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## THREE PLAYS



THREE PLAYS  
BY  
WILLIAM ARCHER

WITH A PERSONAL NOTE BY  
BERNARD SHAW

LONDON  
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HOW  
WILLIAM ARCHER  
IMPRESSED  
BERNARD SHAW

WILLIAM ARCHER, though the most lucid and unequivocal of writers, was in person and manner probably the most deceptive man of his time. Nobody could have been less of an impostor in character ; yet he took in all his contemporaries, even those who were fairly intimate with him. One of the cleverest of our younger essayists has described him as a dour Scot, without the slightest sense of humor, hard, logical, with an ability that was always in cold storage. This was not a stranger's deduction from his writings. It was a personal impression so strong that no study of his writings could quite dispel it. Not until the last London journalist who has met him has perished will William Archer be judged by his writings ; and even in them there is an emotional reticence that will leave an incomplete picture of the man, though they will do him more justice than he ever did to himself. For the present, there is a fabulous Archer who is extremely unlike the real Archer, and much less amiable.

Had the fabulous Archer been the real one, our long friendship would have been impossible: indeed any friendship with him would have been impossible. Fortunately the real Archer was, like myself, the victim of an unsleeping and incorrigible sense of humor : the very quality (or fault)

which the fabulous Archer utterly lacked. No doubt when we first met as young men of the same age some forty-five years ago, I interested him as a person free from certain superstitions that had been oppressive to him ; but I interested him still more by being so laughably free, not only from superstitions recognized by him as such, but from many conventions which he had never dreamt of challenging, that I appealed irresistibly to him as an incarnate joke. The Shavianismus tickled him enormously; and he was never tired of quoting not only my jokes, but my heresies and paradoxes, many of which have by this time become platitudes. The way to get on with Archer was to amuse him : to argue with him was dangerous. The invaluable precept of Robert Owen : " Never argue : repeat your assertion/" established me with Archer on the footing of a privileged lunatic, and made quarrels impossible.

Archer had the air of a stoic : he was really a humorist to whom a jest was worth more than most of the things common men prize. For instance, he was unlucky enough to have trouble with one of his eyes. He went to an oculist, and returned so radiant that I concluded that the oculist had cured him. On the contrary, the oculist had diagnosed amblyopia. " What is amblyopia ?" said Archer. " Well," said the oculist, " the eye is quite perfect. There is no lesion or defect of any sort. A first class eye. Only, it does not see anything." Archer found this so funny that he thought half his sight well lost for the fun of repeating it to me and everyone else.

Another instance, in which money was at stake. Though a thoroughbred Scot, he was usually so indifferent to it, so untouched by vulgar ambition or by the least taint of snobbery, so sensibly unpretentious in his habits, so content to go to the pit when he paid to enter a theatre or even in the steerage when he made a long voyage, that nothing but a stroke of luck could ever have made him rich ; but when

he got married he conscientiously set to work to accumulate savings ; and by doing too much journalism he succeeded in making some provision for family contingencies. Unfortunately, on the best advice, he invested it all in Australian banks; and Australian banks presently went smash. I have known men reduced to fury and despair by less serious losses. Archer was sustained and even elated by our friend John Mackinnon Robertson. Robertson, not at that time the Right Honorable (he had not yet entered on the distinguished parliamentary career which he managed to combine so oddly with an equally distinguished literary activity), had just written an economic treatise entitled *The Fallacy of Saving*. He sent a copy to Archer ; and it arrived simultaneously with the bad news from Australia. Archer at once sat down and wrote, " My dear Robertson : I am already completely convinced of the fallacy of saving, thank you." He came to me to tell me the story, chuckling with the enjoyment of a man who had just heard that his uncle had died in Australia and left him a million. Had he been a giggling fribble, incapable of his own distress, I should have had no patience with him. But, as I shall presently shew, never was there a man less a trifler than William Archer. He laughed at his misfortunes because things of the mind were important to him (humor is purely mental), and things of the body and of the pocket, as long as they stopped short of disablement and painful privation, relatively trivial. The sight of one eye did not matter provided he could see with the other ; and he, who set very little store by what people call good living, could hardly be expected to feel much concern about savings whilst he could pay his way with earnings : a comic speech consoled him for both losses.

Why was it, then, that he produced so strong an impression of dourness, unbending Puritan rigidity, and total lack of humor ?

The explanation is that in spite of his lifelong pre-

occupation with the theatre, he was not a dramatic, self-expressive person. Physically he was a tall upstanding well built good-looking Scot, keeping his figure and bearing to the last. He had an agreeable voice and unaffected manners, and no touch of malice in him. But nobody could tell from any external sign what he was thinking about, or how he felt. The amblyopic eye may have contributed to this air of powerful reserve ; but the reserve was real: it was a habit that had become first nature to him. In modern psycho-pathological terms it was a repression that had become a complex. Accustomed as I was to this, he amazed even me once. He had just completed his translation of Ibsen's *Little Eyolf*; and he read it to two or three friends of whom I was one. His reading was clear, intelligent, cold, without a trace of emotion, and rather wooden in the more moving passages. When he came to the last pages he suddenly handed me the book, and said, formally and with a marked access of woodenness, " Shaw : I must ask you to finish the reading for me. My feelings will not allow me to proceed." The contrast between the matter and the manner of this speech would have been irresistibly comic had any doubt of the sincerity of his distress been possible. I took the proof-sheets in silence, and finished the reading as desired. We were face to face with a man in whom dissimulation had become so instinctive that it had become his natural form of emotional expression. No wonder he seemed a monster of insensibility to those who did not know him very intimately.

To explain this, I must cast back to the year 1730 as a date in religious history. In that year, just before Wesley began Methodism in England, a Scots minister named John Glas was cast out by the General Assembly of the Kirk in Scotland as a Congregationalist heretic. Glas thought this was so much the worse for the Kirk in Scotland. Bible in hand, and strong in the Protestant right to private judgment, he founded one of the innumerable

Separatist sects that arose in the eighteenth century. Shakespear would have called him a Brownist. He maintained that any group of persons organized according to the instructions of St Paul to Timothy, and qualified as godly according to the prescription of Matthew, was independent of any Kirk or General Assembly or ecclesiastical authority whatsoever, and was answerable to God alone. The aim of his own group was the realization of Christ's kingdom as defined in the famous reply to Pilate, " My Kingdom is not of this world." Glas's son-in-law, Sandeman, carried this doctrine to England, where the groups became known as Sandemanians.

Now of Separation there is no end until every human being is a Separate Church, for which there is much to be said. The Separatists continue to separate. In 1804 John Walker, Bachelor of Divinity (for so I construe the letters B.D.) and Fellow of Trinity College, Dublin, separated himself from the Episcopal Church of Ireland, and founded a sect called by him The Church of God, and by the profane The Walkerites. Its tenets resembled those of the Clashes so closely that there was talk of an amalgamation ; but the Glasites were Sabbatarians ; the Walkerites held that Christ had discarded the Sabbath ; and so they could not agree. Anyhow Walkerism was superfluous in Scotland, where its numbers were often so small that worship among them was a family affair conducted by the head of the household, assisted by such male members of the sect as happened to be present. As the Glasites had flourishing congregations in many centres, Walkerite children would be sent to Glasite Meeting when there was no Walkerite Meeting to send them to.

In the second generation of Walkerites, a Miss Walker married a Mr Archer. And one of their sons complicated the faith by marrying a daughter of James Morison, one of the shining lights of Glasism. From that exogamous alliance William Archer sprang. If ever there was a doubly

predestined heir of grace, William, one would think, was he. And, on the whole, he lived up to his antecedents. But God fulfils Himself in many ways, and often in extremely unexpected ones. As William grew up, he felt obliged to pursue his hereditary Separatism to the point of separating himself not only from the Separatists, but from the curious fetish worship of the Bible, and the idolization of Christ, with which all the sects and Churches were still saturated.

This looks like a complete explanation of the reserve that was a second nature with him. But, if you are an English reader, do not infer too much from your ignorance of Scoto-Norwegian Separatism. Long before Archer's views had' formed themselves sufficiently to threaten a schism in the family if he gave voice to them, he had profited, without the smallest friction, by the fact that both Walkerites and Glasites regarded religion as too sacred to be made a subject of private conversation. They actually barred private prayer, and not only neither asked their children controversial questions nor permitted them to put any, but would not allow even a catechism to come between them and their God. In their view, you were either damned or saved by your own nature and the act of God ; and any attempt to force God's hand in the transaction was sedition in His kingdom. Thus William was never driven to lie about his beliefs or about the family beliefs. He was simply not allowed to talk about either. He was, however, expected to go to Meeting when there was a meeting (Walkerite or Glasite) within reach, and not to laugh when his sense of humor got the better of the solemnity of the occasion. In the latter observance the Archer children were by no means uniformly successful. In William as in Mark Twain, the meetings had a marked homeopathic effect.

Another feature of Separatism which favored his freedom of thought was its anti-clericalism. The common English association of clericalism with piety is often mis-

leading. The revolt against institutional religion which moved George Fox to regard a priest of any denomination as Mr Winston Churchill regards a Bolshevist, and to revile a church as a steeple house, has produced all the Separatist sects, and has in our day invaded even the Church of England in the person of the most intellectually eminent of its dignitaries. William Archer's father would have been surprised if anyone had called him an anti-clerical ; but he had the Separatist habit of assuming that parsons are inadmissible acquaintances. The family atmosphere, if not explicitly anti-clerical, was, to say the least, not prelatial.

Archer's brother and collaborator in their translation of *Peer Gynt* tells me that he never heard his father say a word of any kind on any religious subject. This gives in a single sentence a vision of the extraordinary reserve imposed by the Separatism of Glas and Walker, surviving as a habit long after the original impulse had lost its fervor, and had even provoked a reaction. The reaction in William Archer carried him to a Modernism which would have been taken by Glas and Walker as unmistakable evidence of his predestined damnation ; but the habit of reserve remained.

It was reinforced as he grew older by the clash of his political opinions with those of the Glasites, who interpreted Christ's declaration that His kingdom was not of this world as implying a duty of unquestioning submission to all duly constituted secular authority. This view had settled down into simple political Conservatism ; and when Archer's inner light led him to a vigorous Radicalism, it became necessary for him to extend his reserve from religion to politics, or else grieve his people very sorely, a cruelty of which he was quite incapable. He was hereditarily affectionate, and even suffered from a family inability to control his diaphragm (I borrow this quaint diagnosis from an expert) which made it impossible for him to

command his voice when he was deeply moved, which explains both why he could not finish reading *Little Eyolf* and why up to the moment of relinquishing the attempt he had had to constrain himself so rigidly as to seem a wooden image rather than a very emotional man.

He was not himself conscious of the extent to which the Glasite diathesis influenced him. I do not believe that he knew or cared anything about the constitution or origin of Glasism: all he could tell me to satisfy my curiosity as a connoisseur in religious beliefs was that the performance, as he called it, consisted mainly in his grandfather reading the Bible phrase by phrase, and extracting from every phrase some not immediately obvious significance, the more far-fetched and fantastic the better. The grandson was interested neither in *Kirk* nor *Conventicle*, but in the theatre. He was prepared to attend to *Shakespear*, but not to Glasite hermeneutics. He had a certain admiration for his grandfather's ingenuity as an exegete, and was rather proud of him ; but he soon learnt to defend himself from his expositions by an acquirement that often stood him in good stead in the theatre later on. He could slip his finger under the next page of his open Bible ; go fast asleep ; and turn the page without waking up when the rustling of all the other Bibles as their readers turned over struck on his sleeping ear and started a reflex action.

If I had known this when I attempted to read my first play to him I might not have abandoned it for years as an unfinished failure. He was utterly contemptuous of its construction ; but this I did not mind, as I classed constructed plays with artificial flowers, clockwork mice, and the like. Unfortunately, when I came to the second act, something—possibly something exegetic in my tone—revived the old protective habit. He fell into a deep slumber; and I softly put the manuscript away and let him have his sleep out. When I mentioned this to our friend *Henry Arthur Jones* he reminded me of a member

of the *Comedie Francaise*, who on being remonstrated with for sleeping whilst an author was reading a play, said " Sleep is a criticism." This was my own view of the case ; and I might never have meddled with the stage again had not Archer unconsciously discounted the incident one day by telling me the tale of his famous grandfather.

Thus he never came to know what his grandfather's religion was. He dismissed it, and most of Scriptural theology with it, as flat nonsense. And from this estimate he never to the end of his days retreated. It may seem strange that a man whose literary bent was so strong that he made literature his profession, whose ear was so musical that he could write excellent verse, and whose judgment was so respected that he was accepted as the most serious critic of his day, should be able to read the dregs of Elizabethan drama and not to read the Bible ; but the fact remains that when I was writing my preface on Christianity (to Androcles and the Lion) and, having just read the New Testament through, asked him whether he had read the Gospels lately, and what he made of them, he replied that he had tried, but " could not stick it ". The doctrine was nonsense to him; and he had no patience with it because he took no interest in it. I pleaded that though Matthew had muddled his gospel by stringing sayings together in the wrong order, a more intelligible arrangement of them could be discovered by reading the other evangelists ; but this produced no impression on him: the subject simply bored him; and he rather resented any attempt on my part to give the slightest importance to it. This was a very natural consequence of dosing a clever child prematurely with mental food that Ecumenical Councils have before now failed to digest; and parents and school committees will do well to make a careful note of it; but in Archer's case the intolerance it produced became a quality, as his book on India proves. There was no morbid nonsense about understanding everything and pardoning everything

in the Archer family. The glimpses I had of them were quite convincing as to their being healthy minded sensible open air colonially rejuvenated people who, having to keep an inherited form of worship from making social life impossible, instinctively avoided sophistry and speculation, and took their intellectual course simply and downrightly. When, in what was then called *The Conflict Between Religion and Science*, William Archer took the side of Science, he broke away as cleanly and confidently as Glas had broken away from the Assembly or Walker from the Church of Ireland. He expressly denied having ever had any internal struggle or qualm. His only difficulty was to maintain his convictions without making his parents unhappy ; and the Separatist reserve made it quite easy to do this whilst he lived with them.

When he came to London and began to write for the Secularist press, thus breaking the Separatist silence, he resorted to a *nom de plume*, for which, in those days, there were other reasons than family ones. A then future president of the National Secular Society had been actually imprisoned for a year for publishing in *The Freethinker*, his weekly journal, a picture of Samuel anointing Saul, in which the costumes and accessories were those of a modern hairdresser's shop ; and until the expiration of the sentence Archer had to help with a monthly review which the victim of persecution edited for his more scholarly and fastidious followers. The leaders of the Secularist movement, including at that time Mrs Besant, were delighted to welcome Archer as a brilliant young recruit, and were somewhat taken aback when he would not enter into intimate social relations with them lest they should meet his parents, and quite simply told them so in his most expressionless manner. But for the strained relations which ensued, and for his preoccupation with the theatre, he might, like Robertson, have become a familiar figure in the pulpit of South Place Chapel, and been as definitely

associated with Rationalism as Mr Edward Clodd. As it was, his position was sufficiently affirmed to make me ask him one day what his parents had to say about it. His reply was that the subject was never mentioned between them, but that he supposed they must have noticed that he did not attend any place of worship. Clearly there was no bitterness nor bigotry in the matter; and the fact that there was no resistance to break down made it impossible for a man of Archer's affectionate sensitiveness not to shield his father and mother from every contact with his heresy and its associations that could possibly be avoided without a sacrifice of his convictions.

Presently another interest came into his life. One showery day I was in New Oxford Street, probably going to or from the British Museum reading room, when I saw Archer coming towards me past Mudie's, looking much more momentous than usual. He seemed eight feet high; and his aspect was stern and even threatening, as if he were defying all Oxford Street, buses and all, to take the smallest liberty with him. His air of formidable height was partly due, perhaps, to his having draped himself in a buff-colored mackintosh which descended to his calves. But it was quaintly aided by the contrast of his inches with those of a lady who clung to his arm to keep pace with his unmerciful strides. She had a small head and a proportionately small comely face, winsome and ready to smile when not actually smiling. I had never seen Archer with a woman on his arm before, nor indeed concerning himself with one in any way; and, as the future author of *Man and Superman*, I feared the worst. And, sure enough, I was immediately introduced to the lady as his selection for the destiny of being Mrs Archer.

The marriage seemed a great success. Mrs Archer fitted herself into the simple and frugal life of her husband quite naturally, caring no more for fashion or manufactured pleasures and luxuries than he did. There came a wonder-

ful son: he who figures in the correspondence of Robert Louis Stevenson as Tomarcher. Mrs Archer found the world paradise enough first with her Willie, and then with her man and her boy. She tolerated me and indulged me as an incarnate joke because he did ; and I saw rather more of him after his marriage than before it, instead of less : a rare privilege for a bachelor friend.

But the more Archer's slender means obliged him to put Mrs Archer and the boy first, and literature comparatively nowhere, the more I, having among my budget of novels that nobody would publish a book called *The Irrational Knot* (meaning the marriage tie), began to doubt whether domesticity was good for his career. At last I read an anonymous article on one of Archer's subjects which seemed to me a poor one. I was on the point of abusing it roundly to him one day when, to my consternation, he said, just in time, that he had written it. My concern was not because I thought the article unsatisfactory : every writer produces unsatisfactory articles occasionally. But that, good or bad, I had not recognized it as his : a failure unprecedented so far, proved to me that he had lost some of the brilliancy and unmistakable individuality of style which had attracted me in his articles in *The London Figaro* long before I made his acquaintance. I knew that the way to make money in journalism is to turn out rapidly great quantities of undistinguished stuff; and I knew also that when a man marries he gives up his right to put quality of work first, and income second. I did not conceive it possible at that time that I should ever become a married man myself. With an artistic recklessness which shocks me in retrospect I told Archer that Mrs Archer was spoiling him, and that he would be a lost man unless he broke loose. He said, with that wooden formality which was the surest sign that he was deeply moved, that he must ask me not to visit his house whilst I held opinions so disparaging to Mrs Archer.

I was not in the least offended. Indeed I never was offended by anything Archer ever said to me or wrote about me, though he sometimes expressed a quite unnecessary remorse for speeches or articles which he supposed must have been painful to me. For some time I remained under his interdict, and saw nothing of Mrs Archer. Then the unexpected happened. Archer did not break loose; but Mrs Archer did. Let me not be misunderstood. There was no gentleman in the case. It was much more interesting than that.

I forget how long Mrs Archer remained a dropped subject between us; but it was Archer himself who resumed it. I found him in a state of frank anxiety which in him indicated considerable distress of mind; and he told me that Mrs Archer fancied that there was something the matter with her, though she was, as he believed, in perfect health. Now Mrs Archer, like her husband, was not at all the sort of person her appearance suggested. She seemed dainty, unassuming, clinging. Really, she was a woman of independent character, great decision and pertinacity, and considerable physical hardihood. This I had half guessed that day in Oxford Street; but I kept the guess to myself, as it might have been taken as a wanton paradox until the sequel bore it out. When Archer told me of his perplexity I shared it, and could think of nothing to suggest.

To the rescue of this male helplessness came a remarkable lady from America, Miss Annie Payson Call, authoress of a book entitled *Power through Repose*, and of a system, partly manipulative, partly sympathetic, of straightening out tangled nerves. Miss Call had the same sort of amiability as Mrs Archer, and the same overflow of energy for which selfishness was not enough. She tackled Mrs Archer; she tackled me; she tackled everybody; and as she was a charming person, nobody objected. But she found in Mrs Archer something more than the passive

subject of a cure. She found a pupil, a disciple, and finally an apostle in England. Mrs Archer's vocation also was for healing sore minds and wandering wits. With what seems to me in retrospect a staggering suddenness, though in fact she had to see Tom through to his independent manhood first, she created the nerve training institution at King's Langley which she still directs. Literary people in the eighteen-nineties used to write futile sequels to Ibsen's *Doll's House*: Mrs Archer found a real and perfectly satisfactory sequel. She became an independent professional woman most affectionately married to an independent professional man, the two complementing instead of hampering each other; for in practical matters he was full of inhibitions and diffidences from which she was vigorously free. Incidentally I ceased to be one of Willie's bachelor encumbrances. Mrs Archer, having developed considerably more practical initiative and ability than ever I possessed, took me in hand fearlessly on her new footing, and admitted me, I think, to as much of her friendship as I deserved.

Thus Archer's domesticity ceased to be a problem ; and you may set him down for good and all as fortunate in his marriage. But to suggest all that his marriage meant for him I must return to the child Tom Archer. The extraordinary companionship which Archer found in his little son could not have existed but for a double bond between them. First, Archer had retained much more of his own childhood than even his most intimate friends suspected. He must have been a very imaginative child; and he had retained so much of a child's imagination and fun that it was for some time a puzzle to me that he could be so completely fascinated as he was by Ibsen's imagination, and that yet, when I produced my *Quintessence of Ibsenism*, he dismissed much of the specifically adult and worldly part of it precisely as he had dismissed the Scriptural exegetics of his grandfather. This devoted Ibsenite, who

translated the Master's works so forcibly and vividly, was never in the least an Ibsenist: he delighted in Ibsen's plays just as a child delights in *The Arabian Nights* without taking in anything of the passages which Captain Burton left unexpurgated. It was this innocence that limited his own excursions into dramatic literature : he could not see that the life around him, including his own, was teeming with dramatic material, and persisted in looking for his subjects either in literature or in fairyland.

Now it happened that Tom Archer, though so entirely his mother's son in most respects that, save for an occasional fleeting revelation in his expression, he was not a bit like Archer, had a prodigious imagination. Having no derisive brothers and sisters to make him sensitive and secretive about it, but, on the contrary, a father who took it with the tenderest seriousness, and in fact became an accomplice in all its extravagances, Tom was able to let himself go gloriously. He invented a *pays de Cocagne* which he called Peona, which went far beyond the garret-forest in *The Wild Duck*, as it had no contact with limited mechanical realities. I heard much of Peona and its inhabitants at second hand, and even a little at first hand, on which occasions I swallowed every adventure with a gravity not surpassed by Archer's own. I am sure that Archer, whose youth as one of a large and robust family enjoyed no such protection, could never have felt this delicacy had he not remembered his own youth, and recognized his own imagination in his son's.

There was another experience from which he was determined to protect Tom ; and that was the British boarding school, or boy farm, as William Morris called it. It was useless to romance to him about the character forming virtues and historic glories of Eton and Harrow, Winchester and Rugby and Marlborough : he anticipated the opinions of Sanderson of Oundle, who heartily agreed with me when I expressed my opinion that these places should be

razed to the ground, and their foundations sown with salt. Archer had taken his own schooling as a dayboy, and was convinced, with good reason, that this arrangement, however inconvenient for the parents, was much more wholesome for the child. Accordingly, Tom spent his childish schooldays with his people in a Surrey cottage on the facade of which Mr Edward Rimbault Dibdin inscribed the name Walden (a compliment to Thoreau) in highly artistic lettering. When he outgrew the educational resources of that primitive neighborhood the family moved to Dulwich and sent him to the college there.

Meanwhile my comment on Tom was that he was a second Rudyard Kipling; for, as I happened to know from William Morris, Mr Kipling had been a great Peoner in his nonage. The years in which Archer and Tom explored Peona together passed as fast as real years in a real country until at last the once inexhaustible subject of Tom dropped so completely that I actually had to ask Archer about him. To my amazement he conveyed to me, with a manner that would have done credit to a piece of mahogany, that the firm of Archer & Son of Peona had dissolved partnership. Tom, he explained, had been ill; and Archer opined that the illness had affected his character, which, he said, was totally changed. This theory of the alleged change was too summary and too surgical to convince me. But I forbore to probe; and the truth came out gradually. The child Tom, developing into the incipient man, emerged from Peona a most unnatural son. He was as keen about the glories of public schools as if he were indeed the author of *Stalky and Co.* He distinguished himself at Dulwich by the facility with which he turned out Latin verses, becoming Captain of the Classical Side. He joined the Officers' Training Corps, and actually made his father enlist in the Inns of Court Volunteers, a trial which Archer supported because, being a private, and having to salute Tom, who was an officer, the situation

appealed to his sense of humor as well as to his conscientious public spirit. In short, he dragged Archer out of Peona with him, and imposed public schools ideals on him. Military romance alone survived from fairyland ; and even that took the fashionable imperialist shape.

Up to this time Archer had, without knowing it, been a true Glasite in the essential sense. His kingdom had not been of this world. But now, what with the son grasping with all his imaginative power at conventional military ideals, and this world beginning to treat the father with more and more of the distinguished consideration which his work earned and his unworldly character commanded, Archer had to adapt himself as far as he could to the responsibilities of his celebrity, and to set himself to make the best of convention instead of criticizing it with the independence of a young and comparatively unknown man. Every free lance who makes a reputation has to go through this phase; but Archer was under the special emotional pressure of having to adapt himself to Tom's Kiplingesque war mentality in and out of season. He became as conventional as it was in his nature to be, and indeed, for Tom's sake, perhaps a little more, though the public school had taken away his playmate.

Presently Tom's boyhood passed like his childhood, and left him a young man, still his mother's son in respect of being under average military size and considerably over average military vigor of mind and practical initiative. Oxford, where he was expected to distinguish himself because he had done so at Dulwich, did not suit him. True, his aptitude for classical exercises did not desert him. He took honors in law, and was in no sense a failure. But Oxford was something of a failure for him. The struggle for life was not real enough there for a youth who had a passion for the military realism of soldiering. When he left Oxford to begin adult life, he worked as a solicitor for a couple of years in London. Then an opening in America,

with a promise of a speedy return to rejoin his family at home, took him across the Atlantic.

Two months later the gulf of war opened at the feet of our young men. Tom rushed back to hurl himself into it. Amid the volcanos of Messines he was serving as a lance-corporal in " the dear old G Company " of the London Scottish. Invalided home, he accepted a commission, and for a year was able to do no more than sit on the brink of the gulf in the Ordnance until his strength returned, when he volunteered afresh for the firing line as lieutenant in the King's Own Scottish Borderers. In February 1918 he married Alys Morty, cousin to a comrade-at-arms fallen at Messines, and had a deliriously happy honeymoon in Ireland. Then, the war still dragging on, he hurled himself into the gulf again ; and this time, at Mount Kemmel, it closed on him, and his father saw him no more. He left his young widow to take his place in his parents' affections, the newly found beloved daughter succeeding to the newly lost beloved son. Yet Archer was loth to let the son go. He renewed an old interest in super-rational research ; investigated dreams and the new psycho-analysis ; and even experimented unsuccessfully in those posthumous conversations in which so many of the bereaved found comfort. And so, between daughter and son, the adventure of parentage never ended for Archer.

When the war broke out he was past military age, and had to confine his part in it to countering the German propaganda service and doing some of our own, an employment in which his knowledge of languages stood him in good stead. When the Armistice made an end of that, his own bent reasserted itself and took him back to the theatre, and (save where his memories of Tom were concerned) to militant Rationalism.

His great work of translating Ibsen had by this time been brought to an end by Ibsen's death. I am myself a much translated author; and I know how hard the lot of

a translator is if he is sensitive to frantic abuse both by rival or would-be rival translators, and by literary men inflamed by an enthusiasm for the author (gained from the translations they abuse) which convinces them that his opinions are their own, and that the translator, not seeing this, has missed the whole point of the work. I use the word frantic advisedly : the lengths to which these attacks go are incredible. At one time it was the fashion in the literary cliques to dismiss Archer's translations as impossible. I told them it was no use: that Archer-Ibsen had seized the public imagination as it had seized theirs, and would beat any other brand of Ibsen in English. And it was so. Whenever a translation was produced without the peculiar character that Archer gave to his, it had no character at all, no challenge, at best only a drawingroom elegance that was a drawback rather than an advantage. When Mr Anstey burlesqued Ibsen in *Punch*, he did it by burlesquing Archer : without Archer the plays would not have bitten deep enough to be burlesqued. Even in the case of *Peer Gynt*, which moved several enthusiasts to attempt translations following the rhymes and metres of the original (I began one myself, with our friend Brækstad translating for me literally, line by line, and got as far as a couple of pages or so), the unrhymed translation by Archer and his brother Colonel Charles Archer held its own against the most ingenious and elaborate rival versions. Whenever *Peer Gynt* was quoted it was always in the Archer version. I have already given the explanation. Archer understood and cared for Ibsen's imagination. For his sociological views he cared so little that he regarded them mostly as aberrations when he was conscious of them. Thus, undistracted by Ibsen's discussions, he went straight for his poetry, and reproduced every stroke of imagination in a phraseology that invented itself *ad hoc* in his hands. As nothing else really mattered, the critics who could not see this, and would have it that everything else mattered,

neither made nor deserved to make any permanent impression. Besides, the air of Norway breathed through his versions. He had breathed it himself from his childhood during his frequent visits, beginning at the age of three, to the Norwegian home of his grandparents, where he had two unmarried aunts who exercised his tenderness and powers of admiration very beneficently. As to the few lyrics which occur in Ibsen's plays, and which would have baffled a prosaic translator, they gave Archer no trouble at all: he was at his best in them. If it had been possible for the father of a family to live by writing verse in the nineteenth century, Archer would probably have done more in that manner on his own account.

How far he sacrificed a career as an original playwright to putting the English speaking peoples in possession of Ibsen is an open question. In my opinion he instinctively chose the better part, because the theatre was not to him a workshop but part of his fairyland. He never really got behind the scenes, and never wanted to. The illusion that had charmed his youth was so strong and lasting that not even fifty years of professional theatre going in London could dispel it. Inevitably then he liked the theatre as he found it at first: the theatre of the French "well made play". But the attraction of this school of theatrical art for him did not lie in its ingenuities and neatnesses of construction, though he sometimes wrote as if it did. He liked it because it also lived in fairyland. Sophisticated as it was, yet was its kingdom not of this world. Archer, though he approached it as a reformer, did not want to reform it out of existence: he wanted to strengthen it by giving some sort of subsistence to its make-believe, which had worn thin and stale, ignorant and incredible. He did not want to drag the heroine from her fairyland; but how could he believe in her if she had an obviously impossible solicitor and butler and lady's maid? If she lived in a world totally exhausted of ideas, created by authors who,

outside their little theatrical clique, knew nothing of their country, and conceived it as a complete vacuum in respect of the things it had most at heart: business, sport, politics, and religion, how could a man of any strength of mind or sense of verisimilitude take her seriously? That was why Archer cried out in one breath for naturalness in the theatre and for artifice in dramatic authorship. In the novel, which raises no question of technique, he welcomed the most uncompromising naturalness, making me read De Maupassant's *Une Vie*, applauding Zola, and coming into my rooms one day full of his discovery of a new novelist of our own, who had burst on the world with a naturalistic novel entitled *A Mummer's Wife*. I was so impressed with his account of it that I eagerly asked the name of the author; but when he told me it was George Moore I burst into irreverent laughter, knowing the said George personally as an inveterate romancer, whose crimson inventions, so far delivered orally for private circulation only, suggested that he had been brought into the world by a union of Victor Hugo with Ouida. But Archer insisted on my reading the book, as he had insisted on my reading *Une Vie*; and I stood rebuked for my incredulity.

I never read Archer's one novel, a youthful exploit called *The Doom of the Destroyed*, which had been published serially in a Scottish newspaper, and was one of his favorite jokes. I gathered that in point of romance it left George Moore's unpublished *quasi* autobiographical tales of adventure nowhere; but it is certain that Archer's adult taste in novels was for merciless realism. Therefore when one day he proposed that we two should collaborate in writing a play, he to supply the constructional scaffolding or scenario, and I to fill in the dialogue, I assumed that I might be as realistic as Zola or De Maupassant with his entire sympathy. But he was always upsetting my assumptions as to his sympathies; and he did so signally on this occasion.

It happened in this way. Archer had planned for two heroines, a rich one and a poor one. The hero was to prefer the poor one to the rich one ; and in the end his disinterestedness was to be rewarded by the lucrative discovery that the poor one was really the rich one. When I came to fill in this scheme I compressed the two heroines into one ; but I made up the one out of two models, whom I will now describe.

Once, when I was walking homewards at midnight through Wigmore Street, taking advantage of its stillness and loneliness at that hour to contemplate, like Kant, the starry heaven above me, the solitude was harshly broken by the voices of two young women who came out of Mandeville Place on the other side of the street a couple of hundred yards behind me. The dominant one of the pair was in a black rage : the other was feebly trying to quiet her. The strained strong voice and the whimpering remonstrant one went on for some time. Then came the explosion. The angry one fell on the other, buffeting her, tearing at her hair, grasping at her neck. The victim, evidently used to it, cowered against the railings, covering herself as best she could, and imploring and remonstrating in a carefully subdued tone, dreading a police rescue more than the other's violence. Presently the fit passed, and the two came on their way, the lioness silent, and the lamb reproachful and rather emboldened by her sense of injury. The scene stuck in my memory, to be used in due time.

Also I had about this time a friendship with a young independent professional woman, who enjoyed, as such, an exceptional freedom of social intercourse in artistic circles in London. As she was clever, goodnatured, and very goodlooking, all her men friends fell in love with her. This had occurred so often that she had lost all patience with the hesitating preliminaries of her less practised adorers. Accordingly, when they clearly longed to kiss her, and she did not dislike them sufficiently to make their

gratification too great a strain on her excessive good-nature, she would seize the stammering suitor firmly by the wrists, bring him into her arms by a smart pull, and saying " Let's get it over ", allow the startled gentleman to have his kiss, and then proceed to converse with him at her ease on subjects of more general interest.

I provided Archer with a heroine by inventing a young woman who developed from my obliging but impatient friend in the first act to the fury of Wigmore Street in the second: such a heroine as had not been seen on the London stage since Shakespear's Taming of the Shrew. And my shrew was never tamed.

Now Archer was not such a simpleton as to be unaware that some women are vulgar, violent, and immodest according to Victorian conceptions of modesty. He would probably have assented to the proposition that as vulgarity, violence, and immodesty are elements in human nature, it is absurd to think of them as unwomanly, unmanly, or unnatural. Yet he also knew that a character practically free from these three vices could be put on the stage without any departure from nature, for the excellent reason that his own character was most unusually free from them, even his strong Scottish sense of humor being, like his conversation, entirely clean. He reproached me for my apparent obsession with abominably illtempered characters, oversexed to saturation. My way in the theatre was evidently not his way ; and it was not until, at my third attempt as a playwright, I achieved a play (Mrs Warren's Profession) which appealed to his sense of Zolaistic naturalism, that he ceased to dissuade me from pursuing the occupation into which he had innocently tempted me.

I must mention that his decisive and indignant retirement from the collaboration occurred whilst the play was still in shorthand, and therefore quite illegible by him, and not legible enough by myself to admit of my reading it aloud to him tolerably. It was my deliberate and uncon-

scionable disregard of the rules of the art of play construction that revolted him. His scenario had been communicated to me *viva voce* ; and when I told him I had finished the first act, and had not yet come to his plot, asking him to refresh my memory about it, he felt as the architect of a cathedral might if the builder had remarked one day that he had finished the nave and transepts according to his own fancy, and, having lost the architect's plans, would like to have another copy of them before he tackled the tower, the choir, and the lady chapel. I managed to appease my architect by arguing that it was not until the second act that a well made play came to business seriously, and that meanwhile I had fulfilled his design by making the river Rhine the scene of the meeting of the lovers in the first act. But when, having written some pages of the second act, I said I had used up all his plot and wanted some more to go on with, he retired peremptorily from the firm. He was of course quite right: I was transmogrifying not only his design but the whole British drama of that day so recklessly that my privilege as a paradoxical lunatic broke down under the strain; and he could no longer with any self-respect allow me to play the fool with his scenario. For it was not a question of this particular scenario only. He did not agree with me that the form of drama which had been perfected in the middle of the nineteenth century in the French theatre was essentially mechanistic and therefore incapable of producing vital drama. That it was exhausted and, for the moment, sterile, was too obvious to escape an observer of his intelligence; but he saw nothing fundamentally wrong with it, and to the end of his life maintained that it was indispensable as a form for sound theatrical work, needing only to be brought into contact with life by having new ideas poured into it. I held, on the contrary, that a play is a vital growth and not a mechanical construction ; that a plot is the ruin of a story and therefore of a play, which is essentially a story; that Shakespear's

plays and Dickens's novels, though redeemed by their authors' genius, were as ridiculous in their plots as Goldsmith's hopelessly spoilt *Goodnatured Man*: in short, that a play should never have a plot, because, if it has any natural life in it, it will construct itself, like a flowering plant, far more wonderfully than its author can consciously construct it.

On such terms collaboration between us was impossible: indeed my view practically excludes collaboration. His view does not; and we shall presently see him returning to it after an interval of many years, during which I had become an established playwright, possibly wrong in my theory, but beyond all question successful in my practice.

He had already written plays singlehanded. I remember a one-act play called *Clive*, dealing with the failure of that hero's attempt at suicide, and his conclusion that Heaven had other views for him. As this has disappeared, he may have destroyed it as puerile; but I thought it promising, and more alive than a play about a prima donna who lost her voice, a theme frankly taken from George Eliot's *Armstrong*. George Eliot's reputation was then enormous, in spite of the protests of Ruskin, and of the alliterative vituperations of Swinburne; and it was very far from being undeserved. When I read *Middlemarch* in my teens I was impressed by it as by a masterpiece of a new order; and I have no doubt that Archer was equally impressed, though I do not remember discussing George Eliot with him. But the impression she made was not encouraging. The effect of the fatalistic determinism into which the scientific thought of that day had driven her was distinctly depressing and laming. Her characters seemed the helpless victims of their environment and inherited dispositions, contributing nothing except a few follies and weaknesses to the evolutionary struggle, if the word struggle can be used where there is no real resistance to what Darwin called natural selection. Now a fatalist, as George Eliot proved,

Can write so well that a capable man of letters like the late Lord Bryce, in a public eulogy of Tolstoy, could think of nothing more complimentary to say of him than that as a novelist he was second only to George Eliot. But, for all that, she discouraged many noble spirits ; and I think she disabled Archer to some extent, directly or indirectly. The last drop of dramatic vitality in her school was drained by Ibsen; and when Archer had translated Ibsen there was nothing left for the translator.

Archer had various theories as to this disablement: as, for instance, that he could not write dialogue, which was nonsense; but the fact was that a George Eliotish philosophy of life, and a mechanistic limitation of the possibilities of the theatre, combined with his natural and very amiable diffidence and his unconsciously Glasite unworldliness, kept him back from the newly broken and rather unsightly ground in which alone a new drama could germinate.

At last, quite late in life, he had a dream; and the dream was a good story about an Asiatic Rajah made cynical by a western education, and a Green Goddess who had to be propitiated by blood sacrifices, some English captives becoming available for that purpose. The result proved that the complexes which inhibited him from writing effective plays when he was awake, did not operate when he was asleep. When he turned his dream into a play it was prodigiously successful, first in America and then in England ; and Archer ceased at last to be a much underpaid man. I had urged at every opportunity that the great national services he had done by his Englishing of Ibsen should be acknowledged by a pension (a title without one is only a source of expense); but I was always met with the difficulty that in this Philistine country parliamentary grants are made only to generals, pro-consuls, and Polar explorers. Literature and art have nothing to look for but an occasional knighthood or a civil list pension;

and to obtain the pension it is necessary to assert that the postulant is in straitened circumstances. For Ashton Ellis, the translator of Richard Wagner's voluminous prose works, it had been possible, when he was almost destitute, to obtain a wretched pittance of £80 a year; but Archer was at no time at a loss for his livelihood. After the success of *The Green Goddess* a pension was more than ever out of the question ; and Archer never had any official recognition of his public service, out of which, by the way, he steadfastly refused to make money through translator's performing fees, lest he should compromise his disinterestedness as a critic.

Here let me say, parenthetically, that Archer was incorruptible as a critic. In his day there were two methods of amiable corruption in vogue. One was called simply *Chicken & Champagne*, which explains itself. It includes various degrees of blandishment; and some of them were tried on Archer; but they were hopelessly thrown away on him, because he never had the least suspicion of their nature, and either accepted them in unconquerable innocence at their face value, or declined them because they bored him. The second method was almost a routine. An actor-manager would write to a critic to say that he wanted to consult him as an expert. An interview would follow. The manager would explain that he had acquired the performing right of some foreign play, and was thinking of attempting a part in it. Would the critic advise him about the translation ? Would he care to undertake the translation ? If so, would he sell a six months option on the translation for, say, £50 ? If the critic was amenable, the £50 changed hands ; and nothing more was heard of the play or the translation. If not, he recommended another translator; the manager shrugged his shoulders ; and the two parted smiling. The managers did this, I believe, rather because it was the fashion, and almost the due of a leading critic, than with any sense that the proposal was in

any way improper. Certainly the three late distinguished actor-managers who made it to me when I was a critic thought no worse of it than of tipping a waiter, and probably considered it rather unsocial on my part to evade the transaction.

Notwithstanding Archer's reputation as a translator, no such proposals were made, as far as I know, to him. His integrity was unassailed because it was so obviously impregnable. I doubt if he even knew the game as a usage, though he must have been aware of instances in which dealings in options had been followed by marked accesses of eulogy. After all, the instances were exceptional; besides, he went his own way so completely as a matter of course that he passed through the theatrical world without noticing all its aberrations, as indeed he passed through the kingdom of this world in general. He was much too scrupulous in the matter of the Ibsen translations; but the position of a critic who is also a proprietor of performing rights of any kind is certainly a very delicate one ; and it was characteristic of Archer to carry his delicacy too far rather than accept a commercial interest in the plays of an author whom his critical conscience obliged him to recommend with all his might.

