours in the street, and then when you finally let me in, you don't even offer me a chair? You let me stand up, and don't even answer me? By God! [*He stamps on the floor.*]

ROBESPIERRE [*glacially*]. General, you are on the wrong track. There is a great difference between Leonidas and Père Duchesne. You take your models from a dangerous quarter.

WESTERMANN [*surprised*]. What quarter?

ROBESPIERRE. The Revolution.

WESTERMANN [*genuinely astonished*]. But, tell me, citizen, what have I done? What do you accuse me of?

ROBESPIERRE. The Committee of Public Safety will tell you.

WESTERMANN. I have a right to be told now.

ROBESPIERRE. Ask your conscience.

WESTERMANN. My conscience is clear.

ROBESPIERRE. I pity the man who cannot hear the voice of remorse.

WESTERMANN [*calming himself with a violent effort,*

*though his voice trembles with anger and grief*]. I feel remorse for only one thing: having sacrificed my life to an ungrateful nation. I have suffered for it during the past thirty years. I've gone through every form of misery. Ten times I have saved the country from invasion. It never recognized my services. The first impostor that comes along denounces me; they believe anonymous letters from soldiers I punished for cowardice; they accuse me, threaten me, degrade me from my rank, while damned little rascallions are promoted over my head. I must obey Rossignol, a stupid little goldsmith who knows nothing about war, whose reputation is made on his silly blunders. All his titles merely prove the vileness of his origin. Kléber, Dubayet, and Marceau are wasting away in some petty position, and that shopkeeper Niort commands both the armies!

ROBESPIERRE. The Republic places more confidence in a commander with true Republican loyalty than in mere military heads.

WESTERMANN. What confidence does the Republic place in Rossignol's defeats?

ROBESPIERRE. The responsibility for them does not rest on Rossignol's shoulders, but upon those who are about him. If Kléber, Dubayet, and Westermann are so proud of their ability, why do they not put it at the service of the general whom the nation has placed at their head?

WESTERMANN. So you want to deprive us of our just glory?

ROBESPIERRE. Yes.



WESTERMANN. Confess, you are afraid of military glory! You want to minimize it!

ROBESPIERRE. Yes.

WESTERMANN [*with a sneer*]. Lawyers might be jealous, eh?

ROBESPIERRE. It is an insult to reason, and a menace to freedom. What has made you so proud? You are only doing your duty. Do you risk your life? The heads of every one of us are the stakes in the desperate game we are playing against despotism. Do you deserve any more credit than we in risking your life? We are all devoted to liberty or to death. You, like us, are an instrument of the Revolution, the great knife that is to cleave a way through the enemy for the Republic. It is a terrible task, but it must be accepted bravely, and humbly. You have no more right to be proud of your cannon than we of our guillotine.

WESTERMANN. You outrage the grandeur of war.

ROBESPIERRE. Nothing is grand but virtue. No matter where it resides—in soldiers, workingmen, legislators—the Republic honors it alone. But the criminals must tremble. Nothing protects them from its just wrath, neither their titles nor their swords.

WESTERMANN. Are you threatening me?

ROBESPIERRE. I was speaking of no one in particular. On his head be it who recognizes himself!

WESTERMANN. God in heaven! [*He looks threateningly at ROBESPIERRE, quivering from head to foot. He turns to go, then swings round.*] On your guard, Sylla! My head sits more solidly on my shoulders than Custine's. There are still men who do not fear



tyranny. I am going to find Danton. [*He knocks against the wall before he finds the door, and then rushes out. ELÉONORE enters from the door leading to the Duplays' apartments.*]

ELÉONORE. He's gone at last. Oh, Maximilien, I was so worried while he was here!

ROBESPIERRE [*affectionately*]. My dear Eléonore. Were you listening?

ELÉONORE. That man's voice frightened me. I couldn't help coming. I was in there, in Mamma's bath-room.

ROBESPIERRE. What could you have done if he had attempted violence?

ELÉONORE [*embarrassed*]. I—I don't know.

ROBESPIERRE [*taking her hand from behind her back*]. What is this?

ELÉONORE [*blushing*]. A pistol that Philippe left on the table last night when he came home.

ROBESPIERRE [*taking the pistol, and holding her hand in his*]. No, no, these hands must not be soiled with such murderous instruments! They must not shed blood, even to save my life. I want there to remain at least two innocent hands in all the world, to purify the world and Robespierre's heart—when the work is at last done.

ELÉONORE. But why expose yourself to such danger? You provoked that man, and they say he is cruel.

ROBESPIERRE. I am not afraid of the swashbucklers. The moment you take them from the field of battle they merely talk; they tremble when they find them-

selves in the presence of a new power, one they never met with steel: the Law.

ELÉONORE. Citizen Fouché also called, but he was not admitted. That was your order.

ROBESPIERRE. My door is forever closed to the man who dishonored the majesty of the Terror in the massacres at Lyon.

ELÉONORE. He did not want to go. He even cried.

ROBESPIERRE [*severely*]. So do crocodiles.

ELÉONORE. He went to see your sister, to ask her to intercede on his behalf.

ROBESPIERRE [*his expression changing*]. Is she coming? The fool made her believe he was in love with her! She does not respect him, but that sort of attention always flatters a woman, no matter who the man happens to be. She will try to defend him. In the name of Heaven, don't let her in. Tell her I am very busy, and that I can see no one.

ELÉONORE [*smiling*]. You brave all the tyrants of Europe, but you are afraid of your own sister!

ROBESPIERRE [*smiling*]. She is a good woman, and she loves me dearly. But she is so tiresome! Her continual jealousy, the scenes she makes—they drive me mad! I think I would agree to anything to keep her quiet.

ELÉONORE. Don't worry; Mamma knows, and won't let her in.

ROBESPIERRE. My dear friends, how wonderfully you take care of me!

ELÉONORE. We are responsible to the nation for you.

ROBESPIERRE. What a pleasure it is for me to live here! It's a feast for the soul! This is no selfish retreat from the tempests. No, the door is opened to all the care and troubles of the nation; they assume a certain dignified air when they enter. We receive destiny here, without flinching, our eyes in its eyes. I never cross the threshold without breathing the air of that court, with the smell of fresh-cut wood, peace, and hope. The honest face of Duplay, your mother's welcome voice, your hand, Eléonore, extended toward me like the hand of brotherhood, all the loyal affection you have for me, inspire in me the greatest, the rarest, thing of all, the thing I most need and of which I always had least!

ELÉONORE. What?

ROBESPIERRE. Confidence.

ELÉONORE. Is there some one you don't trust?

ROBESPIERRE. I trust no man. I can read lies in their faces, I see intrigue in their protestations. Their eyes, their mouths, their hands, their whole body lies. Suspicion poisons every thought I have. I was intended for a quieter existence. I love men, and I wish to believe in them. But how can I, when I see them perjure themselves ten times a day, sell themselves, their friends, their armies, their *Patrie*, for motives of fear, or ambition, or viciousness, or malevolence pure and simple? I have seen Mirabeau, Lafayette, Dumouriez, Custine, the king, the aristocrats, the Girondins, the Hérésists—all of them betrayed one after the other. The soldiers would have surrendered the nation twenty times had they not feared the guil-

lotine awaiting them. Three-fourths of the members are conspiring against the Convention. Vice is curbed under the heroic discipline imposed by the Revolution. Its allies dare not attack the forces of virtue in broad daylight; they hide under masks of piety and mercy, in order to influence public opinion, and deflect it in favor of rogues, inciting them against the true patriots. But I will tear their masks from their faces, and force the Assembly to see what is beneath: the hideous face of treason. I will force the disguised accomplices of the conspirators to condemn them, or else die with them myself. The Republic will be victorious. But, oh God, in the midst of what devastation! Vice is like the Hydra: every drop of blood that falls to the ground will grow up into another monster. The best men have fallen into its clutches; they fall as if stricken with the plague: the day before yesterday it was Philippeaux; yesterday, Danton; today, Desmoulins—Desmoulins, my friend from childhood, my brother! Who will be the next traitor?

ELÉONORE. Is it possible? So much treason! Have you the proofs?

ROBESPIERRE. Yes, more than proofs: moral certainty, that infallible light which never deceives.

ELÉONORE. No, you cannot be mistaken: you know everything, you see deep into people's hearts. Are they all corrupt?

ROBESPIERRE. There are four or five whom I respect: the honest Couthon, who thinks nothing of his own sufferings, and only of those of the world; the lovable and modest Le Bas; my brother, who has a



good heart but thinks too much about his pleasure; two children, and a man who is on the point of death.

ELÉONORE. But Saint-Just?

ROBESPIERRE. I am afraid of him. Saint-Just is the living sword of the Revolution, her implacable weapon; he would sacrifice me, as he has the others, to his immutable law. Every one else conspires against me. They dislike my clear-sightedness, they are jealous of the people's love for me; they try to render me odious in their eyes. The proconsuls of Marseille and Lyon commit atrocities in the name of Robespierre. The counter-revolution now preaches clemency, and again terror. If I release my hold through weariness, I am lost, and so is the Republic. Couthon is ill. Le Bas and my brother are two stupid. Saint-Just is far away, and holds the armies. I am left alone surrounded by traitors, who are trying all the while to strike me from behind. They will kill me, Eléonore.

ELÉONORE [*taking his hand, and with child-like vivacity*]. If you die, you will not die alone. [ROBESPIERRE *looks at her affectionately, and she blushes.*]

ROBESPIERRE. My dear Eléonore, no, you will not die. I am stronger than my cowardly enemies. I have Truth on my side.

ELÉONORE. You are so worried, and yet you ought to be happy, because you are working for every one's happiness. How unjust life is!

ROBESPIERRE. Now I have made you sad. I was wrong to shatter your illusions. Forgive me.

ELÉONORE. Don't be sorry. I am very proud of your confidence in me. All night long I thought about



those pages from Rousseau you read us yesterday. They were so soothing. I heard the sound of your voice—and those beautiful words. I know them by heart!

ROBESPIERRE [*reciting, with an air of affectionate melancholy, and with great sincerity*]. “The communion of hearts gives to sadness something inexplicably sweet and touching, and friendship is the especial gift to the unfortunate for the assuagement of their woes and the consolation of their sufferings.” [ELÉONORE, *her hand in his, says nothing, but she smiles and blushes.*] You say nothing?

ELÉONORE [*reciting*]. “Can anything that one says to one’s friend ever equal what one feels by his side?”

MADAME DUPLAY [*outside*]. Maximilien, here is Saint-Just. [ELÉONORE *runs out*. SAINT-JUST *enters*. ROBESPIERRE *greets him*. *They shake hands as if they had been separated only a very short time.*]

SAINT-JUST. How are you?

ROBESPIERRE. How are you, Saint-Just? [*They sit down.*]

SAINT-JUST [*gazing calmly at ROBESPIERRE*]. I am very glad to see you again.

ROBESPIERRE. Le Bas writes us that it was only by the barest chance that we see you again.

SAINT-JUST. Yes. [*A pause.*] We need arms there; the army lacks muskets.

ROBESPIERRE. We are manufacturing them. All of Paris is at work. They have set up blacksmith shops in the churches. All other work is at a standstill.

You must have seen Duplay's carpenters making the stocks when you came by. Jewelers are making the locks; there are forges in all the public places.

SAINT-JUST [*after a pause*]. Food is very scarce. Whole divisions are out of provender. We have very little time; the campaign begins in three weeks at the latest. All the blood of France must flow to the North.

ROBESPIERRE. The orders have been given. France is starving in order that the soldiers may have enough to eat.

SAINT-JUST. When you no longer need my advice, send me back. The first engagements will be decisive. Every effort must be made.

ROBESPIERRE. Doesn't the life you lead wear you out?

SAINT-JUST [*sincerely, but without emphasis*]. It affords me some rest from useless discussion. Thought and action out there are identical, like thunder and lightning. Every desire immediately becomes a fact, forever; it is written in the blood of men and the destiny of the world. The task is a truly grand one, and the agony divine! At night, in the snow, at the out-posts of the army, along the weary stretches of the Flemish plain, under the vast winter sky, I feel a thrill of joy run through my body, and my heart's blood throb in my breast. Alone, lost in the midst of the shadows of the Universe, surrounded by enemies, with one foot in the grave, we are the guardians of Reason, the living Light. We are decisive factors in the destiny of the world. We re-create Man.

ROBESPIERRE. Happy the man who strives on the field of action, and is not forced to stay at home.

SAINT-JUST. Who strives more than you? The liberty of the world is here in Paris.

ROBESPIERRE. Here we have the agonizing task of stamping out viciousness. It soils every one who takes part in the nasty business. I must confess, when I contemplate the vicious crimes which the torrent of the Revolution rolls along with all its virtue, I am afraid that I shall catch up some of the nastiness and be identified with it in the eyes of posterity. Merely because I am near perverse and impure men.

SAINT-JUST. Put the sword between yourself and them. You should touch the impure only with steel.

ROBESPIERRE. The corruption is spreading everywhere. Men I counted on most have succumbed. Old friends.

SAINT-JUST. No friends! We have only the *Patrie!*

ROBESPIERRE. Danton is a menace; he is under suspicion. He has uttered violent and insulting words. He is surrounded by conspirators, debauchees, ruined financiers, degraded officers. Every sort of malcontent has joined his forces.

SAINT-JUST. Danton must go!

ROBESPIERRE. Danton was once a Republican. He loved the *Patrie*. Perhaps he still loves her?

SAINT-JUST. No one respects her unless he proves it by austere and pure living. He is not a Republican who possesses aristocratic vices and ideas. I hate Catiline. His cynical heart, his cowardly brain, his

ignoble political ideals—he tries to please all parties in order to use them for his own ends—it all brings dishonor upon the Republic. Danton must be laid low.

ROBESPIERRE. His fall will carry the imprudent Desmoulins along with him.

SAINT-JUST. That impudent pen-pusher! Why, the sufferings of the *Patrie* are merely an excuse for him to do a clever piece of writing! He's a dilettante, who would sacrifice Liberty for a pretty antithesis!

ROBESPIERRE. A child, the dupe of his friends, and of his own mind.

SAINT-JUST. Cleverness is also a crime, when France is in danger. The misfortunes of the State have thrown a sad, a religious air, over everything. I am suspicious of all who laugh.

ROBESPIERRE. But I love Desmoulins.

SAINT-JUST. And I love you, but if you were a criminal, I would accuse you.

ROBESPIERRE [*walks away, distressed. He returns after a moment's silence*]. Thank you.—You are happy; you never hesitate. You never compromise with evil.

SAINT-JUST. I have seen more evil than you.

ROBESPIERRE. Where?

SAINT-JUST. Within myself.

ROBESPIERRE [*surprised*]. In yourself, you whose life is an example of self-sacrifice?

SAINT-JUST. You don't know!

ROBESPIERRE [*incredulously*]. Some—youthful slip?

SAINT-JUST [*seriously*]. I have been to the brink

of the abyss; I saw crime down below, ready to devour me. Ever since I have sworn to destroy it in the world at large and within myself.

ROBESPIERRE. Sometimes I tire of the struggle. The enemy is too powerful. Can we really reform mankind? Will our dream be realized?

SAINT-JUST. The day I cease to believe that, I shall kill myself.

ELÉONORE [*opening the door, says softly*]. Here are Billaud-Varenne and Vadier. [*They enter. BILLAUD-VARENNE'S head droops from fatigue, and his eyes are heavy. VADIER compresses his lips, and is bitter and sardonic. He speaks with a marked Southern accent (which is not indicated in the text). ROBESPIERRE and SAINT-JUST rise and coldly greet the newcomers. They bow, but do not offer to shake hands.*]

BILLAUD-VARENNE. Greetings and Fraternity!

VADIER [*noticing SAINT-JUST*]. Saint-Just! Good! We shall now make up for lost time. [*BILLAUD-VARENNE and VADIER seat themselves unceremoniously. SAINT-JUST walks about. ROBESPIERRE remains standing, and leans against the window-sill. After a pause.*]

BILLAUD-VARENNE. The guillotine! You have waited too long, Robespierre: we are in immediate danger. If Danton is still alive tomorrow, the cause of liberty is lost.

ROBESPIERRE. What news?

BILLAUD-VARENNE [*with papers in his hand*]. Look. The traitor is at it again.

ROBESPIERRE. Who?



VADIER. Your friend, Maximilien: Camille, dear Camille.

ROBESPIERRE. Has he been writing again?

BILLAUD-VARENNE. These proofs have just been seized. Read.

VADIER [*rubbing his hands*]. The seventh *Vieux Cordelier*. The continuation of the good apostle's Credo.

ROBESPIERRE. The idiot! Will he not learn to hold his tongue?

BILLAUD-VARENNE [*like a monomaniac*]. The guillotine!

SAINT-JUST [*reading the proofs with ROBESPIERRE*]. Like a prostitute, who cannot but bring dishonor upon herself.

ROBESPIERRE. And Danton?

BILLAUD-VARENNE. Danton is at it again; he is speaking at the Palais-Royal. He insults Vadier, and me, and all the patriots. Desmoulins is with him. They're all together with the women and Westermann, too. They make obscene allusions to the Committee. The people are gathering about them, and laughing.

SAINT-JUST. You hear, Robespierre?

ROBESPIERRE [*disdainfully*]. No danger. We shall have time to deliberate in peace before Danton is through drinking. [*Looking again at the proofs.*] Why, this is suicide!

VADIER. He's gone too far this time!

BILLAUD-VARENNE. His head should follow!

SAINT-JUST [*reading*]. He compares the members of the Convention to Nero and Tiberius.

BILLAUD-VARENNE [*reading*]. He dares to say that we went after Custine on Pitt's orders, and not because Custine was a traitor, but because he was not a worse one.

VADIER [*reading*]. "The Committee will reduce the Assembly to the servile condition of a parlement the rebellious members of which are to be thrown into prison."

ROBESPIERRE [*correcting them*]. He puts "would reduce," and not "will reduce."

VADIER. The same thing.

BILLAUD-VARENNE [*reading*]. "See how near is the Committee to ruining the Republic, when it sends two of its Deputies which it cannot bribe to the Luxembourg?"

ROBESPIERRE. He says "it can send," and not "it sends."

BILLAUD-VARENNE [*pettishly*]. Don't be so particular!

SAINT-JUST [*reading*]. He has the effrontery to maintain that "the War-office appointed as heads of the armies the brothers of actresses with whom they had been intimate."

VADIER. Disorganizing the defense, reviling the nation in the eyes of foreigners! Can nothing stop his vile tongue!

BILLAUD-VARENNE. And the whole thing bristling with demands for clemency, and talk about humanity!

VADIER. And his hypocritical tears! Bah!

SAINT-JUST. There is no plague of Egypt like a sentimental man! No tyrant brings more harm to

mankind. The traitors of the Gironde called themselves merciful, too, when they carried the torch of rebellion through France.

ROBESPIERRE. Desmoulins is merely weak, he is not dangerous. I knew him as a child. I know him now.

BILLAUD-VARENNE [*suspiciously*]. Do Robespierre's friends enjoy special privileges?

VADIER [*jeering, as he reads the "Vieux Cordelier"*]. And listen to this, Maximilien—this is for you. It seems that your closing the houses of ill-fame and pretending to be so zealous in reforming the world, is merely on Pitt's orders; because you "thereby deprive the government of one of its sources of income: licentiousness." Do you hear that, oh Incorruptible one?