Diffident to the last, Archer had no sooner constructed *The Green Goddess* according to rule, and finished the two main acts, than he lost self-confidence, and perhaps patience, over the denouement in the third act, and asked me to finish the play for him on the old ground that he could not write dialogue. I overwhelmed him with denunciations of his laziness; told him he could finish it perfectly well for himself if he chose to ; and threatened that if I did the work I would make the lady get the better of the wicked Rajah in the vein of Captain Brassbound's *Conversion*. This threat was effectual; and he turned to Arthur Pinero to finish the play for him. Pinero, with great tact, made an alternative suggestion which opened

Archer's eyes to the fact that if it was not worth his while to write the last act because it was to be hack work, he should offer it to a hack writer. Archer thereupon finished the play himself, and was, I hope, delivered by the result from all further misgivings as to his own competence. But it was too late in the day to begin life anew as a fashionable playwright; and *The Green Goddess* stands, by no means as the crown of his career, but rather as a proof that the inhibitions which prevented him from achieving this sort of worldly success earlier were not due, as he himself feared, to lack of faculty, but to Providence, which had other fish for him to fry.

In his predestined work I do not include the whole of his huge output of notices of theatrical performances, nor even the plans for a national theatre, which he prepared in collaboration with Harley Granville-Barker, then the most wonderful of the younger generation knocking at our doors. Journalistic criticism, after the first years, becomes necessarily for the most part repetitive bread winning; and the theatre planning was rather like building sand castles in the face of a flood tide, a pastime to which Granville-Barker was much addicted as a refuge from his proper business of writing plays. Archer's essays on the censorship, on Diderot's Paradox, (*Masks or Faces ?*), and on Macready, with his reprints of the theatrical criticisms of Lewes and Forster, are all valuable and readable ; but they lay in his path as a professional critic of the theatre, and are therefore not so significant as the excursions to which his spirit drove him.

In 1906 a Spanish educationalist and philanthropist who was also strongly anti-clerical (meaning really anti-obscurantist), and was therefore supposed by the officers of the Spanish army to be in his nature essentially diabolical, and in his habits an assassin of all royal persons, had the misfortune to fall into the hands of a court martial in Barcelona, where he was shamefully illused whilst in custody,

and finally shot. It was a monstrous case of class ignorance and vindictive bigotry; and Archer willingly accepted a journalistic commission to visit Spain and investigate it. He exposed it so effectually that the biographical dictionaries and encyclopaedias now refer to him as their authority for their accounts of the martyrdom—for that is what it came to—of Ferrer.

His subsequent visit to India, though it had no such sensational provocation, produced his remarkable book on the subject. At that time it was the fashion for literary European travellers returning from Asia to display their susceptibilities to the call of the East by depicting an India of boundless and magical fascination, lit up with Bengal lights, saturated with the charm of Pierre Loti's romances, adorned with the temples of a living religion more profound than our own, and inhabited by Rabindranath Tagores and dark eyed enchantresses, with Mahatmas in the mountain background. These enthusiasts were more Indian than any Indian; and their readers, who had never been in India, began where they left off, and went much further into an imaginary east. Archer went to see for himself, and instantly and uncompromisingly denounced the temples as the shambles of a barbarous ritual of blood sacrifice, and the people as idolaters with repulsive rings through their noses. He refused to accept the interest of Indian art and the fictions of Indian romance as excuses. He remained invincibly faithful to Western civilization, and told the Indians flatly what a civilized western gentleman must think of them and feel about some of their customs.

In doing so he did India the only service in his power. If western civilization is not more enlightened than eastern we have clearly no right to be in India. When once the British conqueror and master of India comes to think that suttee is a touching and beautiful act of wifely sacrifice, he had better abdicate, come home, and introduce suttee in

England. When he ceases to treat the car of Juggernaut precisely as he would treat a motor bus driven to the public danger, his mission in India is over. What we owe to the Roman occupation of Britain we do not know: in fact there is too much ground for Mr George Trevelyan's conclusion that we relapsed the moment the Romans left us to ourselves ; but we should certainly owe nothing at all if the Romans had had the slightest doubt that the augur represented a less grossly superstitious religion than the Druid, and that Roman law and Roman civilization were higher than British. They may have been as hasty and superficial as Sir John Woodroffe declares Archer to have been; but they did not think so; and anyhow the sole justification of their conquest and occupation was that they were right. We shall have to clear out of India some day as the Romans had to clear out of Britain: perhaps the sooner the better for both parties. But it is certain that if, after that happens, the Indians are ever to say " It was a good thing for us that the westerners came and taught us something ", it will be because the English criticism of India was Archer's criticism, and not that of the occidental renegades who swell the heads of our Indian students by assuring them that we are crude barbarians compared to them. Archer would have been the last man to deny that we are shocking barbarians according to our own standards; that white women with small earrings cannot logically despise brown women with large noserings ; and that the Fundamentalist who prosecutes a school teacher for refusing to bow the knee to the god to whom Jephtha sacrificed his daughter can hardly hope to impose himself on an educated Hindu as a pioneer of thought. All the same, the Fundamentalist does not sacrifice his daughter or even his calf, and would send anyone who did to the electric chair or the lunatic asylum ; and the eastern toleration of nose-rings is not justified by the western toleration of earrings. People who make the one an excuse for the other will never

do anything to lighten the load of human superstition ; and as this was really Archer's appointed task in life he wrote one of the most useful because one of the most resolutely unsympathetic books on India produced in his generation. It is not all unsympathetic or anti-Indian: very far from it. But it was the unsympathetic part that was needed and effective. If you like, he wrote about the Indians as John Glas would have written about the heathen. But why not rather put it that he wrote about the Indians as Dickens wrote about the Americans ? And does anyone now doubt that Dickens told the Americans what they needed to be told, and that his honesty did not prevent his becoming more popular with them than any of their romantic flatterers ?

I have no more to say about William Archer that matters enough to be printed. Looking back as far as the days when, finding me full of literary ability but ridiculously incapable of obtaining literary employment and desperately in need of it, he set me on my feet as a critical journalist by simply handing me over a share of his own work, and making excuses for having deputed it until the Pall Mall Gazette and The World, then in the van of fashionable journalism, accepted the deputy as a principal, I am conscious that many of our contemporaries must have seen him much oftener than I, and that this sketch of him must be incomplete and perhaps in some points misleading. And there is the other possibility : that I may have been too close to him, and known him too early, to realize his full stature. But I am sure that I never could get him to think as well of himself as I thought of him. I leave it to others to compose a proper full-dress literary portrait of him: all I have tried to do here is to give some sort of life to a sketch of a friend of whom, after more than forty years, I have not a single unpleasant recollection, and whom I was never sorry to see or unready to talk to.

One day I received from him the following letter.

27, FITZROY SQUARE, W.i.  
17th December 1924.

MY DEAR G. B. S.

Since I wrote you, I have learnt that I shall have to undergo an operation one of these days—I go into a nursing home tomorrow. I don't know that the operation is a very serious one, and as a matter of fact I feel as fit as a fiddle, so I suppose my chances are pretty good. Still, accidents will happen; and this episode gives me an excuse for saying, what I hope you don't doubt—namely, that though I may sometimes have played the part of ail-too candid mentor, I have never wavered in my admiration and affection for you, or ceased to feel that the Fates had treated me kindly in making me your contemporary and friend. I thank you from my heart for forty years of good comradeship.

Whatever happens, let it never be said that I did not move in good society—I lunched today with the King of Norway and Prince Olaf.

Very kind regards to Mrs Shaw, and all good wishes for 1925.—Ever yours,  
W. A.

I was not seriously alarmed, and presently sailed for Madeira. On landing there, the first words that caught my eye on the news bulletin in the hall of Reid's Hotel were "Death of Mr William Archer". They threw me into a transport of fury. The operation had killed him. I am unfashionable enough to hold that an operation which does not justify itself by its promised results should always be the subject of a stringent inquest; for I have never been able to regard a death caused by an operation as a natural death. My rage may have been unjust to the surgeons; but it carried me over my first sense of bereavement. When

I returned to an Archerless London it seemed to me that the place had entered on a new age in which I was lagging superfluous.

I still feel that when he went he took a piece of me with him.

G. B. S.

AYOT ST LAWRENCE,  
*July* 1926.

MARTHA WASHINGTON  
A PLAY IN EIGHT SCENES



## SCENES AND PERSONAGES

*All characters historical except those marked with an asterisk.*

### SCENE FIRST

The White House, York River, Virginia,  
January 6, 1759.

COLONEL GEORGE WASHINGTON.  
THOMAS, LORD FAIRFAX.  
GOVERNOR FAUQUIER.  
MAJOR CHAMBERLAYNE.  
MR. WILLIAM DANDRIDGE.  
MR. BARTHOLOMEW DANDRIDGE.  
MR. JOHN AUGUSTINE WASHINGTON.  
MR. CHARLES WASHINGTON.  
CULLY (*a Negro*).

MRS. MARTHA CUSTIS.  
MRS. DANDRIDGE.  
Miss ELIZABETH DANDRIDGE.  
MRS. FIELDING LEWIS (BETTY WASHINGTON).  
MRS. BURWELL BASSETT (FANNY DANDRIDGE).  
A Clergyman, Guests, Negroes, etc.

### SCENE SECOND

Mount Vernon, August 31, 1774.

COLONEL WASHINGTON.  
COLONEL EDMUND PENDLETON.  
MR. PATRICK HENRY.  
CULLY (*a Negro*).  
MRS. WASHINGTON.

### SCENE THIRD

Mount Vernon, June 21, 1775.

MR. JOHN PARKE CUSTIS.  
MR. FIELDING LEWIS.  
CULLY (*a Negro*).

MRS. WASHINGTON.  
MRS. ELEANOR CUSTIS.  
MRS. FIELDING LEWIS.

### SCENE FOURTH

The Vassall House, Cambridge, Mass.

PART I.—March 16, 1776.

MR. JOHN PARKE CUSTIS.

MRS. WASHINGTON.  
MRS. ELEANOR CUSTIS.  
MRS. KNOX.  
MRS. MIFFLIN.  
\*MRS. HALLOWELL.  
\*SALLY.

PART II.—March 17, 1776.

GENERAL WASHINGTON.  
AN AIDE-DE-CAMP.

MRS. WASHINGTON.  
\*SALLY.

### SCENE FIFTH

The Camp at Valley Forge.

PART I.—February n, 1778.

DR. ALBIGENCE WALDO.  
\*SERGEANT MAGRATH.  
\*PRIVATES STONE, HOLLINGSWORTH, DUNPHY, NICOL, PHIBBS,  
HART.  
A NEGRO SERVANT.  
MRS. WASHINGTON.

PART II.—May 5, 1778.

GENERAL WASHINGTON.  
GENERAL BENEDICT ARNOLD.  
GENERALS GREENE, LINCOLN, STIRLING, WAYNE.  
A LIEUTENANT.  
ASPY.

MRS. WASHINGTON.  
MRS. GREENE, LADY STIRLING, MRS. KIXTOX.  
Officers, Soldiers, Ladies.

SCENE SIXTH

Mount Vernon, October 7, 1780.

JOHN PARKE CUSTIS.  
CULLY (*a Negro*).  
MRS. WASHINGTON.  
MRS. ELEANOR CUSTIS.  
ELIZABETH and MARTHA CUSTIS (*Children*).  
CHLOE (*a Negress*).

SCENE SEVENTH

The Bassett House, Eltham, Virginia,  
November 5, 1781.

GENERAL WASHINGTON.  
JOHN PARKE CUSTIS.  
DR. CRAIK.  
MRS. WASHINGTON.  
MRS. ELEANOR CUSTIS.  
MRS. BURWELL BASSETT.

SCENE EIGHTH

Mount Vernon, December 2, 1799.

EX-PRESIDENT WASHINGTON.  
BRYAN, LORD FAIRFAX.  
MRS. WASHINGTON.  
LADY FAIRFAX.  
Miss JULIA FAIRFAX.



## SCENE FIRST

*The Sixth of January 1759. Both G. W. and M. W. are aged twenty-seven—a few months more or less.*

*At the White House, one of the Custis residences, on the York River, Virginia.*

*A well-proportioned and spacious room, very simply decorated, in light colours. (Walls panelled and painted.) Entrance door L. In back wall a large double door opening into a similar, but smaller room. This door is not opened until the end of the scene. In wall R. two sash windows, high and comparatively narrow, with fire-place between them—logs burning on hearth. Rather wooden portrait of ancestor in British uniform of the Marlborough period over mantelpiece. One or two other crude family portraits on wall. The windows look out upon a wintry garden. Simple chandelier with about a dozen candles in centre of ceiling, and sconces for candles on walls. But the whole scene passes in bright morning light.*

*All the chairs, sofas and settees of the room, with others evidently pressed into the service, are ranged in four or five rows, facing towards the back. The rows, however, are broken by an aisle leading up to the double door, and about the width of the door. There are eight seats in each row, four on each side of the aisle. The chairs of the last row, near the fire-place, are light and can easily be turned so as to face the fire.*

*(Note.—The White House no longer exists, so that the motives for this scene may be taken from any good colonial building.)*

CULLY, *a middle-aged negro butler in livery, enters L., and is immediately aware of various negro faces, male and female, at both windows. He crosses the room with menacing gestures, throws up the window, down R., and speaks.*

CULLY. Now yo' po' black trash, jes' yo' clar right 'way. Yo' think yo' Mistiss caynt be jined in holy matermony 'thout yo' rubbin' yo' ugly noses up 'gin her winderpanes. What dat yo' say, Dinah? Want ter see her weddin' gown? Oh yo' female wimmin—plum crazy on puss'nal 'dornment! Well, yo' niggers has ma permish'n ter gad'er roun' de peaszer when de bride an' bridegroom dey comes out fer ter drive away. A 'clar ter grashus A dasn't do no more fer yer dan dat. Be off wid yer, now! Git 'way down ter de Williamsburg gate, an' cheer fer Cun'l Washington when he 'rive. A's info'med his Hon'ble Exency de Gub'nor am gwine ter 'scort him. But yo' hymn-singers yo' jes' keep on hand. A'll wave ma hankchif when de cermony begin fer ter commence, an' den's yo' time fer ter mek a joyful noise before de Lo'd. Keep yo eyes on dis yer winder, yo' unnerstan'? Well den, hoi' yer breffs an' act accordin'. (*Closes the window with a bang.*)

*At this moment ELIZABETH DANDRIDGE, aged ten, but looking younger, runs in L. She is MARTHA'S half-sister—a pretty child, wearing a little hoop and a white satin gown with pink ribbons. Perhaps her hair might be done up and powdered. Pictures of children of the period should be consulted.*

ELIZABETH (*carrying a white silk favour*). Oh, Cully, I've got a favour for you. Come here and I'll pin it on. (*Does so.*)

CULLY. Bless yo' heart, Missy Lizbeth.

ELIZABETH (*holding out her skirts and turning round*). What do you think of my gown, Cully? v

CULLY. A 'clar ter goodness, yo' looks splendenshus, Missy Lizbeth. Yo' mout be de bride yo'self.

ELIZABETH. No, Cully, since Colonel George is marrying my sister, I don't think I shall ever marry. (*Sighing*) I could give my heart to no one else,

CULLY. Dere now, Missy—cheer up !

ELIZABETH (*does so*). Of course I'm very glad to have him for a brother-in-law. I was quite a child when my other brother-in-law died ; but I don't believe he can have been half as amiable as Colonel George.

CULLY. Ole Mas'r Custis he wuz a fine man, Missy; but A's 'bleedzed fer ter say A's 'quainted wid no gem'man dat can hol' a can'l ter Cun'l Washington.

ELIZABETH. Do you know what my teacher says he is, Cully ? She says he's a hero !

CULLY. Bless grashus, wha's dat, Missy ?

ELIZABETH. I don't know exactly, but I think a hero means some one that's very tall and strong and kind.

CULLY. Even ter his niggers, Missy ?

ELIZABETH (*quite simply*). Yes, even to his niggers.

CULLY. Den I hopes yo' schoolmarm done tell de troof.

ELIZABETH (*looking round the room*). But, Cully, if the company are to sit in these chairs, I don't see any place for the bride and bridegroom and the minister.

CULLY. Bless yo' heart, Missy, de altar am in dar. (*Indicating the double door.*) When de time come, we opens dese yer do's—

ELIZABETH (*running up to the double door, slightly opening it, and peeping*). Oh, Cully, how beautiful ! Where did all these flowers come from ?

CULLY. De Lor' Fairfax, he sen' 'um f'um up de river.

ELIZABETH. Oh, isn't a wedding fun, Cully! Shan't I have a lot to tell my little nephew and niece.

CULLY (*surprised*). Yo' nephew, Missy ?

ELIZABETH (*grandly*). Master John and Miss Patsy, of course.

CULLY. Dere now, ef A didn't disremember ! Sho' miff dey's yo\* nephew and niece, Missy Lizbeth.

ELIZABETH. Poor innocents, they cried when their mother left them at the Six-Chimney House. But they would only have been in the way here, and children quickly get over their little troubles.

CULLY (*open-mouthed*). Well, A 'clar ter goodness !

ELIZABETH. What do you mean, Cully ?

CULLY. Nuthin', Missy Lizabeth—nuthin' in de roun' worril !

*Enter L. MRS. DANDRIDGE and MRS. FIELDING LEWIS, both in gala attire. MRS. DANDRIDGE, a substantial lady of forty-five, is ELIZABETH'S mother and MARTHA'S stepmother. MRS. LEWIS, WASHINGTON'S sister BETTY, is about twenty-six.*

MRS. DANDRIDGE. Well, is everything ready, Cully?

CULLY. All am prepared, Ma'am.

ELIZABETH. Oh, mother, the altar is just lovely ! Do look!

MRS. DANDRIDGE. I arranged the flowers myself, my dear. (*Looking at a huge watch, attached to a long gold chain*) A quarter of twelve ! I hear your brother is famed for his punctuality. V'

MRS. LEWIS. 'Tis a military virtue, Madam.

MRS. DANDRIDGE. Elizabeth, run to your sister Martha's room, and tell her there are only fifteen minutes left. Your sister Fanny is helping her to complete her toilet.

ELIZABETH. Yes, mother. *[Runs out L.*

MRS. DANDRIDGE. Cully, set chairs by the fire. (*CULLY does so, taking the two nearest chairs in the back row.*) We may as well wait in comfort, Mrs. Lewis. The company will soon be here now, Cully. Be on the watch for them.

CULLY. Sho'ly A will, Marm.

*Exit L. The two ladies sit by the fire.*

MRS. DANDRIDGE. Well now, dear Mrs. Lewis, I hope you take kindly to your new sister-in-law.

MRS. LEWIS. Indeed I do', Madam. I think my brother a most fortunate man.

MRS. DANDRIDGE. Strange how the tall men always pick out the little women. Perhaps Providence so orders it, lest the race should run into giants at the one end and dwarfs at the other.

MRS. LEWIS. But though Martha is no Amazon, she has presence—she has air.

MRS. DANDRIDGE. She has character, dear Madam. Your brother will find her staunch and sterling. Poor Daniel Custis was a good husband enough, yet not quite good enough for her.

MRS. LEWIS. We are all rejoiced that George has at last chosen so wisely. He is by no means insensible to feminine attractions, and has hovered on the brink of matrimony more than once.

MRS. DANDRIDGE. I have heard some gossip about him and a Miss Fauntleroy—

MRS. LEWIS. Yes—and then I believe there was a certain Miss Phillipse of New York with whom he was mightily taken. And Mary Gary of Fredericksburg—but (*laughing*) Mary Gary was quite contrary—

MRS. DANDRIDGE. —and fate reserved him for Martha. Well, no marriage that I can remember has made such a stir in Virginia. It has everything in its favour. They are equal in years and not unequal in fortune. Colonel Washington will be one of the greatest landowners in the colony—as well as one of the most respected men.

MRS. LEWIS. My dear brother! I think he deserves his happiness.

CULLY *opens the door, L., and announces.*

CULLY. De hon'ble Major Chamberlayne ; Mas'r William Dandridge ; Mas'r Bartholomew Dandridge.

*The gentlemen enter, wearing riding-boots, but otherwise in festal attire.*

CHAMBERLAYNE (*a bluff, hearty personage*). Mrs. Dandridge, Madam, I kiss your hand, (*Does so.*)

MRS. DANDRIDGE. You are welcome, Major Chamberlayne. Let me make you known to Mrs. Fielding Lewis, the bridegroom's sister.

CHAMBERLAYNE (*bowing*). I am proud to call myself your brother's friend, Madam. (MRS. LEWIS *curtsies*)

MRS. DANDRIDGE. Well, William—well, Bartholomew—WILLIAM. Yourservant, Madam.

BARTHOLOMEW. Good day to you, mother-in-law. (*Greetings.*)

MRS. DANDRIDGE. Mrs. Lewis, let me present to you my two sons—sturdy lads, you'll admit—but sometimes rather troublesome children.

WILLIAM. We have a stern parent, Madam.

CHAMBERLAYNE. But where is the bride ?

ELIZABETH *tears open the door, L., and dashes in, greatly excited.*

ELIZABETH. Oh, mother, Sister Martha is coming downstairs—and don't she just look splendenshus !

MRS. DANDRIDGE. Splendenshus, child! Where do you get your language ?

ELIZABETH. It was Cully that said it—I thought it such a nice word. (*She curtsies to MAJOR CHAMBERLAYNE. Her half-brothers stoop and kiss her*)

MARTHA CUSTIS *enters L., followed by her sister FANNY—MRS. BURWELL BASSETT. Descriptions exist of MARTHA'S dress—which may or may not be adhered to.*

CHAMBERLAYNE. Ah, here she comes ! (*Bowing*) Mrs. Martha, your humble servant! (MARTHA *curtsies to him, and then to her brothers*)

MARTHA. Good morning, Brother William. Good morning, Brother Bartholomew.

THE BROTHERS. Good morning, Sister Patsy.

*She holds out both hands. WILLIAM kisses the right hand, BARTHOLOMEW the left, simultaneously.*

BARTHOLOMEW (*keeping hold of her hand and raising it, as he stands at arm's length, regarding her*). Sakes alive, sister ! How fine we are ! You might be a princess.

MARTHA. I wouldn't change places with one, brother.

CHAMBERLAYNE. Well said, Mistress Martha ! And I hope you don't forget that I am, so to say, the founder of the feast.

MARTHA. Indeed, Major, 'twas you that brought us acquainted. For my part, I bear you no malice, and I hope that, thirty years hence, Colonel Washington may say the same.

MRS.DANDRIDGE. What are you talking about, Martha, you and the Major ?

CHAMBERLAYNE. Faith, Ma'am, I'm reminding Mistress Martha that I have one good action to my credit.

MRS.DANDRIDGE. And what was that ?

MARTHA. Nothing less than inviting Colonel Washington home to dinner.

CHAMBERLAYNE. 'Twas in a happy hour I met him at the ferry, posting to Williamsburg. " Come home with me to dinner, Colonel George," says I, " and let me present you to my lovely and amiable guest, Mistress Martha Custis." " Nay, sir," says he, " I must beg you to excuse me. The Governor expects me at Williamsburg, and we have weighty matters to discuss." So we had it up and down, but I would take no denial. " Bishop," says he to his servant at last, " I am to dine with Major Chamberlayne ; but bring me my horse not a moment later than five, for we must be in Williamsburg to-night." The horse came at five, but the rider could not tear himself away. He tarried till six, he lingered till seven, and then 'twas too late to ride that night. The Governor and the urgent public business had to wait ; but 'tis my belief that, before he set forth on the morrow, the private business was fairly afoot that has brought us here this day.

- MARTHA. There you are wrong, sir : 'twas at least a month later that Colonel Washington honoured me with the offer of his hand.
- MRS. LEWIS. My brother is not apt to be precipitate in his actions.
- CHAMBERLAYNE. Never tell me that it took him a month to make up his mind.
- BARTHOLOMEW. But having made up his mind, he had still to summon up his courage.
- MARTHA. Nay, brother, Colonel Washington has never to *summon up* his courage, for it never deserts him.
- CHAMBERLAYNE. Not when he has Frenchmen or Indians to face—but a fair lady is a different matter.
- MARTHA. Do you think, sir, that the soldier who saved all that *could* be saved in General Braddock's disaster—the man who had his horse shot under him and four bullet-holes in his coat—would play a less manly part in—other things—than in war ?
- CHAMBERLAYNE. Surely you are not to learn, Madam, that modesty ever goes hand in hand with bravery.
- BARTHOLOMEW. Have you not heard, sister, what took place but a week ago in the House of Burgesses, when the Colonel resigned his command ?
- MARTHA. He told me that the House received him with flattering cordiality—nothing more.
- BARTHOLOMEW. He did not tell you what Speaker Robinson said when he stammered and could find no words to reply to the praises heaped upon him ? He did not mention that ?
- MARTHA. What did the Speaker say ?
- BARTHOLOMEW. " Sit down, Mr. Washington," he said, " sit down—your modesty is equal to your valour, and that surpasses the power of any language I possess."
- MARTHA (*after a short pause*). Thank you for telling me, brother. I should never have heard it from the Colonel. That, I                    is the one sort of secret he keeps from me.

CHAMBERLAYNE. Joking apart, Mistress Martha, you are marrying a very fine fellow.

MARTHA. Joking apart, Major Chamberlayne, I am quite of that opinion.

CHAMBERLAYNE. Even when he was no more than a boy, men saw in him a Man. Poor Braddock, who was only too apt to despise colonials, esteemed and loved George Washington ; and begad, it wasn't because he knuckled under to him either.

MARTHA. I'd like to see him knuckling under to any one !

CHAMBERLAYNE. I remember, when he came back from that massacre on the Ohio, Parson Davies of Hanover County spoke from the pulpit of the " heroic youth ", Colonel Washington, and declared that Providence had preserved him for some great purpose.

MARTHA. If he had been killed on the Ohio he couldn't have married me.

CHAMBERLAYNE. Ha-ha-ha ! Good i'faith ! The prophecy is fulfilled—this is the great purpose young George was reserved for ! You are a sly one, Mistress Martha !

*The sound of a distant horn is heard. The DANDRIDGES, MRS. LEWIS and ELIZABETH go to the windows and look out. Negroes are heard cheering. CULLY appears at the door, L.*

CULLY. His Exency de Gub'nor's cha'yot am drivin' up de paddock, an' Cun'l Washinton an' udder gemmans ridin' longside it.

MARTHA. He mustn't find me here ! Fanny, and dear Mrs. Lewis, pray come with me to the parlour. (*To MRS. DANDRIDGE*) Will you, madam, receive the gentlemen ? Elizabeth, come !

ELIZABETH. Mayn't I stay and receive Colonel George ?

MARTHA. Oh, very well. (*To MRS. LEWIS, as they go out*) The child adores him.

*Exeunt MARTHA, MRS. BASSETT and MRS. LEWIS.*

MRS. DANDRIDGE (*to CULLY*). Has Dr. Mossum come yet, Cully ?

CULLY (*as he follows the ladies out*). De reb'rend gemman hab not yet arrove. *[Exit.*

CHAMBERLAYNE. Come, young men, we must receive His Excellency. *[Goes out with the DANDRIDGES.*

ELIZABETH (*standing besides MRS. DANDRIDGE*). Mother, is it true that Colonel George has killed hundreds of Frenchmen and Indians ?

MRS. DANDRIDGE. No doubt he has killed some, my dear, else they would have killed *him*.

ELIZABETH. But he is so gentle and kind—why should they want to kill him ?

MRS. DANDRIDGE. You must ask the kings that make the wars, my dear—and I doubt whether *they* could tell.

ELIZABETH. Mother—when King George dies, will Colonel George be king ?

MRS. DANDRIDGE (*laughing*). Sh, sh, child! You are talking treason. Don't let the Governor hear you. V

CULLY (*at door, L., announcing*). His hon'ble Exency de Gub'nor, His Lo'dship de Lo'd Fairfax, Cun'l George Washinton, Mr. John 'Gustine Washinton, Mr. Cha'les Washinton.

*They enter in the order stated, followed by MAJOR CHAMBERLAYNE and the two DANDRIDGES. WASHINGTON'S costume is described as " a coat of blue cloth, lined with red silk and adorned with silver trimmings, a white satin waistcoat, knee-breeches and shoes with buckles of gold, powdered hair, and a straight dress sword ". As he is here represented as having just dismounted, some sort of boots might perhaps be substituted for the shoes. The other gentlemen, though not quite so resplendent, should be handsomely dressed.*

LIEUTENANT-GOVERNOR FAUQUIER, *a man of fifty -*

*five, goes up to MRS. DANDRIDGE, whom he evidently knows, and bows.*

GOVERNOR. Mrs. Dandridge, Madam—I hope I see you well.

MRS. DANDRIDGE (*curtsying deeply*). Your Excellency is most obleeing.

WASHINGTON (*comes forward and kisses her hand*). I believe, Madam, you do not know my kind friend, Lord Fairfax, Mrs. Dandridge. (FAIRFAX, *a man of over seventy, bows.*) Permit me to present my brothers, Mr. John Augustine Washington, Mr. Charles Washington. (*Greetings.*)

MRS. DANDRIDGE. We are honoured by your presence, Your Excellency and my Lord.

GOVERNOR. It is a duty, no less than a pleasure, to do honour to Colonel Washington.

FAIRFAX. You will have a good son in young George, Madam—he has been as a son to me.

WASHINGTON (*looking round*). And—and—the bride, Madam ?

MRS. DANDRIDGE (*laughing*). Have no fear, Colonel—she has not run away—she but awaits the hour of the ceremony in another room. It still lacks some minutes of noon, and the canonical gentleman has not yet arrived.

FAIRFAX. I told Colonel George we were setting forth too early, but his impatience was not to be restrained.

*The GOVERNOR and LORD FAIRFAX stand before the fire. MRS. DANDRIDGE resumes her seat above it. The other gentlemen stand around. ELIZABETH, who has been more or less concealed behind her mother, steals up to WASHINGTON and plucks the skirt of his coat.*

WASHINGTON (*looking down at her*). Ah, Miss Betsy, have I overlooked thee ? I was much to blame. (*Stoops and kisses her, then takes her hand and leads her forward.*) Your Excellency, my Lord—permit me to present a young lady whom in ten minutes, I

trust, it will be my privilege to call sister. (ELIZABETH *curtsies*, FAUQUIER *and* FAIRFAX *bow*.)

FAIRFAX. As fine a reverence, little lady, as ever I saw at the Court of Queen Anne.

MRS. DANDRIDGE. Pray, my Lord, do not turn the child's head. Come hither, Elizabeth. (ELIZABETH *stands by her mother's side*.)

GOVERNOR. I trust, Colonel Washington, that your marriage does not involve our losing your services in the field.

WASHINGTON. Indeed, sir, I hope to beat my sword—such as it is—into a ploughshare.

FAIRFAX. Why, George, from a boy you were ambitious of the profession of arms.

WASHINGTON. I still entertain a high opinion of it; but, please God, my fighting days are over.

FAIRFAX. I remember when you would fain have gone to sea as a midshipman.

WASHINGTON. 'Twas a boyish whim; but I own I was greatly cast down when my mother's cousin said to her: "Rather than put your son in the English navy, apprentice him to a tinker."

FAIRFAX. And later—only four years ago—you were eager to exchange a blue coat for a red, and accept a king's commission.

WASHINGTON. I was four years younger, my Lord. I now see that I should never have been received as an equal by the English officers, and we Virginians do not love to rank as inferiors.

GOVERNOR. But, sir, you may again be called upon to defend His Majesty's dominions against the French. So long as they hold Canada and Louisiana, these colonies are never secure.

FAIRFAX. I hear whispers of a projected expedition against Quebec. Does Your Excellency know aught of it?

GOVERNOR. Officially, my Lord, nothing at all. But it

would not greatly surprise me to learn that General James Wolfe was to have a command on this side of the Atlantic.

WASHINGTON. What! Wolfe of Louisburg! A fine fellow! I should be proud to serve under him.

FAIRFAX (*laughing*). So, so! You would unsheath your ploughshare at the call of glory! George, George!  
f You will not easily sink the soldier in the *husbandman*.

WASHINGTON. You may laugh, my Lord; but the glory I most affect is that of taming the wilderness and teaching the earth to bring forth its fruits in season.

FAIRFAX. You hold with my poor friend Jonathan Swift that the greatest benefactor of his kind is he who can make two ears of corn grow where only one grew before.

WASHINGTON. Whoever said that said a very true thing. The noblest use of the sword is to clear a path for the plough.

GOVERNOR. Then, Colonel, I think I can promise you opportunities to employ your sword to that end. We have not yet done with the French beyond the mountains.

WASHINGTON. I, sir, am as resolute as any one that our westward extension shall not be hemmed in by an alien people.

GOVERNOR. Some day, after a great Western campaign, I may have the pleasure of presenting Colonel Washington and his bride at the Court of St. James's.

WASHINGTON (*laughing*). That must be as my bride shall determine. (*Turning to* MRS. DANDRIDGE) What think you, madam? Will Martha have a mind to make her curtsy at Court?

MRS. DANDRIDGE. Why, Colonel, you may as well ask: "Is Martha a woman?"

WASHINGTON. For my own part, I admit my longing desire to visit the great metropolis of this Empire.

But whatever my kind friend here may say (*indicating FAIRFAX*) my one real ambition is to live and die as a tiller of the soil on the banks of the Potomac.

FAIRFAX. To sit under your own vine and fig-tree, no man making you afraid ?

WASHINGTON. You have said it, my Lord. So much, methinks, is the right of every man ; and no man need crave for more.

CULLY (*appearing at the door, L.*). De Reb'rend Dr. Mossum present his comp'n'ts, an' all is prepared fer de nupshl so-lem-niz-ashn.

*A clock in the hall is heard to strike twelve.*

MRS. DANDRIDGE (*rising*). Punctual to the minute !

WASHINGTON. You will excuse me, gentlemen. Mistress Elizabeth, will you conduct me to your sister ? (*ELIZABETH takes his hand and leads him out by the door, L.*)

CULLY *throws open the double door, and reveals the Clergyman waiting in front of a table which more or less suggests an altar. It is decked with flowers in silver bowls and goblets, and with silver candlesticks. The altar should probably be raised by a single step, on which the Clergyman stands. MRS. DANDRIDGE ushers the GOVERNOR, LORD FAIRFAX and the other gentlemen to seats in front. Other guests enter the room ; she welcomes them in dumb show and shows them seats. Some white servants and one or two house-negroes take the back places. CULLY watches the open door, L., till he sees the bride and bridegroom approaching ; then he opens the foremost window and waves a gorgeous handkerchief. The negroes outside strike up a hymn. (Perhaps one of Dr. Watts's hymns would do; perhaps something better could be discovered.) WASHINGTON enters with MARTHA on his arm, ELIZABETH bearing her train, and MRS. LEWIS and MRS. BASSETT following. They pass up the short aisle, the company*

*rising and facing round to them. A verse of the hymn comes to an end, and the Clergyman is about to begin the service when the negroes strike up another verse. The Clergyman shakes his head at CULLY, who throws up the window and shouts.*

CULLY. Stop dat dar hollerin', yo' dad-blame niggers !  
Ef A catches up wid yer, yer'll sing anudder chune !

*He bangs down the window : the hymn has ceased. The company decorously repress smiles, and face towards the parson, who begins the service as*

*The Curtain falls.*

## SCENE SECOND

*The Thirty-first of August 1774. G. W. and M. W. aged forty-two.*

*A room at Mount Vernon, opening upon the piazza. This room must be carefully studied; but it must be remembered that Mount Vernon was considerably altered during the later years of WASHINGTON'S life. The one indispensable entrance is that to the back, opening on the piazza. There ought to be at least one window, with a window-seat, either R. or L.*

*The curtain rises on an empty stage. There is a dinner-table in the middle of the room, at which it is evident that a party of eight or thereabouts has just finished dinner.*

*Voices are heard on the piazza, evidently calling to departing guests : " Good-bye, good-bye ! " " Our compliments to Mrs. Mason " " Pleasant journey." " Come again soon ! " etc. etc. Then MARTHA WASHINGTON, EDMUND PENDLETON, PATRICK HENRY and GEORGE WASHINGTON enter the room, and while conversing resume their places at table. PENDLETON is a man of fifty-three, HENRY of thirty-eight.*

PENDLETON. Ought not we, too, to be getting to horse ?

WASHINGTON. No, no, Mr. Pendleton, we have time before us. Our friends have twice our distance to ride.

MARTHA. If you leave in half an hour you will easily finish your first stage by daylight.

WASHINGTON. A glass of wine, Mr. Pendleton. (*Pours one for him.*) Mr. Henry, if you will not help yourself, pray help Mrs. Washington. (*Passes the decanter to him.*)

PENDLETON (to MARTHA). You ought to accompany us, Madam.

MARTHA. No, no, Mr. Pendleton, I am a country mouse. I should be ill at ease in the whirl of a Metropolis like Philadelphia—a city of twenty thousand people.

WASHINGTON. Well, gentlemen, it has been a great pleasure to Mrs. Washington and myself to receive you at Mount Vernon. I could have wished that the occasion of your coming had been a more peaceable one—a fox-chase, perhaps, or the races at Alexandria—

MARTHA. But you are all the more welcome, gentlemen, as champions of a great cause.

WASHINGTON. Well said, my dear! Colonel Pendleton Mr. Henry, I drink to you! (*Does so; MRS. WASHINGTON likewise; bows exchanged.*)

HENRY. But for the cause, Madam, you would scarcely have seen *me* here. The diversions of you gentle-folks of the tide-waters are beyond the ambitions of our inland rusticity.

MARTHA. Why, Mr. Henry, I hear of you as a sportsman,

HENRY. I go out with my gun in the woods, Madam—that is all. And I confess I do not share the Colonel's regret for the occasion of our coming hither. I look forward with joy to this Continental Congress, which, if I have any voice in the matter, will assert once for all our rights as free Americans.

WASHINGTON. You cannot but have a great voice in the matter, Mr. Henry. We all know the power of that voice, and rejoice to know that it will always be raised for freedom,

MARTHA. Mr. Henry is like the war-horse of Scripture, scenting the battle afar off.

PENDLETON. Good, Madam ! Mrs. Washington knows you, Henry.

HENRY. You are a lawyer yourself, Colonel Pendleton, and a pretty hard hitter at the bar.

WASHINGTON. Yes, gentlemen, you are orators both, and contention is your element. But I am a man of peace.

PENDLETON. A man of peace, Colonel ! The French and the Indians, I believe, do not give you that character.

MARTHA. Colonel Washington is a man of peace because he has seen war.

WASHINGTON. Indeed, I cannot abandon the hope that England will return to her senses and admit our rights, without compelling us to wrest them from her. I have always said that, though no man should scruple to use arms in defence of liberty, yet they should be the last resource.

HENRY. They *will* be the last resource, Colonel, depend upon it ; and to that resource we shall ere long be driven.

MARTHA. May a squaw speak her mind to the Chiefs of the Great Council-Fire ?

WASHINGTON. It is not customary among the Indians, my dear, but as we are not yet in war-paint——

PENDLETON. Pray, let us hear your view, Mrs. Washington.

HENRY. By all means, Madam.

MARTHA. Then it seems to me that we are already at war. Soldiers have been sent to Boston to force the people of Massachusetts Bay to do what they don't want to do—what they are resolved not to do. What is that but war ? And when the people hit back, the soldiers killed them. What is that but war ? And now the whole town is to be ruined by military force because the people refuse to dance to a tune that is not of their own calling. What is that but war ?

HENRY (*thumping the table*). Water-drinker as I am, Colonel Washington, I must beg you to fill me a bumper to drink the health of Mrs. Washington. (*Holds out his glass ; WASHINGTON fills it; HENRY holds it up to MRS. WASHINGTON.*) Madam, I salute you ! If all the women of America think and speak as you do, the result of this conflict cannot be doubtful.

PENDLETON. If King George could hear you, madam, he would think twice before driving us to extremities.

HENRY. Then thank God he does *not* hear ; for it is time this matter were settled. If King George the Third came to reason and we kissed his hand, we should be leaving our children to the tender mercies of King George the Fourth, or King George the Fifth, or King George the Sixth, who would *not* come to reason.

WASHINGTON. There I am not wholly with you, Mr. Henry. I am as resolute as you to resist oppression ; but I am fain to believe that it is the Ministry and the Parliament we are at odds with—not the Crown of Great Britain.

HENRY. Believe me, Colonel, a distinction without a difference. I am not, like Dr. Franklin, in the secrets of the Court of St. James's. I do not know whether the King is the moving spirit in this matter, or is himself led by the nose. In the one case he is wicked, in the other case he is weak—does it greatly matter which ?

PENDLETON. Mr. Henry, you go too far.

HENRY. You, Mr. Pendleton, were one of those who cried " Treason ! " when I reminded the Assembly that Caesar had had his Brutus and Charles the First his Cromwell ; but the only treason I know is treason against the people of America.

PENDLETON. Mr. Henry, I——

WASHINGTON. Gentlemen, gentlemen, let us not fall out about words. We are all agreed on the right of

resistance to tyranny. When we have disarmed the tyranny, it will be time enough to decide who, precisely, was the tyrant.

MARTHA. My father has often told me how his grandfather fought on the side of the Parliament in the Civil War. "The Parliament," he said, "were not fighting against King Charles. Oh no! that would have been treason. They were fighting *for* King Charles *against* his evil counsellors. And they fought for King Charles so stoutly and so loyally that at last they cut his head off." That, I believe, is loyalty as Mr. Henry understands it.

HENRY. Yes, because his head was the worst of his evil counsellors.

MARTHA. Was it not rather his heart?

WASHINGTON. We are jesting with serious things. It is no light matter to fall out with a people and a power like the people and the power of Great Britain.

PENDLETON. If Mr. Pitt were in power, and had not declined into my Lord Chatham, all these troubles would soon be at an end.

HENRY (*hotly*). No, no, and again no, Mr. Pendleton! Mr. Pitt was, and Lord Chatham is, an Englishman; and no Englishman lives who will admit that we colonists, forsooth!, have equal rights with himself.

MARTHA. People in England, it seems to me, overlook the difference between a colonist and a convict. They send us the dregs of their prisons, and then say, "Birds of a feather flock together."

WASHINGTON. You are too warm, my dear——

HENRY. Mrs. Washington is right, Colonel. It is time we had done with all pedantries about charters, and privileges, and internal and external taxation. We claim absolute equality of rights; and if we let ourselves be put off with less, we are—well, in Mrs. Washington's presence I won't say what we are.

MARTHA. We all know what you mean, Mr. Henry, and we applaud the sentiment.

HENRY. Thank you, Madam. How can you pretend, Mr. Pendleton, that your Mr. Pitt would have allowed us equal rights? Did he not say in his place in Parliament—this man to whom some of us have been ninnies enough to set up statues—did he not say, "I assert our right to bind their trade, confine their manufactures—exercise every power whatsoever—except that of taking money out of their pockets without their consent." As if they could bind our trade and confine our manufactures without taking money out of our pockets!

MARTHA. 'Tis as though a highwayman were to say: "Hand over your watch, and your valise, and be quick about it; but if I touch your purse, without your consent, call me a thief!"

HENRY. The case to a tittle, Madam. The ground of difference between us and Great Britain is simply this: The British think that we exist for their benefit, whereas we have the temerity to suppose that we exist for our own. I trust you are with me, Colonel Washington?

WASHINGTON. There is much in what you say, Mr. Henry. I myself have felt the keenest resentment at the doings of our lordly masters in Great Britain. Such an act of vindictive tyranny as the Boston Port Bill is beyond all defence, and the claim to carry offending patriots across the ocean for trial is wholly intolerable. Yet I cannot abandon the hope that the voice of reason may make itself heard.

HENRY. Not till it speaks from the cannon's mouth, Colonel!

WASHINGTON. You may be right, Mr. Henry. I shall certainly not flinch from extreme measures, should they prove necessary. But it is hard to believe that the mother country——

HENRY. The stepmother country——

MARTHA. No, no, Mr. Henry—a true mother, not a stepmother, is slow enough to realise that her child has grown out of leading-strings. That, I am sure, is where the mischief lies. You know, Mr. Pendleton, my son, John Parke Custis, was happily married last February. You would not believe how hard it was for me to admit, as he grew up, that there must be an end to the time when he could be slapped and put in the corner whenever he was naughty. So the mother country refuses to admit to herself that we have grown up. Thinking us naughty children, she has slapped us and put us in the corner; but however naughty we may be, we are children no longer. That is what she has to learn.

HENRY. And by heaven we will teach her by pulling down the house about her ears !

WASHINGTON. Gently, gently, Mr. Henry! Remember the house you speak of is a great Empire, and we are but a little people, not without our jealousies and bickerings.

HENRY. Is not this Continental Congress to which we are bound precisely a proof that jealousies and bickerings are forgotten, and that we stand as a united nation ?

MARTHA. Yes, and but for our friends across the water, we should never have attained that unity. As we are all Virginians here, I may confess that there was a time when I did not love the Yankees.

WASHINGTON. The proof of our unity will be more complete after the Congress is over ; but I do not fear the result.

MARTHA. Colonel Washington's rule in life, gentlemen, is to hope for the best but to be prepared for the worst. It is sometimes a little trying to more eager spirits like myself; yet we manage to put up with each other.

*Enter CULLY, now quite old and shaky.*

CULLY. De gem'men's ho'ses is at de steps.

WASHINGTON. One more glass, gentlemen, to drink good luck to the Continental Congress.

ALL (*rising*). Good luck to the Continental Congress !

MARTHA. And may it be the first of many !

HENRY. So say we all !

CULLY *has brought in riding coats and hats, and is preparing to help in putting on the coats.*

MARTHA. Have you packed the Colonel's writing-case, Cully ?

CULLY. No, Mis' Martha—A done clean forgot it !

WASHINGTON (*going out*). I will see to it, my dear.

MARTHA. Remember, I look for frequent bulletins from the Great Council.

WASHINGTON. You shall have them, never fear.

[*Exit.*

PENDLETON and HENRY *have put on their riding coats, and stand hat in hand.*

MARTHA (*shaking hands with them in turn*). Good-bye, gentlemen. I trust you will all stand firm. I know my George will. God be with you, gentlemen.

WASHINGTON *appears at the door, in riding coat, etc.*

WASHINGTON. Are you ready, gentlemen ?

HENRY. Quite ready, Colonel.

MARTHA. I will see you in the saddle.

*They bow as she takes WASHINGTON'S arm and leads the way out. CULLY stands in the doorway, looking along the piazza in the direction of their exit ; he joins in the cheers which are heard as the party ride off.*

MARTHA *returns alone, and goes over to the window, where she stands looking out.*

CULLY. Is it de troof, Mis' Martha, what I done hear tell, dat de Cun'l am goin' ter Philadelphy fer ter teach King Geo'ge ter min' his own bizness ?

MARTHA (*smiling*). That's not far from the truth, Cully.

CULLY. Is it de troof dat King Geo'ge wan' ter mek white folks slaves, same like black folks ?

MARTHA. Not far from the truth again.

CULLY. Tears ter me, Mis' Martha, like King Geo'ge wuz clean out'n his five wits.

MARTHA (*at the window, waving her handkerchief*). We're beginning to think so, Cully.

CULLY. 'Caze, ef dey wuz all ter be slaves, w'y wuz white folks bo'n white an' black folks black ?

MARTHA. You are as wise as Solomon, Cully. You must reason with the Colonel when he comes back. He thinks all men should be free, white folks and black folks too.

CULLY. Lordy, lordy, Mis' Martha! Me free! Don' let de Mas'r sen' me away, Mis' Martha !

MARTHA. Never fear, Cully—you're safe yet a while. (*Waving for the last time.*) They're gone. Come with me to the weaving-sheds, Cully. We must weave stout cloth, so that we may not have to buy it from England.

*As she is going out, CULLY following*

*The Curtain falls.*

## SCENE THIRD

*The Twenty-first of June 1775—about ten months later than the previous scene.*

*Mount Vernon : the same rooms as in Scene Second. Late afternoon of a beautiful summer day.*

MARTHA WASHINGTON is seated at the spinet, playing Handel's " *Lascia ch' io pianga* ", or some other well-known air of the period. Her daughter-in-law ELEANOR CUSTIS, a quite young woman, sits by the instrument watching her. MRS. FIELDING LEWIS (BETTY WASHINGTON) is sewing by the window.

MRS. LEWIS (*looking out*). Ah, here comes John !

ELEANOR rises and turns towards the door. MARTHA hurries through the close of the piece she is playing, finishes it, and wheels round on the music-stool towards the door just as JOHN PARKE CUSTIS (*twenty-two years of age*) enters along the piazza. He has evidently been riding.

MARTHA. Well, Jack ? No sign of the post ?

JOHN. None, mother, though I rid half-way to Alexandria.

ELEANOR (*her arm on JOHN'S shoulder*). Surely, mother, there is no cause for anxiety. It is barely a week since you heard from my father-in-law.

MARTHA. I am not anxious, child—not fearful of any misadventure. But I am eager for news, as we all are, I suppose, now that war is no longer doubtful. After the attack at Lexington there can be no drawing back.

JOHN. Perhaps the British may draw back, now that we have taught them a lesson.

MARTHA. Ah no, my son—the British are not apt at learning such lessons.

MRS. LEWIS. General Gage seems to sit very quietly in Boston.

JOHN. He has discovered that the Massachusetts minute-men can shoot, and he knows that his own red-coats can't. I'm told they simply put their muskets to their shoulders, close their eyes, and blaze away.

MRS. LEWIS. They shot straight enough in the Boston Massacre.

JOHN. Because they were barely a dozen yards from the crowd. Even a blind man could hit a haystack.

MARTHA. Now that General Gage has been reinforced, we may have news from him at any moment. 'Tis said that General Howe and General Burgoyne are the best men in the British Army. And we do not know what to expect of the Massachusetts commander—what's his name?—Ward. At Lexington the minute-men seem to have been their own generals.

MRS. LEWIS. I wish George were in command at Boston.

MARTHA. What! A Virginian command a New England army! You are dreaming, sister.

MRS. LEWIS. I suppose it is not to be thought of.

JOHN. Put it the other way, Ma'am, and imagine a Yankee commanding a Virginian army.

MRS. LEWIS. Oh, that, of course, would be preposterous.

ELEANOR. My father-in-law wore his uniform when he set forth to the Congress.

MARTHA. He could not do otherwise—he is in command of the Virginian forces.

JOHN. I spoke the other day at Alexandria to a friend

of this Benedict Arnold, who distinguished himself in the affair of Crown Point and Ticonderoga. He says Arnold is a daring fellow, and we shall certainly hear more of him.

MARTHA. And he is a New Englander ?

JOHN. A Connecticut man.

MARTHA. Perhaps Congress will give him the command at Boston.

JOHN. The other man, Ethan Allen, seems to be a little bit crazy. Do you know what he answered when the British asked him by whose commission he acted ? He said, " I demand the surrender of this fort in the name of the Great Jehovah and the Continental Congress ! "

MARTHA. I see nothing crazy in that, my son. Do not mistake an enthusiast for a madman.

ELEANOR (*who has picked up a thick pamphlet from the table and been turning over its leaves*). Oh, John—what book is this you have got hold of ?

JOHN (*looking over her shoulder*). That ? Oh, it's a Tory pamphlet Lord Fairfax gave me yesterday. I have not looked at it yet.

ELEANOR (*handing it to MARTHA*). Just look, mother—look at the title.

MARTHA (*reads*). " Taxation no Tyranny/' Well, at all events the writer nails his colours to the mast.

JOHN. Lord Fairfax says he is one Sam Johnson, a lexi-lexi-cographer.

ELEANOR. What in the wide world is that ?

JOHN. Oh, a fellow that writes dictionaries.

ELEANOR. And what's the use of writing dictionaries ?

JOHN. Why, to help people find the longest words for everything.

MARTHA (*who has been looking through the pamphlet*). Mr. Johnson, I am afraid, does not love us, but here is something that might have taught him not to despise

us : " They multiply with the fecundity of their own rattlesnakes, so that every quarter of a century doubles their numbers " .

MRS. LEWIS. If that be true, how long will it take us to be a greater nation than Britain herself ? There, Jack, is a problem for your arithmetic.

JOHN (*laughing*). Aunt Betty, I give it up.

MARTHA. Mr. Johnson himself might have thought of working it out. But he no doubt proposes to keep on killing us off, as we kill rattlesnakes.

ELEANOR. How can he write of us with such contempt ?

MARTHA. He must have written before the news of Lexington reached England. Up to then he had only heard our rattle ; now he knows that we have fangs as well.

JOHN. Yes, begad, he does !

MARTHA. But he is willing to let some of us survive. He prophesies that the contest will end in the avowal of " English superiority and American obedience " .

JOHN. I wonder why you and I, mother, have got to obey Mr. Sam Johnson.

MARTHA. Because he was born in England, my son, and we, like rattlesnakes, in Virginia.

ELEANOR. Oh but, mother, you haven't read the most spiteful thing he says. (*Takes up the pamphlet and looks for the passage.*) Ah, here it is : " If slavery be thus fatally contagious, how is it that we hear the loudest yelps for liberty among the drivers of negroes ? "

MRS. LEWIS. " Drivers of negroes " , indeed ! As if our faithful, devoted black servants required to be " driven " !

ELEANOR. As if they were not far better off here than in savage, heathen Africa !

MARTHA. Mr. Johnson, it would seem, does not read the Scriptures, else he would know that they every-

where allow the holding of bondmen and bondwomen. But, sister, we must not speak too positively, for you know that, in this matter, your brother inclines to Mr. Johnson's view.

MRS. LEWIS. In some things George is not without a strain of the enthusiast. You know how, when he was elected to the Assembly before your marriage, he insisted on treating the freeholders of Frederick County, but treating them all round—those who voted against him, no less than his supporters.

MARTHA. That was my George all over !

JOHN (*looking out at the window*). Why, who is this, riding post-haste ?

ELEANOR (*also looking out*). Oh, Aunt Betty ! 'Tis Mr. Lewis.

MRS. LEWIS. My husband ! Then we shall have news from Philadelphia !

MARTHA. News from George !

*All gather at the door, awaiting the arrival of*  
FIELDING LEWIS.

JOHN. He has ridden hard. His horse is reeking.

LEWIS (*without*). Betty ! Martha !

MRS. LEWIS. Fielding ! (*Runs out to meet him. Presently he leads her in. MARTHA holds out both hands to him.*)

MARTHA. Welcome to Mount Vernon !

LEWIS. Thank you, sister-in-law. I am the bearer of great news.

MARTHA. Good news ?

LEWIS. Yes.

MARTHA. Have we won a battle ?

LEWIS. A victory, though not exactly a battle.

MRS. LEWIS. Don't speak in riddles, Fielding.

MARTHA. First—how is Colonel Washington ?

LEWIS. There is no such person as Colonel Washington.

- MARTHA (*taken aback, almost alarmed*). What do you mean, brother-in-law ? Tell me !
- LEWIS. Colonel Washington gave place, four days ago, to General George Washington, Commander-in-Chief of the Continental Forces.
- ELEANOR. Oh, mother ! How glorious !
- JOHN. Commander-in-Chief, begged !
- MRS. LEWIS. General Washington ! Martha, you say nothing !
- MARTHA (*who has taken hold of JOHN'S arm to support herself*). Because I know not whether to laugh or to cry. (*With a laugh that is half a sob, she hides her face against her son's breast. He leads her to a seat, centre.*)
- MRS. LEWIS. Congress, you see, sister, does not hold it impossible for a Virginian general to command a New England army.
- MARTHA. I did not really think they would; but I clung to that hope—or was it a fear ?—as long as it was possible.
- LEWIS. Why, sister-in-law, you should be proud and happy that George's countrymen see him for what he is—the best man among us.
- MARTHA. I *am* proud—I *am* happy—but I am fearful and miserable at the same time. I have prayed and prayed that this might *not* happen, not thinking of myself alone, but because I knew that George would fain have been spared the terrible burden they have laid upon him.
- LEWIS. But he was the one man—to have chosen any one else would have been to betray our cause.
- MRS. LEWIS. Even in England his name is known and respected.
- LEWIS. True, my dear—the name of Washington is worth ten thousand men to us.
- MARTHA. You need not teach me to be proud of the name I bear ; and ere long I shall be happy in the

honour done to it. But how can I help also thinking of what that honour must cost—the separation, the danger, the anxiety, perhaps——(*She buries her face in her hands for a moment, then looks up again resolutely*) But no ! You are right, sister, I must think of nothing but that I am the wife of a great soldier, and that I must show myself worthy of him. Have you no letter for me, brother-in-law ?

LEWIS. To be sure I have, sister-in-law. By the powers, I had nigh forgot it.

*He produces from his breast pocket a somewhat bulky missive, tied with a blue ribbon and sealed.*

MARTHA. Give it to me ! (*She takes it eagerly, and seats herself by the window. She rummages in MRS. LEWIS'S work-basket.*) May I use your scissors, Betty ?

MRS. LEWIS. Need you ask, Martha ?

*MARTHA cuts the ribbon and opens the packet. A thickish blue-paper document falls to the ground.*

MRS. LEWIS (*seeing it*). A substantial epistle from the great man.

MARTHA (*picks it up and looks at the endorsement*). This is not a letter, sister.

MRS. LEWIS. What is it, then ?

MARTHA. His Will.

*She places it on the window-ledge. A momentary silence falls on the party. MARTHA holds up a white paper which has been wrapped round the blue document.*

MARTHA. This is his letter. (*Proceeds to read it. The others, respecting her absorption in it, talk in low voices.*)

JOHN. Were you present when my father was offered the command ?

LEWIS. Indeed I was.

JOHN. Did he make a speech ?

LEWIS. A very short one. What I chiefly remember

was that he declined to accept any pay for his services.

JOHN. He would take no pay !

MRS. LEWIS. How like George !

LEWIS. He said that, as no money could compensate him for the loss of " domestic ease "—those were his words, I remember—he would make no profit out of the employment. He would keep careful note of his expenses, and doubted not that they would be discharged.

MRS. LEWIS. And how did Congress take that ?

LEWIS. With great applause.

ELEANOR. How else *could* they take it ?

LEWIS. Why, Mrs. John, their applause showed their trust in his character. An unpaid servant is apt to be a bad servant. But they knew that what George Washington undertook he would perform, pay or no pay.

JOHN (*who has for some moments been lost in thought*). I wonder, would the General give me a post on his staff ?

MARTHA (*has finished her hasty perusal of the letter, and hears this speech*). John, j'ohn, would you leave me quite alone ?

JOHN. Why, mother——

MARTHA. Must I give up my son as well as my husband, Eleanor ? What say *you* ?

ELEANOR. When Virginia needs him, mother, I shall not stand in his way.

MARTHA (*pressing her hand*). You teach me a lesson, child.

JOHN *embraces* ELEANOR. *A pause.*

LEWIS. Are we not to hear, sister-in-law, what His Excellency says ?

MARTHA. Do they give him that title ?

LEWIS. 'Tis his proper designation.

MRS. LEWIS. Pray let us hear, dear Martha, how my brother takes his advancement.

MARTHA (*hesitates a moment*). Well, as we are all here his nearest kin, I will read the principal portions of his letter. He says : "I am now set down to write you on a subject which fills me with inexpressible concern, and this concern is greatly aggravated when I reflect upon the uneasiness I know it will give you. It has been determined in Congress that the whole army raised for the defence of the American cause shall be put under my care—(*her voice breaks, but after a pause she pulls herself together and reads on*)—and that it is necessary for me to proceed immediately to Boston, to take up the command of it." (*Breaks off.*) To Boston ! And I let him go away without his warm clothing !

LEWIS. Why, Boston is not Labrador, sister-in-law.

MARTHA. They say there is always a clammy, chill sea-fog in Massachusetts Bay.

LEWIS. Oh, it's not so bad in summer, and the fighting may be over before winter sets in.

MRS. LEWIS. At worst you can send his flannels after him, Martha.

MARTHA. I will see to it to-morrow.

MRS. LEWIS. What more does my brother say ?

MARTHA (*reads*). " You may believe me . . . when I assure you in the most solemn manner that, so far from seeking this appointment, I have used every endeavour to avoid it, not only from my unwillingness to part with you and the family, but from a consciousness of its being a trust too great for my capacity."

LEWIS (*interrupting*). He said that in Congress. He said : " I declare with sincerity I do not think myself equal to the command I am honoured with ".

MARTHA. 'Tis his greatest foible to undervalue himself. But he cannot hide his light under a bushel. He goes on—(*reads*)— But as it has been a kind of

destiny that has thrown me upon this service, I shall hope that my undertaking it is designed to answer some good purpose. You might, and I suppose did, perceive from the tenor of my letters that I was apprehensive I could not avoid this appointment, as I did not pretend to intimate when I should return. That was the case. It was utterly out of my power to refuse without exposing my character to such censures as would have reflected dishonour upon myself and given pain to my friends. This, I am sure, could not, and ought not to be, pleasing to you." (*She holds the letter to her breast.*) Indeed, indeed, my dear, no ! (*She resumes.*) " I shall rely, therefore, on that Providence which has hitherto preserved me and been bountiful to me, not doubting that I shall return safe to you in the fall."

LEWIS. You see he says " in the fall ".

MRS. LEWIS. Before he requires his warm garments.

MARTHA. Yes, he says " the fall "—but I shall send them all the same ! (*Goes on reading.*) " I shall feel no pain from the toil or danger of the campaign ; my unhappiness will flow from the uneasiness I know you will feel from being left alone. I therefore beg that you will summon your whole fortitude, and pass your time as agreeably as possible. My earnest and ardent desire is that you would pursue any plan that is most likely to produce content and a tolerable degree of tranquillity; as it must add greatly to my uneasy feelings to hear that you are dissatisfied or complaining at what I really could not avoid."—And then he speaks of his will.

*Pause.*

LEWIS. 'Tis the letter of a soldier and a man, Sister Martha.

MARTHA. Could he write any other ? But I must chide him for supposing it possible that I should be " dissatisfied or complaining ". (*Briskly and almost gaily*) Why, brother-in-law, 'tis yet an hour to supper-

time, and you have had nothing after your long ride.  
(*Strikes a gong.*)

LEWIS. We have had other things to think of. But indeed we must drink the General's health.

CULLY *appears, coming along the piazza.*

MARTHA. Wine, Cully—madeira and burgundy—and glasses.

CULLY. Sho'ly, Mis'Martha. *[Exit.*

MRS. LEWIS. There is a rumour, Fielding, that Governor Dunmore is mightily incensed at the turn things have taken, and is preparing to conquer Virginia, as he calls it, for the King.

LEWIS. 'Tis like enough he may play some fool's trick.

JOHN. There are plenty of Tories about, but they have no great hankering after the smell of powder.

LEWIS. Still, if his Lordship did attempt a raid, he would be apt to turn his attention to the home of the Rebel General. You would be safer with us, sister-in-law.

MARTHA. Whatever happens, brother-in-law, I shall not desert my post, unless by the Rebel General's orders.

CULLY *enters with the wine and glasses on a tray, puts it down and stands by the door.*

MARTHA (*to LEWIS*). Will you drink burgundy or madeira?

LEWIS. Burgundy for a thirsty man. (*Shepours it.*)

JOHN. And for me, mother. Shall I pour madeira for the ladies? (*They assent and he does so. As MARTHA is on the point of taking up her glass, she catches CULLY'S wistful eye.*)

MARTHA. Have you heard the news, Cully?

CULLY. Mas'r Lewis's nigger he done tole us—de Cun'l am chose out fer ter fight King Geo'ge.

MARTHA. Should you like to drink his health?

CULLY (*seizing a large glass that stands beside a water-*

*jug*). Ef 'twuz de las' ack, Mis' Martha ! (*She pours some burgundy into the glass—CULLY somewhat disappointed that she does not fill it. Then she takes up her own glass of madeira.*)

MARTHA. To His Excellency the Commander-in-Chief of the Continental Forces !

ALL. The Commander-in-Chief! The Commander-in-Chief !

MARTHA. And success to the Thirteen Colonies !

*All drink.*

CULLY (*turning his glass upside down*). Glory Halleluiah !

*Curtain.*

## SCENE FOURTH

### PART I

*The Sixteenth of March 1776—about nine months later than the previous scene.*

*A room in the Craigie (or Vassal!)—now the Longfellow—House at Cambridge, Mass. The only door, L. Opposite it two windows, with a fireplace and mirror between them. Against the back wall stands a sideboard, and over it hangs a "Grand Union Flag" attached by loops to nails in the wall. The body of the flag consists of seven red and six white stripes, with the crosses of St. George and St. Andrew in the corner, as in the British Union Jack. Two silver candlesticks of many branches stand on the sideboard, one at each end. There is a sofa above the fireplace, an armchair below it, and a large round table in the middle of the room. Afternoon light.*

*(Note.—The above description may be modified to suit an actual room in the existing house. The one essential is that there should be a clear space of blank wall at the back, on which the flag (of considerable size) can hang.)*

MARTHA WASHINGTON and ELEANOR CUSTIS are seated at the table, sewing brown trappers'-shirts (Virginian uniform). MRS. KNOX and MRS. MIFFLIN, also at the table, are rolling bandages.

*A distant cannon-shot is heard. ELEANOR starts, with a little gasp.*

MARTHA. Eleanor, my dear, if you start at every gunshot, John must take you back to Virginia.

ELEANOR. Oh no, mother, I am not afraid. 'Tis but my nerves.

MARTHA. Much may depend on your nerves, my dear. *(To the other ladies)* I am solicitous for my coming grandchild.

MRS. KNOX. 'Tis but natural, Ma'am.

ELEANOR. I assure you, dear mother, I am very well. I would not for worlds take John away from his attendance on the General. *(A couple of nearer and louder shots are heard.)* You see, I did not start.

*During what follows, the cannonade continues intermittently, now loud, now low.*

MARTHA. My nerves, I confess, were more tried by the silence of all those winter weeks—when we had no powder, and scarce any guns, and scarce any men—when the British, had they only known, could have walked into our trenches with only a few pikes to oppose them—when Dr. Franklin wrote urging that we should take to bows and arrows.

MRS. MIFFLIN. Dr. Franklin loves his joke.

MARTHA. 'Twas no joke, Ma'am, believe me. Our fortunes hung on a hair.

MRS. KNOX. And you knew it, Ma'am ?

MARTHA. Not all that I know now. The General did not tell even me. But I guessed what he was going through, when every one was blaming his inactivity, and he durst not even hint at the reason for it. How often has he said to me: " Would that I could shoulder a musket and fight in the ranks, or retire into the back country and live in a wigwam <sup>J</sup> ).

ELEANOR. My father-in-law is always calm ; but I could see about a month ago that his spirits became more cheerful.

MARTHA. Yes, the tide turned when our good Colonel Knox brought us his forty big guns from Ticonderoga. And then King George was so obleeving as to send us stores of ammunition in the brig we captured. 'Tis his own cannon-balls that we are

now returning to him. (*Sound of hooves outside.*)  
Eleanor, that must be John !

ELEANOR *springs up and runs to the door.*

ELEANOR (*looking out*). Yes, here he is. (*All put down their work and turn to the door.*)

*Enter JOHN CUSTIS in civilian riding-dress. He kisses ELEANOR, and then comes forward.*

JOHN. All is going grandly, mother. I left His Excellency but an hour ago. Boston, he says, must very soon be ours !

MARTHA. Thank God for that! But will there be much fighting ?

JOHN. The General does not think so. The red-coats have got their marching orders, and they know it. Their game was up when we seized Dorchester Heights ten days ago.

MARTHA. Then what is all this cannonading ?

JOHN. We are fortifying Nook's Hill, which looks right down into their lines, and they are trying to stop us. But they do very little execution.

ELEANOR. Why are some of the guns so much louder than others ?

JOHN. The loud ones are the British guns. See here, mother——(*He takes a map from a side table, spreads it on the centre table, and begins pointing. The ladies gather round and look.*) Here are our batteries on Dorchester Heights ; here are the British lines on Boston Neck ; and here we are at Cambridge : so you see the British guns are between us and our own. I have ridden round by Roxbury and Brookline.

MARTHA. And where is—what do you call it ?—Nook's Hill ?

JOHN. There, you see—right over the Neck.

MRS. KNOX. To think that I have been to many a barbecue right there !

JOHN. Tis a pretty hot barbecue to-day—but our

works are going forward in spite of it. (To ELEANOR)  
Get me a mouthful of bread and cheese, Nelly dear  
—I must rejoin the General.

ELEANOR. **Must you go ?**

JOHN. Of course. He couldn't get on without his extra  
aide-de-camp—unpaid—like everybody else.

MARTHA. Bid Sally bring the coffee-pot and some  
biscuits, Eleanor. We all need a little refreshment.

ELEANOR (*opens the door, going out, but draws back,  
saying*). Oh, here is Mrs. Hallowell.

*She holds the door open while MRS. HALLOWELL  
rushes in, much excited. Then ELEANOR goes  
out, closing the door.*

MRS. HALLOWELL. Do pardon me, dear Lady Wash-  
ington, intruding upon you unannounced ; but I  
am so terribly upset—

MARTHA (*drily*). Won't you sit down ?

MRS. HALLOWELL. Oh no, no—I couldn't sit. Do tell  
me—I've just heard—is it true that Congress has  
ordered the General to batter down the whole of  
Boston, and not leave one stone upon another ?

MARTHA. Who told you that ?

MRS. HALLOWELL. Why, everybody is talking about  
it! Oh, say it isn't true, Lady Washington ! Think  
of my house on Beacon Street, and the parlour  
chairs upholstered in gold brocade, and the dinner  
set with the Hallowell arms, and the cupboards full  
of blue chancy ! (*Almost in tears*) Oh, it'll all be  
broken !

MARTHA. Is not your husband in Boston ?

MRS. HALLOWELL. Oh yes, he's there too.

MARTHA. Aren't you afraid he might get broken ?

MRS. HALLOWELL. Why, he can go down to the cellar  
—but he can't take all the furniture—and I never  
trust him to *touch* the blue chaney,

MARTHA. Mrs. Hallowell, there is no order to destroy  
Boston ; but Congress has instructed the General

to do so without hesitation should he find it necessary.

MRS. HALLOWELL (*sinking into a chair*). To think of my parlour a smoking ruin !

MARTHA. And do you know who signed these instructions, Mrs. Hallowell ? The President of Congress, Mr. Hancock, who, I am told, has the finest house in Boston. *He* didn't think of his blue china.

MRS. HALLOWELL. Dear Lady Washington, my house is the third from Mr. Hancock's, with the green window-shades. Do beg the General to spare it!

MARTHA. I dare say it will come to no harm, Mrs. Hallowell.

ELEANOR *enters, followed by a negro maid with a tray on which are a coffee-pot, a silver urn, etc.*

MARTHA. A cup of coffee will cheer you up before you go.

MRS. HALLOWELL. Oh, thank you, thank you ! (ELEANOR *pours her a cup.*) Well, I declare, what elegant chaney ! Ah, but you should see mine ! (*As she is about to drink, a particularly loud shot is heard. She starts, drops her teaspoon, spills some of her coffee, and gasps.*) Lord bless us and save us ! I'm not a Tory, Lady Washington—no one can say that of me—but I do think we might have paid a few cents more for our tea rather than have all this to-do about it.

MARTHA (*pointedly, curtsyng*). Good-bye, Mrs. Hallowell.

MRS. HALLOWELL (*rising and curtsyng*). Good-bye, Lady Washington. Pray don't forget now—Number 25 Beacon Street, three doors from Mr. Hancock's, the house with the green shades.

[*Exit, JOHN bowing her out.*

MARTHA. The cackling goose ! She hasn't sense enough to know that she's a Tory.

JOHN. You froze her out pretty fiercely, mother.

MARTHA. She didn't know that either.

*Meanwhile coffee has been poured and cakes handed round. JOHN has something more substantial placed before him. He resumes his seat, and, after drinking a mouthful of coffee, says :*

JOHN. Have you heard the latest news from His Most Gracious Majesty ?

MARTHA. No—what is it ?

MRS. MIFFLIN. Do tell !

MRS. KNOX. Is he coming out himself, to hang, draw and quarter us ?

JOHN. Not he—but he has bought fifteen thousand of his brother Germans—fellows they call Hessians—to come over and cut our throats.

ELEANOR AND MRS. KNOX. Hessians !

JOHN. Yes, and Brunswickers.

MARTHA. Foreign mercenaries !

JOHN. You have hit it, mother.

MARTHA. Can it be true, John ?

JOHN. True beyond a doubt. The bargain was signed in January.

MARTHA. Well—I rejoice to hear it !

ELEANOR. Oh, mother !

MRS. KNOX. Do you say so, Ma'am ?

MARTHA. Yes, I do—for this infamy must silence the General's last doubts. He has tried hard—for 'twas in his generous nature—to think and act as though this were a civil war, to be ended by reconciliation. But what reconciliation can there be with a power that brings hired murderers into the field ?

MRS. KNOX. Then you think this means——

MARTHA. INDEPENDENCE !

*A pause.*

MRS. KNOX (*in an awed whisper*). Independence ! Can we stand alone ?

MRS. MIFFLIN. My husband says the Colonies would always be falling out, and flying at each other's throat.

MARTHA. Do you believe that ? Are Massachusetts Bay, and New York, and Pennsylvania, and the Carolinas and my dear Virginia nothing but a pack of quarrelsome children that need a nurse with a birch rod to look after them ?

JOHN. And a birch rod bought in Germany ! Hurrah for independence, say I !

MARTHA (*pointing to the flag on the wall*). When I saw that flag hoisted on New Year's Day, I wondered why we kept the British Union in the corner. Surely all the world will wonder now.

MRS. KNOX. What would you have in its place ?

JOHN. They have a good flag in South Carolina—a rattlesnake just rising to strike, with the motto " Don't tread on me ".

MARTHA. That is rather a crest than a flag. For a flag should be something simple, that speaks without words.

JOHN. Come, Nelly—you acquired all the accomplishments at Annapolis—design us a Continental flag !

ELEANOR. I only learned to make wax flowers.

JOHN. Not quite what we want, *is it* ?

MRS. MIFFLIN (*sitting opposite the silver urn*). What is this engraved on the urn, Lady Washington ?

MARTHA. The General's coat of arms, Mrs. MifHin.

MRS. MIFFLIN. Well, here are stripes, like those on the flag—and three stars. Why not have stars in the corner instead of those crosses ?

*A pause.*

MARTHA. I wonder !

JOHN. A great idea, Ma'am.

MARTHA. Would the General like it ?

JOHN. Why not, mother ?

MARTHA. He might think it looked—presuming, to make a flag out of his arms.

JOHN. Oh, no one will know—the flag will look quite different. We won't have only three stars—we'll have thirteen—one for each colony.

MARTHA. For each State, my son.

JOHN. Right, mother—for each State. Suppose we try it. Eleanor, I've seen you cut paper stars.

ELEANOR. Yes, that accomplishment I did learn.

JOHN. Then cut us thirteen while I get down the flag.

*He climbs upon a chair, and is about to stand on the sideboard, when his mother cries, " Oh, Jack ! " and hastily places a cushion to preserve the polish. Standing on the cushion, he unhooks the flag, saying, " Please clear the table, ladies ". MARTHA and the two guests do so, depositing trays, cups, etc., wherever convenient. ELEANOR, meanwhile, is folding sheets of paper, and cutting stars.*

*JOHN, having detached the flag, springs down with it and spreads it on the table.*

JOHN. There! What colour shall the field be ?

MARTHA. Blue, of course—where should stars shine but in the sky ?

MRS. KNOX (*rummaging in a basket of remnants*). Here is a piece of blue stuff.

MARTHA. Give it to me ! (*She takes the piece of cloth, applies it to the Union of the flag, and, with a pair of large scissors, trims it to the required size.*) There ! Now how to arrange the stars ?

**MRS. MIFFLIN. A circle ?**

MARTHA. That might do. Let me see one of your stars, Eleanor.

ELEANOR (*handing her one*). Here, mother.

MARTHA (*considering*). H'm ! There would not be room for a circle of these stars—and if they were smaller, they would not show clearly.

JOHN. Make a cross of them—three in each arm and one in the middle.

MARTHA. Let me see ! I think I have it ! (*She takes the scissors and reflectively taps on the Union the points marked o on the diagram :*

o		o		o
	x		x	
o		o		o
	x		x	
o		o		o

*saying meanwhile]* One, two, three—one, two, three—one, two, three—that makes nine. Nine from thirteen leaves four—and the four go here—here—here—and here (*tapping the points marked x*). Now for a handful of stars, Eleanor.

ELEANOR. All I have ready, mother. (*Hands her four more.*)

MARTHA (*placing the stars on the blue field, and considering them*). Dear Mrs. Knox, will you reach me that pincushion ? (*MRS. KNOX does so. MARTHA begins pinning down the stars.*) So——! and so——! and so——!

JOHN. 'Tis a new constellation, mother.

MARTHA. Rising in the western sky ?

JOHN. The British astronomers won't like the looks of it.

MARTHA. So——! and so——! Now for a needle and thread to tack them down. (*She finds one in her work-basket.*)

MRS. MIFFLIN (*contemplating the stars, which are arranged in a cross of five, thus :*

*		*
	*	
*		*

*pending the arrival of the other stars*). Well now, *isn't* that cunning !

MARTHA (*busy sewing at the stars*). What will the General say to it, I wonder ?

MRS. KNOX. And Congress—are *they* prepared to banish the British Union ?

MARTHA. Well, whatever the men may say, we women are making our answer to King George and his—what did you call them, Jack ?

JOHN. Hessians, mother.

MARTHA. —to King George and his Hessians—we are cleansing our flag ! More stars, Eleanor !

*The cannonade has for some minutes been livelier.*

*MARTHA is busy pinning or sewing as*

*The Curtain falls.*

## SCENE FOURTH

### PART II

*The Seventeenth of March 1776—the next evening. The same room. Two or three candles, lighted, on the centre table ; the branch candlesticks on the sideboard unlighted. A grey veil covers the flag, coming down so low that it can easily be plucked away. Until the candles are lighted, this part of the scene is quite in the shade.*

MARTHA WASHINGTON *is superintending the negro maid, who is laying a small cloth on the centre table and setting a cover for one, with a cold fowl, a loaf of bread, etc.*

MARTHA. That will do, Sally. You can go to bed now. I will attend to the General when he comes. Good night, Sally.

SALLY (*curtsying at the door*). Good night, Ma'am.

MARTHA *goes to the sideboard, unlocks it with a key hanging at her chatelaine, and brings out a black bottle. She takes a corkscrew from drawer and very deliberately and carefully draws the cork. Having savoured the aroma of the wine, she loosely replaces the cork and sets the bottle beside the fire. Then she goes to the back, slightly raises the veil that hangs over the flag, and looks up under it, as though to make sure that everything is in order. She drops the veil again, takes up some knitting, seats herself*

*at the fireside and knits, crooning to herself in a low voice :*

'Tis God that still supports our right;  
His just revenge our foes pursues.  
'Tis He that, with resistless might,  
Fierce nations to His power subdues.

*A distant sound of hooves is heard. She drops her knitting in her lap and listens. Then a sentry is vaguely heard to challenge, there is a murmur of reply, and the sentry's voice rings out clear, " Pass, friend. All's well " MARTHA opens the door and looks out into the hall, says to herself " 'Tis he ! " and retreats a little from the door. GEORGE WASHINGTON enters, throws down his hat on a chair, comes up to her and embraces her.*

WASHINGTON. My dear Martha! (*An aide-de-camp appears in the doorway. WASHINGTON speaks to him, looking over his shoulder.*) Come for me in fifteen minutes, Captain Chandler—not a moment more.

THE OFFICER (*saluting*). Very good, sir. *[Exit.*

MARTHA. George, dear—are they gone ?

WASHINGTON. The last British sail passed into the mist at sunset.

MARTHA. And Boston is ours ! Thank God ! Thank God!

WASHINGTON. Yes, Boston is ours—Boston, that was to have been chastised and humiliated by our lords and masters. I have watched them all day from Dorchester Heights, making their exit. They have slunk away with their tails between their legs. 'Tis a good beginning.

MARTHA. Only a beginning, dear ? Not the beginning of the end ?

WASHINGTON. No, no, my dear—the end is yet far off. There is danger even in this first success. 'Twill raise false hopes and undue confidence. We

must be prepared. (*He throws off his cloak, unbuckles his sword, and approaches the table.*)

MARTHA. You cannot remain for the night ?

WASHINGTON. Alas, no ! I make my entrance into the city early to-morrow. I sleep at Mr. Allen's at Roxbury.

MARTHA. Then employ your time to the best advantage, my dear. I think you will find this chicken tender. (*Brings the bottle from the fireside.*) Let me pour you a glass of claret. (*She does so.* WASHINGTON *takes his seat and begins to carve the fowl. She cuts bread for him, etc.*)

WASHINGTON. Where is Eleanor ?

MARTHA. She has retired. In her condition you know, dear, we must not let her keep late hours.

WASHINGTON. No, no—you are right. Give her my love.

MARTHA. Has there been no fighting to-day ? We have heard no guns.

WASHINGTON. No : we let them go undisturbed. The Selectmen sent me a message begging that we would give General Howe no excuse for carrying out his threat to burn the town if his embarkation were molested. I replied that I could take no notice of assurances which, even if we accepted them, did not bind the British General. But the truth is, they were at no time very well within range of our guns, and they could have done much more harm to Boston than we could do to them. I confess I was a little sorry to let the Tories get off scot-free.

MARTHA. The Tories ? Have they gone ?

WASHINGTON. Why, yes—they have scuttled like rabbits. My glass showed me hundreds of civilians embarking, with boat-loads of their goods and chattels. Poor wretches ! The decision to evacuate must have come upon them like the crack of doom.

MARTHA. Where do you think the British are<sup>^</sup>oing ?

WASHINGTON. I anticipated—indeed I feared—that they would make for New York. But, strangely enough, they seemed to be heading northward. That may be only a ruse, however. Time will show.

MARTHA (*removing his plate*). Some cheese, my dear ?  
(*Placing it before him.*)

WASHINGTON. Thank you, my love. (*Helping himself*)

MARTHA. What of the state of health in Boston ? We hear very bad reports of it.

WASHINGTON. Only men who have had the smallpox are to enter the town to-morrow. Fortunately, I am one of them.

MARTHA. Come now, George—don't pretend that you would have stayed behind, even if you had not undergone the disease.

WASHINGTON. The question does not arise, my dear. We need not discuss it.

MARTHA. And is this true that Jack was telling us yesterday, about the British having hired an army of Germans to do their dirty work for them ?

WASHINGTON. Only too true, I fear.

MARTHA. And what does Your Excellency say to that ? How stands your allegiance to the good King George ?

WASHINGTON. It needed not this, my dear, to end my hopes of reconciliation. That was done by the wanton destruction of Falmouth and Norfolk—flaming arguments for our cause. But indeed I have ceased to regret the snapping of our ties to Britain. (*Goes to the door and calls.*) Captain Chandler ?

THE OFFICER'S VOICE. Your Excellency ?

WASHINGTON. Be good enough to bring me a little book—a pamphlet—that you will find in my saddle-bag. It is called " Common Sense ".

THE OFFICER'S VOICE. I will, sir.

WASHINGTON. 'Tis a little book that was sent me some weeks ago.

MARTHA. I have heard it spoken of. They say 'tis from the pen of Dr. Franklin.

WASHINGTON. Others maintain that the author is Mr. John Adams. But they are all wrong—'tis the work of one Thomas Paine, an Englishman. And 'tis well named " Common Sense ".

*The aide-de-camp salutes at the door, and hands WASHINGTON the book.*

WASHINGTON. Thank you, sir.

*The aide-de-camp salutes and retires. WASHINGTON goes over to the fireplace, and stands in front of it, turning over the leaves of the pamphlet. MARTHA seats herself in the arm-chair below the fireplace and resumes her knitting.*

WASHINGTON. This writer has convinced me that separation was inevitable, and left me only regretting that it should have come in anger.

MARTHA. I am glad, George, glad. I thank Mr. Paine for removing the one shade of difference between us.