SAINT-JUST. The nasty hypocritical scoundrel!

BILLAUD-VARENNE [*violently*]. The guillotine! [*He falls, with his head on the table, like an ox that has been felled.*]

ROBESPIERRE. Has he fainted?

VADIER [*coldly*]. Dizziness. [SAINT-JUST *opens the window, and BILLAUD-VARENNE comes to.*]

SAINT-JUST. Are you ill, Billaud?

BILLAUD-VARENNE [*hoarsely*]. Who are you?—Scoundrels!—I'm utterly exhausted: I haven't slept for the last two nights.

VADIER. He spends his nights at the Committee and his days at the Assembly.

ROBESPIERRE. You are overworking. Would you like some one to take your place for a few days?

BILLAUD-VARENNE. My work can't be done by

others. Corresponding with the various departments, holding every string of France in my hand: no one else could do that. If I stop for a moment, everything will collapse. No, I must stay until I drop.

SAINT-JUST. We shall all die at our posts.

BILLAUD-VARENNE. Oh, Nature, thou didst not create me for such tempests! My soul is torn by these murderous blasts from the desert! My heart is too soft; I was intended for sweeter things: retirement, friends, a family!

VADIER [*ironically*]. Let us not become sentimental, Billaud!

BILLAUD-VARENNE [*becoming violent again*]. Let us purify the atmosphere! To the guillotine with Desmoulins!

ROBESPIERRE. It is I who should give the example: I wash my hands of Desmoulins.

VADIER [*laughing to himself*]. Brutus, oh, magnanimous man, virtuous man, I knew very well you would never hesitate to rid yourself of a friend!

ROBESPIERRE. The fate of Desmoulins is bound up with that of another man.

BILLAUD-VARENNE. Are you afraid to mention Danton by name?

ROBESPIERRE. I am afraid to break a talisman of the Republic.

VADIER. Its lucky piece.

ROBESPIERRE. Danton is my enemy. If my friendship counts for nothing in our deliberations, my hatred, on the other hand, should not weigh in my judgment. Before entering the fray, let us consider in cold blood

what risks we incur in thus dismantling a fortress of the Revolution.

BILLAUD-VARENNE. A fortress for sale!

VADIER. The scarecrow of the Revolution! In time of public danger such monstrous idols are brought out to rout the enemy. He rather inspires fear in the breast of those who hear him. His hideous face frightens Liberty.

ROBESPIERRE. You cannot deny that his face is known and feared throughout Europe.

VADIER [*chaffingly*]. True, and like a good sans-culotte he cheerfully shows to the world "What Cæsar shamelessly showed to Nicodemus in his youth, and what long ago the hero of Greece admired in Hephestos, and Hadrian put into the Pantheon."

SAINT-JUST [*angrily*]. Stop your nasty joking! Would you make war on corruption with corruption?

VADIER. Now, you aren't going to make me recite Rousseau to you?

ROBESPIERRE [*making an effort at impartiality*]. I think it no more than right to take Danton's past services into account.

SAINT-JUST. The more good a man does, the greater his obligation to continue. Woe be unto him who has once defended the cause and the people, and abandons them afterward! He is a greater criminal than the man who consistently fought against it. For he once knew the good, and has wilfully betrayed it.

ROBESPIERRE. Hébert's death stirred up public sympathy. The police reports I received inform me that our enemies are profiting by the confusion of the



people, who have been suddenly enlightened, in order to shake their faith in their true friends. Everything nowadays is open to suspicion; even the memory of Marat. We must be prudent, and take care not to add to the general suspicion by internal quarrels.

SAINT-JUST. Let us put an end to suspicion with the death of the suspects.

VADIER [*aside, glancing at ROBESPIERRE*]. The coward! He's afraid to touch his aristocratic friends! Cromwell keeps with the majority! If he persists I'll guillotine a hundred toads in his pond!

ROBESPIERRE. A head like his does not fall without making the State feel it.

BILLAUD-VARENNE [*suspiciously and with violence*]. Are you afraid, Robespierre?

VADIER [*inciting BILLAUD-VARENNE*]. Ask him, Billaud, if he uses Danton like a mattress to hide behind, and escape the bullets?

BILLAUD-VARENNE [*brutally*]. Speak out: You are afraid of being exposed by Danton's fall? You stick close to him! Danton diverts the attention—and the blows—from you, eh?

ROBESPIERRE. I take no notice of such slander. What do I care for the dangers? What is my life to me? But I have some experience from the past, and I am looking into the future. You are bloodthirsty monsters; your hatred blinds you. You think of yourselves, and not of the Republic.

SAINT-JUST. Let us calmly consider what the Republic owes to the conspirators. Let us not ask whether Danton is talented, but whether his talents

serve the Republic. Where have these attacks of the past three months come from? Danton. Who inspired Philippeaux's letters against the Committee? Danton. Who dictates Desmoulins' pamphlets? Danton. Each number of the *Vieux Cordelier* is submitted to him; he corrects the manuscript in his own hand. If the river is poisoned, let us stop it at the source. Where is Danton's sincerity? Where is his bravery? What has he done the past year for the Republic?

ROBESPIERRE [*pretending to be convinced, and speaking with a mixture of sincerity and hypocrisy*]. It is true he never spoke for The Mountain when it was attacked.

SAINT-JUST. No, but he did for Dumouriez, and the generals who were his accomplices. The Jacobins defended him; you, too, Robespierre. But when you were accused, did he say a word?

ROBESPIERRE. No, and when he saw me deserted, a victim of the slanders of the Gironde, he said to his friends: "Since he wishes to ruin himself, let him! Let us not share his lot!" But do not drag me into the discussion.

BILLAUD-VARENNE. You yourself told me, Robespierre, that he did all he could to save the Girondins, and to strike Hanriot, who arrested the traitors.

ROBESPIERRE. That is true.

SAINT-JUST. And you told me, Robespierre, that he was base enough to confess his embezzlements, and Fabre's—his secretary—during his brief administration as Minister of Justice.

ROBESPIERRE. I don't deny that.

**SAINT-JUST.** He was Lafayette's friend. Mirabeau bought him. He corresponded with Dumouriez and Wimpfen. He flattered Orléans. Every enemy of the Revolution was on familiar terms with him.

**ROBESPIERRE.** You must not exaggerate!

**SAINT-JUST.** You yourself told me. I should never have known otherwise.

**ROBESPIERRE.** Of course, but—

**BILLAUD-VARENNE** [*violently*]. Do you deny it?

**ROBESPIERRE.** I cannot. Danton was an assiduous member of those Royalists gatherings, where Orléans himself mixed the punch. Fabre and Wimpfen, too, were present. They tried to bring the Deputies of the Mountain, to seduce and compromise them. But that was of no importance.

**BILLAUD-VARENNE.** On the contrary! It was high treason. Out and out conspiracy!

**ROBESPIERRE.** I have just thought of a small detail. It seems that lately he boasted that if he were accused he would throw the blame on us for the Dauphin affair.

**BILLAUD-VARENNE.** The blackguard! Did he say that? And you defend him?

**ROBESPIERRE.** Westermann just left this room. He threatened me with Danton, and an uprising.

**BILLAUD-VARENNE.** And we sit here talking! The marauders are still at large!

**ROBESPIERRE.** Do you want him?

**SAINT-JUST.** The nation wants him.

**VADIER** [*aside*]. The hypocrite! He wants him, too! But we must persuade him!

**ROBESPIERRE.** He was a great man. At least, he

had the air of a great man, and at times he even seemed a good and virtuous man.

SAINT-JUST. Nothing so resembles virtue as a great crime.

VADIER [*sarcastically*]. You will deliver his funeral oration later on, Maximilien. But now let us bring down the beast.

SAINT-JUST. Vadier, you must respect death.

VADIER. But the little fellow is still alive.

SAINT-JUST. Danton is already doomed.

BILLAUD-VARENNE. Who will take it upon himself to accuse him?

VADIER. Saint-Just. The young man does it so well. Every sentence of his is as good as a stroke of the guillotine.

SAINT-JUST. It would give me great pleasure to attack the monster.

ROBESPIERRE [*getting papers, which he gives to SAINT-JUST*]. Here are the notes, all ready for you.

VADIER [*aside*]. He has a whole portfolio like that for each of his friends.

ROBESPIERRE. Let us not honor Danton by trying him alone: it would attract too much attention.

BILLAUD-VARENNE. Let us overwhelm him in a general accusation.

VADIER. Whom shall we put with him, to fill out the menu?

SAINT-JUST. Every one who has tried to corrupt the cause of Liberty by means of money, evil example, or brains.

VADIER. Let us be clear. You're too vague.

ROBESPIERRE. Danton loved gold. Let him be buried with gold. Let us implicate him in the bank affair. Put him in with the embezzlers. He will find himself in company with his friend, his secretary, his Fabre d'Eglantine.

VADIER. Fabre, Chabot, the Jews, the Austrian bankers, the Freys, and the Diederischens—good. We begin to have an imposing list.

BILLAUD-VARENNE. It might be well to add Hérault, the friend of the émigrés.

SAINT-JUST. Philippeaux, above all, the disorganizer of the army, the destroyer of discipline.

ROBESPIERRE. Westermann, with his bloody sword, always ready for an insurrection. Is that all?

VADIER. You forget dear Camille.

ROBESPIERRE. Wouldn't you prefer Bourbon, or Legendre, the mouthpieces of the enemy in the Assembly?

VADIER. No—Camille.

BILLAUD-VARENNE. Camille.

SAINT-JUST. Justice!

ROBESPIERRE. Take him.

SAINT-JUST. Good-by for the present. I must prepare my report. I shall strike them tomorrow at the Convention.

VADIER. No, no, young man. Your youthful imprudence is running away with you. Would you call Danton into court?