WASHINGTON. Listen to this: "As to government matters, it is not in the power of Britain to do this continent justice. The business of it will soon be too weighty and intricate to be managed with any tolerable degree of convenience by a power so distant from us and so very ignorant of us."

MARTHA. That is the heart of the matter. People in England—those in power at any rate—are utterly ignorant of us, and think of us only to despise us.

WASHINGTON. And again: " Small islands, not capable of protecting themselves, are the proper objects for kingdoms to take under their care. There is something very absurd in supposing a continent to be perpetually governed by an island. In no instance hath nature made the satellite larger than its primary planet."

MARTHA. A very trenchant writer, this Mr. Paine.

WASHINGTON. As for England's alleged protection of

our commerce, he says, very justly, that when European nations fall out, neutrality, for an American ship, will be a safer convoy than a man-of-war. And in another place he asks what can be more absurd than to conceive three million people running to their sea-coast, every time a ship arrives from London, to know what portion of liberty they shall enjoy.

MARTHA. And the three million will one day be thirty millions—perhaps even more.

*The aide-de-camp throws open the door and takes a step into the room.*

OFFICER (*saluting*). The horses are ready, sir.

WASHINGTON. Thank you, so am I. (*Throws the pamphlet on the table.*) I will leave you this book, Martha—'tis worth your perusal. (*He crosses, puts on his sword, cloak and hat, then turns to her.*) And now——

MARTHA. One moment, General. I have something to show you, though I own I am a little timorous about it. (*The OFFICER is about to show his discretion by retiring—she turns to him and says*) Do not leave us, Captain Chandler. This may interest you too. (*She is meanwhile lighting all the candles on the side-board.*)

WASHINGTON. What is all this mystery? Why have you veiled the flag ?

MARTHA. Why should an independent people—and you say you are now for independence—show the British Union in its colours ?

WASHINGTON. Why indeed ? I have cudgelled my brains to think of a fitting substitute.

MARTHA. What say you to this ? (*She twitches away the veil and reveals the flag with the thirteen stars.*)

*Pause.*

WASHINGTON. So this is what you have plotted ?

MARTHA. Mrs. Knox, Mrs. Mifflin, Eleanor and I.

WASHINGTON. One—two—three—thirteen stars! How did you hit upon the device ?

MARTHA. Never mind how—'twas Mrs. Mifflin who thought of it.

WASHINGTON. What say you, Chandler ?

OFFICER. 'Tis a brave flag to fight under, sir.

WASHINGTON (*reflectively*). Stars—and stripes ! It has one great merit—there is no other flag like it.

MARTHA. Has it Your Excellency's approval ?

WASHINGTON. Perhaps, my dear, your needle has been making history.

MARTHA. Her needle is woman's sword.

WASHINGTON. It shall be submitted to Congress. I shall urge its acceptance, I promise you. Meanwhile, I salute the Stars and Stripes.

*He draws his sword and does so — the OFFICER likewise. MARTHA folds her hands, bows her head, and seems to be whispering a prayer.*

*Curtain.*

## SCENE FIFTH

### PART I

*The Eleventh of February 1778—nearly two years later than the previous scene.*

*A moonlight evening at Valley Forge. An open space : snow on the ground', and snow-clad trees R. and L. A log hut slants half-way across the scene, backwards from front L. There is a door near the front ; supposing it to be in the middle of the hut, only a little more than half of the hut is visible. Between the door and the back end, a square window closed by a rude shutter. The hut has a very shallow veranda ; merely a prolongation of the eaves by some two feet, supported by three rough posts. A star-lit sky at the back indicates that the position is one of some height. From near the end of the hut an unseen path leads down to an unseen hollow, supposed to occupy the right-hand corner of the scene. Entrances along the front of the hut, L., and among the trees, R.*

*All the soldiers in this scene are dressed in deplorable rags. One or two wear a sort of raw-hide brogues, others have their feet wrapped in clouts. Stockings they have none.*

*PRIVATE BENJAMIN STONE, of New England, stands at the farther end of the veranda, looking down into the hollow.*

**BEN.** Say, Zeph, have you got the parlour fire a-goin' ?  
**ZEPHANIAH HOLLINGSWORTH**(*in the hollow, unseen*).

She's just a-burnin' up. Them pine-cones is rare an' roziny.

BEN. Keep a place for me in the chimney-corner. I'm a-joinin' the Cinderella Squad to-night.

ZEPH (*appearing up the slope*). You, Ben! You're a-dreamin' ! I had the blanket last night—'tis your turn to-night.

BEN. I ain't fergettin'. But Dutch Hendrick's turr'ble bad to-night. Doctor says three or four hours\*ll finish him. An' maybe an extra blanket'll stop his teeth chitterin'.

ZEPH. What! Give up yer blanket to Dutchy ! That low-down cuss !

BEN. 'Tain't as I'm in love with him. Maybe he'll find himself warmer than he reckoned for afore the night's out. But he may as well die in comfort, the old sinner.

*A crimson and wavering glow, mingled with cracklings, has meanwhile risen from below, back R.*

MARTHA WASHINGTON, *with a small basket on her arm, escorted by SERGEANT MAGRATH, carrying a lantern, and followed by a negro man-servant carrying a large basket, enters, front R. The little group pauses unperceived by the soldiers.*

ZEPH (*putting his head in at the door of the hut*). Now then, the Cinderella Squad, tumble out ! Who's for a front seat round the merry yule log ?

PRIVATES PHIBBS, NICOLS, DUNPHY, HART *and two or three more, ragged and shivering, limp and crawl out of the hut, some carrying boxes, and others mere planks, to sit on.*

MARTHA. What does he mean, Sergeant, by the Cinderella Squad ?

SERGEANT. Well, 'tis this way, Ma'am. Thim spalpeens of the Congress, God damn their sowls—(*checking himself in panic*)—axin' your pardon, Ma'am——

MARTHA. I didn't quite hear. I think you said " the honourable gentlemen of the Congress "——?

SERGEANT. That's it, Ma'am—that's what I said. The honourable gintlmen don't sind enough of blankets for to go round. So, bein' as wood's the one thing we has lashin's of, the bhoys do be lightin' bonfires in anny bit of a hollow that gives them shelter—*(Pointing off)* Ye can see them from here, Ma'am, all over the camp—an' some of them sits by the fire-side, night an' night about, while the lave o' them has the blankets. Cind'rella, I've heard tell, was a Princess of Oireland that had a fancy for toastin' her toes.

MARTHA. Poor fellows ! May I speak to them ?

SERGEANT. Sure 'tis the proud lads they'll be, Ma'am. *(Crossing to the hut.)* Stand to there, men ! Here's the Gin'ral's lady herself come to visit you.

MARTHA *crosses. Some of the men are still in front of the hut, some are descending into the hollow. These turn back ; all draw up in a rough line and salute.*

MARTHA. The General has invited me to Headquarters, my friends, to see for myself——*(Interrupts herself.)* Give me the lantern, Sergeant. *(She holds it up in the face of one of the men.)* Why, surely I knew you at Morrystown ! You are Zephaniah Hollingsworth-

ZEPH *(steps forward and salutes)*. The same, Ma'am.

MARTHA. Give me your hand, Zephaniah ! I've not forgotten the day when you stopped my runaway horse.

ZEPH. 'Twas a small matter, Ma'am. I jest happened to be there.

MARTHA. They tell me you've happened to be there several other times when gallant things have been done. *(She hands back the lantern.)* Well, friends, the General asked me to come and see for myself the " incomparable patience and fidelity "—these are his own words—with which his brave fellows are bearing the hardships of this cruel winter. No need

for me to tell you that the General has done, and is doing, his uttermost to make things easier for you.

*I We know that, Ma'am.*

SOLDIERS. ^ 'Tis that keeps the heart in us.

( God bless him, Ma'am.

SERGEANT. 'TisthegreatCommanderwehave,entoiirely.

SOLDIERS. Aye, aye. (*Murmurs of assent.*)

Ni coLs (*setting down the box he is carrying*). May I offer you a seat, Ma'am ?

MARTHA (*seating herself*). I thank you, sir. (*To the others*) You have had much—far too much—to endure ; but the worst, I hope, will soon be over. General Greene and General Wayne, you know, are out foraging in the Jerseys—be sure they will not come back empty-handed.

BEN. A little change of diet would be very ac<sup>r</sup>ptable, Ma'am, after fire-cake an' water for breakfast—

DUNPHY. Fire-cake an' water for dinner—

pHiBBs. Fire-cake an<sup>j</sup> water for supper—

HART. An' on Sundays a mush o' flour paste.

MARTHA. Trust me, the lean days are drawing to an end.

BEN. I dreamt last night of a porterhouse steak an' a noggin of rum.

DUNPHY. Glutton !

HART. Wine-bibber !

ZEPH. I dreamt of drawin' on a pair of good woollen stockings.

MARTHA *has beckoned to the negro, who has placed the large basket beside her and whipped off the canvas cover.*

MARTHA. There now! See how dreams come true!  
(*She takes a pair of grey stockings from the basket and holds them up.*)

HART. Holy Moses ! 'tis a pair of stockin's !

DUNPHY. Is there such a thing in the wide world ?

P HIBBS. Just let me feel of them, Ma'am. (*Strokes them down.*)

MARTHA. The General wrote me how his soldiers might be tracked in the snow by the blood from their bare feet ; so I set the women of Virginia knitting. 'Twas little enough yarn we had ; but we did what we could ; and here is some of our handiwork. (*Distributes pairs of stockings.*)

ZEPH. God bless you, Ma'am.

HART. God bless you.

BEN (*holding up stocking*). 'Tis the beautifullest thing in the world, a stockin'.

PHIBBS. There's but one beautifuller.

BEN. What's that ?

PHIBBS. A pair ! (*Holding them up.*)

BEN. True for you, Falsehoods.

MARTHA (*astonished*). Falsehoods ? What do you mean ?

BEN. Well, you see, Ma'am, his name's Phibbs, so we calls him Falsehoods for short.

ZEPH. If we only had shoes, now, we'd soon kick the red-coats out of Philadelphia.

DUNPHY. Raw-hide galligaskins are better 'n nuthin'. (*Exhibiting his own.*)

BEN. Hark at his pride !

ZEPH. And Agag walked delicately.

DR. ALBIGENCE WALDO *enters from the left, along the front of the hut.*

DR. WALDO. You here, Madam !

MARTHA. As you see, Dr. Waldo. I brought with me a few little comforts for our brave lads, and I have been distributing some of them.

*The SOLDIERS hold up their stockings.*

DR. WALDO. Ha, capital, capital !

MARTHA. And I was coming on to your quarters with a little wine and some cordials for the sick.

DR. WALDO. I have some patients here—frost-bite—fever and ague—pleurisy—

MARTHA. Surely this is not a hospital hut.

DR. WALDO. The hospital huts are packed like herring-casks, Madam. *(To the men)* How is Dutchy to-night ?

BEN. Mighty bad, Doctor.

DUNPHY. Nearly all in, I reckon.

DR. WALDO. Well, I must have a look at him. *(At door.)*

MARTHA. May I come with you, Doctor ?

DR. WALDO. 'Tis scarcely a scene for ladies, Madam.

MARTHA. Fie, Doctor ! There are no ladies here. I am simply a soldier's wife.

DR. WALDO. If you insist, Madam.—*(To SOLDIERS)* Throw open that window, men. *(To MARTHA)* You will find the air stifling.

MARTHA. I am not one of the women who faint, Doctor.

*They go into the hut, the SERGEANT and the negro following. The SOLDIERS have thrown back the shutter of the unglazed window, revealing a faint gleam of candle-light within.*

DUNPHY. Is there water in them kittles, Falsehoods ?

PHIBBS *(trying them)*. Full up.

DUNPHY. Bring 'em along then. We must wash our feet afore we puts our stockin's on.

*He himself picks up a tin pan. PHIBBS and NICOLS each take a camp-kettle, and they go down to the fire, followed by HART, who limps badly. The fire is now throwing out a steady glow. BEN and ZEPH stay behind, looking in at the window.*

ZEPH. Not much o' the fine madam about her, Ben.

BEN. She has a kind heart. But why should I have to thank her kind heart for the first pair o' stockin's I've seen since the Brandywine ? Ain't there no sech thing as a Quartermaster - General ? What's

come o' the blasted commissariat ? What about them gutsy devils of Congressmen, fillin' their God-damn bellies, an' leavin' us to——

ZEPH. Whisht, whisht, man ! Mind the General's order about " the foolish and wicked habit of profane swearing " .

BEN. I'd bet my shirt—if I had one—that the General says a damn or two himself every time he thinks o\* Congress.

ZEPH (*looking in at the window*). Sh ! She's kneelin' beside Dutchy's pallet ! She's prayin'.

*ZEPH and BEN take off their hats. A low murmur of prayer proceeds from the hut, and a moment afterwards the men around the fire are heard singing :*

The day is broke, my boys, push on,  
And follow, follow Washington,  
'Tis he that leads the way, my boys,  
'Tis he that leads the way.

When he commands we will obey,  
Through rain or sun, by night or day,  
Determined to be free, my boys,  
Determined to be free.

*At the end of the song, the prayer continues for a moment, ZEPH and BEN listening reverently. Then they say " Amen " and put on their hats.*

BEN. Fancy prayin' fer Dutchy ! 'Tis a waste of good religion.

ZEPH. Who knows ? Maybe, when the time comes, some one may be fool enough to think of prayin' fer you, ye reprobate.—Huh ! snow again !

*Flakes of snow begin to sift down. MARTHA comes out of the hut, followed, as before, by the negro and the SERGEANT.*

MARTHA. Will you take me to another hut, Sergeant ?

SERGEANT. That I will, Ma'am.

MARTHA (*speaking back into the hut*). Good night, men.  
God bless you !

VOICES WITHIN. Good night, Ma'am. Good night.

MARTHA (*seeing ZEPH and BEN*). Good night, Zephaniah.  
Good night.

ZEPH AND BEN. Good night, Ma'am, an' thanks t'you,  
Ma'am.

MARTHA *and her escort go out, front L.* DR. WALDO  
*conies from the hut.*

BEN. Is there any chance for Dutchy, Doctor ?

DR. WALDO. Dutchy passed away while Lady Washing-  
ton was praying. *[Follows MARTHA out.*

BEN (*after watching his departure*). Glory be ! I can  
have my blanket again.

*He hastens into the hut. ZEPH turns towards the  
fire. The snow drifts down. Another verse of  
the song begins as*

*The Curtain falls.*

## SCENE FIFTH

### PART II

*The Fifth of May 1778—seven weeks later than Part I.*

*The same scene, on a bright spring morning. All the snow has gone. A sort of tribune, not more than a foot from the ground, has been erected at the back, facing to the right. The railings are draped with the Stars and Stripes. A flagstaff at each end of the tribune.*

WASHINGTON *stands on the tribune, with his Generals around him*—BENEDICT ARNOLD, NATHANAEL GREENE, BENJAMIN LINCOLN, LORD STIRLING, ANTHONY WAYNE. MARTHA WASHINGTON, MRS. GREENE, LADY STIRLING, MRS. KNOX *are seated in front of the hut, L. Down R. are a number of officers and men.*

WASHINGTON (*addressing the unseen troops below the tribune*). Men of the American Army, you all know the reason of our assembling to-day. After a winter of bitter hardship, bravely endured, a springtide of rejoicing has come to us. It has pleased the Almighty Ruler of the Universe to defend the cause of the United American States, and finally to raise up a powerful friend among the princes of the earth, to establish our liberty and independence on a lasting foundation. A treaty of mutual aid and alliance has been signed between our Government and His Majesty King Lewis the Sixteenth of France. (*A great outburst of cheering.*) That treaty has been negotiated by our great and famous countryman, Dr. Franklin. (*Loud cheering.*) One article in it, I may tell you,

binds us to accept no accommodation with Great Britain, short of absolute independence. (*More cheering.*) Soldiers and comrades, I would not have you think that the struggle is over. There is much yet to be done, and it may be that days of darkness and discouragement still lie before us. But with the aid of the great Navy and the gallant soldiers of France, we cannot fail of ultimate success. Three cheers for the French Alliance !

*He raises his hat and starts the cheer'ing, in which all join, the ladies standing up. The white flag of France and the Stars and Stripes are run up on the flagstuffs. A salute of thirteen guns (one for each State) is fired, and a feu de joie is heard, running off into the distance. A band strikes up some appropriate French air. (It does not appear that pre-r evolution France had any recognised National Anthem.) The Generals all come down from the tribune, and mingle with the other officers and ladies on the scene. A great deal of animated conversation goes on. As the noise of the firing and cheering dies down, WASHINGTON brings a limping soldier up to MARTHA, who is now in the centre of the scene.*

WASHINGTON. Let me present to you, my dear, one of the most skilful and intrepid soldiers of our country—General Benedict Arnold. General Arnold—Mrs. Washington. (*Curtsy and bow.*)

MARTHA. 'Tis an honour to make your acquaintance, General Arnold. I know how much we all owe you, and how highly my husband esteems your services.

ARNOLD. I am proud to hear you say so, Madam.

MARTHA. But I fear your wound still troubles you.

ARNOLD. When a man has had his leg twice broken, Madam—once above the knee——

WASHINGTON.—atQuebec——

ARNOLD. —and once below the knee——•

WASHINGTON.—atSaratoga——

ARNOLD. —doubtless his dancing days are over.

WASHINGTON. But not his fighting days. General Arnold, my dear, would ever be in the hottest corner, even if he had no legs at all, and, like the man in the ballad, had to fight upon his stumps.

A LIEUTENANT, *followed by two soldiers, dragging between them a man in civil dress, enters in front R., makes his way through the crowd, and comes up to WASHINGTON.*

LIEUTENANT (*saluting*). We have caught a Tory spy, Your Excellency. He was trying to sneak off through our lines, with these notes of our strength and dispositions upon him. (*Hands WASHINGTON papers—he glances at them.*)

WASHINGTON (*to the SPY*). What have you to say, sir ?

THE SPY. I reckon, General, there's not much to be said. I am a Loyalist, and I'm proud of it.

*A great burst of cheering and of music behind the scenes.*

WASHINGTON (*after a pause*). On any other day, sir, you should have gone straight before a court-martial. But to-day I am disposed to let you go free—on one condition.

THE SPY. What is that, sir ?

WASHINGTON (*tearing up the papers*). That you go straight to Philadelphia and tell General Howe all that you have seen and heard. Release him, men.

*They do so. The crowd laugh and applaud. The SPY slinks off, down R. The music swells louder as*

*The Curtain falls.*

## SCENE SIXTH

*The Seventh of October 1780—two and a half years later than the previous scene.*

*The room at Mount Vernon, as in Scenes II. and III.*

*Late afternoon.*

MARTHA WASHINGTON and ELEANOR CUSTIS are superintending the evening meal of ELEANOR'S two little girls, ELIZABETH, aged four years and two months, and MARTHA, aged two years and nine months. The elder sits in a high chair, the younger in the lap of a fat negro mammy, CHLOE by name. CULLY, now very old, stands in the background. The meal is just over.

ELEANOR. Now, Betsy dear, you've had quite enough. Just finish your milk and fold up your bib. (*The child drinks, plucks off its bib, and tries to fold it, ELEANOR helping.*)

MARTHA (*patting the cheeks of the younger child*). There's a plump little Patsy ! I hope all Grandad's soldier-boys have had as good a supper as thou.

ELEANOR (*to the elder child*). Now—" For what we have received——"

THE CHILD. " —make us tooly sankful."

ELEANOR (*lifts her out of her chair*). There now—say good night to Granny, and off to bye-bye.

*The child runs up to MARTHA, who picks her up, kisses her, and says good night, after whatever fashion she pleases.*

CULLY. Come 'long, Missy Betsy.

*He takes the child's hand and leads her to the door. Meanwhile CHLOE has held up the little one to be kissed, first by MARTHA, then by ELEANOR. She carries her to the door, takes the elder child's hand from CULLY, and they go off. CULLY gathers the children's supper things on a tray and totters off with it.*

MARTHA (*who has taken up her knitting by the window*). They are good, the darlings.

ELEANOR (*also knitting*). I wish their Daddy could see them. He has been nearly a year now on the General's staff.

MARTHA (*dropping her knitting in her lap*). And it's getting on for six years since my old man has seen his own home.

ELEANOR. Mother—you have not been quite yourself these days. You are not alarmed, surely, by the rumours that have been flying about ?

MARTHA. Alarmed, dear ? No. But the reports have been very odd. They don't speak of a battle, and still less of any disaster—only of something vague and strange.

ELEANOR. What was the date of your last letter from my father-in-law ?

MARTHA. September the iyth—nearly three weeks ago.

ELEANOR. Doubtless he has been too busy for correspondence.

MARTHA. Oh, I am not anxious about *him*. He has an unseen bodyguard around him, until his work is done. But the war drags on and on. We thought the end was near when Burgoyne surrendered—but no ! The French Alliance, from which we hoped so much, has led to little but trouble. There is no money in the country that will buy anything. People are using dollar bills for curl-papers. Charleston has capitulated to Clinton. Cornwallis has beaten Gates at Camden. A barbarous war is wasting the Carolinas. 'Twould be more than human if one had not moments of depression.

ELEANOR. My father-in-law would reprove you, mother.

MARTHA. Your father-in-law has never seen me falter.  
But he, too, is human, my dear. More than once  
has he said to me : " Could you bear to leave your  
dear Virginia, Martha ? What if we had to seek  
peace and freedom in the wilderness beyond the  
Ohio ? "

ELEANOR (*lays her hand on MARTHA's*). My dear mother !  
CULLY *enters hastily from the back*.

CULLY. Ma lady! Missy El'nor ! Dere's a soldier-  
man a-gallopin' across de paddock. Dey say 'tis  
Mas'r John !

MARTHA (*at window*). Eleanor, you have younger eyes.

ELEANOR. Yes, it is John! Oh, mother, what news  
does he bring ? (*She hurries out along the piazza.*)

MARTHA. Tell cook to hasten the supper, Cully. What-  
ever news he brings, Master John must be hungry  
after his ride.

CULLY. Sartin' sho', ma lady. A'll bid cook stir her  
stumps !

*He lingers, however, obviously anxious to hear  
what JOHN has to say.*

*After a moment ELEANOR enters, back, leading in  
JOHN, who is in uniform, with riding-boots and  
cloak.*

ELEANOR. No bad news, mother!

CULLY. Praise de Lo'd ! *[Exit.*

JOHN. Nor good news either—precisely. (*Embraces and  
kisses his mother.*)

MARTHA. You are very mysterious, John.

JOHN. And how are the babes ?

ELEANOR. As fat as dumplings——

MARTHA. And as good as gold.

JOHN (*towards the door*). Mayn't I.....? :

ELEANOR. Wait a minute. Chloe is just putting them  
to bed.

MARTHA. Let us have your tidings first, my son. Sit here. (*She draws him down on a couch, front L. ELEANOR stands behind with her arm on his shoulder.*)

JOHN. Ton my word, I scarce know where to begin. I warn you 'twill take your breath away.

MARTHA. Suppose you begin at the beginning.

JOHN. Do you remember, five years ago, in this very room, I said we should hear more of Benedict Arnold?

MARTHA. And so we have—a great deal more.

JOHN. But not all—not by a long way. What is the last you heard of him?

MARTHA. Why, that the General had made him Commandant of West Point.

JOHN. Of our great fortress and arsenal, with a garrison of three thousand men. Well, what should you say if this same Benedict Arnold, the General's most admired and trusted officer, had sold West Point to the enemy!

MARTHA. Sold——! What do you mean?

JOHN. Betrayed it!

ELEANOR. Betrayed West Point!

MARTHA. But, John—you said the news was not bad!

JOHN. No more it is—for the sale came to nought. The betrayal—the dastardly crime—failed!

MARTHA. Oh, thank God for that! Thank God! Thank God! (*She hides her face on her son's shoulder and sobs.*)

JOHN (*caressing her*). Mother, mother! I assure you all is well! By the strangest accident, the plot was utterly foiled.

ELEANOR. And Arnold? What of him?

JOHN. That's the worst of the affair—he escaped to a British ship, and is safe in New York.

MARTHA (*looking up*). To think that he should be such a villain! He, that had done such gallant things!

JOHN. It seems you can be a traitor without being a coward.

ELEANOR (*taking a chair at the end of the couch, beside her husband*). But how was the plot discovered, John?

JOHN. Well, you see, the British agent all along was one Major Andre——

ELEANOR. The Andre who directed all the Meschianza tomfooleries at Philadelphia ?

JOHN. The very man. This Andre, you see, passed our lines in disguise, calling himself John Anderson, and had a meeting with Arnold. They consulted for several hours, and planned all the details of the villainy. Arnold actually set down the whole scheme in his own handwriting, and Andre concealed the papers in his boots. Then he set off back to New York, carrying a pass signed by Arnold himself, stating that " John Anderson " was travelling " on public business ".

MARTHA. " Public business " indeed !

JOHN. Andre had almost reached the British lines when he fell in with three of our militia-men. If he had simply shown his pass, they would have let him go—they said so.

MARTHA. And why did he not ?

JOHN. Because of a miraculous chance. One of our men had been a prisoner in New York, and had escaped only three days before, in the uniform of a Hessian soldier. Andre, seeing the green uniform, thought he was among friends.

MARTHA. Yes—and then ?

JOHN. He declared himself to be a British officer !

MARTHA (*a long sigh of relief*). Ah !

JOHN. The men searched him, found his British regimentals under a civilian great-coat, and extracted Arnold's papers from the heels of his boots.

MARTHA. So that one Hessian uniform saved West Point and saved America !

JOHN. That, and nothing else.

MARTHA. And people say there is no Providence !

ELEANOR. But how did Arnold escape ?

JOHN. By the blunder of an idiot. Andre tried hard to buy himself off, but our fellows were staunch, and handed him over to one Colonel Jamison, at the nearest American post. What must this egregious Jamison do but send a despatch to Arnold telling of Andre's arrest, and saying that he had forwarded the papers to His Excellency.

MARTHA. He must have been a traitor himself.

JOHN. No—only a born fool. Jamison's letter was handed to Arnold while he was at breakfast with some of the General's staff. He never turned a hair, but went on talking as though nothing had happened.

MARTHA. He has nerves of iron.

JOHN. Presently he made an excuse and left the room. His wife followed him, and, soon after, the officers thought they heard a cry, but paid no attention. Arnold had told her the truth—she had shrieked and fainted—and he, leaving her insensible, had fled.

MARTHA. Was she—Mrs. Arnold—in the villainy ?

JOHN. The General believes—nay, he is sure—that she was not.

ELEANOR. I am glad of that. With all her flightiness, there was good in Elizabeth Shippen.

MARTHA. But the General, John ? How did he take it ?

JOHN. He was wonderful, mother. I was with him when he received the news. He was as calm as though it had been an invitation to dinner. He hurried Colonel Hamilton off in pursuit of Arnold, and sent out orders countermanding his treacherous displacements of the troops at West Point. Then Lafayette came in. The General turned to him and

said : " Arnold is a traitor, and has fled to the British. Whom can we trust ? " There was a break in his voice, and I saw tears roll down his cheeks.

*There is a pause. MARTHA dries her eyes.*

MARTHA. And Andre ? What of him ?

JOHN (*speaking with reluctance*). He was tried by court-martial at Tappan—just a week ago. General Greene was President of the Court, and Lafayette, Von Steuben and a dozen other Generals were the judges.

MARTHA. And—the result ?

JOHN. He was sentenced to death as a spy.

MARTHA. And then——?

JOHN. Next morning—he was hanged. (*He sits with his hands clasped in front of him gazing at the ground.*)

ELEANOR. Why, John, you speak as if you pitied him !

JOHN. I do, Eleanor, I do. So did every one that witnessed his conduct at his trial, and—after. 'Twas the strangest scene that ever was. All the high officers of the army, excepting the General himself, attended—not to gloat over the fate of an enemy, but rather as though to do honour to a brave gentleman. Melancholy and gloom pervaded all ranks. The scene was affectingly awful. He went to his death without bravado, but without a tremor.

ELEANOR. But he had been found out in an act of treachery !

MARTHA. 'Tis one of the saddest things in war, my daughter, that 'tis the duty of one side to foster treachery in the other.

JOHN. I am glad you see it like that, mother. You will find that the General agrees. He bade me, first to tell my story, and then to give you this brief letter—all he had time to write.

*He hands her a letter. MARTHA opens it eagerly and runs through it, the others watching her.*

MARTHA, He says : " Andre has met his fate with that

fortitude which was to be expected from an accomplished man and a gallant officer ".

JOHN. That is the sentiment of every one. Colonel Hamilton is of opinion that Andre's petition to be shot instead of hanged might have been granted. But just because he aroused so much sympathy, the General felt it his duty to adhere to the letter of the law.

MARTHA. But what does this mean, John ? The General writes : " How far Arnold meant to involve me in the catastrophe does not appear by any indubitable evidence ; and I am rather inclined to think that he did not wish to hazard the more important object of his treachery by attempting to combine two events ". What " two events " ? What does he mean ?

JOHN. Why this : that if the plot had succeeded, 'tis at least an even chance that the General himself might have been captured in the fortress.

ELEANOR. Great heavens !

MARTHA. My George in British hands ! that would have been the end of all things. On the brink of what a precipice have we been standing !

ELEANOR. You may well say, mother, that my father has an unseen bodyguard around him.

MARTHA. Until his work is done ! (*Rising.*) And now, John, come and look at your babies. *Takes his arm and moves towards the door as*

*The Curtain falls.*

## SCENE SEVENTH

*The Fifth of November 1781—a year later than the previous scene.*

A corridor in COLONEL BURWELL BASSETT's house at Eltham, Virginia. It is a shallow scene : only one wall is visible, with a large double door in the centre, and on each side of the door a settee against the wall. Above each settee is a sconce with two lighted candles ; and high above the sconces hang the heads and antlers of two stags. In front of the settee to the right is a small table. The light is dim throughout.

One wing of the door is opened noiselessly, and DR. CRAIK enters, followed by MRS. BASSETT (MARTHA'S sister FANNY), now a middle-aged lady. She closes the door gently. They talk in low tones.

MRS. BASSETT. Is there anything else we can do, Doctor ?

DR. CRAIK. Nothing, I fear, Madam. You must induce young Mrs. Custis to eat something and to rest.

MRS. BASSETT. Poor Eleanor ! All these two weeks she has scarce moved from her husband's bedside.

DR. CRAIK. She cannot help now, madam. For her children's sake, you must persuade her to bear up.

MARTHA enters, L., a candle with a glass funnel in her hand, and some linen over her arm.

MARTHA. Here are the towels, Fanny. (*Seeing the doctor.*) Ah, Doctor,—you are not leaving us ?

DR. CRAIK. No, Madam. I will stay with you, until——

MARTHA. *Until——?*

DR. CRAIK. Until the end.

*Pause. MRS. BASSETT takes the candle and towels, and places them on the table, while MARTHA gazes petrified in the DOCTOR'S face.*

MARTHA. There is no hope ?

DR. CRAIK. Your son is unconscious, Madam. He is past all suffering. He will soon join the host of brave men who have saved our country. (*He re-enters the sick-room.*)

MARTHA *throws herself into her sisters arms, weeping bitterly.*

MRS. BASSETT. My poor, poor Martha !

MARTHA. I had but two children, and this is the last.

MRS. BASSETT. You have your grandchildren, Martha, and you are the wife of George Washington. Be brave, my sister ; you are blessed among women.

MARTHA. To think what a time of triumph this would have been, if only John could have shared in it !

MRS. BASSETT. He did share in it, Martha. He saw the great surrender.

MARTHA. With dying eyes. (*Slight pause.*) But you are right, Fanny. He dies for his country, and I am blessed among women. If only my George were here. (*She takes up the towels and turns to the sick-room.*)

MRS. BASSETT. Eleanor must be made to eat something. I will bring a tray——

MARTHA (*at the door*). Do, sister. *[Exit.*

MRS. BASSETT *takes up the candle, and is going off R., when she starts back with a little scream, and then holds up the candle in the face of GEORGE WASHINGTON, who enters silently. He wears his cloak, and has evidently been riding hard.*

MRS. BASSETT. Why, George ! How you startled me !

WASHINGTON. Dr. Craik sent me an express. I have ridden thirty miles without a halt.

MRS. BASSETT. Martha was just longing to have you here.

WASHINGTON. Well? What of John?

MRS. BASSETT. The doctor says there is no hope. He is unconscious.

WASHINGTON. Poor fellow! Poor Martha!

MRS. BASSETT. Now that you are here, the worst is over for her. But my heart bleeds for Eleanor.

WASHINGTON. A good girl. But she loses her husband in victory. She must think of the thousand others who, in hours of defeat and despair, have lost all that was dear to them.

MRS. BASSETT. Shall I tell Martha?

WASHINGTON. Pray do so.

*He places his hat on the table, takes off his cloak, and throws it on the settee, R. MRS. BASSETT opens the sick-room door and beckons. MARTHA comes out. MRS. BASSETT slips into the room and closes the door.*

MARTHA (*runs up to her husband and embraces him*).  
George, George! Thank heaven you are here!  
Have you heard?

WASHINGTON. I have heard, Martha. 'Tis a sore trial for you, my dear wife. (*He leads her over to the settee, L., and they sit.*)

MARTHA. Was I too proud and happy, George? Has this been sent as a punishment for vainglory?

WASHINGTON. Hush, Martha dear. You did right to be glad. And even had you done wrong, Heaven does not punish us at the expense of others.

MARTHA. Then why——?

WASHINGTON. Let us not ask why. We only know that we cannot know. We must be resolute and endure.

MARTHA. And is all well, George ? Is the war indeed over ?

WASHINGTON. Not over, my dear—perhaps not by months or years. But after Yorktown, I think our cause is secure. You and I, Martha, will not lay our bones in the wastes beyond the Ohio, but in our dear Virginia—

MARTHA. Beside our dear dead. (*Pause.*) Tell me, George, when were you first aware of John's sickness ?

WASHINGTON. He was at my side when I put the match to the first gun of the bombardment ; and he then seemed very well. That was on the 9th of October, nearly a month ago. It was two, or perhaps three, days later that I saw he was unfit for duty and ordered him into hospital. I happened to be at his bedside at ten in the morning of the 17th, when the enemy beat a parley. You should have seen how he brightened up ; for we all knew what that meant. Then you know what he did on the day of the surrender—

MARTHA. He insisted on being carried out—?

WASHINGTON. Yes—to see General O'Hara give up his sword—for Cornwallis, you know, was sick. I reproved him when I saw him ; but he smiled and said, " I had to tell mother that I had been in at the death/'

MARTHA (*weeping*). My poor boy ! My poor boy !

WASHINGTON. That very day I sent him here, to Eltham—and you know the rest.

MARTHA. Oh, George, he has not been a bad son to you—tell me that !

WASHINGTON. Had he been my own, my dear, I could scarce have loved him more.

*The door is thrown open, and ELEANOR appears, weeping, dishevelled, eager.*

ELEANOR. Oh, mother, his eyes are open ! He is conscious. He whispered, " The General."

*Both wings of the door are opened, and the dying*

*man can be seen on a small, low bed, the DOCTOR sitting at his right side, MRS. BASSETT standing opposite. WASHINGTON rises, comes a step forward, and turns to face the sick-room.*

WASHINGTON. **Shall I——?**

DR. CRAIK (*rises and comes forward*). I think he wishes to see you, General.

WASHINGTON *goes up and takes the chair in which the DOCTOR has been seated. MARTHA follows and stands behind him. ELEANOR joins MRS. BASSETT on the other side of the bed, and clings to her, weeping. JOHN feebly moves his right hand, which WASHINGTON takes.*

JOHN (*barely audible*). General !

WASHINGTON. My dear boy! (*Stoops and kisses his forehead.*)

JOHN. Good-bye ! (*Feebly moving both hands*) Mother ! Eleanor ! kiss the babes !

MARTHA and ELEANOR *kneel, one at each side of the bed, and take his hands. He tries to raise his head, but it drops back. His eyes close and his mouth falls open. A pause. The DOCTOR goes up to him and touches his eyes.*

DR. CRAIK. All is over.

*A pause.*

WASHINGTON. Martha!

*He lays his hand on her shoulder and helps her to rise. She throws herself into his arms. He stands looking down at the dead man.*

*Curtain.*

## SCENE EIGHTH

*The Second of December 1799—eighteen years later than the previous scene. GEORGE WASHINGTON and MARTHA, aged sixty-seven.*

*The room at Mount Vernon. The furniture and pictures are a good deal altered. Portraits of WASHINGTON and of MARTHA on the walls. The gathering twilight of a winter day.*

LADY FAIRFAX, *a middle-aged woman, and her daughter of twenty-five, both wearing winter wraps, are standing with MARTHA WASHINGTON before the fire, evidently in the act of taking leave.*

LADY FAIRFAX. It has been an honour no less than a pleasure, Madam, to be received in your beautiful home.

MARTHA. The name of Fairfax, my lady, is never spoken without affection at Mount Vernon.

LADY FAIRFAX. But for the satisfaction he promised himself in seeing the General, I doubt whether my lord would ever have returned from Europe.

MARTHA. The late lord was, and your husband is, among the dearest of the General's friends.

LORD FAIRFAX *and* GEORGE WASHINGTON *enter.*  
FAIRFAX *is about* WASHINGTON'S *age. His dress denotes, wit]tout emphasising, the clergyman. He carries a heavy great-coat over his arm.*

FAIRFAX. The coach is not yet here, my love. There is time, before we leave, for the General to show you

and Julia his greenhouse, which, I assure you, is worth a visit.

LADY FAIRFAX. Oh, will you be so good, General ?

WASHINGTON. With great pleasure, my lady.

LADY FAIRFAX. Will not you come too, Bryan ?

FAIRFAX. Pray excuse me—I have something to say in private to Mrs. Washington.

LADY FAIRFAX. Ah, I see—you have planned to get rid of us !

FAIRFAX. Precisely, my love.

LADY FAIRFAX. Can we permit this, General ?

WASHINGTON. Perhaps I, too, may have secrets to impart to your ladyship.

LADY FAIRFAX. Ah—you are in the plot ?

WASHINGTON. On my honour, no ; but I embrace the opportunity.

LADY FAIRFAX and JULIA go out with WASHINGTON, laughing.

MARTHA (*seated*). What is this secret, my Lord ?

FAIRFAX. Not " my Lord ", I beg. That is all very well in England, but in Virginia I am still Parson Fairfax ; to you and your husband, I hope, plain Bryan.

MARTHA. Well, Bryan, what is it you wish to tell me ?

FAIRFAX. I want to tell you, and I want you to tell him, in what esteem and reverence George Washington is held in England. Wherever I came, 'twas my chief title to interest and respect that I was your husband's friend.

MARTHA. They bear no malice ?

FAIRFAX. The British, my dear Martha, whatever else they may be, are not a rancorous people. Even during the war they saw in him a chivalrous and indomitable Captain. Since the war, they have seen him ignoring temptations such as few men in his place could have withstood,—

MARTHA. To him they were no temptations.

FAIRFAX. True ; because vulgar ambition is foreign to his nature. He has built up a new nation with a wisdom and a selflessness as yet unknown to history ; and the British, however sore they may be over their defeat, regard the great man who accomplished it, not with resentment, but with pride.

MARTHA. And you, Bryan ? Are you reconciled to all that has happened ?

FAIRFAX. I still deplore the severance ; but I see that it was inevitable. And I am almost consoled when I reflect that, at the height of our political divergence, there was never any estrangement of heart between me and your husband.

MARTHA. I understand, Bryan, why you say all this to me, and not to George ; for he is not one who loves to hear his own praises. But I think you two old friends ought to speak without reserve as to your political sentiments.

WASHINGTON *returns with the ladies.*

WASHINGTON. Are we indiscreet ? Do we return too soon ?

MARTHA. I have been telling Bryan, George, that he should not hesitate to talk of politics with you, but should tell you just how far he accepts the—the——

WASHINGTON. —theneworderofthings? Indeed, old friend, you may speak without reserve.

FAIRFAX. Well, George, this is what I feel : I shall never cease to regret the quarrel and the war ; but I see that they were forced upon you by great unwisdom on the other side.

WASHINGTON. If you see that, I know not what difference there is between us.

FAIRFAX. Ever since I read your Farewell Address three years ago, I have felt that this Commonwealth is not only a new thing in the world, but a great thing ; and 'tis you who have brought it into being.

WASHINGTON. With many valiant helpers. Alone, for example, I should scarce have won the day against

the sectionalism which would have made of us thirteen separate provinces in place of one great Nation. 'Twas Mr. Hamilton who fought that arduous battle.

MARTHA. You say so, my dear ; but what could Mr. Hamilton have done without you ?

FAIRFAX. Truly, late events have vindicated his and your wisdom. The trouble with France would scarce have blown over bloodlessly, had she had a disunited America to deal with.

LADY FAIRFAX. What would you have done, Mrs. Washington, had His Excellency been forced to take the field again ?

MARTHA. I should have thanked God that he had still the strength to serve his country.

FAIRFAX. Perhaps this young General Buonaparte, of whom we hear so much, would have been sent to Louisiana instead of to Egypt.

WASHINGTON. If I judge the young man aright, he would have proved a tougher antagonist than General Howe or my Lord Cornwallis. But since Admiral Nelson has destroyed the French fleet, I do not see how he is ever to get out of Egypt again.

FAIRFAX. You have not heard the latest news ?

WASHINGTON. What news ?

FAIRFAX. Why, Buonaparte has left his army in Egypt, and arrived in Paris—alone !

WASHINGTON. Alone ! He has deserted his army ! Surely that must be the end of his career.

*A negro servant in livery appears at the back.*

THE SERVANT. His Lo'dship's ca'ge am at de do'!

*[Exit.*

LADY FAIRFAX. Good-bye, dear Mrs. Washington. We must see you at Mounteagle before long.

MARTHA. Not till the spring, I fear, Lady Fairfax.

FAIRFAX. Good-bye, George.

WASHINGTON. Good-bye, Bryan. 'Tis good to have you with us once more.

FAIRFAX. With you in every sense, old friend.

*General farewells : WASHINGTON and MARTHA accompany their guests out. Meanwhile dusk has fallen, and the negro servant brings in two candlesticks, which he places on the table. He goes out. MARTHA returns and seats herself in the corner of the settee nearest the fire. She has taken up her work-basket and begins to knit. Presently WASHINGTON enters, takes up a newspaper from the table, and sits in the other corner of the settee.*

WASHINGTON (*puts on his spectacles and is beginning to read, when he lets the paper fall in Jus lap, and says reflectively*). Would that all our guests were like that faithful friend, Tory though he was in his day.

MARTHA. Indeed, dear George, we are too seldom alone—

WASHINGTON. —in this well-resorted tavern of ours.

MARTHA. But if you wanted solitude, you should not have saved your country—you should not have created the United States.

WASHINGTON. I did not create them, my dear—I only helped the native good sense of the people to reject the counsels of selfishness and cowardice.

MARTHA. Whatever you did, 'twas what no one else could do. You cannot complain if people come from far and near to show their respect for you.

WASHINGTON. Would not the word "curiosity" answer as well?

MARTHA. No—they come out of respect for you, and curiosity to see me—the plain little wife of the great man.

WASHINGTON (*taking off and laying down his spectacles*). You jest, my dear Patsy. I think it was in foresight of the lot reserved for me that Heaven took care to provide me with the helpmeet I required.

MARTHA. If I have not helped you, George, at least I have striven to be no hindrance to you.

WASHINGTON. Your courage—your serenity—has helped me in every turn of the game—in defeat no less than in victory—most of all, I think, in the black days of Morristown and Valley Forge.

MARTHA (*laying her hand on his*). Dear George, if I have indeed done anything, these words are my rich reward.

WASHINGTON. Do you know what I have often thought? They were fools and criminals who would have had me proclaim myself king—but you would have made a very stately little queen—Lady Washington.

MARTHA. Now it is you who jest. There have been Queen Marys enough and to spare; but who ever heard of a Queen Martha?

WASHINGTON. Queen Martha sounds quite as well as Queen Anne, on whose dignity the Lord Fairfax of my youth used to descant.

MARTHA. Is it not strange to think, George, how sad has been the lot of kings and queens in our time? The name of Washington has been one of evil omen to them.

WASHINGTON. Ah, my dear, it was not the loss of the Thirteen Colonies that drove King George mad: it was because his mind was unsound that he lost the Thirteen Colonies.

MARTHA. And then the unhappy King and Queen of France! With what fervour we used to drink the health of His Most Christian Majesty! Poor things—we brought little health to them.

WASHINGTON. Come, come, my dear—I hope you are not laying their fate at my door.

MARTHA. Not their end, certainly, but the beginning of their downfall. Did not the good Lafayette, in

offering you, as he said, " the tribute " of the French Revolution, call it the offspring of ours ?

WASHINGTON. Tis true that, could Marie Antoinette have foreseen '89, she might not have been so eager in '79 to help us set up a Republic.

MARTHA. I can't bear to think of their end, and the fate of the poor little Dauphin. Do you remember *our feu de joie* at Newburg in honour of his birth ?

WASHINGTON. Yes, we have lived to see great tragedies on the European stage. Let us be thankful for the ocean that secures us, both from tyranny and from the vengeance that attends it.

MARTHA. And then the King of Sweden, murdered in his own capital ! Of one thing we may be sure—no President chosen by the people of the United States will ever be assassinated.

WASHINGTON. One would indeed hold it unthinkable. But I should feel greater confidence had I never been President.

MARTHA. Well, all these wranglings and janglings—Toryism, Federalism, Republicanism—have nothing to say to us now. Your prayer has been granted, and you can henceforth lead the peaceful life of a planter on our dear Virginian tide-waters.

WASHINGTON. Under my own vine and fig-tree, no man making me afraid. It is true, Patsy dear ; I am thankful to Heaven ; and when the call comes for me, I shall be ready.

MARTHA. The call——?

WASHINGTON. The call of a greater President than Mr. Adams.

MARTHA. Now you know, George, that you entered into an engagement with Mr. Morris and General Knox, not to leave the theatre of this world before the century was out.

WASHINGTON. I shall do my best, believe me, to keep that engagement ; but you remember what the

Scottish poet says : " The best laid plans of mice and men——"

MARTHA. Yes, dear George, yes : let us not talk lightly of death. The twilight is gathering round us, and we will pass into it together.

WASHINGTON. I think I must tell you of a strange dream I had not long ago. I cannot quite shake off the disquietude it caused me.

MARTHA. Let me help you, dear, to shake it *off*.

WASHINGTON. First, then, remember that, if dreams mean anything, 'tis oftentimes the contrary of what they seem to indicate.

MARTHA. I know that 'tis said so.

WASHINGTON. I dreamed, then, that you and I were sitting together, as we are now, conversing upon the happy life we had spent, and looking forward to many more years on earth ; when behold ! there was a great light all around us, and then an almost invisible figure of a sweet angel stood by your side and whispered in your ear. You suddenly turned pale, and began to vanish from my sight, till I was left all alone. I awoke with a feeling, not so much of sorrow, as of awe ; and it still comes over me when I recall the vision.

MARTHA. But, George, if dreams go by contraries, this means that I shall *not* be taken from you.

WASHINGTON. May it not rather mean that I shall soon leave *you* ?

MARTHA. Even were that so—though I do not think it—I should not be overmuch dismayed. For I am very sure that, when the angel whispers to you, I, too, shall hear his voice and quickly follow.

WASHINGTON (*laying his hand on hers*). Patsy! My dearest !

MARTHA. I heard the opening cannon of nearly all your campaigns. When you set forth on another, I shall not be far away.

WASHINGTON. I will send you an invitation to Headquarters.

MARTHA. And I will come.

*The picture fades out.*

GEORGE WASHINGTON *died twelve days later*; MARTHA *two years and four months after him.*

PREFACE TO " BEATRIZ JUANA "  
AND "LIDIA"

MANY dramatists have treated more or less modern themes in an Elizabethan manner : these two plays attempt to treat Elizabethan themes in a more or less modern manner.

They are in reality an outcome of my lifelong concern with dramatic criticism. They are dramatic criticism operating, not by precept, but by example. Having for forty years spelt " w-i-n-d-e-r—winder ", I thought, on the principle laid down by an eminent educationist, that it was high time that I turned to and cleaned it.

In less figurative language : the preparation for a course of lectures delivered at King's College in 1920 involved the re-reading of a large number of Elizabethan plays ; and I was struck by the fact that several of the themes treated by the minor Elizabethans and Jacobean contained elements of enduring vitality that were overlaid and obscured by the technical and spiritual crudities of a semi-barbarous age. The chief of these, on the tragic side, was *The Changeling*, by Middleton and Rowley, which Sir Walter Scott, before the days of hysterical Elizabethan worship, had noted as a thing of singular power ; while, on the comic side, *The Great Duke of Florence*, by Philip Massinger, had, I thought, been underestimated by the critics. Almost without conscious purpose, I began to reconstruct the two themes in my

mind, in the light of what I humbly conceive to be the more civilised theatrical methods of to-day. In each case, what I took from my original was simply one or two characters and a situation ; apart from these, everything had to be reinvented. Before I began to rehandle either Middleton's theme or Massinger's, many months had elapsed since I had read my original ; and in neither case did I once reopen the Elizabethan text. Two lines in the second act of *Beatriz Juana* are suggested by my recollection of a phrase of Middleton's ; but otherwise my verbal indebtedness is nil.

I make no attempt to explain or defend the details of my remodelling : partly because such discussion would be tedious ; partly because I am sincerely anxious that readers should turn to my originals and judge for themselves whether, and how far, my temerity has justified itself. The theoretical point I set out to prove was that dramatic creation, as we nowadays understand it, demands a form of intellectual effort totally different from that of the Elizabethans, and far more complex. May I note that readers who care to think the matter out will see that the validity of my argument does not wholly depend on the artistic merits or demerits of my two plays ? An impartial jury might quite possibly decide that the theory on which I proceeded was right, though in putting it in practice I had shown myself an inefficient craftsman.

Why, it may be asked, in attempting to produce modern plays, have I chosen the antiquated medium of blank verse ? The answer is that I tried to write in prose and failed. I found it impossible to hit on any form of speech that did not seem hopelessly out of keeping with these Mediterranean, cinquecento themes. Blank verse, then, I adopted rather as a dialect than as a poetical form. I make no pretence to rival either Middleton or Massinger (and much less their more lyrical contemporaries) as a poet. I make no pretence to be a poet

at all. My criticism of the minor Elizabethans may be summed up in the contention that they were specifically poets rather than dramatists ; whereas I am, or try to be, specifically a dramatist, and not a poet.

In ignoring this distinction, the criticism of the past century has, in my judgement, gone regrettably astray. For reasons which it would take too long to discuss, almost every man who could hold a pen, in the Elizabethan age, could, now and then at all events, write delicious poetry. When Lamb in the first years of the nineteenth century unearthed the treasures which had lain almost unsuspected for over a hundred years, his exquisite perception of poetic values misled him as to the dramatic values of his find. No one feels more keenly than I that Charles Lamb is never to be thought of without love and reverence ; but, none the less, he was a disastrous critic of drama. He did not know where the essence of drama lay ; and he handed on that disability to a whole school of more dogmatic and less perceptive critics. These plays may be regarded as a continuation of the endeavour I made in my before-mentioned lectures to enforce the distinction between verbal poetry and drama. Unsympathetic critics will no doubt say that I have at least been successful in avoiding poetry. I warn them in advance that I shall accept the remark as a compliment.

It may seem impertinent to drag Shakespeare into this discussion ; but, to avoid misunderstanding, I must try, in a final word, to state my view of his relation to his contemporaries. The radical error of the Lamb school of criticism, I suggest, is that it tends to minimise the gulf that separates him from them. It would be rash to say that he was greater as a dramatist than as a poet : for who shall measure two immeasurable supremacies ? But it is the simple truth that his dramatic supremacy was the rarer and more astounding of the two. For my part, at any rate, I cannot find words to express my

estimate of his greatness. But he has suffered in the criticism of the past century, not only by the tendency to make him out a mere *primus inter pares*, but by the no less unhappy tendency to ignore the distinction between the lesser Shakespeare and the greater. Until we are ready to admit that he wrote, or at any rate was finally responsible for, some very bad plays, we can have no true perception of the magnificence of his genius. I need not, and must not, say anything more on this theme. I merely wish to make it clear that although I am, no doubt, in a certain sense, a disparager of the Elizabethans, all that I say, directly or indirectly, must be taken with the proviso " Shakespeare apart ".

HAMILTON, BERMUDA,  
*March 8, 1923.*

BEATRIZ JUANA



## PREFATORY NOTE

IN the names *Beatrix Juana* and *De Flores* I have acknowledged my indebtedness to *The Changeling*, by Middleton and Rowley, for the central situation of this play. From the Jacobean tragedy I have taken nothing else. I have, as it were, reinvented the whole action, in terms of latter-day technique. I read *The Changeling* once, many years ago, and a second time several months before I began this play. In the course of writing it, I have not once opened the book. Two lines in the second act are suggested by my recollection of a passage in Middleton. Not another word have I consciously borrowed.

If the technical methods are, or aim at being, modern, why have I adopted the convention of blank verse? My answer is that I tried prose and found it impossible. I made more than one attempt, but never got beyond a few speeches, which, on re-reading, seemed to me ludicrous. Quite modern speech was hopelessly incongruous with the period, place and theme. It jarred upon, and even paralysed the imagination. What is known as "Wardour-Street English" was worse. It brought with it associations of an order of romance totally different from that which I was attempting. I fell back on blank verse, not as a medium of poetry, but simply as a dialect which the custom of centuries has led us to associate with Renaissance, and, especially, with

Mediterranean themes. It is not "poetic drama" that I have tried to write : I have not even aimed at rhetorical graces. It was "stark" undecorated drama that I wished to produce ; and, rightly or wrongly, I thought measured speech less jarring than any other form of utterance I could devise. But I have not tried to make either my vocabulary or my rhythms Elizabethan. On the contrary my endeavour has been to avoid expressions which belonged peculiarly to any particular period, whether ancient or modern.

## PERSONS

DON HIPPOLITO DE URGEL—(55).

BEATRIZ JUANA, *his daughter*—(22).

CAMILLA, *her maid*.

DON BELTRAN DE CABRA—(30).

DON MANUEL DE MERLO—(26).

DON GEDEON DE MERLO—(23).

MIGUEL DE FLORES, *Don Hippolito's Intendant*—(40).

OTTAVIO, *Don Manuel's parasite*.

THE CORREGIDOR *and* ALGUAZILS.

FABIO

BLASCO } *and other* SERVANTS.

PABLO }

SCENE : Valencia—in and near Don Hippohto's palace

TIME : About 1600.



## ACT FIRST

*An irregularly paved terrace between the palace and the garden of DON HIPPOLITO DE URGEL. At the back, a high wall, pierced, somewhat to the right, by a handsome gate of wrought iron. Over the wall distant houses and a church are (in the daylight) visible. A wing of the palace on the right ; two or three windows on the ground level, but no door ; the windows with the projecting iron gratings (rejas) common in Spanish houses. The glazed casements open inwards, and are scarcely, if at all, visible. A wide space, by which entrances and exits are made, between the building and the back wall. In the centre a large tree, overshadowing the scene, with a bench round it. In front, on the left, a circular canopy, with pillars, over the mouth of a well, and a semi-circular marble seat running round the well. Suspended from the canopy is a wheel, but no rope. The mouth of the well is closed by a wooden cover, hinged in the middle, so that one-half of it can easily be raised. The well is a beautiful piece of architecture, but is noticeably dilapidated—slightly ruinous. A pergola, running at right angles to the wall, and some overarching trees, close the scene on the left.*

### SCENE i : MIDNIGHT

*Moonlight. The voice of a man, hidden by the wall, is heard singing to the accompaniment of a lute.*

*BEATRIZ JUANA and CAMILLA are seen in the moonlight within the grating of the window farthest forward on the right. Both are fully dressed.*

BEATRIZ. Whose is the voice ? Don Manuel's ?

CAMILLA.

Well you know

'Tis not Don Manuel's croak.

BEATRIZ. Whose then ?

CAMILLA. Nay, nay,  
Dear mistress, why this show of ignorance ?  
Have you no ear ? (*The singing ceases.*)

BEATRIZ. The tale my ear would tell  
My heart is eager to believe—yet dare not.

CAMILLA. Think you Don Manuel would desert his bed  
To pay you court with music ? Listen well,  
And you may hear the music of his snores.  
He knows you by your father's dictate his,  
Deems his sweet person irresistible,  
And does not stoop to woo, but waves his hand,  
And looks to see you kneel and worship him.  
Trust me, dear mistress, if he serenades  
At all, it is at casements all unbarred,  
And balconies that he may lightly scale.

BEATRIZ. No more of him, Camilla ! He may scale  
What balconies he will for me.  
(*Another voice begins to sing to the lute.*)

Hark, hark !  
That is another voice, not Don Beltran's.

CAMILLA. So, so ! Your ear is quick enough, meseems !  
You have betrayed yourself. You knew right well  
The voice that first we heard.

BEATRIZ. I did, I did !  
But when you love, Camilla, you may learn  
That love delights in small hypocrisies.  
See, see ! What shadow flitted by the well ?

CAMILLA. Nay, I see nothing.

BEATRIZ. 'Neath the pergola,  
Look, it is moving !

CAMILLA. By my faith, 'tis so !  
A man !

BEATRIZ. Speak you with him : I will withdraw.

BELTRAN DE CABRA, *entering down L., has stolen  
round in the shadow, but now advances into  
the moonlight.*

CAMILLA. Tis Don Beltrdn.

BEATRIZ. Then all the more, Camilla,  
He must not see me till he beg for me.  
*[She withdraws.]*

BELTRAN. Hist ! hist ! What shimmering form is that  
I see  
Behind the envious grating ? Dare I hope  
That 'tis the Lady Beatriz ?

CAMILLA. Nay, Senor,—  
The Lady Beatriz's waiting-woman.  
I am Camilla. Who are you ? And how  
Come you by night——?

BELTRAN. Walls have been scaled ere now :  
And sure you know me, wench ?

CAMILLA. It cannot be  
Senor de Cabra ?

BELTRAN. Rightly guessed ! I am  
Beltran de Cabra, and your lady's slave.  
Beseech her, of her bounty, good Camilla,  
To grant me one brief moment oi her presence.

CAMILLA. I'll bear your message, Senor.  
*[Withdraws.]*

BELTRAN *(steals over to the gate)*. Fabio ! Hist !

FABIO *(appearing at the gate)*. Senor ?

BELTRAN. Cease singing, Fabio. Let your lute  
Whisper of love in wordless melody.

FABIO. So be it, master mine.  
*He retires, and continues to touch the lute softly  
and plaintively. As BELTRAN returns to the  
window, BEATRIZ appears at it. She has changed  
her dress and assumed a studied deshabelle.*

BELTRAN. Sweet Beatriz !  
My gracious lady, deign you to accept  
The homage of a heart that beats for you,  
And you alone ?

BEATRIZ.                   Fie on you, Don Beltran !  
Why wake me thus, at midnight, from my dreams,  
Imperilling, it may be, my good name ?  
*(Shrinking back from him.)*

Nay, look not on me ! Startled and abashed  
I dare not face you. Quick ! your errand tell,  
And get you gone.

BELTRAN.                 Why, what should be my errand  
But to give pleading utterance to the love  
My passionate eyes so oft have silently  
Avowed ?

BEATRIZ.         Alas, sir——

BELTRAN.                   Say not I misread  
The answering message of those eyes divine  
That owned my worship, and rebuked it not.

BEATRIZ. Alas ! I have been much to blame——my eyes,  
My tell-tale eyes, it seems, have uttered things,  
Unwittingly, that ought to have found no voice  
Even in the dim recesses of my heart.

BELTRAN. What mean you, lady ?

BEATRIZ.                   Have I not, Beltran,  
Betrayed to you that which my plighted faith  
And filial duty, aye, and maiden shame  
Forbade me to confess, ev'n to myself ?

BELTRAN. Is, then, the rumour true——?

BEATRIZ.                   What rumour ?

BELTRAN.                   **That**  
Which says that you must wed Manuel de Merlo ?

BEATRIZ. My father wills it, and my word is given.

BELTRAN. That popinjay !

BEATRIZ.                   That popinjay has lands  
That interlock with ours ; and I, alas !  
My father's only child——

BELTRAN.                   But Don Hippolito,  
Your father, is he not the wealthiest man  
Of all the province ?

BEATRIZ.                   Wealth still craves for wealth,



BELTRAN. Oh, cruel word !

BEATRIZ. See you no remedy ?

BELTRAN. None, unless your father  
Relent——

BEATRIZ. His faith is pledged to Manuel.  
But if——

BELTRAN. If? what?

BEATRIZ. Your sword, you said, should carve  
A way to wealth and honour : might it not,  
At need——

BELTRAN. Speak plainly.

BEATRIZ. Carve a way to *me* ?

BELTRAN. Would you, dear lady, wait till I have won  
Renown and fortune ?

BEATRIZ. There's a shorter way—  
A single thrust would do't.

BELTRAN. A single thrust ?

BEATRIZ. Don Manuel bars our way to happiness—  
Don Manuel is a fool——

BELTRAN. A popinjay !  
But what of that ?

BEATRIZ. Are you so dull, Beltran ?

BELTRAN. I dare not read your meaning, Beatriz.

BEATRIZ. Where gallants meet, the rapier in its sheath  
Sits lightly. Every day brings forth its duel.  
No need to force a quarrel—Manuel's folly  
Will see to that. You have but to challenge him,  
And——

BELTRAN. Murder him ! Is that what you would say ?

BEATRIZ. Since when is killing in fair fight called  
murder ?

BELTRAN. The fight a cut-throat forces is not fair.

BEATRIZ. Is he who wields the stronger blade a cut-  
throat ?

BELTRAN. Yes, if he quarrel with intent to slay.

BEATRIZ. I am a woman, little skilled in logic :  
I cannot argue, I can only love.  
You are a swordsman of the tongue, Beltran ;  
You thrust and parry nimbly ; but, alack !  
I see you do not love ; to love you play  
The cut-throat.

BELTRAN. Sweetest lady, say not so !  
Ask of me what you will ! No toil or danger  
Shall daunt me that your witching voice commands,  
If but the voice of honour chime with it.

BEATRIZ. So, sir, it seems I tempt you to dishonour !

BELTRAN. Women, my Beatriz, see not with men's eyes.

BEATRIZ. If with men's weapons they could fight, Senor,  
Bold were the man who should impugn the honour  
Of Beatriz Juana de Urgel !

BELTRAN. Hear me, dear lady !

BEATRIZ. Nay, sir, fare you well !  
Your honour chimes not, as you say, with mine.  
I little thought—if hither, sir, you came  
Resolved to humble me—Camilla, come !  
Camilla !—you have won your wager, sir.  
Go, boast your victory o'er a woman's weakness,  
Who owned her love only that you might flout it.  
Farewell !

*CAMILLA is seen for a moment, BEATRIZ rushes  
to her, and they both pass out of sight.*

BELTRAN. Nay, hear me, Beatriz !—She is gone.  
I was too peremptory, she, poor maid,  
Too passionate ! Yet will I fight for her,  
Though not with traitorous weapons. For, God's  
blood !

If she is less than wise, she is more than fair.

*(Reaching the gate, he says.)*

Hist ! Fabio ! the ladder !

*FABIO appears and motions towards the left.*

*BELTRAN goes out to the left, skirting the wall.*

*BEATRIZ reappears with CAMILLA at the window.*

BEATRIZ *(looking out cautiously)*. Is he gone ?

CAMILLA. Yes, lady.

BEATRIX. Oh, my lover ! There he stood,  
And braved me like a fool—but like a king !  
Oh, I could kiss his footprints. Even his honour  
I love, while I despise. Men will be men,  
And headstrong. Only weaklings crouch before us.  
By the new tremor in my heart I know,  
And the sweet, subtle tingling in my veins,  
'Twas for this man that I was born a woman !  
I shall not sleep, Camilla.

*The Curtain falls.*

SCENE 2 : MID-DAY

*When the curtain rises again, the scene is bathed in sunshine, except where the trees give shade. The great gate stands open.*

DON HIPPOLITO DE URGEL, *a handsome man of fifty - five, is seated at a movable table beneath the tree, centre, finishing breakfast. A flask of wine, a ham, bread and fruit on the table. BLASCO and another man-servant in attendance on him.*

CAMILLA enters, R.—*that is to say, between the house and the back wall.*

HIPPOLITO. Comes she, Camilla ?

CAMILLA. Lady Beatriz  
Entreats your pardon, sir. She slept but ill.  
In half an hour she'll wait upon you.

HIPPOLITO. So !  
Slept she but ill ? I heard a lute at midnight :  
Doubtless Don Manuel serenading her.

CAMILLA (*demurely*). Doubtless, my lord.

HIPPOLITO. Well, I am for the harbour.  
See that I find her here when I return.

*[Exit CAMILLA, R,*





*appears at the gate, coming from the left, and enters.*

BELTRAN. Your humble servant, Don Hippolito.

HIPPOLITO. Your servant, sir.

*(Recognising him)* Surely 'tis Don Beltran  
De Cabra ?

BELTRAN. He, my lord.

HIPPOLITO. You are welcome, sir.

BELTRAN. At the Alcalde's banquet, sir, you said  
That I might wait on you.

HIPPOLITO. I told you then  
Your father fought beside me at Lepanto,  
And you should be right welcome for his sake.  
But now——

BELTRAN. I come untimely ?

HIPPOLITO. At the harbour  
I have some business that requires my care.

BELTRAN. May I attend you thither ?

HIPPOLITO. With all my heart.  
I but await my servant. Pray be seated.

*(He seats himself at the upper end of the semi-circular seat around the well. As BELTRAN is about to sit on the margin of the well itself> he says :)*

Beware ! That coping may be treacherous.  
Rather sit here. *(Making room for him.)*

BELTRAN. The well is very ancient ?

HIPPOLITO. Nay, not so ancient. In my grandsire's  
time

This canopy was built. But since the earthquake  
Five months ago, the well is waterless,  
The masonry is cracked and crumbling. One day  
I purpose to repair the canopy.

BELTRAN. And fill the well ?

HIPPOLITO. 'Twould be too great a labour.  
'Tis strangely deep. This cover makes all safe.

*Enter BLASCO, R.*

Ah, here my servant comes.

(*To BLASCO*) Take thou my sword,  
And follow us. (*BLASCO takes the sword.*)

BELTRAN. I have, my lord, a suit  
I fain would venture to prefer to you.

HIPPOLITO. A suit, young man ?

BELTRAN. A most ambitious suit,  
For which I beg a patient hearing.

HIPPOLITO. Come, sir ;  
We'll weigh the matter as we walk along.

BELTRAN. You are all courtesy, my lord.

*They pass through the gateway and go out to the left. The stage is vacant for a moment. Then DE FLORES enters from the right, and goes cautiously up to the foremost window.*

DE FLORES. Camilla !  
Camilla, hist !

*CAMILLA appears behind the grating.*

CAMILLA. What would you ?

DE FLORES. Knows your mistress  
What is in store for her at Pentecost ?

CAMILLA. At Pentecost ?

DE FLORES. Poor lamb, her fate is fixt.

CAMILLA. Her wedding mean you ?

DE FLORES. Aye, with Manuel.

CAMILLA. That day will never dawn. She'll sooner wed  
Satan himself—a blackamoor—or you,  
De Flores of the rueful countenance.

DE FLORES. I'll pay you out, minx !

CAMILLA. Pay me out ? for what ?  
Pay *her* out, rather, who in childish rage,  
Defaced your beauty with her riding-whip.

DE FLORES. Aye, mock away, my mistress; but  
beware !

[*CAMILLA retires.*

One day I may pay out the two of you.

DE FLORES, *who is wearing his hat, moves up to go out, R. As he does so, DON MANUEL and OTTAVIO appear at the gate, coming from the right.*

MANUEL. Hey, you, sir !

(DE FLORES glances over his shoulder, but does not stop.)

Is the fellow deaf ? My man !  
Come hither ! (DE FLORES *pays no heed.*)  
Stop the slave, Ottavio !

OTTAVIO *runs after DE FLORES and claps him on the shoulder.*

OTTAVIO. Don Manuel calls to you.

DE FLORES *turns and advances a little.*

MANUEL. You heard me, villain !

DE FLORES. I heard your voice, Sefior, but not my name ;

And, from your tone, I thought you hailed a lackey.

MANUEL. And so I did, for you I hailed.

DE FLORES. I am  
My lord's intendant.

MANUEL. Oh, I cry you mercy,  
Sefior Intendant ! I am little skilled  
In nice precedences of vassalage.

DE FLORES. You know me well, Sefior.

MANUEL. Aye, that I do,  
And know you for a sullen, upstart knave.  
(*Knocking off his hat.*)

Off with your hat, sir, when you speak to me !

(DE FLORES, *his face full of rage, feels instinctively for his sword, but finds himself unarmed. He masters himself, and picks up his hat.*)

Go, tell your mistress I attend her here,  
And have but little leisure, since at noon  
I go a-hawking.

DE FLORES. I will tell her maid.

MANUEL. Tell whom you will, man, so you speed her  
coming,  
And take your scowling visage out of sight.

(DE FLORES goes out to the right, putting on his  
hat as he does so, with a defiant gesture. MANUEL  
seats himself beneath the tree.)

When I am in the saddle here, Ottavio,  
That scoundrel shall repent his insolence.

OTTAVIO. You have the true patrician style, my lord,  
With such as he. Men know in you their master.

MANUEL. And women ? Hey, Ottavio ?

OTTAVIO. Oh, as for women  
You're not their master——

MANUEL. Not——?

OTTAVIO. You are their god.  
Their very Jove.

MANUEL. 'Tis true I have a way with them.  
What was their name for me in Alicante ?

OTTAVIO. Why, Manuel the Merciless.

MANUEL. 'Twas SO—  
Well, I have earned the title—in the lists  
Of love, I give no quarter—and the more  
I mow them down, the more they challenge me.  
The pretty fools.

OTTAVIO. You are a shining flame  
Wherein the moths, in headlong rivalry,  
Are mad to singe their wings.

MANUEL. My life's a burden—  
They will not let me be.

OTTAVIO. Nay, you are impious  
To quarrel with the gifts the gracious gods  
Have showered on you, their darling—to the envy  
Of common mortals—such as I.

MANUEL. Well, well,  
The burden one is born to one must bear.

OTTAVIO. And yours is ancient blood and manly grace,  
And wit and fascination.

MANUEL. Nay, Ottavio,  
You know I love not flattery.

OTTAVIO. Flattery !  
Hear him, ye gods ! I speak the plain, blunt truth,  
And for my pains am dubbed a flatterer !  
I'll tell you of your faults, then—and the greatest  
Is undervaluing your own deserts.  
Your modesty. . . . But lo ! the Lady Beatriz—

MANUEL. At last ! Hold *you* the waiting-woman in play.

OTTAVIO. Trust me !

BEATRIZ, *followed by CAMILLA, enters from the right.* CAMILLA *Stops, Up R.* OTTAVIO, *With many bows to BEATRIZ as he passes her, joins CAMILLA and talks to her in whispers.* BEATRIZ *advances.*

BEATRIZ. Your lordship deigned to summon me ?

MANUEL. I did. A fair good-morrow, sweetheart mine.

BEATRIZ. Sweetheart, forsooth ! Am I a tavern wench  
To be accosted thus ?

MANUEL. Why, hoity-toity !  
What would you ? We're as good as man and wife.

BEATRIZ. There wants but one thing.

MANUEL. One thing ?

BEATRIZ. My consent.

MANUEL. Nay, nay—on me this coyness is but wasted—  
I am no novice in the ways of women.  
So, lady mine (since sweetheart likes you not),  
Pray waste no time in coquetry. Your father  
And mine have wedded us with mutual vows  
And parchments signed and sealed. The ceremony  
Alone is lacking.

BEATRIZ. And if I say—no ?

MANUEL. Pooh, pooh ! Time flies. Ere noon I must  
to horse.

Spare me this show of maidenly reluctance.  
'Tis at your father's bidding I am here

To fix the day with you. Within a month  
He swears we shall be one.

BEATRIZ. I am loath to balk  
The passionate impatience of your wooing ;  
Your eloquent entreaties move me deeply,  
Your chivalrous homage to my womanhood—  
All this I prize ; yet trust me, sir, I'd rather  
Die as a cloistered nun than be your wife.  
So fare you well ! Camilla, come !

MANUEL (*getting between her and the right*). Stay,  
mistress !

A jest may go too far.

BEATRIZ. This jest, Senor,  
Has gone a thousand miles beyond my liking.

MANUEL. Reject my suit !

BEATRIZ. Even so, in sober earnest.  
Your suit was not a suit, but a command.  
Whistle your dogs to heel. No spaniel I.

MANUEL. Command ? It was your father who com-  
manded.

BEATRIZ. You, jailer-like, did but present his warrant,  
And bid me follow you to prison.

MANUEL. Dost think  
'Tis Manuel de Merlo's wont to implore  
A woman's favour on his bended knees ?

BEATRIZ. 'Tis time that Manuel de Merlo learned  
Civility—but not with me for tutor.

DON HIPPOLITO, DON BELTRAN *and* BLASCO *enter*  
*unobserved, by the gateway, coming from the*  
*left. They stand at the back, watching the*  
*scene.*

MANUEL. Civility ! I'd have you know, my lady,  
I am no common suitor, nor are you  
The paragon, the Phoenix of your sex.  
A score of ladies—Don Ottavio there,  
My friend, will bear me witness—just as fair  
And nobly-born as you, to win my hand

Would go in pilgrimage upon their knees  
To Compostella—aye, and back again !

BEATRIZ. If boasting, sir, could win my love, you had  
won it

Many times over. Let me pass !

MANUEL (*seizing her wrist*). By heaven,  
Hear me you shall ! You know not what you do.

BELTRAN (*coming forward, with his sword drawn*).  
Nor you, sir, when you dare to lay a hand  
Upon that lady. Instantly release her,  
Or——

MANUEL. Or ?

BELTRAN. I'll skewer you, Sir Popinjay !  
MANUEL *drops BEATRIZ'S hand, and makes a*  
*feeble show of drawing his sword. HIPPOLITO*  
*comes forward and intervenes.*

HIPPOLITO. Come, gentlemen, enough of this. Don  
Manuel,  
Your courtship scarce was courtly.

MANUEL. Sir, your daughter  
With insolence rejects my suit.

BELTRAN. Take heed, sir !  
When a fair lady freely speaks her mind,  
'Tis insolent to talk of insolence.  
Withdraw the word, or——

MANUEL. Don Hippolito,  
What does this bully here ?

HIPPOLITO. A plague on both of you,  
Brawlers ! Don Manuel, you forget yourself.  
But if my daughter, Don Beltran, should need  
A champion, that part is mine. I am old  
But not outworn—I need no substitute.

BELTRAN. I bow to the rebuke, sir.

HIPPOLITO. You, Don Manuel,  
Have touched the lute, it seems, with little skill,  
And set it jarring.

MANUEL.                                   Touched the lute, indeed !  
Say, rather, stroked a tigress 'gainst the grain.

HIPPOLITO. Girl, what say *you* ?

BEATRIZ *bursts out laughing.*

MANUEL.                                   She laughs ! at me ! at *me* !

BEATRIZ. You would have laughed, dear father, to have  
seen

The supercilious air, the conquering strut,  
The come-and-kiss-me-quick vaingloriousness,  
Wherewith this senor—or this sultan, rather—  
Claimed lordship o'er his humble handmaiden,  
Your daughter.

HIPPOLITO.                   Peace, my daughter. You forget  
You are Don Manuel's affianced bride.

BEATRIZ. Affianced !

HIPPOLITO.                   Yes, affianced, headstrong girl !  
And if he claimed fulfilment of your pledge,  
'Twas at my urgence.

BEATRIZ.                               Did you urge him, sir,  
To issue his commands as to a slave ?

HIPPOLITO. No more ! A passing breeze, a lovers'  
quarrel,

Weighs not a feather-weight 'gainst my fixed design,  
My plighted word. You've played your part, Don  
Manuel,

Somewhat too boisterously for my daughter's taste.  
But what of that ? A maiden's petulance passes  
Swift as a summer cloud before the moon.

Come you again to-morrow or the next day  
And you shall find the wench, I warrant you,  
In gentler mood.

BEATRIZ.                               A venturous warranty,  
My father.

HIPPOLITO. Silence, girl !

MANUEL.                               Well, I will come.  
But let me tell you, Don Hippolito,  
I love not to be baited by a girl—  
She must sing smaller, or I'll none of her.

A termagant, i'faith ! The maid I wed  
Must know her master, and accept his rule  
With mannerly submission.

BELTRAN (*his hand on his sword*). Don Hippolito !  
Is this to be endured ?

MANUEL (*with affected disdain*). Call off your bravo,  
My lady ! Come, Ottavio.

*With exaggerated bows to HIPPOLITO and  
BEATRIZ, and gestures of defiance to BELTRAN,  
the two go out through the gateway, turning to  
the right.*

HIPPOLITO. Don Beltran.  
Curb your untimely zeal. Don Manuel  
Is scarce a courtly cavalier. But, mistress,  
You wantonly enraged him. Give and take—  
That is the law of wedlock. Play him fairly,  
And Manuel, for all his swaggering airs,  
Will be your slave. I know you, daughter mine :  
Trust you to hold your own 'gainst any man.

BELTRAN. Is, then, my suit still hopeless ?

HIPPOLITO. Urge it not.  
Your father was my friend, and much it grieves me  
To do displeasure to your father's son ;  
But, as I told you, from the cradle up,  
Don Manuel and my Beatriz have been plighted  
With all solemnity. Their lands conjoined  
Will form a little kingdom. 'Tis the hope  
My heart is set on, since the will of Heaven  
Vouchsafed me not a son.

BELTRAN. But since Don Manuel  
Has forfeited, it seems, this lady's grace——

HIPPOLITO. Should I, then, hold my covenant for-  
feited ?

Nay, sir, my honour's pledged.

BELTRAN. You see, fair lady,  
How high my aspiration soared. I ventured  
To crave your noble father's leave to offer  
My homage to your beauty, and essay

To win your heart. My suit, alas, is vain ;  
My hopes are shattered——

HIPPOLITO. God be with you, sir !

BELTRAN. Adieu, my lord.

*(Kneeling to BEATRIZ and kissing her hand.)*

Lady, a sad farewell.

BEATRIZ. Farewell, sir—God be with you !

*(Whispering)* And despair not !

I'll die before I wed the popinjay.

*[Exit BELTRAN through the gateway and to the right.]*

HIPPOLITO. A gallant gentleman !

BEATRIZ. Indeed ? I have given

But little heed to him. I can think of naught

But your hard-heartedness, my tyrant father.

Are you unmoved ? Is there no choice for me

But misery or disinheritance ?

HIPPOLITO. Pooh ! misery——

BEATRIZ. What else is loveless marriage ?

HIPPOLITO. Love comes with time ; and one day you  
will thank me

For giving you a weak, and not a strong man

To mate. Your spirit's masterful, my girl,

And scorns subjection.

BEATRIZ. So you think it meet

To break my spirit ? But if I rebel,

And say I will not, *will not* marry Manuel,

What then ?

HIPPOLITO. Why, then my lands and palaces

Here in Valencia, in Cataluna,

In Aragon, Mallorca, Sicily,

Go to my kinsman of the younger line,

Bernardo de Urgel ; and as for you,

Your dowry, ample for a bride of Heaven,

Will feed the coffers of a nunnery.

'Tis my last word.

*[Exit, R.]*

BEATRIZ *(as he goes out)*. I thank you, father dear.

*(Reflects for a few moments.)*

Camilla, are my gold-fish fed ? Go, see to it.

*(As CAMILLA is going, calls after her)*

And send De Flores hither !

CAMILLA *having disappeared*, R., BEATRIZ *goes, with a certain stealthiness, over to the well, raises the cover with some effort, and looks down. She is in this position when DE FLORES enters*, R. *Pic advances a few steps.*

DE FLORES. My lady Beatriz !

You sent for me ?

BEATRIZ *drops the cover and turns abruptly. She has been so lost in thought that she is a little startled. She advances to DE FLORES, and they come down together to the seat under the tree.*

BEATRIZ. You are my friend, De Flores ?

My good Miguel ?

DE FLORES. Your servant, lady, ever.

BEATRIZ. I see you in my earliest memories,  
First as the sergeant of my father's troop—  
Sergeant, I think ?

DE FLORES. Yes, lady.

BEATRIZ. Next alferéz :

Then as his chamberlain : and now, Miguel,  
Intendant of his principalities.

DE FLORES. Your father's grace advanced me.

BEATRIZ. And your merit.

And I—I think you know—have stood your friend.

*She sits on the seat.*

DE FLORES. My humblest thanks.

BEATRIZ. When, in my froward childhood,  
I burst my waiting-women's leading strings,  
You ever took my part.

DE FLORES. Lady, I did—  
I turned a blind eye to your peccadillos.

BEATRIZ. Unkind, sir, to remind me—

DE FLORES *(hastily)*. Nay, I meant not—  
'Twas but a slip—I could bite out my tongue !

BEATRIX. That mishap is my one remorse.

DE FLORES. Forget it,  
My lady. I was ever hard of feature ;  
Your riding-switch defaced no comeliness,  
And one eye serves me just as well as two—  
Not much escapes it.

BEATRIX. That I know, Miguel.  
No need to tell you, therefore, how my heart  
Contemns and loathes this marriage that my father  
Would thrust upon me.

DEPLORES. I have guessed as much.

BEATRIX. How think you of Don Manuel ?

DE FLORES. Mistress mine,  
'Tis not for me to——

BEATRIX. I have seen him treat you  
Like a mere lackey.

DE FLORES. Like a scullion, lady.  
I say not that I love him.

BEATRIX. Why should you,  
A soldier, not ignobly born, be doomed  
To crouch before a puppy's insolence ?

DE FLORES. I am your father's servant——

BEATRIX. For the time :  
But were I mistress of my dower——

DE FLORES. Your dower  
Is princely.

BEATRIX. With the grange of Alcobar—  
Where my poor mother died in her affliction—  
Therefore unblest to me—there goes, I think,  
A fair domain——

DE FLORES. A farm and fisheries,  
With full seigniorial rights——

BEATRIX. When I am married,  
So it be not to Manuel, but to one  
Whom I myself shall choose, that grange and farm,  
De Flores, shall be yours.

DE FLORES. My bounteous mistress !  
How shall I——?

BEATRIZ. But alas ! while Manuel lives,  
My father, well you know, will ne'er endure  
To see me wed another.

DE FLORES. Where his word  
Is pledged, my master's mind is adamant.

BEATRIZ. And therefore——

DE FLORES. Therefore?

BEATRIZ. While Don Manuel lives,  
It seems that your release from servitude,  
Your patent of gentility, remains  
A thing phantasmal, inaccessible,  
A castle in the clouds.

DE FLORES. To give it substance,  
You mean that Manuel—— ?

BEATRIZ. His worthless life  
Obstructs your fortunes——

DE FLORES. Menaces *your* freedom,  
And, therefore, ought to—end ?

BEATRIZ (*nods*). And speedily !

DE FLORES *turns away, with a look of exultation.*  
*Then, after a perceptible pause, he again faces*  
BEATRIZ.

DE FLORES. So ho, my lady ! And you turn to me,  
Your good Miguel, your faithful friend at need,  
For this slight service ?

BEATRIZ. 'Tis no slight reward  
I offer.

DE FLORES. Know you that to-day at sunset  
I sail for Sicily ?