SAINT-JUST. Danton believes that no one will dare attack him face to face. I shall undeceive him.

VADIER. Your good intentions, my friend, are not



enough. You must have lungs deep enough to drown out the roarings of that bull!

SAINT-JUST. Truth will overcome tempests.

ROBESPIERRE. We cannot expose the Republic in an open argument like that.

SAINT-JUST. What then? [ROBESPIERRE *does not answer.*]

BILLAUD-VARENNE. Have Danton arrested tonight.

SAINT-JUST [*violently*]. Never!

VADIER. The end justifies the means!

SAINT-JUST. I never strike an unarmed enemy. I will face Danton willingly. Combats like that can only bring honor to the Republic; but your suggestion is dishonorable. Ignoble!

BILLAUD-VARENNE. The enemies of the people deserve no consideration!

VADIER. Useless bravery in politics is always stupid, and sometimes treasonable.

SAINT-JUST. I won't have it! [*He throws his cap to the floor.*]

BILLAUD-VARENNE [*severely*]. Do you then prefer the fight to the welfare of the Republic?

SAINT-JUST. Such attempts require danger; it sanctifies them. A Revolution is a heroic enterprise, in which the leaders walk between the guillotine and immortality. We should be criminals if we were not ready to sacrifice our lives, and the lives of the others, at any moment.

VADIER. Never worry; you are risking enough as it is. If Danton were a prisoner he would incite the

people; and never doubt, if he is victorious, he will send you to the block.

SAINTE-JUST. I despise the dust I am made of. My heart is the only thing that really belongs to me, and I will pass through life, through blood and murder, without sullyng its purity.

BILLAUD-VARENNE [*with hard and disdainful severity*]. Self-esteem is pure selfishness. It makes no difference to us whether Saint-Just's heart is sullied or not; we are saving the Republic.

SAINTE-JUST [*with an inquiring look at ROBESPIERRE*]. Robespierre!

ROBESPIERRE. My friend, you need fear nothing so far as your soul is concerned. The storm and stress of a Revolution are not dealt with according to ordinary processes of law; we cannot apply moral standards to the force that is now shaping the world on a new foundation. Of course, we must be just; but the individual conscience cannot judge: only the public conscience matters. Our light is in the people: its salvation is our law. We have but one question to ask ourselves: do the people want Danton put down? Once that question is decided, the whole matter is ended. We must wage war to win. Justice means that that which is just shall triumph. We cannot wait: Danton must be laid low. To allow him to arm himself would be to offer our breast to the dagger of an assassin; military and financial despotism would rule the Revolution, and civil wars lay waste our land for a hundred years. We would be hated in history, though we deserve to be loved.

BILLAUD-VARENNE. We must win at all costs! Every one must tremble with fear at our terrible dictatorship!

VADIER. This is not a question of whether one man shall or shall not be judged according to law, but whether all Europe is to become Jacobin or not.

SAINT-JUST [*his hands to his breast, resembling David's "Robespierre," in his picture of the "Tennis-Court Oath"*]. Oh, Republic, take my honor if you will, take me and devour me!

BILLAUD-VARENNE [*sharply*]. Perhaps at this very moment the Republic is choking; our ideas are fruitless; Reason is dying. Quick!

ROBESPIERRE. Arrest Danton. [*He signs a paper. BILLAUD-VARENNE also signs, in feverish haste.*]

SAINT-JUST. For you, Liberty! [*He signs.*]

BILLAUD-VARENNE. The Convention won't object?

ROBESPIERRE [*disdainfully*]. The Convention is always ready to sacrifice its members for the public welfare.

VADIER [*signing*]. Leave this matter to me.

ROBESPIERRE [*with a sigh*]. The Revolution weighs heavier on our shoulders than ever.

VADIER [*aside*]. The cat-tiger has scruples, but he licks his chops all the same!

ROBESPIERRE. A regrettable necessity. We mutilate the Republic in order to save her.

SAINT-JUST [*somber and exalted*]. The philosopher Jesus said to his disciples: "And if thy right hand offend thee, cut it off, and cast it from thee; for it is profitable for thee that one of thy members should

perish, and not that thy whole body should be cast into hell." And I say to you: if your friend is corrupt, and corrupts the Republic, cast him from the Republic; if your brother is corrupt and corrupts the Republic, cast him from the Republic. And if the blood of the Republic, if your own blood, flows from a gaping wound, let it flow. The Republic must be purified, or die! The Republic is virtue. If that virtue be stained, the Republic ceases to exist.

VADIER [*aside*]. They are all mad. They ought to be put into strait-jackets. They must be put in cells.—Oh, then! [*He starts to go.*]

BILLAUD-VARENNE. Wait until I sign.

VADIER. You have already signed.

BILLARD-VARENNE. Where? I don't remember. What have I done? Was I right? *Tristis est anima mea!* Oh, if I could only stretch out in the fields, on the fresh earth; smell the scent of the woods; see a brook running between banks of willows! Rest! Rest—

ROBESPIERRE. The founders of the Republic have no rest this side the grave.

## ACT III

*[The Revolutionary Tribunal.]*

*The Public Prosecutor FOUQUIER-TINVILLE; HERMAN, the Judge, the Jury, gendarmes, and the People, are present. On the prisoners' bench are DANTON, DESMOULINS, HÉRAULT, PHILIPPEAUX, WESTERMANN, CHABOT and the brothers FREY—the last two of whom do not speak—and FABRE D'EGLANTINE, who sits in an arm-chair in their midst. In the front row with the public, sits the painter DAVID and some of his friends. The windows of the room are open, and through them the shouts of the crowd are heard. From time to time, VADIER'S head is seen peering through the wicket in the door, behind the JUDGE, watching the trial. General HANRIOT stands at the door. HERMAN and FOUQUIER-TINVILLE cast anxious glances toward him every few moments.*

*CHABOT and the brothers FREY are being questioned, and DANTON is boiling with rage. DESMOULINS appears crushed and discouraged. HÉRAULT calmly looks on, smiling. PHILIPPEAUX, jaws set and eyes riveted on his judges, prepares his defense. FABRE D'EGLANTINE, who is ill and suffering, sits back in his chair. The crowd jostle and push, following the trial with great interest. They emphasize with their remarks and shouting*



*each development in the trial, like an audience at a melodrama—amused and moved at the same time.]*

JUDGE [*to the brothers FREY*]. You are an agent of Pitt. You have tried to corrupt the Convention. In order to further your speculations and corrupt practices, you tried to bribe the representatives of the people. You have put a price on the conscience of every one you wished to buy.

DANTON [*bursting forth*]. Judge, I demand a word!

JUDGE. Your turn will come, Danton.

DANTON. What have I to do with all this nastiness? What have I to do with these thieves?

JUDGE. You will be informed.

DANTON. My natural decency prevents my crushing those scoundrels. You know that very well, and you take advantage of my silence in order to associate me in the minds of the people with underhanded swindlers and embezzlers.

HÉRAULT. Calm yourself, Danton.

JUDGE. You must respect the law. You will have a chance to explain later.

FOUQUIER-TINVILLE. Quiet, Danton. You will have to answer the charges, together with the rest who are accused with you.

DANTON. Danton must not be tried for corruption after a pack of blackguards. You might at least give him first place. Danton refuses to be second in anything whatsoever, in virtue or in vice.

PHILIPPEAUX. Don't, Danton. You must be prudent.

JUDGE [*to the brothers FREY*]. You are Jews by birth, and you came originally from Moravia; your name is Tropuscka. You took the name of Schoenfeld, under which you bought patents of nobility in Austria, and for the time being called yourself Frey. One of your sisters was baptized, and is now being kept by a German baron. The other married Chabot, a former priest, and now a representative in the Convention. You have associated yourself with certain other adventurers of doubtful birth like yourself: Diederischen, who came originally from Holstein, and was employed in a Viennese bank; Gusman, called the Spaniard, who passed as a German nobleman; the former Abbé d'Espagnac, an army contractor. With the help of certain deputies whom you had bribed, you prospered. Chabot served as a go-between for you and his colleagues. He put his own price at 150,000 livres. He gave Fabre d'Eglantine 100,000 of the sum, and Fabre altered the Convention's decree relative to the *Compagnie des Indes*. I am submitting the original document to the jury.

VADIER [*stealthily opening the wicket and beckoning to HANRIOT*]. Is all well, Hanriot?

HANRIOT [*in an undertone*]. Everything will be satisfactory.

VADIER [*pointing to FOUQUIER-TINVILLE and the Court*]. They are not baulking?

HANRIOT. Don't worry. I have my eye on them.

VADIER. Good. And don't hesitate; if the prosecutor flinches, arrest him. [*He closes the wicket.*]

HÉRAULT [*looking at the crowd*]. See the people gape at us!

DANTON [*really ashamed, but with a forced laugh*]. They're not used to seeing this old face of mine on this infamous bench. It's not an ordinary sight! Danton at the mercy of a pack of charlatans. Ha, ha! I must laugh! Look at David over there; his tongue sticks out from sheer hatred, like a dog's. Good God, Camille, pull yourself together! What the devil, the people are looking at us!

CAMILLE. Ah, Danton, I shall never see my Lucile again!

DANTON. Nonsense! You'll sleep in her arms to-night.

CAMILLE. Get me away from here, Danton; save me. I don't know what to do. I can never defend myself!

DANTON. Weaker than a girl! Keep a stiff upper lip, and remember that we are making history.

CAMILLE. What do I care for history?

DANTON. If you want to see Lucile, don't sit there looking like a criminal! What the devil are you looking at?

CAMILLE. Look, Danton, there—

DANTON. What? What is it?

CAMILLE. Near the window—that young man—

DANTON. That impudent rascal, with a shock of hair over his eyes, that law-clerk with his arm around a woman's waist?

CAMILLE. Nothing—nothing—hallucinations: I saw, I thought I saw—myself—

DANTON. Yourself?