BEATRIZ. Delay your sailing.

DE FLORES. Your father orders it.

BEATRIZ. The resolute mind  
Turns hindrances to profit. Sail at sunset  
But bid the master anchor in the bay :

At midnight steal ashore, and—afterwards,  
Hoist sail again ere dawn. So shall suspicion  
Ne'er light on you.

DE FLORES.                    You plan a murder, lady,  
As deftly as a mantlet. Must I, then,  
Stab him in bed ? Is that your gracious will ?

BEATRIZ. In nowise. That were bungling. He must  
vanish !  
Must disappear and leave no track behind.  
Then 'twill be spread abroad that he pursues  
Some light-o'-love, some gay Italian flame,  
In passage to Madrid.

DE FLORES.                    You'll see to that ?

BEATRIZ. I'll see to that.

DE FLORES.                    But without horse or carriage  
He cannot reach Madrid ; and if his servants  
Know that no horse is missing——?

BEATRIZ.    True ! there lies  
A danger——

DE FLORES.                    I can help you out of it.  
Ottavio, his henchman, sails on the *Esperanza*  
With me, for Palma. Let it be given out  
That Manuel, in a sudden spleen, has turned  
His back on you, and taken ship with us  
Home to Mallorca——

BEATRIZ.    'Tis a good device !  
That, too, will rouse my father's wrath against him,  
And break the match.

DE FLORES.                    But still one stumbling-block,  
One plaguy obstacle, remains.

BEATRIZ.    You mean——?

DE FLORES. In brief—pray pardon me—I mean the  
body—  
The inconvenient clod of flesh and bone—  
You've thought of its disposal ?

BEATRIZ.    See you not  
The way ?

DEFLORES. I am dull. Forgive me and expound  
Your plan.

BEATRIZ. Til make a tryst with him to-night.  
E'en now he left in anger—I had flouted him,  
And galled his vanity till he writhed again.  
Now you shall bear a message ; you shall tell him  
The Lady Beatriz repents, and craves  
His pardon for her shrewishness, and prays him,  
In pledge of reconcilment, here to meet her,  
Here, by the well——

DE FLORES. The well !

BEATRIZ. Alone—at midnight—  
That so she may do penance, as becomes  
A maid, remorseful for her hasty fault.

DE FLORES. Then, if he come——

BEATRIZ. If ! Do you doubt his coming ?

DE FLORES. You will await him by the well ?

BEATRIZ. Not I !  
Another mistress, from whose close embraces  
He never shall arise ! And you, De Flores,  
Shall lead him to her arms.

DE FLORES. How pat it goes !  
The well-mouth, by some strange mischance, is  
open——

BEATRIZ. It opens easily——

DE FLORES. One flash of steel !  
Your plighted lord slips down to doom as glibly  
As sword into its scabbard ! Truly, mistress,  
A pretty piece of work ! But take it not  
Amiss, I pray you, if I crave a moment  
To think upon't.

*Pause.*

BEATRIZ. The grange of Alcobar,  
With rights seigniorial !

DE FLORES. Shall I sell my soul  
For fisheries and vineyards ? There's but one thing  
For which a man will brave the sulphur-pool——

BEATRIZ. And that is——?

DE FLORES. Woman !

BEATRIZ. Why, well said, Miguel !  
The lord of Alcobar may pick and choose  
'Mong ladies of the province.

DE FLORES. And " well said ",  
Say I, my mistress ! I can pick and choose !  
'Tis true as holy writ ! I am your servant,  
Lady—a weapon in your resolute grasp.

BEATRIZ. My brave De Flores !

DE FLORES. But, as I bethink me,  
I have no fitting weapon to my hand.  
My dagger, in the stag-hunt yesterday,  
Fell from its sheath.

BEATRIZ (*unhooking a jewelled dagger that hangs at her girdle*). Take this stiletto, Miguel—  
A toy, but needle-keen.

DE FLORES. Aye, 'twill suffice.

BEATRIZ. Regard it as a pledge, to be redeemed  
With title-parchments of your seigniori.

DE FLORES. I need no pledge, beyond my lady's word.

BEATRIZ. Say, then, a token of my friendship.

DE FLORES. Friendship !  
Your graciousness overpowers me. (*Pause.*) One  
thing more.

BEATRIZ. What's that ?

DE FLORES. Don Manuel knows I love him not ;  
And should I bear from you a message only,  
With nought to vouch for it—no token—letter—  
He will suspect an ambush, and refuse  
My guidance.

BEATRIZ. True. Braggarts are ever cowards.  
What token can I send ?

DE FLORES. A letter, lady,  
Were best—a honied word of penitence  
And invitation——

BEATRIZ. I will write it straightway.  
Come for it in an hour. My brave De Flores !  
*She turns away to go into the house.*

DE FLORES. Lady ! *(She stops and turns around.)*

BEATRIZ. What more ?

DE PLORES. As I have cause to know,  
'Tis perilous to trespass on your pride ;  
And yet, methinks, on such a day as this,  
To seal our covenant, I might——

BEATRIZ. Might——? What ?

DE FLORES. Presume to kiss your hand.

*After a struggle, and with evident reluctance, she holds out her hand to him.*

BEATRIZ. There, then !  
*He kisses her hand. She snatches it away, and hastens into the house, R.*

DE FLORES *(to himself)*. At last !  
The bond is sealed ! The day of payment, lady,  
Will come anon : and paid in full it shall be !  
You'll find me no complaisant creditor.

*The Curtain falls.*

### SCENE 3 : MIDNIGHT

*Moonlight, but not so bright as on the previous evening.  
All is still, except for a very distant voice, singing to a lute.*

BEATRIZ, *wearing a loose robe over her night-dress, stands at the window, behind the grating.*

BEATRIZ. Not yet! Not yet! Pray heaven those serenaders  
Come not this way. *(A pause.)* Oh, should De Flores fail me——!

He cannot, oh, he cannot !

*(Another pause. Then DE FLORES and MANUEL appear outside the gate.)*

Here they come !

Brave, brave De Flores ! *(She retires out of sight.)*

DE FLORES *unlocks and opens the gate, and he and MANUEL enter. MANUEL wears a dark cloak over a bright costume of white satin.*

MANUEL *(at the gate)*. Is she waiting, hey ?

I cannot see her.

DE FLORES. Maidens, good my lord,  
Love not to be the earliest at a meeting :  
They deem that such a show of eagerness  
Cheapens their favours.

MANUEL. If she keep me waiting——!

DE FLORES. Doubtless she watches at her window,  
ready

To hasten forth as soon as she shall see you  
There, at the trysting-place. Now softly, so !

*He guides MANUEL on tiptoe forward to the well.*

MANUEL. Now she *must* see me !

DE FLORES. You're a clouded sun :  
This cloak is dark—she may not well discern you.  
Pray you unhook it : let her see your figure  
In all its bravery. I'll bear the cloak,  
And post me at the gate, as sentinel  
Upon your privacy.

*MANUEL takes off his cloak and hands it to DE FLORES, who throws it down upon the seat.*

MANUEL. Still she delays !  
If she be fooling me——! But it cannot be—  
I have her letter safe : her reputation  
Lies at my mercy——

DE FLORES. No, my lord ! At mine !

*Plunges the dagger in his heart. MANUEL gives a cry, and then a gurgling groan. DE FLORES catches him as he falls, feels in his*

*doublet for the letter, and secures it. Then he heaves the body up and drops it, feet foremost, into the well. At MANUEL'S cry, BEATRIZ has appeared at the window, where she stands grasping the bars and panting with suspense. DE FLORES, turning, sees her, and at once crosses to her, leaving MANUEL'S cloak and hat where they lie.*

BEATRIZ. You have done it !

DE FLORES. I have done the work ; and now  
I claim the wages.

BEATRIZ. Alcobar is yours,  
My brave De Flores—with whatever more  
A friend can do for your advancement. See !  
Take you this packet—find some messenger—  
Some one who knows you not—to bring it to me  
To-morrow morning. (*Hands him a letter, tied up  
and sealed.*)

DE FLORES. One who knows me not——?  
To bring it here——? To you——?

BEATRIZ. Do as I bid you—  
Trust me—'tis for our safety ! So, farewell !  
A prosperous voyage to you.

DE FLORES. Farewell, lady,  
Three months shall see me back again—and then——

BEATRIZ. Count on my gratitude ! [*Exit.*]

DE FLORES. I do, my beauty !  
I've ta'en security !  
(*He slips back to the well, unfastening the sheath  
of the dagger from his girdle.*)

The sheath must lie  
Beside the dagger.  
(*He drops it down the well, and throws in MANUEL'S  
hat and cloak.*)

There ! Now rest in peace,  
Most valiant Manuel. I'll make free, indeed,  
To raise your ghost when it shall serve my purpose ;  
But you shall never know it!

*He closes the well, and then slips over to the gate. Just then the serenading party is heard approaching : one playing the lute, and one singing softly. DE FLORES stands in the shadow of the wall while they pass, then goes out, closes the gate, and is locking it as*

*The Curtain falls.*



The readier consentment to her marriage  
With this Beltrdn de Cabra.

GEDEON. Who is he ?

OTTAVIO. I know him not. They say a poor hidalgo.

GEDEON. 'Tis a dark riddle !

*Enter, from the right, DON HIPPOLITO.*

HIPPOLITO. Welcome, Don Gedeon !  
Give me your hand ! You were a sturdy boy  
When last I saw you. Three years younger, is't not,  
Than Manuel, your brother ?

GEDEON. Aye, three years.

HIPPOLITO. How goes it with your father ?

GEDEON. Sir, he is well.

HIPPOLITO. Though Manuel has used us scurvily  
I would not have the friendship of our houses  
Forgotten.

GEDEON. Where is Manuel, Sefior ?

HIPPOLITO. Manuel ! You ask *me*——?

GEDEON. Where is Manuel ?

HIPPOLITO. Where should he be? In Palma, -1  
surmise.

If he has gone elsewhither, you should know,  
Being newly come from there.

GEDEON. Sir, in Mallorca  
He is not, nor has been this many a day.

HIPPOLITO. Why, you, sir—is your name Ottavio ?—  
He sailed with you !

OTTAVIO. Not so, sir.

HIPPOLITO. In a fit  
Of childish spleen, he broke his plighted faith  
To Beatriz, my daughter, and set sail  
In the *Esperanza*, my own carack——

OTTAVIO. Nay, sir—  
I, by your licence, sailed in the *Esperanza*,  
But not Don Manuel.

HIPPOLITO. Not Don Manuel!  
Why, then, belike he went a-gadding elsewhere,  
Mayhap in still worse company.

GEDEON. He took  
No servant with him, and he rode no horse.  
His servants and his horses all await him  
Here in Valencia.

HIPPOLITO. And to Mallorca  
He sailed not ?

OTTAVIO. On the cross of Christ I swear  
He sailed not !

HIPPOLITO. Then belike he sailed elsewhither.  
Ships every day put forth. . . . Yet in the letter  
He sent my daughter——

GEDEON. Letter!

HIPPOLITO. Aye, a petulant  
Insulting scrawl—he said that in Mallorca  
A lady languisht for him——

GEDEON. There is none such.

HIPPOLITO. An idle boast ! I thought as much——  
(CAMILLA enters by the centre door, carrying a  
tray with the remains of a meal,—fruit, bread  
and wine.)

Camilla,

When comes your mistress forth ?

CAMILLA. My lord and lady  
Are newly risen——

HIPPOLITO. Tell them I entreat  
Their presence here.

(CAMILLA puts down the tray on the table, R.,  
returns to the centre door, knocks and enters.)

A new-made man and wife—  
But six days wed—they rise not with the lark.

GEDEON. Saw you my brother's letter ?

HIPPOLITO. Saw it ? No——  
My daughter told me of it.

GEDEON. Then you know not  
If 'twas his hand indeed that writ it ?

HIPPOLITO. Why,  
Who else should write it ?

(*Re-enter CAMILLA, centre.*)

You, Camilla, saw  
Don Manuel's letter to your mistress ?

CAMILLA. Surely,  
I saw it, sir.

CEDEON. And did you read it ?

CAMILLA. Nay, sir :  
I cannot read. I saw my mistress tear it  
Into a thousand pieces in her wrath.

CEDEON. Saw you the messenger that bore it ?

CAMILLA. Aye, sir :  
It was to me he gave it.

GEDEON. Knew you him ?

CAMILLA. I knew him not. He seemed a sailorman—  
Biscayan or Galician.

*CAMILLA takes up the tray, and exit, R.*

HIPPOLITO. Doubtless one  
Whom, ere he sailed, Don Manuel fee'd to bear it.

CEDEON. Ottavio, we must find this messenger,  
Biscayan or Galician. We must search  
The port. But later, with your leave, my lord,  
I shall return, in hope to see your daughter,  
And learn of her——

HIPPOLITO. All that my daughter knows  
I have told you. But she doubtless will repeat it  
At your desire.

CEDEON. I thank you, sir.  
*Enter BLASCO, R.*

HIPPOLITO. Why, Blasco,  
Are you returned ?

BLASCO. My lord, the *Esperanza*  
Anchored an hour ago. I ran ahead

To tell you that Senor de Flores follows,  
Not empty-handed.

HIPPoLiTo.                      Was his mission, then,  
Successful ?

BLASco.                      Far beyond his hopes, he says.

OTTAVIO. You, fellow, were on board the *Esperanza*  
When I to Palma de Mallorca sailed !

BLASco. Senor Ottavio ! Yes, as far as Palma  
You sailed with us.

OTTAVIO.                      And was Don Manuel  
De Merlo on the carack ?

BLASco.                      Was Don Manuel——?  
You know, sir, he was not.

OTTAVIO.                      You see, my lord,  
De Flores, questionless, will say the same.

HIPPoLiTo. 'Tis past my wit——  
*(Enter, R., DE FLORES, followed by two men  
bearing a heavy casket. Some servants crowd  
behind him and stand at the door.)*

   Welcome, my good De Flores !

DE FLORES. My lord, your humble servant.

HIPPoLiTo.                      Blasco tells me  
Your mission has been fruitful.

DE FLORES.                      Heaven be praised !  
*(Laying his hand on the casket.)*  
Here is the garnered harvest.

HiPpoLiTo.                      Faithfully  
You have ever served me. You shall tell your tale  
Anon. *(To the servants)* The casket to my cabinet  
bear.  
*The men turn to the door, R. DE FLORES checks  
them and points to the centre door.*

DE FLORES. His lordship's cabinet—yonder !

HiPpoLiTo.                      Nay, De Flores :  
*(He motions the servants to leave the room, R.)*  
'Tis to an altered house that you return.

My cabinet is beside your own, and this  
Is now my daughter's bridal-chamber.

DE FLORES. Bridal——!  
Your daughter's——?

HIPPOLITO. I To. She is wedded.

DEFLORES (*stammering*). Did—did *he*——  
Don Manuel——?

HIPPOLITO. Nay, Don Manuel played the recreant:  
He broke his pledge, and fled. A week ago  
My daughter gave her hand to Don Beltran  
De Cabra.

DE FLORES. Don Beltran——!

HIPPOLITO. And here they come.  
(*The door, centre, opens, and BEATRIZ and  
BELTRAN enter, he with his arm round her. She  
is wearing a loose morning-gown.*)

At last, my Beatriz !

BEATRIZ. Good morning, father !  
(*She kisses him, then sees DE FLORES, with a little  
start*)

Miguel ! returned !

DE FLORES (*bowing*). My lady !

BEATRIZ. You are welcome.

HIPPOLITO (*indicating GEDEON*).  
This gentleman awaits you, Beatriz—  
Don Manuel's brother——

BEATRIZ. Manuel's !  
*A mute exchange of glances between her and DE  
FLORES.*

GEDFON. Gedeon  
De Merlo, at your service.

BEATRIZ. I have heard  
Your brother speak of you.

HIPPOLITO. He comes, my daughter,  
On a strange errand——

GEDEON. Manuel has vanished.

BEATRIZ. Vanished !

BELTRAN. Don Manuel vanished !

BEATRIZ. Sailed he not  
With you, De Flores, to Mallorca ?

DE FLORES. No,  
Not on the *Esperanza*, lady.

BEATRIZ. Then  
Where has he gone ?

CEDEON. That, lady, is the riddle  
We come to solve. You, as I hear, received  
A letter from him.

BEATRIZ. An insulting letter.

CEDEON. Have you it, madam ?

BEATRIZ. Nay, I scattered it  
In fragments to the winds.

CEDEON. Knew you his writing ?  
Was it his hand that penned it ?

BEATRIZ. Nay, I know not—  
It bore his name. He was no lyric lover—  
He wooed me not with madrigals or sonnets.  
This rude, splenetic missive was the first  
He ever writ me.

GEDEON. And he said——?

BEATRIZ. He said  
My shrewishness—mark you, Senor—my shrewish-  
ness  
Had wearied him : he would no more endure it :  
He would return, that very night, to Palma,  
Where longed and pined for him a noble lady,  
Of beauty greater, wealth scarce less, than mine—  
Oh, 'twas a miracle of courtesy,  
Your brother's letter.

GEDEON. Was't my brother's letter ?

BEATRIZ. Whose else ?

GEDEON. Perchance——

BEATRIZ. Perchance——?

GEDEON. His murderer's.

HIPPOLITO } His murderer's ! (*Pause.*)  
BELTRAN }

BEATRIZ.           think           you he has been murdered ?

GEDEON. I know not, lady, what to think—I know  
That since that night no human eye has seen him.

BEATRIZ. No human eye——!

HIPPOLITO.                           The thing's incredible—  
Impossible ! Why, who should murder him ?  
And wherefore ?

BEATRIZ.                   You, Senor Ottavio,  
You knew his life—was there no enemy—  
No vengeful husband, or no woman wrong'd,  
That might desire his death ?

OTTAVIO (*embarrassed*).                   There may have been.

BEATRIZ. Yet I, for my part, cannot think him dead.  
Since he is not in Palma, Don Gedeon,  
I counsel you to search Madrid and Seville,  
The taverns and the bowers of revelry—  
His pleasant wont it was to boast his fame  
In haunts like these.

GEDEON.                   We but waste time in guesses.  
Alive or dead, our business is to find him.  
First to the harbour—come, Ottavio—  
We'll seek the messenger that bore his letter.

HIPPOLITO. I, Don Gedeon, will go along with you—  
There I know all men, and all men know me.  
Come you, too, son-in-law ?

BELTRAN.                   Right willingly,  
My father. (*To GEDEON*) I, Senor, loved not your  
brother—  
He was my rival for this lady's hand,  
The noblest prize in Spain or Christendom.  
Yet heartily I trust 'twas no mischance,  
Much less foul play, that cleared the path for me  
To this, my happiness.

GEDEON (*bowing*).                   You are courteous, sir.  
(*To HIPPOLITO*)  
Shall we set forth ?

HIPPOLIT O. Have with you I

OTTAVIO (*plucks GEDEON by the sleeve and whispers*).  
Don Gedeon !

That man—De Cabra—now I know him ! He  
Threatened Don Manuel and wellnigh struck him  
The day he disappeared.

GEDEON (*whispers*). So! So! No more !  
We'll keep an eye on him !

BELTRAN (*embracing her and whispering*). My Beatriz !  
My treasure ! For an hour I leave you, sweet—  
You give me furlough ?

BEATRIZ. For an hour, Beltran—  
I grant no longer respite from my love.  
Adieu, mine own ! (*They kiss and part.*)

DE FLORES *has been standing near the door, R.,  
glaring at them. Pie starts when HIPPOLITO  
addresses him.*

HIIPPOLITO. The story of your mission  
Must wait until I come again, De Flores.

*Exit, R., with GEDEON ; BELTRAN following ; last  
OTTAVIO.*

*Having carefully closed the door after them, DE  
FLORES walks straight up to BEATRIZ.*

DE FLORES. So, you are married, lady !

BEATRIZ. So it seems.  
Does that offend you ? You look thunderous,  
As though I had wronged you !

DE FLORES (*half to himself*). Fool ! insensate fool!  
I might have known. . . . Indeed I did suspect  
Your haste to rid yourself of Manuel,  
But dreamt not you would be so lightning-swift.

BEATRIZ. I thought you had divined. . . . You said  
that nought  
Escaped your eye—

DE FLORES. Your cunning had put blinkers  
On the one eye you had left me.

BEATRIZ. Cunning? Nay,  
I owed you no account of my designs.



- BEATRIZ. You call me——! Do you dare to——? You  
forget  
Your place, De Flores. I am still your mistress,  
Your lady.
- DE FLORES. Lady here and mistress there—  
The time for that is past. We are man and woman ;  
And 'tis for woman man will risk damnation.  
I told you so !
- BEATRIZ. You said so, I remember—  
And I replied : the lord of Alcobar  
Can wed with whom he will.
- DE FLORES. Can pick and choose,  
You said : 'mong all the ladies of the province  
Can pick and choose——
- BEATRIZ. Why, so he can !
- DE FLORES. You have said it !  
And, Beatriz Juana, I choose—you !  
*She gazes at him in speechless astonishment, then  
bursts out laughing.*
- BEATRIZ. Me ! Me ! The jest is priceless ! Now I see  
Why it was gall to you to find me married !  
You saw yourself—the very thought on't makes me  
Tingle with shame—you saw yourself my husband !  
But, think you, were I ne'er so free, my father  
Would see his daughter with his steward wed ?  
Curb your presumption, sir !
- DE FLORES. The day might come  
When on his knees your father should implore me  
To wed you.
- BEATRIZ. Are you mad ?
- DE FLORES. But my presumption,  
E'en were you free, would scarcely soar at once  
To marriage. In a month or two, mayhap,  
To think on't might no longer make you tingle  
With sharrie. But marriage was no vital point  
In my design. I would have been—I *am*—  
At first content with—love.
- BEATRIZ. With love ?

DE FLORES. Or would you  
Prefer another name for it ? I care not—  
You know my meaning.

BEATRIZ. Nay, I know it not !  
You *have* no meaning ! You are fever'd—frenzied—  
'Tis your delirium speaks.

DE FLORES. Yes, I am fever'd,  
And you shall slake my thirst. Your pride, your  
petulance,  
Your glorious body and your evil soul  
Are mine to work my will with ! *He* your lord,  
That petty squireling who has stolen my first-fruits !  
/, Beatriz Juana, am your master,  
And you shall know it.

BEATRIZ (*moving towards her room*). When your wits  
return  
We'll speak again.

DE FLORES (*grips her arm*). Yes, we shall speak again  
In soft seclusion, amorous secrecy—  
But now we part not till you tell me—when ?

BEATRIZ. I'll shriek for help !

DE FLORES. Aye, do ! arouse the household !  
And when they come, we'll send for Don Gedeon  
De Merlo, for your father, and we'll tell them  
Where they may find Don Manuel.

BEATRIZ. Would you, madman,  
Bare your own neck to the garrote ?

DE FLORES. My neck  
Runs little risk. Remember, they will find him  
W<sup>T</sup>ith your stiletto sticking 'twixt his ribs.  
My hands are clean. I did but chance upon you  
When all was over. At the utmost, I  
Was your accomplice in the after-fact,  
Disposing of the body ; and of that  
I purge my conscience in denouncing you.

BEATRIZ. But if I tell the utter truth !

DE FLORES. You have nought  
To prove it ! Who'll believe that you could bribe me,

The faithful servant, virtuous De Flores,  
To risk his soul and body for a farm,  
A few poor roods of land ? Who would suspect  
I staked my soul and body to win yours ?

BEATRIZ. Thou fiend !

DE FLORES. And if, at worst, you were believed,  
We'd go to death together. When I saw you  
Come from yon chamber, radiant, drunk with love,  
Clasped in another's arms, an iron will  
Possessed me, and I swore that death itself  
Were a small price to pay for poisoning,  
Or ending, those delights.

BEATRIZ. Sure, I am dreaming !  
This cannot be my faithful, good Miguel,  
My kind De Flores ! You are playing with me.  
To punish me for some imagined slur,  
You seek to affright me. (*Kneeling.*) See, I kneel  
to you—  
Say you but jested ! We were friends of old——

DE FLORES. Friends !

BEATRIZ. And henceforth your fortune,  
your advancement,  
Shall be my care. The lands of Alcobar  
Are but an earnest of the gifts I'll shower  
Upon you.

DE FLORES. Will you give me back my eye ?

BEATRIZ. That old mischance ! How can you be so  
wicked ?

DE FLORES. Wicked ! Were there a crown for wicked-  
ness,  
Which of us two would wear it, gentle lady ?  
Stand up ! You may be seen. None must suspect  
Our tender secret. For the time, at least,  
We must guard warily our stolen joys.  
Where shall we meet—and when ?

BEATRIZ (*who has risen*). Inhuman wretch !  
What joy can it afford you to torment me ?  
What pleasure from my loathing can you reap ?

You spoke of love—I hate you, hate you, hate you !  
Am I a woman—ask yourself—whose hatred  
A man would choose to earn, if he were wise ?

DE FLORES. Wise ? Who is wise that hungers for  
revenge ?

E'en as a child, your pride, your cruelty,  
Were hateful to me, while your beauty stung me  
With vague unrest. Then, in your budding girl-  
hood—

How old were you ? Thirteen ? Fourteen ? I know  
not—

One day your humble slave " forgot his place ",  
And ventured impiously to kiss your hand.  
Your switch so fiercely avenged the insult  
(For even then you were a strapping wench)  
That I became a Polypheme, a scarecrow,  
A wretch that women shrank from—while my lady  
Thought with a few soft words to buy my pardon !  
From that time, as he watched your beauty grow,  
With arrogant self-worship hand in hand,  
The scarecrow swore that one day there should be  
One woman who should shrink from him in vain.  
That day has come—an all-just Providence  
Has lured you on to place yourself, my beauty,  
Defenceless in my hands—and now, by heaven !  
I'll drain the sweet, sweet cup of love and hate,  
Of mingled lust and vengeance, to the dregs.  
Where shall *we* meet—and when ?

BEATRIZ, *during this speech, has sunk upon the  
couch and hidden her face in her hands. After  
a perceptible pause, she looks up.*

BEATRIZ. My good De Flores,  
A demon has possessed you. Presently  
You will arouse yourself and cast him out,  
And wonder at your madness. Meantime, I—  
To show I trust your better self, and know  
Your wholesome mind will soon return to you—  
I'll speak with you—I'll plead with you—again.

DE FLORES. You'll speak ? You'll plead ? You'll waste  
your breath.

BEATRIZ. Hush! Hush!  
I will not hear. My father rides to-day—  
My husband with him—to the hunting-lodge  
At Liria. They hunt all day to-morrow,  
And come again at evening. Thus to-night  
I am alone. When all the house is still,  
Come hither. For the wrong that once I did you,  
I will devise some princely recompense  
That leaves my honour stainless, and your soul,  
De Flores, unbefouled with hideous crime.  
So let it be, I pray you !

DE FLORES. I will come  
When all the house is still. You have wit, my lady,  
To match your beauty. You are worth the winning !  
By heaven, I'd give my other eye for you !

*[With an ironic bow, he goes off, R.]*

BEATRIZ. You shall, and more, wild beast !  
*(She paces distractedly up and down, then flings herself on her knees at the prie-dieu, and seems to pray for a moment. Presently she springs up again and strikes a bell which stands on the table. CAMILLA enters, R.)*

Lay out, Camilla,  
My velvet gown. My lord will soon return.

CAMILLA. I will, my lady. *(Going towards centre.)*

BEATRIZ. Stay, Camilla—tell me—  
That letter that you brought me from Don Manuel,  
When came it to your hand ?

CAMILLA. That morning early,  
While you were yet abed.

BEATRIZ. The morning, was't not,  
After the *Espcranza* sailed ?

CAMILLA. It was.  
The sailor met me as I went to mass,  
At the outer gate—I brought it to you straightway.

BEATRIZ. Right, right. And had you noted aught amiss  
That night ?

CAMILLA. I had noted nothing.



**BELTRAN.** **My love !**  
My lady ! What has scared you ? Am not I  
Here at your side ? What evil should you fear ?  
Come men or demons, I for you will face them !

**BEATRIZ.** Demons ! Aye, that's the word !

**BELTRAN.** What mean you, dear one ?

**BEATRIZ.** I have seen a demon !

**BELTRAN.** Tell me, what has changed you ?  
'Tis not an hour since you were gay and happy,  
My adored, my radiant bride.

**BEATRIZ.** A hideous thing  
Has breathed upon me, and has left my soul  
Besmirched.

**BELTRAN.** A hideous thing !

**BEATRIZ.** You know that man—  
Intendant, steward—nay, I know not what—  
My father's favourite——?

**BELTRAN.** De Flores ?

**BEATRIZ.** He!

**BELTRAN.** I have seen him—scarcely more—an ugly  
fellow—  
But Don Hippolito highly prizes him.

**BEATRIZ.** He is a villain, an accursed villain !  
He hates me !

**BELTRAN.** Hates you ? Wherefore ?

**BEATRIZ.** In my childhood,  
By pure mischance, I caused him lose his eye.

**BELTRAN.** Therefore he nurses malice ?

**BEATRIZ.** More than malice—  
A devilish vengeance.

**BELTRAN.** He has frightened you ?  
This very day, your father, doubt it not,  
Will send him packing.

**BEATRIZ.** Oh, you know not yet  
The abysses of his wickedness.

BELTRAN.

Say on !

He shall pay dear——

BEATRIZ.

I

think—I cannot tell—

I think that Manuel indeed was murdered—

And by De Flores.

BELTRAN.

Beatriz ! What say you ?

Is't possible ? He has a villainous air,

'Tis true. Well, if it be so, you are rid of him

The easier.

BEATRIZ.

Aye, but you know not yet—

The fiend—the hell-hound—he accuses me—

Me !—of the deed.

BELTRAN.

Great God in heaven ! The wretch

Is mad ! The fetters and the whip for him

Are all too merciful ! My poor, poor dove !

Frighted by such a vulture !

BEATRIZ.

I must tell you—

Some time ago, I lost a jewelled dagger,

A small stiletto——

BELTRAN.

I have seen you wear it—

A toy !

BEATRIZ.

This villain must have stolen it.

He knows—or so he says—where Manuel's corse

Lies—with my dagger slain——

BELTRAN.

A hellish plot,

\* But brainsick ! It can but recoil upon him.

\* Trust me, he dare not carry it to the end—

He would wring money from you—nothing more.

BEATRIZ. Not money—no !

BELTRAN.

Preferment, then !

BEATRIZ.

Beltran—

Oh, let me hide my face, my love, my husband,

Here, in your breast ! The fiend would have me

yield—

Yield—to his lust——

BELTRAN.

My sword ! Where is it ? Pablo !

He dies upon the instant ! God in heaven !

The world's polluted wherein such a thing,  
So vile, so infamous, but breathes the air !  
He shall not breathe it long !

*He is rushing to the door, R., but BEATRIZ holds him back.*

BEATRIZ. Nay, dearest love,  
Have patience ! If you slew him instantly,  
'Twould seem a murder—you must needs account  
for't.

How innocent so e'er, the very scandal  
Would soil my name. But if a husband slays  
Upon the threshold of his bridal chamber  
A midnight ravisher—all the world applauds,  
Nor seeks a further reason.

BELTRAN. True ! Aye, true !  
It irks me he should live another hour—  
But I'll be patient.

BEATRIZ. I have laid a trap for him.

BELTRAN. How ? Tell me how ?

BEATRIZ. I feigned a half consent——

BELTRAN. Oh, Beatriz ! That you could stoop so far  
Even as that !

BEATRIZ. I feared his instant violence—  
Else had I ne'er——

BELTRAN. Forgive!—you had no choice—  
And then——?

BEATRIZ. You know my father rides to-night  
To Liria, to the hunting-lodge——

BELTRAN. **I know it.**

BEATRIZ. I said you too were riding to the hunt,  
And therefore he would find me here alone,  
At midnight——

BELTRAN. Dearly shall the caitiff pay  
For so far humbling you——!

BEATRIZ. Now, my Beltran,  
You with my father must indeed ride forth,

But secretly return, and gain unseen  
The ambush of our chamber——

BELTRAN. Aye, the ambush !  
I love not hiding, love not setting traps.

BEATRIZ. Would you make war on vermin chivalrously ?

BELTRAN. My Beatriz—what a sulphurous thunder-  
cloud  
Has marred the sunshine of our wedded bliss !  
But soon the jaws of hell, whence it arose,  
Shall suck it back again.

BEATRIZ (*embraces him*). My knight! My champion!  
If thy love shield me, I am safe indeed !

*(She strikes the bell)*

'Twere best that you make known to all the household  
Your purpose to desert me—

*(Half playfully, half tenderly)* to desert me,  
My love !—to-night.

*Enter CAMILLA, centre.*

Send Pablo to my lord,  
Camilla. *[Exit CAMILLA, R.*

BELTRAN. Ere I kill him, I must wring  
Confession from him of Don Manuel's fate—  
Of where, and how, he slew him.

BEATRIZ. Nay, dear love—  
E'en with his dying breath he'll spit forth poison,  
Falsehood and calumny ! What is Manuel  
To you and me ? Think only of our love,  
And, like a sudden thunderbolt from heaven,  
Sweep from our path this foul contamination,  
This cankerous blight !

*Enter PABLO, R.*

PABLO. You sent for me, my lord ?

BELTRAN. Pablo, I ride with Don Hippolito  
To Liria to-day. Bid my groom saddle  
My Arab gelding——

PABLO. Pardon me, Senor—  
The horse is lame—Fabio this morning told me——

BELTRAN. The best horse in my stable—what has  
lamed him ?

I must myself go look to it. Come with me,  
My Beatriz—

BEATRIZ. Nay, I am weary, dearest—  
I'll rest me till you come again—

BELTRAN. Farewell, then,  
A little space. (*Bending over her and whispering*)  
Let not this hateful thing  
Weigh on your soul. My love is all around you,  
A magic robe no ill can penetrate.  
Rest, dearest heart !

*Kisses her, and exit, R., PABLO following.*

BEATRIZ. Rest ! rest ! Could I but rest !  
(*She paces up and down, then picks up a guitar  
on the table, R., throws herself on the couch  
and touches a few chords. She soon lets it fall  
to the ground, and calls loudly :*)

Camilla !

CAMILLA *appears in the opening of the door,  
centre.*

CAMILLA. Here, my lady !

BEATRIZ. Not the velvet—  
That is too hot. Lay out the gold brocade,  
The Venice ruff—dost mark ?

CAMILLA. I will, my lady.  
*[Withdraws and closes the door.*

BEATRIZ *rises, goes towards the centre door,  
stops, gazes at the threshold, and says in a  
fierce whisper.*

BEATRIZ. Here will he lie, and bleed—and bleed—and  
bleed  
His soul out !

DE FLORES *appears outside the barred window,  
looks warily around, and says, in a low voice.*

DE FLORES. Beatriz Juana ! Hist !  
BEATRIZ *starts violently and turns towards him.*

BEATRIZ. You here ! What would you ?

DEPLORES. I would reassure

Your fearful spirit. I have seen to it  
That solitude and secrecy shall reign  
To-night. The most part of the serving-men  
Go hunting with your father. For the rest  
I have bidden them at the tavern hold fandango  
In honour of my prosperous return.  
'Twould be inhuman to forbid Camilla  
To join the revels. You will grant her leave.  
So shall the silent midnight be our own,  
Nor any tremor mar our—conference.

BEATRIZ. You are, then, ruthless ?

DEPLORES. I am resolute.

Long years have I lived only for this night.

My hour has come at last. *[He goes.]*

BEATRIZ. Your hour has come !

*The Curtain falls.*

## ACT THIRD

*The hall, as in Act II. The candles in the chandelier are lighted, and a candlestick with two lighted candles stands on the table. There is thus bright light in the centre, but dusk in the corners of the room. Moonlight without.*

BEATRIZ *discovered walking restlessly up and down. A guitar is heard at some distance, off L. She goes to the window. A troop of ten or twelve men and women passes, carrying lanterns. One of them is playing the guitar.*

A VOICE (*without*). The Lady Beatriz !

BEATRIZ. Is it you, Diego ?  
You go a-revelling ?

THE VOICE. Senor de Flores  
Has made a fiesta for us.

BEATRIZ. Well, good night !  
Good night, Pepita !

A WOMAN'S VOICE. Sleep well, gracious lady !  
*The revellers pass on, singing. BEATRIZ again walks up and down. Her back is turned to the door, R., when CAMILLA opens it. She wears a mantilla and is dressed for the feast. BEATRIZ turns with a little scream.*

BEATRIZ. Camilla ! You ! The others all are gone—  
Hark to their song !

CAMILLA. I follow them—it hastes not.  
Shall I not make your toilet for the night ?

BEATRIZ. Nay ; I am wakeful ; when I cannot sleep,  
You know, I love not to lie cribb'd in bed,  
Tossing. I'll go to rest when I am weary.  
Good night. The dance awaits you.

CAMILLA. At the least,  
Shall I not light the candles in your chamber ?

BEATRIZ (*interposing between her and the door*).  
They are already lit.

CAMILLA. You are not afraid,  
Alone, in this great house ?

BEATRIZ. What should I fear ?  
Go, go, Camilla !

CAMILLA. Then, good night, my lady.  
*Exit CAMILLA, R. BEATRIZ goes to the window. Presently CAMILLA, carrying a lantern, is vaguely seen to pass. BEATRIZ waves her hand to her. After a pause, she goes rapidly up to the centre door, and throws both wings wide open. BELTRAN is revealed, silhouetted against a dim light, standing like a statue, resting his hands on his drawn sword.*

BEATRIZ. They all are gone. Your sword is drawn—  
the sword  
Of justice, not of vengeance, my Beltran.  
His death is doubly just. You free the world,  
Not of a ravisher only, but a murderer.  
Remember that !

BELTRAN. No more, my Beatriz.  
Sometimes the fates impose on us such deeds  
As must be done, not spoken of, not thought on.

BEATRIZ. I am silent. I will draw the curtains.  
(*Leaving the door open, she draws the heavy curtains across the doorway.*) So !

(*To herself*)  
Come quickly now ! Come quickly ! Oh, come quickly !

*She seats herself on the couch, but, unable to*

*keep still, rises again and kneels at the prie-dieu, her back to the door, R.*

*The door opens slowly and DE FLORES steals in, wearing a sword and dagger. He slips up behind her, but not quite noiselessly. She does not affect to be startled.*

DE FLORES (*in a low voice*).

Sweet saint, forgive ! My love's importunacy  
Is indiscreet, and makes me an intruder  
On your devotions. I will bide your leisure.  
I well conceive, in truth, it needs some time  
To make your peace with heaven.

BEATRIZ (*rising*). Mock me not,  
And mock not heaven ! Surely you are come  
To tell me you desist from this black crime,  
This impious, this abhorrent villainy ?  
Say that 'tis so !

DE FLORES. Desist ! What anchorite,  
What heavenly archangel, were he here—  
Here, in the silent night, alone with you—  
Your beauty with repugnance all aglow—  
Could put the cup of nectar from his lips  
Untasted ? Have you no compassion, lady,  
For all my years of love ?

BEATRIZ. You mean of hate !  
*Down to this point both have spoken almost in a  
whisper. DE FLORES now raises his voice.*

DE FLORES. Hatred and love—two faces of one coin,  
Two edges of one blade. Enough ! You are mine !  
I woo not,—I command ! The sacrament  
Of crime unites us——

BEATRIZ (*snatches up a fan from the couch, and strikes  
him on the mouth*). Liar !

DE FLORES. **Once            too            oft**  
Already you have struck me ! Come ! An end to this,  
My mistress !

*He seizes her, and drags her towards the doorway,*

centre. *The curtains part, and BELTRAN stands on the threshold.*

BELTRAN. Ruffian, draw. I will not murder  
Even a murderer !

(DE FLORES draws, and they exchange some passes.  
BELTRAN breaks DE FLORES' guard and lunges at him. His sword-blade snaps, three or four inches from the point.)

My sword is broken !

(*A moment of perplexity.*)

Ha ! I see it all ! He wears a shirt of mail !

BEATRIZ. Great God !

DE FLORES (*still on his guard*). Tis true ! A shirt of  
Milan steel.

I knew my lady apt at setting snares,  
And came as half-expectant of an ambush,  
Or even a dagger-thrust from her own fair hand.

BEATRIZ (*clinging to BELTRAN*).

Kill him ! He must not live !

DE FLORES. A pointless blade  
Is not a formidable weapon, madam—  
His lordship's life is more in jeopardy  
Than mine. But fear not—it is not my cue  
To kill him, if, as I am bold to hope,  
He'll list to reason. We may come to terms  
With swords unblooded.

BEATRIZ. Hear him not, Beltran !  
He lies ! He lies !

BELTRAN. Be calm, dear love, be calm !  
He cannot lie away my faith in you.  
I loathe to parley with him ; but, dear heart,  
Setting a snare, we have abased ourselves  
Nigh to his level, and are tangled in't.

DE FLORES. Call we a truce, then !

*He sheathes his sword. BELTRAN throws his down on the table.*

BEATRIZ. Oh, the shame of it,  
Beltran ! I saw in you my swift avenger ;

And lo ! my avenger has become my judge.  
I am at the bar, and you must patiently  
Hear my accuser,—vilest of the vile—  
With infamous calumnies befoul my name.  
It shall not be ! I will rather end myself—  
Thus——

*She snatches the dagger from her husband's belt  
and makes as though to stab herself. He at  
once seizes her wrist and disarms her.*

BELTRAN.       Why this frenzy, Beatriz, my own ?  
With me you are safe.

*He leads her to a chair, but she slips off it to her  
knees, and clings to his hand, imploring him.*

BEATRIZ.               Then let us fly from here !  
Wipe from our memories this hideous day  
And night ! We'll cross the sea. In Sicily  
My father has a palace. There we'll find,  
After this storm, a safe, a tranquil haven.  
What though this villain go unpunished ? Must we  
To vengeful justice sacrifice our peace,  
Our new-found happiness ? Leave him to his fate !  
It will not tarry. Heaven ordains for him  
Some sudden, shameful end. But let me never  
Look on his face again !

*BELTRAN has sunk into the chair. She rests her  
face upon his knee. He strokes her hair.*

BELTRAN.               My Beatriz,  
My wife ! You are o'erwrought. Trust, love, to me.  
We must not fly from calumny, we must crush it.  
Think of your father—should we let his trust  
In such a man as this remain unshaken ?  
We must not, howsoe'er we loathe the task,  
Leave such a snake unscotched.

DE FLORES.             You have not the choice—  
Take horse—take ship—to-night—this very hour—  
You cannot shake me off, my haughty lady !

BELTRAN.       This is a shameless ruffian, Beatriz—  
I think, a madman—leave him, dear, to me.  
Go to your chamber, trust in me——

BEATRIZ. No, no !  
I will not go, Beltran ! I know too well  
His devilish cunning. Let me rather rise  
And meet it, face to face ! (*Springs to her feet.*) My  
woman's weakness  
Thus I shake off ! Here, at her husband's side,  
Stands Beatriz Juana de Urgel,  
Strong in her innocence. Come, sir, begin—  
Let loose your hornet's nest of perjuries  
To your own ruin.

DE FLORES. If a front of brass  
Meant innocence, I know of old, my lady,  
No saint were half so innocent as you.

BELTRAN. No more ! What have you, sir, to say ?

DE FLORES. Why, this—  
You know the well out yonder in the garden,  
The well whereof the earthquake drank the water,  
And shook the canopy—

BELTRAN. Yes, yes, I know it.

DE FLORES. To-morrow let the alguazils be summoned,  
And bid them bring some dozen fathoms of cord,  
And search its depths.

BELTRAN. What then ?

DE FLORES. Why, there they'll find  
All that was mortal of Don Manuel—  
All, understand me, that the worms have left.

BELTRAN. You say this—

DE FLORES. I were mad to tell a lie  
So easy of disproof. I think the lady  
Will scarce deny it.

BEATRIZ. Nay, I question not  
That *he*, of all men living, knows 'tis true—  
And reason good.

DE FLORES. Yes, reason good,—for I  
Helped, I confess it, to bestow the body—  
The murd'ress lacked the strength.

BELTRAN. Murd'ress ! You mean—

DE FLORES. I mean this woman.

BELTRAN.

You are raving !

DE FLORES.

Wait,

And weigh my proofs. Her very artfulness  
Entrapped her. She took care no pool of blood,  
No crimson on her garments, should betray her—  
Wherefore she left her dagger to seal up  
The gash it made—deep in her victim's heart—  
And in his heart the alguazils will find it—  
A jewelled plaything, beautiful, but deadly :  
The maggots have no teeth for gems and steel.

(A pause.)

That dagger's voice will—

BEATRIZ.

Fix the crime on you,

Who stole the toy ! Camilla knows—we missed it  
Just at that time. 'Tis crystal-clear ! He had forged  
A two-edged plot. He hated Manuel,  
Who used him as a lackey, insolently :  
And me he hated—I have told you why.  
He thought one well-aimed blow would glut his  
rancour,  
And place me at his mercy. He confessed it !  
He dreamed—the frantic dream were laughable  
If I could laugh ; like a death's-head it grins at me—  
He dreamed a madman's dream of wedding me.  
And when, to-day, *that* part of his design  
Vanished in air, he all the more resolved  
To venture all, to play upon my fears,  
And make of me his slave.

BELTRAN.

The plot was mad

Indeed !

DE FLORES. Too mad to be believed. 'Tis but  
The coinage of her cunning, her despair.

BELTRAN. By your own witness you were an accomplice  
In a black deed—

DE FLORES.

The deed was done ere I

Or knew or dreamed of it. Passing the gate,  
I heard a cry, a gurgling moan, and saw



DE FLORES. Manuel was seen alive, and flushed with wine,

An hour ere midnight on Saint Julian's eve,  
And ne'er was seen again ; and now his body  
Lies (you believe me *so far* ?) in the well  
A stone's-throw hence. Suppose 'twere true I slew  
him—

Did I waylay him at the tavern door,  
A mile away, and bear his body hither ?  
Did I invite the insolent cub, my foe,  
To sally forth upon a moonlight ramble  
As friend with friend, and lure him to the spot  
Appointed for his end ? Shortly, how came he  
That midnight into Don Hippolito's garden ?  
The wall is high, the gate is locked—

BEATRIZ. You held  
A key to it !

DE FLORES. Perhaps. But would Don Manuel  
From a carousal, think you, break away  
To roam with me the garden solitudes  
And serenade the moon ?

BEATRIZ. Who knows what lie  
You may have told him to entice him hither ?  
Since he was but a means to work my ruin,  
I the true victim of your plot. Oh, me !  
What nameless infamies may this slave have forged  
To bait the trap for Manuel ? Wherefore seek  
To drag them to the light—?

*She draws BELTRAN away towards the door.*

DE FLORES (*producing a folded paper*). Hold, Don  
Beltran !

Here is the bait that trapped Don Manuel.  
This paper from the bosom of his doublet  
Dropped as I raised his corse. I picked it up  
And treasured it.

*He holds it out to BELTRAN. BEATRIZ makes a dash at it, while DE FLORES keeps it out of her clutches.*

BEATRIZ. Beltran! My own Beltran !  
Read it not ! Touch it not! Oh, if you love me,



I perceive  
No mark of fraud. In truth a modest missive  
Of invitation to an amorous meeting !  
To whom addressed ? To whom ? As I bethink me,  
To one whom, but a few short hours before,  
You had begged me to entangle in a quarrel,  
And basely slay ! Oh God ! can this be true ?  
Can any woman, born of woman, be  
At once so fair without and foul within ?

*(Looking at the paper.)*

Oh, it is cunning ! With a wanton's art  
She takes the measure of her wretched dupe,  
And lays for a coarse mind a coarser bait.  
None but a pitiful vainglorious fool  
Had been decoyed by it ! Oh me, oh me !  
In what an eddy of the flaming gulf  
Of hell are we three whirling !

B E A T R I Z. Surely, surely,  
You cannot think 'twas I that struck the blow !

BELTRAN. Why not ? The hand, so cunning to betray,  
Might well be strong to kill.

BEATRIZ. Beltran, Beltran !  
My husband !—hear the truth, the very truth—  
By all the saints in heaven I swear to tell it !

DE FLORES. The woman's raving !

BEATRIZ. See ! he quails before me—  
'Tis he, not I, that now stands terror-stricken.

DE FLORES. Pooh ! What have I to fear ? Say on, my  
lady.

BELTRAN. Say on ! To lips so voluble in lies,  
The truth, no doubt, is as a foreign tongue,  
Uncouth of utterance. Yet when lies avail  
No longer——

BEATRIZ. Oh, Beltran, you are cruel, cruel !  
All that I did, I did for love of you—  
Thankless and pitiless you ! Don Manuel,  
Hateful at best, grew loathsome when he stood  
Between me and your love. You might, Beltran,  
Have honourably cleared him from our path——





To tamper with the fray, and by this sword !  
That movement is your last.

BEATRIZ *crouches, up L., watching intently.*

BELTRAN *attacks DE FLORES. After they have exchanged several passes, he strikes the sword out of DE FLORES' hand, parries DE FLORES' dagger with his own, and, closing with him, stabs him in the neck, above the coat of mail. DE FLORES falls, dying.*

DEPLORES. So! I am sped !

You have foiled me, mistress, of my crowning  
vengeance.

I leave you to your—happiness. (*Dies.*)

BELTRAN *throws down his dagger upon the table, and sheathes his sword, looking down at DE FLORES. BEATRIZ, hovering cautiously, with the gait of a wild animal, gradually approaches the body.*

BEATRIZ. Is he dead ?

BELTRAN. His lips are sealed. Here, in this nether  
sphere,

He can no more accuse you. When you meet  
Before the Almighty Judge, what witness, think you,  
Will he then bear ?

BEATRIZ. The fiend ! The treacherous demon !  
The grinning werewolf, with his venomous fangs !  
Oh, I could——! (*Snatches the dagger from the table, and makes as though to stab the dead body.*)

BELTRAN (*seizing her arm*). Hold ! Are you in very deed  
A vampire, famishing for dead men's blood ?  
(*She drops the dagger.*)

This and the other—two men have you slain  
Already ; and my prescient spirit tells me  
You soon may add a third to your account.  
I know not what faint scruple holds my hand  
Now, even now, from burying yonder blade  
Deep in my tortured breast.

BEATRIZ. You, my Beltran !  
Oh, cruel ! Put away such brainsick thoughts !

If I have sinned, it was for you, for you !  
And you can dream of ending at a blow  
Your life and mine—for 'tis in you I live !  
Oh, you have spoken wildly in your frenzy,  
Wildly and cruelly to your Beatriz.  
You knew not what you said. Your Beatriz  
Forgives and loves you—loves the strength and  
valour

That shielded her, and smote to deepest hell  
Her mortal foe. But now, shake off, shake off  
These hateful fantasies ! be yourself again !  
This carrion holds no threat for us—you slew him  
In act of offering barbarous violence  
To me, your wife. You did as law and honour  
Alike decree—what is there, then, to fear ?  
To-morrow's dawn will show a sky serene—  
The past is dead—the future lies before us,  
Sunlit and lovelit ! Let us go to meet it,  
My lover and my lord !

BELTRAN. To what a thing,  
To what a soulless idol, God in heaven !  
Have I bent down in worship ? Is't then true  
That spirits of the damned, loosed from their chains,  
Can enter and enslave the loveliest forms ?  
Malignant woman, dare you speak of love  
To me ? Oh God ! It was but seven nights since  
You gave me your angelic loveliness,  
Hallowed—dost hear the mockery in the word ?  
Hallowed in holy wedlock. I, poor fool,  
Felt all my glowing passion interfused  
With reverence, and worshipped God in you,  
The crown of his creation. And behold !  
When to our marriage-bed your feet went up—  
Your delicate feet of rose-flushed alabaster—  
They trod upon a corse, a festering corse,  
Slain by your cunning ! Trod, not shrinkingly,  
Not shudderingly, but rather trampled it  
With ghoulish exultation, glorying  
To have offered on the altar of your—love—  
This sacrifice. While on my breast you lay,  
Deep in your heart the hideous knowledge lurked,

As loathsome as the mouldering thing entombed  
Under our very casement. Wretched woman !  
Know you, ev'n now, no prickings of remorse ?  
Have you no entrails of compassion ?

BEATRIX.

You,

Yes, you are heartless, you are cruel, you  
Who make my love a crime ! Why should I pity  
This pitiless wretch, or yonder blustering coxcomb ?  
Beltran, my own Beltrdn, you who but now,  
Despite his shirt of steel, faced this black traitor,  
And slew him, must I think you none the less,  
A coward ? Why let phantom fears intrude  
Between us and our happiness ? Can you make  
My passionate, my undaunted love for you  
A crime and a reproach ? I saw in you  
The man of men for whom my womanhood  
Came into being ; and, since *you* would not,  
I took the straight, the inevitable path  
To the fulfilment of our destiny.  
That was my crime—and you, you, you denounce it!  
See, at your feet I kneel, your wife, your mate,  
In soul and body yours, and conjure you  
By all the blissful memories of our love,  
By all our hopes of happy, happy years  
To come, while youth, and strength and beauty stll  
Are ours, and in our passionate, pulsing veins  
The life-blood courses——

BELTRAN, *at the beginning of this speech, has put  
on a cloak which had lain on a chair, R.*

BEATRIZ, *kneeling at the point indicated, seizes  
and clings to this cloak. He now snatches it  
from her grasp.*

BELTRAN.

Life-blood ! Dare you speak  
Of life-blood, while the death-blood from your hands  
Is dripping ?

*(Leaning over her with a sort of tenderness)*

Oh, my love ! If there were aught  
In heaven or earth, elixir, lymph or balm,  
Could wash those hands clean, I would give my life  
for it.

But no ! It cannot be ! The paradise  
Your beauty made for me, your crime has ruined.  
Its gore-bedabbled joys would sear my soul—  
No joys, but torments. I must turn my back  
On Eden, and go forth into the desert  
Of life without you. This man's mouth being dumb,  
Your secret now is safe : you have no revelation  
To fear from me. Adieu !

BEATRIZ (*springing to her feet*). You are leaving me  
To-night ? Alone, with this ?

BELTRAN. What's that to you ?  
A dead man more or less !

BEATRIZ. And whither go you ?

BELTRAN. I know not—care not. Let my horse decide !

BEATRIZ. And when return ?

BELTRAN. When Manuel returns  
To life.

BEATRIZ. You have for ever ceased to love me ?

BELTRAN. Love you or hate you—can I tell ? My heart  
Feels nothing—it is numb with agony.

BEATRIZ. But you are still my husband ! I am still  
Your wife ! Has Holy Church not made us one  
. For ever ?

BELTRAN. What the Church has joined, your crime  
Has sundered.

BEATRIZ. You will never——?

BELTRAN. Nevermore  
Cross what a little week ago I deemed  
The verge of heaven—the threshold of your chamber.

BEATRIZ. You sentence me to endless widowhood,—  
To living death !

BELTRAN. Farewell—a last farewell,  
Beatriz Juana ! *[Exit, R.*

BEATRIZ. Gone! Was ever woman  
So outraged, so humiliated ! And I—  
I crawled before him ! Truly, he said well,  
(*Pointing to DE FLORES*)

Who said that love and hate went ever paired,  
Two edges of one blade ! My virtuous lord,  
Oh, you shall pay for this !

*(She kneels beside the body of DE FLORES, feels in his breast, and produces the letter. Then she takes it to the candle on the table, R., lights it at the flame, and, as she watches it burn, says :\*)*

My good Beltran

De Cabra, you shall dearly pay for this !

*(She goes to the door, centre, draws back the curtains, and, as she is on the point of entering, sinks on her knees, and bursts into a passion of tears, saying :)*

The threshold of my chamber. . . .

*The Curtain falls.*

## ACT FOURTH

*The hall, as in the two preceding Acts. Morning light.*

BEATRIZ *is seated on the couch, idly touching her guitar.*  
*After a few moments, she drops the guitar, and claps*  
*her hands twice.*

BEATRIZ. Camilla! Ho, Camilla.

CAMILLA (*from door, centre*). Here, my lady.

BEATRIZ. Where is my father ?

CAMILLA. In his cabinet,  
With Don Gedeon.

BEATRIZ. No news yet of Ottavio ?

CAMILLA. None that I hear of.

BEATRIZ. Oh, he is a laggard !  
'Tis but a three days' ride, and this the ninth  
Since he set forth—is't not ?

CAMILLA. You keep the count  
Better than I do, for you know his errand—  
From me 'tis hidden.

BEATRIZ. You are curious,  
Camilla ?

CAMILLA. Where my lady is concerned,  
Should I be unconcerned ?

BEATRIZ. Well, well,—be patient.  
Contain yourself for yet an hour or two—  
At most a day—and then the mystery  
Shall be unveiled, and you will understand  
The expectancy that tortures me. This day

Is big with fate for me. My future hangs  
Upon an hour's decision. (*Pause.*) Don Gedeon  
Lingers. 'Tis his daily wont at noon  
To kiss my hand.

CAMILLA. I think it lacks a little  
Of noon. And in the corridor I hear  
Footsteps.

DON HIPPOLITO *enters, R., followed by* DON  
GEDEON. CAMILLA *goes out, centre.*

HIPPOLITO. Are you astir, my Beatriz ?  
Can you receive the obeisance of our guest ?

BEATRIZ (*rising*). Right willingly, my father. Give me  
first  
Your blessing. (*She offers him her brow to kiss.*)

HIPPOLITO (*kissing her*). Dearest daughter mine !

GEDEON. Good morrow, gentle lady. (*He kisses her  
hand*) If your looks  
Belie you not, your dreams were pleasant.

BEATRIZ. Nay,  
This messenger's delay disquiets me.

HIPPOLITO. The roads are difficult. His best of speed  
Could scarcely bring him earlier back.

BEATRIZ. I fear  
His errand may be fruitless.

GEDEON. Don Beltran  
Could not refuse my challenge, if a spark  
Of manhood lingers in him !

BEATRIZ. But Ottavio  
May not have found him at his Murcian tower.

HIPPOLITO. What other refuge should the recreant  
seek ?  
And those I spoke with solemnly averred  
They had seen him there, the prey of deep dejection,  
Leading a hermit life.

GEDEON. Doubt not that justice  
Will one day overtake him.

BEATRIZ. " One day "—yes—  
But meantime——

HIPPOLITO. If you would but tell us, daughter,  
All that upon the fatal night befell,  
And how De Flores met his end——

BEATRIZ (*affecting to shudder*). Nay, nay—  
Beltran is still my husband, howsoever  
Unworthily—or worse—he may have won me.  
Until his guilt be proved, I dare not tell,  
Even to you, the story of that night.  
So pardon me, my father.

CEDEON. Gracious lady,  
Though it may lend my brother's murderers  
A respite, yet I cannot but revere  
Your nobleness of soul.

BEATRIZ. Nay, Don Gedeon,  
You praise me groundlessly. While still a wife,  
You would not have me false to wifely duty ?

HIPPOLITO. Curst be the day that gave you such a  
husband.  
My mind misgave me, but your headstrong haste  
O'erbore my scruples.

BEATRIZ. I was blind, my father,  
I loved him blindly.

*Enter PABLO, R.*

PABLO (*to HIPPOLITO*). The Corregidor  
Attends you in your cabinet, my lord.

HIPPOLITO. Good ! I come straightway——

BEATRIZ. The Corregidor !

HIPPOLITO. Nay, start not, Beatriz—Don Roderigo,  
You know, is my good friend. I deemed it prudent  
To give him timely warning to be ready  
In case the mystery of Manuel's end  
Should suddenly be solved.

BEATRIZ. Doubtless, dear father,  
You acted wisely.

HIPPOLITO. I will go to him. [*Exit, R.*]

GEDEON. You are restless, lady.

BEATRIZ (*sitting on the couch*). Oh, the weary hours  
Of lingering suspense !

GEDEON. Think you to me  
The hours seem shorter. Fear and tremulous hope  
Fight, in my breast, a duel to the death.

BEATRIZ. What fear you ?

GEDEON. Can you ask ? The brightest vision  
That ever hung before the ravished eyes  
Of mortal man, may at a breath dissolve  
And leave me broken-hearted.

BEATRIZ. If Beltran,  
You mean, should show himself misjudged, and prove  
Guiltless of screening Manuel's murderers,  
There then would be no duel——

GEDEON. And no way—  
No honourable way—to break the bond,  
Dear saint, that ties you to a pitiful cur,  
A moonstruck recreant who insults your virtue  
And beauty by deserting you——

BEATRIZ. Stay, stay !  
I must not listen ! I am still his wife ;  
And if the sudden frenzy that o'ercame him  
So strangely, should as suddenly depart  
And leave him in his sober senses—then  
It were my wifely duty to forgive him,  
And strive to reawake, as from a swoon,  
My love for him.

GEDEON. 'Tis that, 'tis that I dread !  
Your heavenly goodness, loveliest of women,  
Will draw you on to sacrifice yourself  
To this poor madman, if not criminal.

BEATRIZ. I loved him once.

GEDEON. Your great and generous heart  
Transfigured him, and what you truly loved  
Was not the man, but what you dreamed of him.  
Then you were but a girl—now, Beatriz,  
You are a queenly woman. Pain and sorrow

Proudly encountered, resolutely vanquished,  
Have, in a few short months, ensainted you,  
And given you sovereign right to more than love—  
To worship !

BEATRIZ.                    Ah, Gedeon, the difference !  
Was Manuel indeed your brother ? Why  
Were you the younger, he the elder born ?  
It almost makes one doubt of Providence.

GEDEON. Had I been elder born, dear saint, perchance  
His arrogance, his vices, had been mine.  
No sycophants beset, no temptresses  
Allure, a younger son.

BEATRIZ.                    Had it been you  
That from Mallorca came, a year ago,  
To woo me——

GEDEON.                    Oh, say on, sweet Beatriz—  
Could you have loved me ?

BEATRIZ.                    This at least I'll say—  
Much error, much affliction, had been spared us.

GEDEON. Error ! You own, then, that your love for him,  
This base De Cabra, was an error ?

BEATRIZ.                    Nay,  
I said not so. A woman's heart is loyal——

GEDEON. Ev'n to its errors, you would say ?

BEATRIZ.                    It shrinks  
With desperate reluctance from avowing  
That one to whom its love has once been given  
Is utterly unworthy.

GEDEON.                    Oh, my queen !  
The very nobleness for which I love you  
Is like to sound the death-knell of my hopes.  
But, oh, the pity ! Could you but have loved me,  
No woman's love had e'er been so repaid.  
Our fathers' hopes, thwarted by Manuel's fate,  
Had been fulfilled in me. Our house had risen  
To wealth and greatness beyond rivalry  
In Spain ; and you had stood pre-eminent

In station, as in beauty. Say, my queen,  
Is not the vision dazzling ?

BeATRIZ (*intently reflecting*). All the more  
Since you, Gedeon, could wear illustriously  
Such honours as, if Manuel had attained them,  
Would but have made of him a laughing-stock,  
A dwarf in giant's trappings. One could almost  
Believe that Providence, in Manuel's death,  
Did but amend the fault it had committed  
In placing him before you in the world.

GEDEON. The purposes of God are hard to fathom.

BEATRIZ. True, true—I did but dally with a thought  
That drifted through my mind.

DON HIPPOLITO *enters, R., followed by OTTAVIO  
in riding dress.*

HIPPOLITO. Ottavio's here,  
My Beatriz, and reports that Don Beltran  
Rides close upon his tracks.

BEATRIZ (*springing up*). At last ! At last !

GEDEON. How found you him, Ottavio ? What said he  
In answer to your embassy ?

OTTAVIO. I found him,  
In his hill-castle, sunk in apathy  
And black disconsolateness. His servants said  
He would not eat, he could not sleep ; they feared  
That in some frenzy he might take his life.  
They scarce persuaded him to hear my errand ;  
But when, at last admitted, I threw down  
Your gauntlet, telling him 'twas thought he knew  
More than was fitting of Don Manuel's fate,  
And bidding him, if he would clear his honour,  
Face you in single combat, he arose,  
Not eagerly, not fiercely, but as one  
Who hears with calm resolve a fatal summons,  
And said : " So be it ! I will follow you."  
Sometimes together, sometimes miles apart,  
We made the journey, but no other word  
He uttered by the way. At length we reached

The western suburb, and I spurred ahead  
To herald his arrival.

BELTRAN, *in sombre travelling dress, has thrown  
open the door, R., and, hearing the last words,  
strides in.*

BELTRAN. He is here.

*(Pause.)*

What would you with him ?

GEDEON. Sir, my messenger  
Has told you——

HiPPoLiTo. First, let *me* speak. Don Beltran  
De Cabra, can you look upon this lady,  
My daughter, and your deeply-injured wife,  
And ask : What would we with you ? First, I claim  
Stern retribution for the base affront,  
The unendurable indignity  
You have done to her, to me, to all our house.  
What more you have to answer for, I know not—  
*(Throws down his glove.)*

I claim priority.

GEDEON. And I, Senor,  
Give you to know that general report,  
Obscure, but ever growing, charges you  
With guilty knowledge of my brother's fate.  
'Tis known that on the day he last was seen,  
You—'neath the eyes of Don Hippolito,  
And of this lady, since your wife—exchanged  
Hot words with Manuel, and were scarce restrained  
From drawing sword on him. 'Tis manifest  
You were his rival for this lady's hand.  
Presumptions these, not proofs—can you rebut them ?  
*(Silence.)*

If not, I summon you, either to avow  
Complicity, or, sword to sword with me,  
Call God to judge between us—if you dare !

*Pause.*

BELTRAN. What says my lady wife ?

BEATRIZ. Dear father, hear me !  
Have patience, Don Gedeon ! He is my husband—

I must have speech with him alone. It may be  
That he to my affection will disclose  
What violence would never wring from him.  
Be not o'er-hasty, father, to essay  
The dire arbitrament of blood. Remember,  
Whatever his errors, he is still the man  
To whom I pledged my maiden vows. Oh, leave me  
Alone with him. To summon you again  
I'll strike upon the bell.

HIPPOLITO. Come, Don Gedeon ;  
The girl will have her will.

GEDEON. Must this be so,  
Much-injured lady ? Must you stoop to plead  
With one who cast away contemptuously  
The treasure that was his ?

BEATRIZ. It must be so !  
*[Exeunt, R., HIPPOLITO, GEDEON and OTTAVIO.]*

BELTRAN. What have we two to say, oh lady fair,  
Who " pledged to me her maiden vows " ?

BEATRIZ. Beltrdn,  
Call back your reason ! Be a man again,  
And all may yet be well.

BELTRAN. To be a man  
I must conceal and profit by your crime.  
Conceal it—yes : I am not your justiciar—  
But profit by it—no !

BEATRIZ. You are still resolved  
That one swift, passion-prompted deed, that crushed  
A crawling thing, and swept it from our path,  
Shall make my life a long-drawn penitence ?  
'Tis madness ! Rouse yourself ! Blot out the past !  
Let each forgive the other.

BELTRAN. You, sweet lady !  
Can *you* forgive ? Oh, miracle of grace !  
And will you, then, recall the calumnies,  
The crafty hints, the treacherous silences,  
That have laid guilty knowledge to my charge,  
If not the very deed ?

BEATRIZ. I gave no hint,  
I spoke no calumnies. Your flight itself  
Engendered the suspicions. Your return  
Will crush them.

BELTRAN. My return will make me seem,  
Not criminal, but merely lunatic,  
And now restored to reason ? That's the hope  
Your grace holds out to me ?

BEATRIZ. If you are indeed  
Restored to reason.

BELTRAN. To complete my cure  
'Twere well that you should dissipate the mists  
That still bedim my mind. Of Manuel's fate  
How much is known ?

BEATRIZ. No more than when you fled.

BELTRAN. The secret of the well is undisclosed ?

BEATRIZ. Who should disclose it ?

BELTRAN. Having lured De Flores  
To death——

BEATRIZ. / lure him. It was he himself  
Who dug the pitfall !

BELTRAN. Well, we'll let that pass.  
De Flores dead, why not have told the truth—  
The half-truth, and the lesser half, but still  
Something not quite a lie—and say he had slain  
Don Manuel ?

BEATRIZ. Why, how should I have learnt it ?  
And how explain the unproportioned deed—  
Death for a peevish word ? And then my dagger——

BELTRAN. Your indiscreet stiletto would have pointed  
Straight to the truth—'twas well bethought. Your  
genius  
For crime has ripened into mastery.  
You were a tyro when you penned that letter,  
Those luckless words that, like a lightning-flash,  
Revealed to me the caverns of your soul,  
Hideous with crawling things.

BEATRIZ. Beware, Beltran !  
Let not your frenzy quite outrun my patience ;  
Or else——

BELTRAN. That letter ? Doubtless you remembered——

BEATRIZ. To burn it ? Find its ashes if you can !

BELTRAN. And then De Flores' death ? What was the  
story  
You told of that ?

BEATRIZ. The truth—that he attempted  
My honour, and you slew him.

BELTRAN. Then—my flight ?  
You said I was o'erta'en by sudden madness ?

BEATRIZ. I said that madly you suspected me  
Of willingly admitting to my chamber  
The wretch you had slain.

BELTRAN. Oh, innocence belied !  
How cunningly you weave, with warp and woof  
Of truth and falsity, a cloak of darkness  
To hide your infamies——

BEATRIZ. Enough, enough !  
With venomous words, as to a thing abhorred,  
You blight my last fond hope of reconcilment.  
I loved you once, and still a spark unquenched  
Glowes in my heart. But if you scoff at me,  
Adieu to love !—It must be war between us !

BELTRAN. War ? Is not war declared ? Your father's  
glove  
Lies there. Your lover's challenge——

BEATRIZ. Lover's ! Dare you  
Defame my honour !

BELTRAN. Heaven forbid ! Your honour  
Goes hand in hand with policy. When once  
Your honourable suitor, Don Gedeon,  
Has run your brainsick husband through the body  
(The trick's familiar to your politic thought)  
He brings you all that Manuel offered you  
Without the trifling incommodity

Of Manuel's fatuous person. 'Tis a scheme  
 Worthy your genius. Just a clash of swords,  
 And presto ! your great error is undone,  
 That rash, impulsive weakness of the flesh  
 That made you for a moment mine. But, lady,  
 Though honourable death were welcome to me,  
 You shall not lead me lamb-like to the slaughter !  
 I will not passively give up the ghost  
 To help your stratagems. Your father's challenge  
 I will postpone. I will refuse to meet him  
 Till I have finished with Gedeon ! You know  
 My sword is not a plaything—and, by God !  
 It shall go hard but I will finish with him  
 In very deed !

BEATRIZ. Poor fool, you have seal'd your fate !  
 Still haunted by my passionate memories,  
 For you I madly strove to put aside  
 Visions of wealth and power and adoration  
 A queen might envy. I would have renounced them,  
 For one kind word from you ! That folly's past :  
 You, *you* have killed it—you, Beltran de Cabra !  
 Because I loved you, and because I seized  
 Life and its joys too eagerly and boldly,  
 You impiously usurp the judgement-seat,  
 And doom me, in the flush and glory of youth,  
 To cloistered penitence for evermore.  
 It shall not be ! God's not so pitiless  
 As you ! And now, forsooth, you seek to slay  
 A man whose only sin is worshipping me—  
 It shall not, shall not be ! Woe to the man  
 Who first humiliates, and then goads a woman  
 To desperation ! Will she pick and choose  
 Her weapons, think you ? No—in self-defence  
 She'll shrink from nothing.

BELTRAN. Doubtless—if her name  
 Be Beatriz Juana de Urgel.

BEATRIZ. That jibe shall be your last !

*(She rushes at the bell and strikes it.)*

A tinkling thing,

And yet it rang your knell, Beltran de Cabra !  
(DON HIPPOLITO *and* DON GEDEON *enter*, R.)

Come, father ! Don Gedeon ! Summon the household !

Let all the world hear ! Oh, 'tis horrible !  
Oh, horrible !

HIPPOLITO.           What has affrighted you,  
My daughter ?

GEDEON.               Fear not, Lady Beatriz—  
We are here !

BEATRIZ.           That man ! Oh, let him not escape you !  
You said that the Corregidor was here—  
Oh, summon him !

OTTAVIO, CAMILLA *and servants have come crowding in*. HIPPOLITO *whispers to* PABLO, *who goes off*,\*.

GEDEON.               What direful tidings, lady,  
Have moved you thus ?

BEATRIZ.               I partly had divined it;  
I battled with the thought ; I strove to strangle it,  
And cleanse my mind. But now—oh, heavens !—  
the worst

That e'er my fevered fancy, as I thought it,  
Had conjured up, proves to be less unhallowed,  
Less hideous than the truth. Oh God ! Oh God !  
Why do I live to tell it ?

*The* CORREGIDOR, *a stately magistrate, enters*,  
R., *followed by a* SECRETARY *and six or eight*  
*alguazils, armed with partisans.*

HIPPOLITO (*to the* CORREGIDOR). Sir, my daughter  
Entreats your presence. She has some impartment,  
It seems, that she desires to make to you.

CORREGIDOR. An accusation, lady ?

BEATRIZ.               Yes.

CORREGIDOR.               'Twere well  
We should receive it formally. Escribano,  
Arrange the court.

(*The* SECRETARY *whispers to the servants. They*

*quickly bring forward the table to the centre, place a high chair behind it for the CORREGIDOR, and a seat for the SECRETARY at the end, R. At a motion from the CORREGIDOR, DON HIPPOLITO takes a seat on his right, a little way back from the table.)*

Are you the accuser, lady ?

*(She bows her head.)*

And who the accused ? Is he here present ?

BEATRIZ *(pointing to BELTRAN)*. There !  
There stands the man.

CORREGIDOR. Let him be guarded.

BELTRAN. Needless—  
I have no will to fly.

*Nevertheless two alguazils place themselves behind him.*

CORREGIDOR *(to BEATRIZ)*. Your accusation  
Concerns——?

BEATRIZ. The death of Manuel de Merlo,  
Once my betrothed.

CORREGIDOR. Say on ; and, Escribano,  
Write down her words.

BEATRIZ. First, sir—and you, my father,  
Be not dismayed if hidden crime should rear  
Its grisly head within your very gates—  
First, sir, let men be sent to search the well,  
The disused, ruined well——

HIPPOLITO. Here in our garden ?

BEATRIZ. Aye, here—where else, my father ? Let them  
search

And whatso'er they find, report it truly.

CORREGIDOR. Let it be done.

*(DON HIPPOLITO gives whispered directions to PABLO. He and some other servants, with two alguazils, go out to the right.)*

Now, lady, to your tale.

BEATRIZ. Have I the strength? Oh, bear with me,  
Senor!

My soul is rent with anguish. Bear with me,  
If in unravelling the tangled skein  
Of villainy, my thought should grow perplexed,  
And my tongue falter. Where must I begin?  
Oh me, my mind's distraught!

CORREGIDOR. 'Tis scarce three months  
Since, in this very room, Miguel de Flores,  
Your father's steward, was found stabbed to death,  
Stabbed in the throat. You said your husband slew  
him  
In act of offering violence to your person—  
Was that the truth?

BEATRIZ. The truth? Do you suspect me,  
Senor, of falsehood? All I said was true;  
But true it is I said not all—I could not  
Tell the whole story of that dreadful night.  
Yet all I clearly knew I told—the rest  
Was formless fear.

CORREGIDOR. Now you must tell us all.

BEATRIZ. Hear, then: the vile De Flores first essayed,  
By vague affrightments, darkling menaces,  
To bend me to his purpose—vowed he held  
My husband in his power, and could compel him  
Ignobly to assent to any shame.  
"We are leagued," he said, "in mischief. Each of us  
Holds a stiletto at the other's throat.  
Our guilt unites us. He can ask of me  
All that I have, and I must give it him  
On peril of my neck. But my demands  
Are no less law to him; and"—said the slave—  
"My first demand is you, his wife."

HiPPoLiTo. Great God!  
The man I trusted!

CORREGIDOR. Pray you, peace, my Lord!

BEATRIZ. Just as he hissed these words into my ear,  
And laid on me his loathsome hands, my husband  
Entered and saw. He rushed with naked blade

Upon the ravisher, and, I well believe,  
Would fain have stopped his tongue, this side of  
doomsday,  
With one swift thrust ; but, as you know, Senor,  
De Flores wore a shirt of steel, and forced him  
To parley.

CORREGIDOR. And you heard their parley ?

BEATRIZ.

No—

On plea of sparing me distress, *he* forced me  
Back to my chamber, and he locked the door.  
I heard their voices loud in altercation—  
I heard Don Manuel's name—I heard De Flores  
Befoul my honour, and declare me wanton,  
Pretending I had made a tryst with him  
That night. Thereat I beat upon the door,  
And shrieked denial of the infamy—  
When suddenly I heard the clash of swords,  
A scuffle, and a fall—a heavy groan—  
Then silence. Frozen with fear, I held my breath,  
And listened—listened ! Which of them had fallen ?  
Which, when the door was opened, should I see  
Upon the threshold ? Hark ! the key at last !  
Turned in the lock—and there my husband stood !  
I flew to him, my knight, my paladin,  
With thanks to God and him for my deliverance—  
But oh, the horror !—from my clinging arms  
He shrank, as from the pest. His face convulsed  
With rage, he dragged me forward : " See," he  
cried,  
" There, mistress, lies your paramour ! He is dumb—  
He can nor kiss nor tell ! " And so he fled,  
In jealous fury, forth into the night.

HIPPOLITO. My poor, poor daughter !

GEDEON.

Most unhappy lady,

What have you not endured ?

CORREGIDOR (*to* BELTRAN).

Is this, sir, true ?

BELTRAN. Let her speak on. I thought that I had  
sounded



CAMILLA. My dear, dear lady !  
 Rest on my heart !

HIPPOLITO. Call up your courage, daughter !  
 A malediction rests upon this house  
 Till all be brought to light. You have nought to  
 fear,—  
 Tell the whole truth, how black soe'er it be.

CEDEON. I am your champion, lady, to the death—  
 Remember that !

BEATRIZ (*recovering herself*). Beltran de Cabra met me,  
 His wife, with mingled menace and entreaty.  
 If I, to shield him, would but perjure me,  
 And say De Flores, ere he died, confessed  
 Himself Don Manuel's murderer, and none other,  
 My gracious lord perchance might pardon me.  
 But if I should betray him—so he said—  
 And breathe one word betokening his guilt,  
 He'd turn the tables on me, and denounce  
 Me—*me*—as the contriver of the deed,  
 And partner in its black accomplishment.

HIPPOLITO. Is't possible !

GEDEON. Oh, monstrous villainy !

BELTRAN. Say on, sweet lady ! I drink in your words,  
 And yearn to hear the sequel. Keep me not  
 Stretched on the rack.

BEATRIZ. Then, then, I learned the truth,  
 The hideous truth. Beltran had played upon  
 De Flores' hate for Manuel, knowing not  
 His deadlier hate for me. De Flores hoped  
 To have us at his mercy, both of us—  
 And to that end he from my chamber stole  
 A little jewelled knife, my father's gift,  
 Wherewith to do the deed. And now, Senor,  
 You see the villainy De Flores planned,  
 And this man has inherited from him !  
 That dagger, in Don Manuel's bosom buried,  
 Gives, as he thinks, my neck to the garrote.  
 And so it may if *his* word weighs with you—  
 His against mine ! Senor Corregidor,



CAMILLA. Yes, my lady, it is yours.

*The dagger is passed to the* CORREGIDOR.

BEATRIZ. Oh, little did you think that glittering toy  
Would slay your daughter's happiness, my father,  
Or would be used by villainy to menace  
Her honour and her life.

CORREGIDOR (*to alguazils, indicating* BELTRAN).

Disarm that man

And seize him.

*(They do so. His sword and dagger, being on one  
baldrick, come off together.)*

Have you aught, Beltran de Cabra,  
To say, before the prison closes on you ?  
If so, say on.

BELTRAN. I beg of you, Senor,  
Your licence to examine that same toy,  
That dagger.

*(The CORREGIDOR hands it to an alguazil, who  
passes it to BELTRAN.)*

Yes, I have seen it oft, my lady,  
Hang from your girdle. 'Tis of tempered steel—  
Fit emblem of your soul, as keen, as cruel,  
As deadly. To the eye a thing of beauty,  
It speaks of treachery to the inward sense,  
Of lurking, crawling death.

*(To the CORREGIDOR)* Sir, as for you,  
You and the law, there's much that I could say,  
If life for me held aught worth fighting for.  
Time was—it seems a million years ago—  
I thought the world a brave abiding-place,  
Of Justice, Honour, Beauty, Faith and Love !  
From that fair world I would with all my might  
Have striven to expel a noxious thing,  
A venom-breathing canker, that had crept,  
Masked as a beauteous flower, into its precincts.  
But lo ! That world was but a thing of dreams,  
A cloud-built palace of the sunset—now  
A desolation and a bitter jest  
To my awakened sense. I dreamed—I woke—



LIDIA  
COMEDY IN FOUR ACTS

*Suggested by Massinger's  
" Great Duke of Florence "*



## PERSONS OF THE PLAY

THE DUKE OF TARANTO—(42).

THE MARCHESA ARIADNE, *his sister*—(45).

DAFNE, *her daughter*—(25).

GIOVANNI, *the Duke's nephew*—(20).

THE COUNT OF PANTELLARIA, *the Duke's chamberlain*—(35).

COUNT CARLO CAROMONTE—(55)

LIDIA, *his daughter*—(19).

PETRONELLA, *her maid*.

PANDOLFO, *Caromonte's steward*—(40).

GIULIO, *the Duke's personal attendant*—(30).

Other Servants.

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The first Act passes at Caromonte, eight leagues from Taranto ;  
the remaining Acts in the Palace at Taranto.

Two days elapse between Acts I. and II., one night between  
Acts II. and III., and one night between Acts III. and IV.



## ACT I

*In the gardens of the Villa Caromonte, about eight leagues from Toronto. An expanse of sward, partly overshadowed by trees. In the centre a semicircular marble seat with a back to it, of spacious and beautiful design, around a sundial placed at the centre of the arc. Right and left, in front of the enclosing shrubberies, moss-grown terminal statues. At the back there is a grassy terrace\* some three feet high, and above it the background is closed in by three screens of yew hedge, one screen projecting from each side, about one-third of the width of the scene, while the space between them is blocked, as it were, by the third screen, placed some four feet in front of the other two, and overlapping them at each end. Against the middle of this hedge, a statue of Diana. Clipped obelisks and urns break the flat line of the hedge-tops. Blue sky beyond.*

*These hedge-screens form the backing of the stage of an (invisible) alfresco theatre, lying beyond them. From the moment the curtain rises, the sounds of some sort of performance going on in this theatre can be vaguely heard—the sing-song of recitation, snatches of music, an occasional burst of applause.*

*The COUNT OF PANTELLARIA enters, down R., and looks about him, evidently unfamiliar with the place, and attracted by the sounds proceeding from behind the hedge. He is a self-consciously handsome man of thirty-five, foppish in his exterior, so far as his military dress (light breastplate, etc.) will permit. He moves across, in front of the sundial, and is approaching the back-*

<sup>1</sup> This elevation is not absolutely essential.

*ground when there is a burst of laughter from the unseen audience, and an OLD MAN, bent, bearded, wearing huge horn spectacles, carrying a sack on his back, and supporting himself on a staff, totters out through the left-hand opening in the hedge. As he meets the COUNT, he drops his sack and staff, and draws himself up.*

THE OLD MAN. Whom do I see ? The Count of Pantellaria !

COUNT. Nay, sir—plain Captain Moro. Who are you ?

THE OLD MAN. A Deadly Sin, sir—I am Avarice.

COUNT. Speak plainly, since you know me.

THE OLD MAN. Nay, not I,  
Good Captain Moro.