CAMILLE. I imagined I was in his place, at the trial of the Girondins—my victims— Oh, Danton! [*Meanwhile the documents have been handed to all the jurymen.*]

JUDGE. Fabre, do you still deny the accusations?

FABRE D'EGLANTINE [*quietly, ironically, but wearily*]. There is no need of my explaining it all again: you would refuse to listen; you have already made up your mind. I showed you just now that the true version of the decree which I made out had been changed, added to, and corrected, by traitors. That is evident to any one who will take the trouble to look at the papers dispassionately and in a spirit of justice. But there is no one of that sort here: I know very well that I was condemned in advance. I was unlucky enough to incur Robespierre's displeasure, and it is your business to pander to his egotism. I know this is the end. But I am tired of life, it has brought me too much suffering for me to make an effort to preserve it.

FOUQUIER-TINVILLE. You are outraging justice, and you slander Robespierre. It is not Robespierre who accuses you of corruption: it is Cambon. It is not Robespierre who accuses you of conspiracy: it is Billaud-Varenne. Your propensity for intrigue is well-known. It has often led you to plot and conspire and write dangerous plays.

FABRE D'EGLANTINE. Silence! *Ne sutor ultra*

*crepidam*. Messieurs, you my audience, I call you to witness: have not my plays diverted you? Fouquier can take my head from me, but not my *Philinte!*

FOUQUIER-TINVILLE. Some abnormal form of curiosity has led you to consider the Nation's Assembly as a theater, where you sought to play upon the secret springs of the soul. You made use of everything: the ambition of certain people, the laziness of others; anxiety, envy, everything suited your ends. This impudent cleverness of yours has revealed you as the leader of an organized counter-revolution, either because your effrontery or your brazen humor were pleased to run counter to the established order—through your unhealthy disdain of reason—or rather your confessed aristocratic ideas, and your cupidity—nourished for a long time by money from Pitt for the ruin of the Republic. In 'ninety-two you were discovered conspiring with the enemy. Danton sent you to Dumouriez in order to carry on your criminal negotiations, which saved the Prussians, who were practically defeated. This now brings us to the other prisoners. I must leave you now, as they are anxious for me to tear away their masks. I shall come to you again before long, and show the center of this vast network of intrigues. [*The prisoners are agitated, and the spectators become more attentive. DANTON is seen speaking words of encouragement to his friends.*]

FABRE D'EGLANTINE [*impertinently, to FOUQUIER-TINVILLE*]. The plot was not well thought out, and the intrigue confusing; too many characters; you can't tell where they come from, and you know only too well



where they are going. Why talk so much about them? Your play is execrable, Fouquier. You had much better chop off my head at once: I have the tooth-ache.

JUDGE [to HÉRAULT DE SÉCHELLES]. Prisoner, your name and occupation?

HÉRAULT. Formerly Héroult-Séchéelles. Former Attorney-general at the Châtelet: I once sat in the present room. Former President of the Convention: in its name I inaugurated the Republican Constitution. Former member of the Committee of Public Safety; once the friend of Saint-Just and of Couthon, who are now murdering me.

JUDGE. You are an aristocrat. Your fortune dates from your relations with the Court, and from the time you were presented to the Capet woman by the Polignac woman. You have been in constant communication with the émigrés; you were the friend of Proly the Austrian, the bastard son of the Prince of Kaunitz, who was sent to the guillotine last month. You have divulged the secrets of the Committee of Public Safety, and sent important papers to foreign courts; you sheltered under your roof, in direct violation of the law, the former war commissioner Catus, who was wanted on the charge of being an émigré and a conspirator. You were even so audacious as to follow him and defend him in the Lepelletier section where he was arrested.

HÉRAULT. I deny one thing: I never divulged state secrets, and I defy you to prove the accusation. The rest is true, I am proud to confess.

JUDGE. Have you any explanation to make?

HÉRAULT. None at all. I had friends, and no power in the State could prevent my caring for them and helping them when they needed help.

JUDGE. You were once President of the Convention. It was your duty to furnish an example of obedience to the nation.

HÉRAULT. I now offer them an example of another sort: sacrificing my life for my duty.

JUDGE. Is that all you have to say?

HÉRAULT. That is all.

FOUQUIER-TINVILLE. The next, Herman!

JUDGE [*to DESMOULINS, who is next*]. Your name and occupations?

CAMILLE [*nervously*]. Lucie-Camille-Simplice Desmoulins, Deputy to the Convention.

JUDGE. How old are you?

CAMILLE. As old as the *sans-culotte* Jesus when he was crucified: thirty-three.

JUDGE. You are accused of having sought to bring discredit upon the Republic. You have spoken libelously of the actions of the State, and compared the glory of our time to the nastiness of the Roman emperors. You have reawakened the hopes of the aristocrats, excited suspicion against those who saw the necessity of putting down rebellion, and undermined the work of national defense. Under your mask of humanity, which is belied by your character as already known, you have tried to release from prison the suspects, and overwhelm the State with a counter-revolution. What have you to say in your defense?

CAMILLE [*deeply agitated, tries to answer, but can*

*only stutter. He puts his hand to his forehead. His friends look at him in anxiety].* I ask for mercy. I don't know what's the matter—with me! I—I can't speak.

JUDGE. Do you confess having done these things?

CAMILLE. No, no.

JUDGE. Then defend yourself.

CAMILLE. I cannot. Excuse me. I—I am ill. [*His friends press about him. He sits down, breathing hard, and mops his forehead with a handkerchief. The Judge shrugs his shoulders.*]

FOUQUIER-TINVILLE. Do you confess or not?

PHILIPPEAUX. Read the seditious passages.

DANTON. Yes, read them; dare read them before the people. Let them judge where their friends stand!

JUDGE. I have sufficiently indicated them. There is no need of again calling public attention to such dangerous sentiments.

DANTON. For whom are they dangerous? For cut-throats?

FOUQUIER-TINVILLE. I see your course has been prepared in advance. We shall pay no attention to it.

CAMILLE [*in agony*]. I am ashamed—I beg your pardon, all of you. I haven't slept for several nights; all these charges against me—! I'm not master of myself—I can't speak. Give me a breathing-spell. I—I feel dizzy.

FOUQUIER-TINVILLE. We have no time to waste.

DANTON. At what hour have you decided to have our heads? Can't you wait, hangman?

PHILIPPEAUX. You will wait for Desmoulins. You have no right to murder people without hearing them.

FABRE D'ÉGLANTINE. You know he is sensitive and very impressionable. You are trying to take advantage of his weakness. You won't do a thing to him while we still live.

HÉRAULT [*ironically*]. Like the duel of the Emperor Commodus who, armed with a cavalry sword, forced his enemy to fight him with a fencing-foil tipped with cork.

JUDGE. Silence!

THE FOUR PRISONERS. Silence yourself, hangman! —People, protect our rights, the sacred rights of the prisoner. [*The People shout: "Bravo! Bravo!"*]

DANTON [*rubbing DESMOULINS' hands*]. Courage, my boy!

CAMILLE [*still nervous, but pulling himself together, he grasps DANTON'S hand, smiles at him, and rises*]. Thank you, friends, I feel much better now. You have given me strength.—That, monsters, is what you will never have: the affection of the people. You accuse me of having spoken my mind? I am proud of it. Faithful to the Republic, which I founded, I will remain free, no matter what it costs me. You say I have insulted liberty? I have said that liberty meant happiness, reason, equality, and justice. I have committed these outrages, yes! You see, oh people, how I am rewarded! [*The People acclaim him with Bravos.*]

JUDGE. You must not address the people.

CAMILLE. Whom should I address? The aristocrats? I begged the Committee to be merciful, for I

wanted the people to enjoy the liberty which they have acquired, but which seems intended now merely to satisfy the grudges of a handful of scoundrels! I asked men to put an end to their quarreling, and that they be bound together by love into a great family. It appears that these desires are criminal. But what I call a crime is this mad political game which soils the nation and the people, forcing it to plunge their hands into innocent blood before the whole universe!

JUDGE. It is not your place to accuse; you are here to answer your accusers.

CAMILLE. Very well, I accuse myself, if you like, of not having always thought as I think today. For too long did I believe in hatred; the heat of battle led me on, and I have committed too many crimes; I stirred up vengeance, and more than once the sword was drawn as a result of my writings. Innocent people were dragged here on my advice. This is my crime, my real crime, and you are my partners in it. This is the crime I am today expiating.

JUDGE. Whom are you referring to?

FOUQUIER-TINVILLE. Whose death do you regret?

PHILIPPEAUX. Don't answer, Desmoulins!

FABRE D'EGLANTINE. It's a trap. Take care!

DANTON. Swallow your tongue, my boy!

CAMILLE. I refer to the Girondins. [*The People murmur, and DAVID says: "He confesses!"*]

JUDGE. The prisoner confesses his implication in the Brissotist conspiracies.

CAMILLE [*with a shrug*]. It was my *Brissot dévoilé* which condemned the Brissotists.



FOUQUIER-TINVILLE. But now you regret it?

CAMILLE [*not answering*]. Oh, my colleagues! I say to you as Brutus said to Cicero: "We fear death too much, and exile, and poverty. *Nimium timemus mortem et exilium et paupertatem.*" Is life so dear that we should prolong it without honor? There is not one of us who has not reached the very summit of the mountain of life. We have before us the descent, which is full of precipices, unavoidable even by the most obscure. The descent has no pleasant landscapes to offer, no resting places which were not a thousand times more delectable to that same Solomon who declared, in all his glory and in the midst of his seven hundred wives: "I find that the dead are happier than the living, and that the happiest of men is he who was never born." [*He sits down.*]

DANTON. Fool! That speech of yours will cost us our heads! [*He kisses DESMOULINS. Some one comes to tell DANTON that it is his turn. He rises and faces the Court.*]

JUDGE [*to DANTON*]. Prisoner, your name, age, occupation, and place of residence?

DANTON [*in a voice of thunder*]. My place of residence? Soon the great void. My name? In the Panthéon. [*The People are tense. They talk and appear to approve him; then suddenly they become silent, as the Judge speaks.*]

JUDGE. You know the law. Answer categorically.

DANTON. My name is Georges-Jacques Danton. I am thirty-three years old, and a native of Arcis-sur-

Aube. I am a solicitor. I live in Paris at present, in the Rue des Cordeliers.

JUDGE. Danton, the National Convention accuses you of having conspired with Mirabeau and Dumouriez, of having known their plans for putting an end to our liberty, and of having secretly aided and abetted them. [DANTON roars with laughter. The Court, the People, and even the prisoners stare at him, and then all begin to laugh. The whole room vibrates with Homeric laughter. DANTON strikes the railing in front of him with his fist.]

DANTON [*still laughing*]. Liberty conspiring against Liberty! Danton conspiring against Danton!—Scoundrels! Look me in the eye! Liberty resides here! [*He puts his hands to his head.*] It is in this petrified mask of mine, it is in these eyes which flame with volcanic fire; in this voice, the roar of which rocks the palaces of tyrants to their foundations. Take my head, nail it to the shield of the Republic, and it will, like Medusa, make the enemies of Liberty fall dead from fright.

JUDGE. I am not asking for your panegyric, but for your defense.

DANTON. A man like me does not have to defend himself: my actions speak for me. I have nothing to defend, nothing to explain. I don't enshroud myself with all sorts of mysterious things if I want to make love to an old woman—as Robespierre does. My door is wide open, I have no curtains to my bed; all of France knows when I drink and when I make love. I am a man of the people; my virtues and vices are

of the people; I conceal nothing from them. I show myself to the world, and I have nothing to be ashamed of.

JUDGE. Danton, your language is an insult to justice. The low expressions you use indicate the baseness of your soul. Moderation is the badge of innocence, and audacity that of crime.

DANTON. If audacity is a crime, I speak for crime. I kiss it, and leave virtue to you, Judge: the lean kine of Pharaoh have no attraction for me. I love audacity, and I am proud of it: the audacity of a good hug. I love the huge breasts where heroes suck. The Revolution is the daughter of audacity. Audacity is what laid low the Bastille; through me, audacity urged the people of Paris against royalty; audacity it was that urged me to pick the severed head of Louis by its fat ears, and cast it in the teeth of tyrants and their God! [*The People, in great excitement, show their approval of DANTON.*]

JUDGE. All this violence proves nothing. I have made specific accusations against you, and I ask you to make specific replies, adhering to the facts.

DANTON. Do you expect a revolutionary like me to make a dignified answer? My soul is like bronze in a forge. The statue of Liberty is being molded in my breast. Do you want to put me into a squirrel's cage? Do you insist on putting me through a cross-examination? Catechize me? Why, I would tear the net you want to put around me to tatters; my belly would burst the shirt! I am accused, you say! Where are my accusers? Let them show themselves, and I

will cover them with the opprobrium they so richly deserve!

JUDGE. Again, Danton, you are lacking in respect toward the representatives of the nation, toward the court and the sovereign people who have a right to demand an account of your actions. Marat was accused as you are accused. He did not become violent. He did not answer facts with athletic exhibitions and florid rhetoric. He tried to justify himself, and he succeeded. I can offer you no more brilliant example.

DANTON. I shall then condescend to justify myself, and follow Saint-Just's plan. When I look through this list of horrors, my whole self shudders. I, sold to Mirabeau, Orléans, Dumouriez! I always fought them! I frustrated Mirabeau's plans when I considered them dangerous to the cause of Liberty. I defended Marat against him. The only time I saw Dumouriez was to ask him for an accounting of the millions that he had squandered. I suspected his plans, and in order to spoil them, I flattered him. Ought I to have ruined him, when the safety of the Republic lay in his hands? Yes, I did send Fabre to him; yes, I did promise to make him commander-in-chief; but at the same time I told Billaud-Varenne to keep a strict watch over him. Am I to be blamed because I lied to a traitor? I have committed many another crime for the nation. You can't save a nation with petty virtues. I would have shouldered any crime at all, if need were, to save you—all of you, judges, people, even you vile impostors who are now accusing me! I conspire with royalty? Ah, yes, indeed, I re-



member how I aided in establishing the royal power on the tenth of August, the triumph of the federalists on the thirty-first of May, and the victory of the Prussians at Valmy! Bring forth my accusers! I have something to say to the blackguards who are ruining the Republic! I have a few important revelations to make. I demand a hearing.

JUDGE. These indecent outbursts can only harm your cause. Those who accuse you enjoy the confidence of the public. Clear yourself first: a man who is accused deserves no confidence until he has washed himself clean of his accusations. It is not only your Republicanism which is now in question; you have been cited for evil living, debauchery, prodigality, and embezzlement.

DANTON. Not so fast! Stop the spigot of your flowing eloquence. Let us have a few drops at a time, so that we may lose nothing. So I am accused of loving life, enjoying it? Of course, I love life. Not all the pedants of Arras and Geneva can put a stop to the joy that ferments in the district of Champagne. It swells on the vines and increases the desires of men. Shall I blush because of my superabundant vitality? Nature gave me great capacity and correspondingly great needs. I was fortunate enough not to have sprung from an enfeebled and puny and privileged race; and I have throughout my tempestuous career, preserved my natural vigor intact. What have you to complain of? My vigor has been your salvation. What do you care if I pass my nights at the Palais-Royal? Not a single caress can harm the cause of



Liberty. I have enough love for everything. Have you proscribed all pleasure? Has France made an oath of chastity? Have we all fallen under the rule of a schoolmaster? Because an old fox has lost his tail must we all lose ours? [*The People laugh.*]

JUDGE. You are accused of having kept part of the money intrusted to you by the State. You have used secret moneys for the satisfaction of your pleasures. You have levied on Belgium and brought from Brussels three carriages full of plunder.

DANTON. I have already answered those absurd accusations. When I was Minister under the Revolution, fifty millions were left to me. I admit that. I offered to make a strict accounting of them. Cambon gave me 40,000 livres for secret expenses. Half of this I spent openly: I gave free rein to Fabre and to Billaud. I used these funds to help the departments. As to that ridiculous tale of the archduchess' napkins, which were brought from Belgium, do you think me a handkerchief thief? My trunks were opened at Béthune, and I was detained. They found only my own clothes, and a swanskin corset. Does the corset outrage Robespierre's modesty? Is that why I am accused?

JUDGE. The charge of embezzlement is proved by your prodigality of the past two years. Your income was not sufficient, and you must have taken State money.

DANTON. As a solicitor in the council, I bought a little property near Arcis. I have assured my mother a small income, also my father-in-law, and the good

woman who brought me up. These sums are no larger than was my income before the Revolution. As for the life I led at Paris or at Arcis, possibly I have not confined my expenditures to the level of shameful economy. I do not force my friends when they sup with me to partake of the meager soup of Mère Duplay. I cannot stint myself or my friends. Are you not ashamed to trifle with Danton about how much he drinks or how much he eats? This nasty hypocrisy is threatening to overwhelm the nation. It blushes for nature, and hides its face at a real healthy thing. Its virtues are but negative virtues. So long as a man has a weak stomach and atrophied senses, lives on a little cheese and sleeps in a narrow bed, you call him Incorruptible, and imagine that that is sufficient to allow him to dispense with courage and intelligence. I detest these anæmic virtues. Virtue means to be great, for yourself and for the nation. When you have the honor of holding a great man in your midst, don't begrudge him his bread. All his needs, his passions, his capacity for sacrifice, are built on a different plan from that of ordinary men. Achilles used to eat the whole back of an ox at a single meal. If Danton requires much to feed his furnace, let him have it without a murmur. Here, in me, is the vast fire, the flames of which protect you against prowling beasts that wait their chance to spring at the throat of the Republic.

JUDGE. You therefore confess?

DANTON. You lie! I have just denied. I have lived freely, honestly, carefully, on the money that was

confided to me, but I have not been miserly. I rendered to Danton the things that were Danton's. Bring the witnesses I asked for, and we shall clear up any misunderstandings. The accusations and answers ought not to remain vague: nothing short of a categorical discussion will bring this trial to an end. Where are the witnesses? Why don't they come forth?

JUDGE. Your voice is tired, Danton: rest.

DANTON. Not at all! I can continue.

JUDGE. You may continue your justification shortly, and more calmly.

DANTON [*furiously*]. I am calm! My witnesses! I have been asking for them for the past three days! I have not yet seen a single one. I ask the public prosecutor, before the assembled audience, why justice is refused me?

FOUQUIER-TINVILLE. I have no objection to their being summoned.

DANTON. Then bring them. Nothing can be done without your orders.

FOUQUIER-TINVILLE. I allow the witnesses to be called, except, of course, those designated by the prisoners as belonging to the Convention; because the accusation is made by the whole Assembly, and it would be ridiculous to insist that your own accusers should be brought in to justify you, especially when they are the representatives of the people, the guardians of the highest power, accountable only to the people.

HÉRAULT. A good Jesuit trick! [*He and FABRE D'EGLANTINE laugh.*]

DANTON. I see! My colleagues will be allowed to murder me, and I shall not be permitted to bring confusion on my murderers!

FOUQUIER-TINVILLE. You dare insult the national representatives!

PHILIPPEAUX. Are we here as a mere matter of form? Do you want us to remain mute?

CAMILLE. People, you hear! They are afraid of the truth! They fear the testimony that will confound them!

JUDGE. Address the court, and not the people.

PHILIPPEAUX. The people are our sole judges; you are nothing without them.

CAMILLE. I ask the Convention!

DANTON. You want to gag us, but you cannot. My voice will stir Paris to its very entrails. Light! Light!

JUDGE. Silence!

THE PEOPLE. The witnesses! [*The Judges become alarmed.*]

FOUQUIER-TINVILLE. It is time to cease this scandalous discussion; I shall write to the Convention of your request: we will obey their command. [*The People applaud. FOUQUIER-TINVILLE and HERMAN consult together, write the request, and read in an undertone what they have written.*]

CAMILLE [*exultant*]. We have won our case!

DANTON. We'll confound the blackguards. You'll see them fall into their own vileness head-first. If the French people are what they ought to be, I shall be obliged to ask their pardon.

PHILIPPEAUX. Pardon from those who seek our death?

CAMILLE [*gaily*]. We shall appoint Saint-Just schoolmaster at Blérancourt and Robespierre churchwarden at Saint-Omer.

HÉRAULT [*with a shrug*]. Incurrible! They are on their way to the guillotine, and they still hope!

DANTON. Idiots! To accuse Danton and Desmoulins of conspiring against the Republic! So Barère is a patriot now, and Danton an aristocrat. France won't be humbugged like that for very long! [*To one of the Jury.*] Do you think we are conspirators? See, he smiles. He doesn't believe it.—Write that he laughed!

FOUQUIER-TINVILLE [*in the midst of his work*]. I beg you to cease your personal conversations. It is against the law.

DANTON. Do you dare tell your father how to make children? I was the one who organized this court; I ought to know how to behave in it.

CAMILLE. I am beginning to take pleasure in life again. A moment ago, everything was dark; I felt as if I were already in the grave.

DANTON. It isn't that everything is light: you yourself have changed. You didn't loom very large on the horizon.

CAMILLE. I am ashamed of my weakness. My flesh is feeble.

DANTON. You're a sly one! You wanted to become an object of sympathy to the women! See that girl there making eyes at you!



HÉRAULT [*softly*]. My poor friends, I really pity you.

DANTON. Why, my handsome fellow?

HÉRAULT. You're selling the bear-skin, when your own is already disposed of.

DANTON. My skin? Yes, I know, there are many who would like it. Saint-Just especially. Well, let him come and take it, and if he succeeds, let him make a rug of it.

HÉRAULT. Why bother? [*He shrugs his shoulders and lapses into silence. Meanwhile, FOUQUIER-TINVILLE has finished his letter, which is taken out by a guard.*]

JUDGE. While we await the Convention's answer, let us continue. [*The gendarmes make the prisoners sit down again. He says to PHILIPPEAUX.*] Your name and occupation?

PHILIPPEAUX. Pierre-Nicolas Philippeaux, former judge at Le Mans, representative in the Convention.

JUDGE. Your age?

PHILIPPEAUX. Thirty-five.

JUDGE. You are charged with having paralyzed the national defense, during your mission in La Vendée; you attempted to throw the Committee of Public Safety into disrepute, by means of insulting pamphlets; you were a conspirator with Danton and Fabre in their attempt to restore the royalty.

PHILIPPEAUX. I exposed the indignation of the public against the brigandage of certain generals. It was my duty, and I accomplished it.

JUDGE. In this implacable struggle for France, your

duty was to do everything in your power to aid the nation. You tried to hinder it.

PHILIPPEAUX. Ronsin and Rossignol are a dishonor to humanity.

FOUQUIER-TINVILLE. You were not a representative of humanity, but of the nation.

PHILIPPEAUX. My nation is humanity.

JUDGE. Did those you pitied, the Royalists who were crushed by Rossignol, think of humanity?

PHILIPPEAUX. There is no excuse for crime.

FOUQUIER-TINVILLE. Victory is.

PHILIPPEAUX. I accuse you.

CAMILLE. Before all the people, I denounce these infamies!

FOUQUIER-TINVILLE [*with a shrug*]. Let the people judge. [*The People are divided: many applaud FOUQUIER-TINVILLE and converse among themselves.*]

DANTON [*aside to DESMOULINS*]. Keep your mouth shut! You're throwing stones in my garden.

CAMILLE [*astounded*]. How is that?

DANTON. I said what was necessary.

JUDGE [*to WESTERMANN*]. Prisoner, stand up.

WESTERMANN. I? Well, forward march!

JUDGE. Your name?

WESTERMANN. You know my name very well.

JUDGE. Your name?

WESTERMANN [*with a shrug*]. Always mixing things up! Ask the people!

JUDGE. You are François-Joseph Westermann, native of Alsace, brigadier-general. You are forty-three years old. You were to have been the sword of this

conspiracy. Danton recalled you to Paris to command the soldiers in the counter-revolution. You committed atrocities in your army. You were the cause of the defeat at Châtillon. Together with Philippeaux, you attempted to kill the patriots whom it was your duty to defend. Your record is very bad. You have been three times accused of theft.

WESTERMANN. You swine, you lie!

JUDGE. I shall have you sent back to your cell for insulting the law, and try you without hearing your defense.

WESTERMANN. I was a soldier at the age of fifteen. On the tenth of August I commanded the people when we took the Tuileries. I fought at Jemmapes. Dumouriez deserted me in Holland, surrounded by the enemy, and I brought my legion to Antwerp. Then I was in La Vendée; I made trouble for the brigands of Charette and Cathelineau. Savenay, Ancenis, and Le Mans are strewn with their carcasses. So the damned pigs accuse me of being cruel? I was more than that: I was ferocious toward cowards. Do you ask for proofs against me? Here they are: I charged my cavalry through our retreating soldiers at Pontorson. I slashed the face of a cowardly officer at Châtillon. I would have burned my whole army, if necessary, in order to be victorious. I pillaged, you say? What has that to do with you? You are out of your minds. I did my duty as a soldier: I'm not a shopkeeper. My duty was to defend the *Patrie* by every means; I have accomplished it for the past thirty years, sparing neither my own sweat nor my blood. I received seven

wounds—not one in the back—or rather the only one is my accusation.

JUDGE. You have often in the presence of witnesses, spoken insultingly of the Convention. You have even threatened to pull down the palace on the heads of the representatives.

WESTERMANN. Quite true. I hate that suspicious pack of spouters who stop all action by their jealous stupidity. I said that the Convention needed to be cleaned out and I offered to carry off the manure.

FOUQUIER-TINVILLE. Do you confess to having conspired?

WESTERMANN. What conspiracy are you talking about? I did my own thinking, and my own doing. I am a friend of none of these others. I've spoken occasionally to Danton, and I admire his energy; but he's a lawyer, too, and I never trust lawyers. France can't be saved by talk, but only by sabers.

JUDGE. That is enough. Your case is clear.

WESTERMANN. Send me to the guillotine! That at least is something active—like a saber stroke. I only ask one thing: put me on my back: I want to face the knife. [VADIER and BILLAUD-VARENNE enter. FOUQUIER-TINVILLE rises and shakes hands with them. *The People are excited.*]

BILLAUD-VARENNE [*in an undertone*]. Scoundrels! We have them now!

VADIER [*aside to FOUQUIER-TINVILLE*]. This will end matters.

FOUQUIER-TINVILLE. It was high time. [*Deep agitation among the People, who become silent.* FOUQUIER-

TINVILLE *reads, standing, with the other two at his side.*] “The National Convention, after having heard the report of the Committee of Public Safety and Public Security, decrees that the Revolutionary Tribunal shall continue the examination into the conspiracy of Danton and his associates; that the Judge shall use every means accorded him by law to impose respect and to put a stop to every effort on the part of the prisoners to disturb the public dignity and interfere with the course of justice, and that every prisoner accused of conspiracy who shall resist or insult the national justice shall be immediately withdrawn from the trial.” [*The People and the others are astonished. All at once the People begin talking, then the prisoners, at first ill at ease, burst out.*]

CAMILLE. Infamous! They are gagging us!

PHILIPPEAUX. They are not judges, but butchers.

DANTON [*to FOUQUIER-TINVILLE*]. You have not read it all. There is something else. The answer! The answer to our demand!

JUDGE. Silence!

FOUQUIER-TINVILLE. The Convention communicates the following letter, received by the Committees from the police department, which shall be read in order that the court may understand the perils besetting the cause of Liberty. [*Reads:*] “Commune of Paris. We, the administrators of the police department, having received a letter from the concierge of the Luxembourg prison, immediately went to the said prison, and brought before us Citizen Laflotte, former minister to the Republic of Florence, who has been confined there



for the past six days. He declared to us that last night, between the hours of six and seven, as he was in the room of Arthur Dillon, having taken the aforesaid Dillon to one side, told him that it was necessary to resist oppression, that the good men detained in the Luxembourg and other prisons ought to join forces; that Desmoulins' wife had placed a thousand écus at his disposal, in order to arouse the people in the neighborhood of the Revolutionary Tribunal—”

CAMILLE [*furiously*]. The scoundrels! They are not satisfied with murdering me! They are trying to murder my wife!

DANTON [*shaking his fist at FOUQUIER-TINVILLE*]. Scoundrels, scoundrels! They've invented this to ruin us! [*The People are in a fury of indignation.*]

FOUQUIER-TINVILLE [*continuing, as he makes efforts to arouse the interest of the audience*—“Laflotte pretended to enter into their plans in order to become better acquainted with them. Dillon, believing that he had made a convert to his infamous plot, told him of various plans. Laflotte declares his willingness to reveal these details to the Committee of Public Safety—”  
[*The People drown out his voice.*]

CAMILLE [*raving like a madman*]. Monsters! [*He crumples the papers in his hand and throws them at FOUQUIER-TINVILLE's head. He says to the People:*]  
Help! Help!

DANTON [*roaring*]. Cowards! Cut-throats! Why not bind us to these benches, and cut our throats!

PHILIPPEAUX. Tyranny!

DANTON. People, they are killing us—and you with

us! They are murdering Danton! Paris, arise! Arise! [*Two voices, at first, then all the People shout: "Tyranny!"*]

WESTERMANN. To arms! [*The People repeat: "To arms!" A wild uproar indoors and out.*]

FOUQUIER-TINVILLE [*pale and frightened, to BILLAUD-VARENNE and VADIER*]. What shall we do? The people may attack.

BILLAUD-VARENNE. Hanriot, clear the room.

VADIER. That would only incite them to battle, and who knows which would be the stronger?

FOUQUIER-TINVILLE [*who has just looked out the window*]. They are standing in crowds along the quay. They could force the doors.

DANTON. People, we can do anything we will. We have triumphed over kings and over the armies of Europe. To arms! Down with the tyrants!

VADIER [*to FOUQUIER-TINVILLE*]. First of all, send these fellows back to prison, and get that spouter out of the way.

DANTON [*shaking his fist at VADIER*]. Look at the cowardly cut-throats. Vadier, Vadier! Dog, come here! If this is to be a combat between cannibals, allow me at least to fight for my life!

VADIER [*to FOUQUIER-TINVILLE*]. Prosecutor, carry out the decree.

FOUQUIER-TINVILLE. The unheard-of indecency which the prisoners choose to employ as weapons of defense, the threats which they are so impudent as to hurl at the Tribunal, must put an end to the session. They force us to deal in like fashion under the grave

circumstances. I am therefore forced to ask that the questions be asked and judgment passed in the absence of the prisoners.

JUDGE. The court will deliberate. Take out the prisoners. [DANTON *does not seem to have understood. He chokes, roaring like an animal.*]

VADIER [*in an undertone*]. Cry, old fellow, your time has come!

HÉRAULT [*rising and dusting his coat*]. This is the end.

DANTON [*allowing himself to be led to his bench by the gendarmes, and there falling in a heap. He suddenly pulls himself together*]. Peace, Danton, peace. Our destinies are being accomplished.

CAMILLE [*supplicating*]. I am a friend of Robespierre. You can't condemn me.

WESTERMANN [*to DANTON*]. Keep that idiot from dishonoring himself.

DANTON [*in consternation*]. They are mad. Miserable country, what will become of you without this leader?

HÉRAULT [*to DESMOULINS*]. Come, my friends, let us show them we know how to die.

DANTON. We have lived long enough to lay our heads on the breast of glory. Let them take us to the scaffold!

CAMILLE. Oh, my wife! My son! Shall I never see you again? No, I cannot. My friends, help me!

JUDGE. Take out the prisoners.

DANTON. Don't, don't; this miserable life is not worth struggling for.

HÉRAULT [*as if in a hurry to have done with everything, goes to FABRE D'EGLANTINE, without waiting for the gendarmes, who take charge of the other prisoners*]. Give me your arm, my friend; here at last is an end to your troubles.

FABRE D'EGLANTINE. We shall at least have enjoyed a splendid performance.

DANTON. Well, Fabre, here is a play that is more impressive than any you ever wrote—no offense, I hope?

FABRE D'EGLANTINE. You have not read my latest; there are some good things in it. I tremble for fear Collot d'Herbois may destroy the manuscript. He is jealous of me.

DANTON. Console yourself, we shall all do there what you did here on earth.

FABRE D'EGLANTINE. What?

DANTON. Write poetry.

HÉRAULT. The Convention will be empty tomorrow. I yawn when I think that our survivors will be condemned, on pain of death, not to sleep through the speeches of Robespierre and Saint-Just, of Saint-Just and of Robespierre.

DANTON. They will not listen very long. I have dug the grave, and Robespierre will follow me.

FABRE D'EGLANTINE. I should like to have followed the development of the character of some of these little rascals: Barras, Talien, and Fouché. But I must not ask too much. Come, Hérault. [*They go out.*]

CAMILLE [*clinging to his bench, from which the gendarmes pull him*]. I won't go! You will kill me in prison. Oh, People, listen to me: it was I who made

the Republic. Defend me! I defended you! You won't take me from here, you monsters! Cowards, murderers! Oh, Lucile! Horace! My dear ones! [*They take him out.*]

DANTON [*deeply stirred*]. I, too, have a wife and children. [*Recovering his self-command.*] Come, Danton, no weakness.

WESTERMANN [*to DANTON*]. Why don't you take advantage of the people's feelings? They are on the point of fighting.

DANTON. The pigs! Nonsense! Pigs! They enjoy our little performance; they are there to applaud the victors. I've taught them only too well to act for themselves.

WESTERMANN. Stir them up now!

DANTON. Too late. And what the devil do I care? The Republic will fall, and I want to go before I see the end.

WESTERMANN. See what happened because you hesitated! Why didn't you forestall Robespierre?

DANTON. The Revolution cannot exist with both of us. I could never have defended myself without killing him. I prefer the Revolution to myself. [*WESTERMANN goes out.*]

PHILIPPEAUX. Come, Danton, it is some consolation to die as one has lived.

DANTON. I committed every crime for the sake of Liberty. I shouldered every task that the hypocrites shunned. I have sacrificed everything for the Revolution. I now see it was all in vain. The minx has played me false; and now she sacrifices me, as she will



sacrifice Robespierre tomorrow. She will take up with the first adventurer who presents himself. Well, what of it? I regret nothing; I love her, and I am glad I dishonored myself for her sake. I pity the poor beggars who never embraced her. When once you have been intimate with the divine strumpet, you are ready to die, for you have lived. [*He goes out with PHILIPPEAUX.*]

FOUQUIER-TINVILLE. I ask the jury whether they have sufficient instructions?

JUDGE. The jury will retire to deliberate. [*The Jury goes out. The People shift restlessly about, undecided what to think or do. Outside DANTON is heard, and the shouting of the crowds. They rush to the windows. Some of the court also look out. Those who are in the hall, repeat what is said outside, at first in undertones, then loudly.*]

FOUQUIER-TINVILLE. The riot is beginning. We'll be torn to pieces.

VADIER. Don't allow the shouting to influence the jury. Go and tell them. [*They go out. The People shout angrily at VADIER and FOUQUIER-TINVILLE, who enter the jury-room.*]

JUDGE [*terror-stricken*]. Citizens, the dignity of the Tribunal— Respect for justice— [*The shouting drowns out his last words.*] They are coming! We shall all be massacred! [*He shrinks toward the door, where he takes hold of the knob. The People, in fury, tear up benches and throw them toward the judges' benches, shouting threats of death. Enter SAINT-JUST. The People are somewhat intimidated,*

*and are silent. SAINT-JUST looks at them, coldly, and they fall back. There is dead silence for a few seconds, then murmurs are heard here and there. VADIER enters a moment after, and takes advantage of the calm to speak.]*

VADIER. Citizens, the Committee on Provisions and Necessities [*the People are silent*] takes this occasion to announce to the public the arrival of a large amount of grain and wood at the port of Bercy. [*A great clamor arises. People jostle one another in a wild attempt to leave the hall. After a few moments, only a small knot of curious onlookers remain. VADIER casts a glance of irony at the People.*] Their hearts are good, but their stomachs better. [*The Jury re-enters. The monotony of the Judge's questions is drowned by the last stragglers. The noise outside gradually subsides, and HERMAN'S voice becomes more distinct. Sentence is passed in a death-like silence.*]

JUDGE. Jurymen citizens, there was a conspiracy which was to have brought dishonor upon the national representatives, re-established the monarchy, and through corruption destroy the Republican government. Is Georges-Jacques Danton, solicitor, Deputy to the National Convention, guilty of conspiracy against the Republic?

THE HEAD OF THE JURY. He is.

JUDGE. Is Lucie-Simplice-Camille Desmoulins, solicitor, Deputy to the Convention, guilty of conspiring against the Republic?

THE HEAD OF THE JURY. He is.

JUDGE. Is Philippe-François-Nazaire Fabre, known

as Fabre d'Eglantine, Deputy to the Convention, guilty of conspiring against the Republic?

THE HEAD OF THE JURY. He is.

JUDGE. Is Pierre-Nicolas Philippeaux, former judge, and Deputy to the Convention, guilty of conspiring against the Republic?

THE HEAD OF THE JURY. He is.

JUDGE. Is Marie-Jean Hérault-Séchelles, attorney general, and Deputy to the Convention, guilty of conspiring against the Republic?

THE HEAD OF THE JURY. He is.

JUDGE. Is François-Joseph Westermann, brigadier-general, guilty of conspiring against the Republic?

THE HEAD OF THE JURY. He is.

FOUQUIER-TINVILLE. I demand the application of the law.

JUDGE. Then the Tribunal condemns Georges-Jacques Danton, Lucie-Simplice-Camille Desmoulins, Marie-Jean Hérault-Séchelles, Philippe-François-Nazaire Fabre, known as Fabre d'Eglantine, Pierre-Nicolas Philippeaux, and François-Joseph Westermann, to the death penalty. The Tribunal commands that this sentence be communicated to them between the two wickets of the *Conciergerie* by the clerk of the Tribunal, and that they be executed today, the sixteenth of Germinal, in the Place de la Révolution. [*The People file out. Outside, the clamor becomes more and more indistinct.*—SAINT-JUST, VADIER, and BILLAUD-VARENNE look at each other in silence.]

VADIER. The rotten colossus at last laid low! The Republic can now draw a free breath.

BILLAUD-VARENNE [*looking at SAINT-JUST—fiercely*]. The Republic will never be free until her dictators have disappeared.

SAINT-JUST [*looking straight at VADIER and BILLAUD-VARENNE*]. The Republic will never be pure until the vultures are no more.

VADIER [*banteringly*]. The Republic will never be free or pure until the Republic is no more!

SAINT-JUST. Ideas do not need men. Peoples pass away in order that God may live.

END





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