COUNT. Let us drop our masks.  
I seem to have heard your voice—

THE OLD MAN (*throwing off spectacles, beard, etc.*).  
I am Pandolfo,  
Late esquire to the Count of Pantellaria,  
Now Caromonte's steward, at your service.

COUNT. Give me thy hand, old friend ; but know me  
still

As Captain Moro. Are you turned a mummer ?

PANDOLFO. I play the Miser in the Prince's masque.  
But you, my lord, seem also to be mumming,  
And not in jest. Why should His Grace's chamberlain  
Deny his name ? They say you are first favourite  
At Court.

COUNT. They say not altogether wrongly.  
The Duke reposes flattering confidence  
In me. I now am on a secret mission.

PANDOLFO. To Caromonte ?

COUNT. To spy out the land.

PANDOLFO. What is there here to spy on ?

*The COUNT has moved down to the left end of the*

*semicircular bench, and seated himself negligently on the back of it.*

COUNT. When the Duke,  
Seven years ago, to Caromonte's tutelage  
Entrusted his young nephew, Prince Giovanni,  
He knew not, or at least he heeded not,  
That Caromonte had a daughter, then  
A child in pinafores. But lately rumour  
Has spoken of her as no more a child.  
Children grow up ; and suddenly the Duke  
Bethinks him of the possibility  
That he has left his nephew and his heir  
Too long secluded in this Paradise,  
Unmindful of its Eve. In such an Eden  
Serpents sometimes intrude.

PANDOLFO. Not here, not here !  
Set the Duke's mind at rest: my Lady Lidia  
And the young Prince are frank, firm friends indeed,  
But nothing more.

COUNT. The whisperings of Satan—  
That is, of sex—have not perturbed their innocence ?  
Art sure of that ?

PANDOLFO. You may believe me, sir—  
We servants watch our masters. Satan's voice  
Has here been mute—at least has passed unheeded.

COUNT. Good, good ! Yet none the less the Duke did  
wisely  
To send me, like the Angel Gabriel,  
Incognito to reconnoitre Eden,  
And summon Adam back to Court.

PANDOLFO. The Prince !

COUNT. His school-days end to-day : a sound precaution :  
For sometimes Satan does not whisper, but  
Speaks suddenly in loud, imperious tones  
Strangely compulsive. (*Sighing.*) All too well I  
know it,  
My good Pandolfo.

PANDOLFO. We at Caromonte  
Will grieve to lose the Prince—a kindly youth.

COUNT (*rising*). Prithee, Pandolfo, entertain my escort—  
I left them at the Villa.

PANDOLFO. Was there no one  
There to receive them ?

COUNT. Neither man nor mouse.

PANDOLFO. The varlets all had slipped away to watch  
This mummerly.

COUNT. Which now, I think, is ending.  
*Sounds of the performance have occasionally been  
heard during the foregoing scene. There is now  
a loud and prolonged outburst of applause.*

PANDOLFO (*going*). Your men shall be my care.

COUNT. And recollect:  
I am Captain Moro.

PANDOLFO. Then you would not have me  
Announce you as the Angel Gabriel ?

COUNT. Villain, begone! Here come your brother  
mountebanks.

PANDOLFO *goes out in front, R., leaving behind  
him his bag, staff and other properties, which  
lie up L. The COUNT moves up towards the  
back, "L., as some grotesque figures come gambol-  
ling in by the right-hand gap in the hedge at  
back. They look backwards as though awaiting  
some one that is to follow, and do not see the  
COUNT. They represent Iracundia, Crudeltd,  
Odio, Gelosia (men), Lussuria, Invidia, Accidia,  
Calunma, Menzogna (women).<sup>1</sup> One of the  
latter is PETRONELLA. Presently enter LIDIA, in  
the character of Superbia, wearing a towering  
and fantastic head-dress, very high-heeled shoes  
(which must not, however, impede her grace of  
movement), and, in general, garish and ostenta-  
tious, though not quite unbeautiful, attire. The  
MASQUERS at once form a circle around her, take  
hands, and begin to caper and dance. GIOVANNI,  
in the character of Juventus (Giovinezza),*

<sup>1</sup> The number of these vices may be reduced by two or three.

*enters behind her, his costume not symbolical, though rather more elaborate than it would ordinarily be. He stands outside the dancing circle, smiling at it.*

THE MASQUERS (*chanting*).

Hail, Queen Superbia ! Hail, most mighty Empress  
Of all the Deadly Sins !

LIDIA (*in a high, affected voice*). Our faithful subjects,

We graciously accept this well-meant homage,

Howe'er inadequate, to our majesty.

'Tis true we have been foil'd in our assault

On Messer Giovinezza. (*Indicating GIOVANNI.*)

But what then ?

Another day, with energies renewed,

We'll try again. Meanwhile, as human mortals

Let us disguise ourselves. Divinity

Weighs heavy on us.

*She breaks through the circle, and runs out, back*

*R. The others caper after her, and GIOVANNI*

*is following, when the COUNT slips up behind*

*him and plucks his cloak.*

COUNT.

Pray you, pardon me,

My lord—if I mistake not, I address

The Prince Giovanni ?

GIOVANNI.

I am he. And you ?

I know you not.

COUNT.

The bearer of a letter,

Your Highness, from His Grace the Duke, your uncle.

My name is Captain Moro.

GIOVANNI.

Captain MoroJ?

I do not think I knew you at the Palace.

COUNT. After Your Highness left the Court, I joined

His Grace's bodyguard. Here, sir, is his letter.

*Takes it from his pouch and hands it to the Prince.*

GIOVANNI. I thank you, sir.

*(Opens the letter and reads it, with growing surprise and perturbation, the COUNT watching*

*him. When he has finished, still holding the letter in his hand, he turns to the COUNT.)*

You know the letter's purport ?

COUNT. I bring with me an escort, to conduct  
Your Highness back to Court.

GIOVANNI. My uncle bids me  
" With all speed " to take horse : yet surely not  
To-day ?

COUNT. His Grace, on pain of his displeasure,  
Enjoined me to return this very evening.

GIOVANNI. To-day ! At once ! To pluck me suddenly  
Up by the roots, as one plucks up a weed !  
Scarce time to bid farewell !

COUNT. His Grace is ever  
Abrupt in his decisions.

GIOVANNI (*thrusting the letter into his girdle*).  
Tell me, Captain—  
Captain—I crave your pardon—

COUNT. Captain Moro.,

GIOVANNI. Pray, Captain Moro, think you this new  
chamberlain,  
Count Pantellaria, has a hand in this ?

COUNT. Affairs of state are far beyond my ken,  
Your Highness. Possibly His Grace conceived  
You would be eager to resume your place  
At Court.

GIOVANNI. Why, so I should be—so I am,  
No doubt. But here at Caromonte, I  
Have been most happy, with the Count, my guardian,  
And tutor.

COUNT. Princes do not always love  
Their governors.

GIOVANNI. He loves me, and I him.  
And then his daughter—

COUNT. Ah, he has a daughter ?

LIDIA (off R.). Giovanni ! Ho, Giovanni !

GIOVANNI(*to COUNT*).  
Here, Lidia !

This is she.

*He advances to meet her. The COUNT moves up.  
LIDIA enters, down R., in everyday dress, with  
a mandolin slung by a ribbon over her shoulder.  
She does not see the COUNT. Striking a few  
chords, she gaily chants :*

LIDIA. Tinsel, rouge and gilt, farewell !  
Exit Superbia, enter Lidia !

*(She sees the COUNT, and is taken aback.)*

Oh!

GIOVANNI. An envoy, Lidia, from my uncle's Court.  
This, Captain Moro, is the Lady Lidia,  
Count Caromonte's daughter.

*LIDIA unslings the mandolin, places it on the seat,  
and then curtsies to the COUNT.*

COUNT (*bowing*). Lady fair,  
Your humble servant.

LIDIA. You are welcome, sir.  
Seek you my father ?

COUNT. With the Prince's leave—  
I bear a missive for Count Caromonte.

LIDIA. I'll lead you to him, sir.

GIOVANNI. Stay, Lidia, stay—  
I have instant need to speak with you.

*(PANDOLFO has entered by the left-hand gap in the  
hedge, to gather up his properties. GIOVANNI  
sees and addresses him.)*

Ho, there !

Pandolfo—have you seen Count Caromonte ?

PANDOLFO. Sir, in his study.

GIOVANNI. Thither guide this gentleman.  
Pardon me, Captain Moro. I'll attend you  
In half an hour.

COUNT. The Duke forbade delay.  
*Goes off with PANDOLFO, back R., looking back at  
LIDIA, and evidently much struck with her.*

LIDIA. Forbade delay ? Delay in what ? Giovanni,  
Your brow is clouded ! Tell me, what's amiss ?

GIOVANNI. Lidia, read this. (*Hands her the letter.*)

LIDIA. This ? From the Duke ?

GIOVANNI. Read, read !

LIDIA *sits at the end of the seat and reads, GIOVANNI standing beside the sundial and watching her.*

LIDIA (*reads*). " To our dear Nephew, the  
Prince Giovanni, these with speed :

We have seen good, dear Nephew, for seven years, to deny ourselves the comfort of thy presence at Court, fearing temptation for thy tender age, and desiring thy perfect accomplishment in all princely arts, disciplines and virtues, at the hands of our trusted servant, the Lord of Caromonte. Howbeit, thy years are now ripe for induction into the rudiments of state-craft; and, in a sudden conjuncture, we are fain to test thy aptitudes and dispositions. Be this, then, thy warrant of release from Count Caromonte's tutelage, and do thou, taking horse with all speed, return, under Captain Moro's escort, to Court. We long to embrace thee.

Given under our own hand,  
Thy Prince and loving kinsman,  
AMADEO, Duke of Taranto."

LIDIA *hands the letter back to GIOVANNI. A long pause.*

GIOVANNI. Well, Lidia ?

LIDIA. Well ?

GIOVANNI. Speak ! Have you naught to say ?

LIDIA. When does Your Highness purpose to set forth ?

GIOVANNI. Are you so heartless ?

LIDIA. Would you have me swoon,  
Or tear my hair ? That were disloyalty.  
The Duke, your uncle, calls you to the post  
His bounty destines for you. Go you must ;  
And we, your friends, must——

GIOVANNI. "We"! Why talk of "we" ?  
Have *you*, you, Lidia—you my heart's one friend,  
No sigh, no tear, at parting ?

LIDIA. Nay, Your Highness——

GIOVANNI. My "Highness"! Do you mock me ?

LIDIA. Dear Giovanni,  
I but recall what both of us, mayhap,  
Have all too readily forgot: your princedom,  
My lowliness.

GIOVANNI. Such words are meaningless,  
And well you know it, Lidia. Were I born  
To rule Castile and Arragon, or to fill  
The throne of all the Caesars——

LIDIA (*interrupting*). I would be  
Your loving subject, and—if you were pleased  
So to remember me—your humble friend.

GIOVANNI. You wound me when you talk in such a  
strain.

LIDIA. No other strain would now become me, sir.

GIOVANNI. "Sir"! Must I "Madam" you? Is all  
forgot,—  
Our hours, our years, of kind companionship :  
The books we conned together—you were still  
The first to thrill to Virgil's tender art,  
Or solve a knotty phrase in Tacitus—  
Our morning rides a-hawking, evening games '  
Of chess—the subtle traps you laid for me——

LIDIA (*looking up with a smile*).  
You beat me—once or twice.

GIOVANNI. Yes—once or twice  
You fell into the snare yourself had planned.  
Say, is it all forgot? Our twilight talks  
On life and death, your father sitting by,  
And smiling at our youthful eagerness :  
Or bursts of reckless mirth, when you gave rein,  
Too rarely, to your wicked mimicry.  
Were ever two such playmates? I, the boy,  
Older in—months—yet owning from the first

The gentle dominance of your riper mind,  
Your nobler nature——

LIDIA (*interrupting*). Stay, Giovanni, stay !  
Why must you wring my heart ? This blow, we  
knew,  
Must one day fall. If tears would mend the matter,  
What rivers could I shed ? Trust me, the springs  
Lie near—too near—the surface.

GIOVANNI. Why *too* near ?  
My eyes are overflowing.

LIDIA. You may weep.  
It is your privilege to be foolish. I——  
The scapegrace mimic—I must mimic wisdom,  
Discretion, fortitude and all the virtues.

GIOVANNI. Unkind one ! Far too well you play your  
part!  
You do not feel as I do.

LIDIA. Be it so !  
We'll say my heart is shallow, frivolous—  
Does that content my lord ?

GIOVANNI. You answer me  
Again with mockery.

LIDIA. Giovanni, think !  
Which of us twain has sorer ground for sorrow ?  
You go to Court—a new and splendid scene  
Awaits you, and a lofty part to play.  
The Duke—the letter says so—purposes  
To teach you navigate the ship of state  
Amid the shoals of policy. That task—  
That noble task—your birthright—calls to you,  
With noble pleasures beckoning in its train :  
Art, music, high exploits of chivalry,  
And laurels by the hands of beauty twined.

GIOVANNI. Beauty, forsooth !

LIDIA. You scorn it ?

GIOVANNI. Scorn it ? No!  
But I spell beauty L, I, D, I, A.

LIBIA (*shaking her head sadly*).

One month at Court, my friend, and you'll have learnt

Some dainty, modish new orthography.

Your future I have painted—what of mine ?

The slight employments of a country girl :

Dull, daily rounds of duty : gossipings

With Petronella o'er our broidery-frames :

A game of checkers with my kind old father,

Too idle, both, for chess : to sleep : to wake,

And face the lagging hours of each new day

With never a hope of change—while everywhere

Fond memories of the—brother lost to me,

Of comradeship in studies, sports and dreams ;

Gay bickerings and appeasements ; sympathy

In every thought, shall haunt my solitude,

And make it doubly drear. Giovanni, say—

Whose lot is harder, yours or mine ?

GIOVANNI.

Why, mine !

For I must feign content, and interest

In things indifferent, since unshared by you.

But, Lidia, we are foolish, both of us,

To talk of parting in this doleful key.

I must to Court ! What then ? A week, a month

At most, and you shall see me here again,

Heading a gallant cavalcade—

LIDIA.

You know

Our guest-room is but scanty—r

GIOVANNI.

Not as guests

We'll come, but as marauders, swooping down

Upon a vassal state, to bear away

The Princess, destined for a wider realm,

A larger sovereignty.

LIDIA.

Awake, awake,

Giovanni, from such fever-fantasies !

Would you bring ruin on my father ? Shame

On me, his daughter ?

GIOVANNI.

Ruin! Shame!

LIDIA.

Reflect!

Shall it be said that Carlo Caromonte



GIOVANNI (*falls on his knees and kisses her hand*).

Oh, forgive me, Lidia ;  
I *will* be worthy of you, matchless girl—  
Though—cruel paradox—you make it seem  
That to be worthy of you means to lose you.

LIDIA. I hear a footstep ! Rise, Giovanni, rise !

(*He does so.*)

Let no one guess how foolish we have been.

GIOVANNI. How foolish I have been.

LIDIA. I, too ! I, too !

But, being a woman, I more cunningly  
Can mask my folly.

CAROMONTE, *a fine-looking old man, enters, R.,*  
*with the COUNT.*

CAROMONTE (*advancing*). Here the children are.  
So, Prince Giovanni, we must part ! You quit  
The school of letters for the sterner school  
Of life.

GIOVANNI. The Duke decrees it, sir.

CAROMONTE. And you,  
I warrant me, are nothing loth. Well, well !  
You've been—Your Highness, I should say, has  
been—  
An apt and kindly pupil—

GIOVANNI. You, Sir Count,  
A patient, an indulgent master. Truly  
*Most* loth am I to leave dear Caromonte,  
My boyhood's home.

CAROMONTE. Well, manhood claims you now.  
The claim is something sudden—premature  
I dare not call it, since the Duke commands.  
But—boy, you take with you *dimidium*  
*Animae meae*—half of this old heart.  
The other half is here—

(*His arm on LIDIA's shoulder?*)

but, Lidia girl,  
We'll miss him, shall we not ?

LID I A. Yes, father, we  
 Shall miss His Highness.

COUNT (*to GIOVANNI*). Sir, the day wears on—  
 We have a five hours' ride——

GIOVANNI. Have with you, sir !  
 The time to pack a saddle-bag. My books  
 And other gear can follow.

CAROMONTE. I'll attend you.  
 (*To the COUNT*) Come, sir.

COUNT. Your pardon ! May a stranger beg  
 A word with this fair lady ?

CAROMONTE. With my daughter !

COUNT (*to LIDIA*). The masque you played in—I would  
 fain enquire  
 Its scope and authorship—the Duke, my master,  
 Is curious in such toys.

CAROMONTE. Sir, as you will—  
 When all's prepared, the Prince will send for you.

COUNT. I thank you, sir.

GIOVANNI. Lidia, not yet we part ?

LIDIA. Nay, I will see you in the saddle, Prince  
 Giovanni.

GIOVANNI *and* CAROMONTE *go off R., GIOVANNI*  
*looking back at LIBIA, who follows him with her*  
*eyes, and stands lost in thought for a moment*  
*after he has gone.*

COUNT. H'm ! Your ladyship !

LIDIA (*coming to herself*). Captain Moro—  
 How can I serve you ?  
*She moves over and seats herself at the opposite*  
*end of the bench from that on which she has*  
*been sitting.*

COUNT. Was the masque you played  
 A Florentine invention ?

LIDIA. Truly, no.  
 The Prince Giovanni writ it for a jest.

COUNT. Its name ?

LIDIA. " De Juventute."

COUNT. So! The Prince

Is something of a poet ?

LIDIA. More in sport  
Than earnest. He aspires not to pluck off  
Ariosto's laurel.

COUNT. None the less, at Court,  
E'en though his verses limp, his rhymes make war  
Each with the other, he will outvie Petrarch.  
Doubtless this masque will be rehearsed to grace  
His wedding-feast.

LIDIA. His wedding !

COUNT. Aye, his wedding—  
'Twill scarce be long delayed.

LIDIA (*after a very slight pause*). No doubt, no doubt.

COUNT. The Duke, 'tis true, has been importuned oft  
Himself to wed, and hand his sceptre down  
In lineal succession. Well he might !  
He's yet in the meridian of his age.

LIDIA. And why—why weds he not ?

COUNT. A Prince's whim !  
The memory of his sainted spouse, forsooth,  
Forbids him, so he says—perchance believes.  
But all men know he shirks the chains of wedlock,  
He loves his freedom ; and, 'tis thought, would fain  
Silence his subjects' importunities  
By giving Prince Giovanni a princess,  
And pointing to a little brood of heirs  
Presumptive to his dukedom.

LIDIA. He is wise.  
Is any lady——? Has he made his choice ?

COUNT. The destined bride, 'tis thought, is Lady Dafne,  
His Grace's niece, child of his widowed sister,  
Marchesa Ariadne.

LIDIA. The Princess  
Whom—so men say—the Count of Pantellaria,  
His minister and favourite, is to wed ?

COUNT (*slightly taken aback*). Men say, my lady, many  
idle things  
Of those above them. But it seems you have heard  
Of this Count Pantellaria ?

LIDIA. Who has not ?  
We live secluded, yet not quite cut off  
From rumours of the Court.

COUNT. And what says rumour  
Of Pantellaria ?

LIDIA. Why should I repeat  
The " idle things " that gossip whispers ?

COUNT. Why ?  
The Count's my patron—I would fain defend him  
'Gainst slander.

LIDIA. Nay, not slander—rather ridicule.  
Men call him upstart—and indeed his rise  
Was something sudden.

COUNT. Pooh ! they are envious.

LIDIA. They add that he's a coxcomb—but withal  
No fool.

COUNT. Is that the worst ?  
(*She nods.*) They're flatterers !  
He *is* a fool ! With friendship's hardihood,  
I oft have told him so. Not *always*, mark you !  
Were there no women in the world, the Count  
Would be a paragon of sagacity.  
But for a pretty face he'll play the madman ;  
And—let it go no further—I suspect  
That at this very hour he's doing so.  
I've warned him and besought him—all in vain :  
He mocks at my remonstrance.

*Enter PANDOLFO, R.*

PANDOLFO. Captain Moro,  
The escort's mounted, and the Prince awaits.

COUNT. I come, I come. Fair lady—

LIDIA. Let me be  
Your guide, sir.

*She moves to the right, the COUNT following.  
Suddenly he clutches his forehead and appears to  
stagger.*

COUNT. Ha! What's this ? A sudden pang !  
A giddiness, a faintness, overpowers me !

*PANDOLFO runs to his aid. LIDIA turns in alarm.*

LIDIA. Are you unwell, sir ?

COUNT (*as though bewildered*). Tell me, has there been  
An earthquake-shock ?

*(PANDOLFO supports him back to the seat beside the  
sundial)* My head ! My brain, s'afire !

LIDIA. Rest here a moment—I will seek a cordial,  
A sovereign remedy my mother left me.  
Pandolfo will attend you.

COUNT (*apparently in agony*). Haste ! Oh haste,  
I pray you !

*[LIDIA hurries off, R.]*

PANDOLFO. Is the pain abated, sir ?

COUNT (*having watched LIDIA disappear*). The pain is  
gone, Pandolfo, suddenly.

But, much I fear, a second paroxysm  
Awaits me, should I try to mount and ride.

PANDOLFO. My lord, you seem miraculously restored—  
One might suppose you feigning.

COUNT. What you please  
You may suppose ; but this I know, my friend,  
By hook or crook, ere I return to Court,  
I must see more of yonder girl. Report  
Far underpraised her matchless qualities.  
My duty to the Duke were unfulfilled  
If I forbore to sift her character  
More deeply.

PANDOLFO. I begin to understand—  
Your sudden seizure, call it apoplexy,  
Sunstroke or God knows what, is sent by heaven  
That you may find yourself, for certain days,  
A patient in the Lady Lidia's hands,  
And study her at your ease.



*(He drinks, and, while the others watch him anxiously, he seems slowly to revive.)*

Oh, magic draught! It stills my throbbing pulse.  
The red-hot blades no longer pierce my brain.  
But oh! this weakness——!

GIOVANNI. You must rest you here, sir.  
I will excuse your tarrying to the Duke.

COUNT. I thank Your Highness.

CAROMONTE. You must seek repose—  
I'll send a litter——

COUNT. With a little aid,  
I think, sir, I could walk——

CAROMONTE. Well said! Well said!  
Come, let me help you—lend your arm, Pandolfo.  
*Between them, CAROMONTE and PANDOLFO get the  
COUNT upon his feet.*

COUNT. Your Highness pardons me?

GIOVANNI. I trust ere long  
To see you quite restored.

COUNT *(to LIDIA, as he moves slowly off, R., leaning on  
CAROMONTE and PANDOLFO).*

You have saved my life,  
Fair lady.

*GIOVANNI and LIDIA watch them departing.*

LIDIA. Bid Pandolfo, Petronella,  
Bestow the Captain in the westward chamber.

PETRONELLA. I will, my lady.

*[Exit, R.]*

LIDIA. Shall we follow, Prince?

GIOVANNI. No, Lidia, no! If we indeed must part,  
Here let it be, from prying eyes remote.  
I'm but a bungling mummer, as you know,  
And have no skill to feign indifference.

LIDIA. Farewell, then, dear Giovanni! Oh, farewell,  
My playmate, taskmate, brother kind and true!  
Farewell, my Prince!

*She holds out both hands: he takes them.*

GIOVANNI. Dear Lidia, fare you well—  
My playmate, taskmate—but my sister, no !  
Farewell, my Princess.  
*Kissing her hands.*

LIDIA. Hush, Giovanni! Hush !  
Our boy-and-girlhood has been beautiful—  
'Tis past, but 'tis not lost to us.

GIOVANNI. It is !  
'Tis lost, as in the rose the bud is lost.  
To-morrow flowers our man-and-womanhood !  
*(He turns away.)*

Farewell, but not for long !

LIDIA *(calling after him)*. Giovanni, wisdom !

GIOVANNI. Hark to the echo ! It says : Lidia, hope !  
*Exit R. LIDIA gazes after him, then takes up the mandolin which is still on the seat. She sits down, strikes a few chords, but lets the instrument drop, and turning, rests her arms on the back of the seat, and buries her face in them.*

*Curtain.*

## ACT II

A gallery in the Ducal Palace at Taranto. No doors visible, R. or L., but perhaps screens or hangings. The DUKE'S private apartments are conceived as lying to the right, the MARCHESA'S to the left. At the back, the gallery opens by three low arches, divided by two short, thick pillars, upon a semicircular platform, its balustrade formed by a semicircular stone seat, broken in the middle to permit of access to the platform by a staircase leading up from the garden. Through the right-hand arch a glimpse can be obtained of a long wing of the Palace, stretching backward at right angles. The garden, town and harbour are conceived as lying below to the left.

A chandelier in the centre. Sconces, with candles, against the pillars, and on the back wall, right and left of the arches. A table, R., with ornaments (including a silver mirror) and one or two vellum-covered books on it. A large divan, L. Chairs placed against the pillars. The view of the centre entrance (by the steps, back) must, so far as possible, be unobstructed. The bright light of a cloudless morning.

PRINCE GIOVANNI discovered sitting on the semicircular seat, a little to the left of the opening. He has tablets on his knee, in which he occasionally jots down a few words ; then searches for more words, and perhaps erases some already written.

The MARCHESA ARIADNE and her daughter DAFNE enter L. The MARCHESA is a good-looking woman of forty-five, not very tall and rather stout, but by no means grotesque. DAFNE is a handsome girl of twenty-five, well filled-out

*and taller than her mother. DAFNE is the first to catch sight of GIOVANNI, who remains oblivious of their presence.*

DAFNE. The Prince Giovanni!

MARCHESA (*regarding him*). 'Tis a comely boy—  
My little Dafne is in fortune's way.

DAFNE. What is his comeliness to me ?

MARCHESA. Now, Dafne—  
The hatefullest of vices ?

DAFNE. Thrice a day  
You tell me it is affectation.

MARCHESA. Right!  
Wherefore affect, then, ignorance of the match  
The Duke and I have planned for you ?

DAFNE. Which I  
Most unaffectedly abhor.

MARCHESA. Come, come !  
Think you to pit a girlish whim against  
Your mother's love, your uncle's power ?

DAFNE. When love  
Conspires with power to wed me to a boy.

MARCHESA. How twenty-five looks down on twenty !

DAFNE. And  
Looks up to thirty !

MARCHESA. Are you thinking still  
Upon that petty squireling !

DAFNE. Count Giannotto  
Is a brave soldier and a man of men.

MARCHESA. So may Giovanni be——

DAFNE. When I am forty !  
Give me a husband who has won his spurs.

MARCHESA. You're brazen, Dafne !

DAFNE. Unaffected only.

MARCHESA. Allthingsinmoderation.

DAFNE. Even truth ?

MARCHESA. Bah! I've no patience——  
(*Watching GIOVANNI.*) He is scribbling verses—  
Searching the vault of heaven for a rhyme.  
Steal up to him ! Surprise him !

DAFNE. Nay, my mother—  
Such unaffected arts are not for me.

MARCHESA. How have I sinned, that heaven should  
afflict me  
With this unwomanly, this graceless child !  
(*She slips up behind GIOVANNI and looks over his  
shoulder.*)

How goes the sonnet, Prince ?

GIOVANNI (*rising, and putting up his tablets in some  
confusion.*) Madonna, pardon !

I saw you not.

MARCHESA. How goes the sonnet ?

GIOVANNI. Only  
A trifling canzonet.

MARCHESA. Your Cousin Dafne  
Will set and sing it to her mandolin.  
*They come forward.*

GIOVANNI (*bowing*). Good morrow, Contessina.

DAFNE (*with a low curtsy*). Prince, good morrow.

MARCHESA. Titles! 'Twixt cousins !

GIOVANNI (*taking DAFNE'S hand*). May I, Cousin Dafne ?  
(*Kissing her hand.*)

DAFNE (*frankly*). Why not, Giovanni ? Cousins should  
be friends.

MARCHESA. So you're a poet, nephew ?

GIOVANNI. Say a rhymer  
In idle hours.

MARCHESA. We'll judge of that in time,  
Not by your own report.

GIOVANNI. My vanity  
Has been laughed out of me.

MARCHESA. Indeed ? By whom ?

GIOVANNI. Why, by the sternest, yet the kindest,  
mentor.

MARCHESA. Your tutor, Caromonte ?

GIOVANNI. Partly, yes—  
But chiefly by his daughter, Lidia.

MARCHESA. So !  
I heard he had a daughter.

DAFNE. Is she, then,  
A learned lady ?

GIOVANNI. Why, it scarce needs learning  
To know good verse from bad. Yet noble books  
She knows and loves. All beauty speaks to her  
In its own language—'tis her native tongue—  
And she interprets it.

MARCHESA. To you, fair nephew ?

GIOVANNI. I am her scholar.

DAFNE. Is she young ?

GIOVANNI. Her years  
Are less than mine.

DAFNE. And beautiful ?

MARCHESA. Nay, Dafne,  
That question's indiscreet. You place the Prince  
In a dilemma ; how to reconcile  
His gallantry with his sincerity.

GIOVANNI. How mean you, Aunt? Dilemma? I see  
none.  
My cousin's question I can answer simply.  
Few ladies have I seen in my seclusion,  
And truly none that can compare with Lidia.

DAFNE (*laughing*). Bravo, my Prince ! A fig for gallantry !  
Long live sincerity !

GIOVANNI. Ah, I see ! You mean—  
I should have said——. But, cousin, who compares  
The freshness of the dawn with noonday's glory ?

DAFNE. Better and better ! You're a poet, cousin !  
If she denies it, Lady Lidia's wrong.  
We shall be friends, Giovanni.

*Gives him her hand. He takes it, a little bewildered. She moves out on the platform to conceal her amusement. The MARCHESA is visibly annoyed, but GIOVANNI remains unconscious.*

MARCHESA. Truly, Prince,  
You paint a paragon.

GIOVANNI. Could you see her, Aunt,  
You would not praise my painting.

MARCHESA. Have you told  
The Duke of her perfections ?

GIOVANNI. I have found  
As yet no opportunity.

MARCHESA. I will make one—  
Assuredly the Duke must hear of this.

GIOVANNI. If I dared ask——

MARCHESA. Ask ? What ?

GIOVANNI. You are so kind—  
If 'mongst your ladies you could find a place  
For Lidia——

MARCHESA & (*laughing*). Ha, ha, ha !

GIOVANNI. You laugh !

MARCHESA (*serious again*). Forgive me !  
I find your youth enchanting, nephew mine.  
Without delay I'll ask the Duke's permission—  
Be sure of that.

GIOVANNI. Dear Aunt, you are kind indeed.  
DAFNE *returns from the platform.*

DAFNE. Here comes the Count of Pantellaria,  
Scaling the terraces with seven-league strides.

MARCHESA (*in a flutter*). The Count! And I in morn-  
ing disarray !

He must not see me ! Where's my tire-woman ?  
You, Dafne, entertain him.

DAFNE. Nay, not I!  
My sire presumptive—not to say presumptuous—

May entertain himself—

(*Picking up a hand-mirror on the table, R.*)

here's all he needs—

A mirror.

MARCHESA. Graceless girl!

DAFNE.

Farewell, Giovanni!

[*Runs out, L.*]

MARCHESA. Your cousin, Prince, is——Oh, the Count!  
the Count !

*She hurries off, L., as the COUNT appears, mounting the steps, back centre. He comes forward hastily, and is evidently pleased to see the Prince.*

COUNT. Thank heaven ! I sought Your Highness——

GIOVANNI.

Captain Moro !

Are you recovered ?

COUNT.

Perfectly.

GIOVANNI.

And you

Precede the Count of Pantellaria ?

COUNT. When I appear, he's seldom far behind—  
I *am* the Count.

GIOVANNI.

You ! then at Caromonte

You wore false colours !

COUNT.

By the Duke's command.

GIOVANNI. The Duke's ?

COUNT.

He ordered me, myself unknown,  
To judge how Caromonte had fulfilled  
His trust.

GIOVANNI. To spy on me, and on my tutor !

COUNT. Suspend your censure, Prince——another time  
I'll tell you all. Now I must seek the Duke.

But first——(*Watching him closely.*)

I bring you greetings from your tutor,  
And from the Lady Lidia.

GIOVANNI.

Ha! You saw her——?

COUNT. This morning, when I rode from Caromonte  
At sunrise.

GIOVANNI. Did she send no word ?—no message ?

COUNT. Only her humble service.

GIOVANNI. Seemed she sad,  
Or merry ?

COUNT. Neither merry, Prince, nor sad,  
But gentle and serene.

GIOVANNI. So is she ever.

*He dwells in silence upon the thought of her. The  
COUNT watches him, raising his eyebrows ; then  
says :*

COUNT. Pray, tell me—has your Uncle questioned you  
About—about—well, things at Caromonte ?

GIOVANNI. Not closely—I have had no private speech  
with him.

COUNT. Good, good ! 'tis clear he waits for my report.  
Named he the Lady Lidia ?

GIOVANNI. Nay, not once.

COUNT. Spoke *you* of her ?

GIOVANNI. Not to my Uncle—no !

COUNT. Then to——?

GIOVANNI. My Aunt. Ev'n now I spoke of her  
To the Marchesa.

COUNT. And she——?

GIOVANNI. Promised me  
To find a place for Lidia 'mongst her ladies.

COUNT. The mischiefs done ! I come too late !

GIOVANNI. What mean you ?

COUNT. Too late ! My instinct told me there was danger.

GIOVANNI. Danger ? To whom ? To what ?

COUNT. To you—to all of us—  
But chiefly to your heritage.

GIOVANNI. Because  
I seek a place at Court for Lidia !

COUNT. Prince,  
 You know not what you do. Unearth a treasure—  
 A Phidian marble, or a priceless gem—  
 Here in the dukedom—think you it belongs  
 To you or me, the finder ?

GIOVANNI. Surely, no—  
 The Duke may claim it.

COUNT. Aye, he may and will.  
 Now read my parable.

GIOVANNI (*after a pause*). No, it baffles me.

COUNT. What sculptor or what goldsmith ever carved,  
 Tell me, a treasure like the Lady Lidia ?  
 At Caromonte, she's a matchless pearl  
 Hid in the deep. But bring her to the surface  
 And all the world will covet her.

GIOVANNI. Will covet——?

COUNT. His counsellors implore the Duke to marry.

GIOVANNI. You cannot mean——?

COUNT. I do !

GIOVANNI. The Duke, my Uncle,  
 Would——!

COUNT. Let the Lady Lidia come to Court,  
 And, mark me, Prince Giovanni, ere a month  
 Has passed, she'll claim your homage as your  
 Duchess !

GIOVANNI. The Duke ! An old man !

COUNT. Dukes are never old.  
 'Tis you are young.

GIOVANNI. Lidia would ne'er consent !

COUNT. The Duke is absolute. Her loyal father  
 Would bend her to his will.

GIOVANNI. No, no ! You jest!  
 The thought's abhorrent ! 'Tis unthinkable !

COUNT. Say rather, certain. You would have, my  
 Prince,  
 Another Aunt, and soon another cousin—  
 Then—where were your succession ?

GIOVANNI. My succession !  
 Think you, if all this horror came to pass,  
 I'd care a straw for my succession ?

COUNT. Well,  
 A straw would be the measure of its worth.

GIOVANNI. What's to be done ?

COUNT. Why, we must see to it  
 No rumour of the Pearl of Caromonte  
 Must reach the Duke.

GIOVANNI. But I have vaunted her  
 Already to my Aunt.

COUNT. Find her, and say  
 You have bethought you that her rustic graces  
 Were out of place at Court. Say that her father  
 Would hold it tyranny to drag her hither.  
 Say——

GIOVANNI. I will try ; but I'm no apt dissembler.

COUNT. Make haste !

GIOVANNI. I will.

COUNT. Oh, luckless hour ! The Duke !  
*As GIOVANNI is hastening out, L., he almost runs  
 into the arms of the DUKE, who enters, followed  
 by a GENTLEMAN.*

DUKE. Whither away, my nephew ?

GIOVANNI (*confused*). Sir, I pray,  
 Excuse me.

DUKE. Why, what weighty business claims you  
 So urgently ?

GIOVANNI. Nothing, Your Grace.

DUKE. Then nothing  
 Can wait awhile. How comes it, Captain Moro,  
 You seek the Prince ere you report to me ?

COUNT. My Lord, it was by chance——

DUKE. Your sudden sickness,  
 I trust, has left you ?

COUNT. I am quite restored.

DUKE. And now, Giovanni, we must crave your pardon,  
This gentleman and I—'tis time you knew  
He is not Captain Moro, but the Count  
Of Pantellaria, my chamberlain.

GIOVANNI (*embarrassed*). Indeed ! The Count——

DUKE. Pardon our harmless ruse.  
For certain ends of state, we deemed it best  
That he unknown should visit Caromonte.  
Of course you are surprised——

GIOVANNI. Surprised ? Of course.  
*The DUKE raises his eyebrows and watches them  
closely, evidently suspecting intelligence between  
them.*

DUKE. How sped your mission, Count ?

COUNT. I found, Your Grace,  
No reason for alarm.

DUKE. Then we may speak  
Freely before the Prince ?

COUNT. 'Twere best we should.

DUKE. Thus stands the case, then: rumours reached  
our ears  
Of dangers in the air of Caromonte—  
Of influences unwholesome for a youth  
Destined to sovereignty. You tell me, Count,  
Our fears were groundless ?

COUNT. Utterly, Your Grace.  
The girl is—well—in feature not amiss—  
But otherwise (the Prince will bear me out)  
A very rustic—awkward—ill at ease—  
Now shy, now hoydenish. She has pride of birth  
Without the grace of breeding. And withal,  
She shows—to prove herself her father's daughter—  
At times a strain of pedantry.

DUKE. Giovanni,  
Call you the portrait just ?

GIOVANNI (*patently embarrassed*). The Count is critical—  
But—Lidia certainly is country bred,  
And—as he says—Count Caromonte's daughter.

COUNT. The Prince is tongue-tied by a generous  
loyalty.

He means—Your Grace will readily divine—  
More than he says.

*The DUKE is looking doubtfully from the one to  
the other, when the GENTLEMAN, who has gone  
out upon the platform, speaks.*

GENTLEMAN. A sail, my Lord ! A sail !  
A galley rounds the headland !

DUKE (*turning*). Ha ! Her flag ?

GENTLEMAN. **Your Own.**

DUKE (*joining him on platform*). 'Tis so ! It must be  
Antomarchi

Returned from Smyrna. He has made good speed.

*He stands looking outward. Meanwhile the COUNT  
speaks hurriedly to GIOVANNI.*

COUNT. Now—the Marchesa !

GIOVANNI. Where to find her ?

COUNT (*pointing L.*). You  
Go that way, Prince. (*Pointing R.*) I this way ! All  
is lost

If we should fail to interpose before  
She sees the Duke.

GIOVANNI. But surely she'll suspect  
Something amiss, if I so suddenly  
Should change my tune.

COUNT. Then tell the simple truth.  
There's nothing like it. She no more than you,  
Or I, would see a Duchess on the throne.  
Make haste ! Make sure !

*With gestures of haste and secrecy, the COUNT  
slips off R., while GIOVANNI goes out L.*

DUKE (*turning, and finding no one there*). What ! both my  
gentlemen

Gone without leave or licence ! Tell me, Giulio,  
What devilment's afoot ?

GIULIO. I know of none, sir.

DUKE (*as though sniffing an odour*). You scent no treason  
in the air ?

*The MARCHESA appears, ascending the stair, back  
centre, and advances across the platform. She is  
followed by a LADY, who remains on the plat-  
form, talking to GIULIO.*

MARCHESA. Oh, brother !  
I have sought you everywhere.

DUKE. Well, you have found me—  
Is aught amiss ?

MARCHESA. The very thing we feared !

DUKE. Feared? As to what ?

MARCHESA. Giovanni's lost his head !  
A fatal oversight it was to leave him •>  
So long at Caromonte.

DUKE. Pantellaria  
Reports no harm done.

MARCHESA. Why, then, Pantellaria  
Knows nothing of the matter. Harm, forsooth !  
Here, on this spot, not half an hour ago,  
Giovanni poured forth odes and madrigals  
In rapturous praise of Caromonte's daughter.

DUKE. So so !

MARCHESA. The minx has captured him.

DUKE. So ho !

MARCHESA. He has no eyes for Dafne—all is " Lidia ".

DUKE. My mind misgave me.

MARCHESA. And, to crown the jest,  
Submissively our duteous nephew craves  
A simple boon—that I appoint the girl  
One of my ladies—bring her here to Court !  
What says Your Grace to that ?

DUKE. I say, good sister,  
Some mystery is here that we must fathom.  
The Count is creep in it.

MARCHESA. The Count! Is he  
Leagued with Giovanni ?

DUKE. Leagued? I cannot say ;  
But he pursues some subtle policy.  
His cue is to dispraise the wench—he calls her  
A rustic hoyden—and Giovanni feigned  
To own the picture just.

MARCHESA. What can it mean ?  
If Pantellaria should play me false  
After the grace—the condescension—I  
Have shown him, let the upstart look to it !

DUKE. Poor wretch ! He little knows the wrath he  
braves.  
But, ere we sentence him, 'twere well to prove  
His guilt. (*Calls.*) Go, Giulio—find Count Pantel-  
laria,  
And bring him hither.

[*Exit GIULIO, R.*

I'll probe him, sister—  
Til dig a little pitfall in his path.

MARCHESA. What pitfall, brother ?

DUKE. You shall see anon.  
Greet him serenely, showing naught amiss ;  
Then leave us here alone—but presently  
Steal back, and on the platform listening,  
You'll hear him prove his innocence—or his guilt.

MARCHESA. To spy on him !

DUKE. You hesitate ?

MARCHESA. Why should I ?  
Scruples are for plebeians, not for princes.

DUKE. Hush ! he is here.

*Enter*COUNTPANTELLARIA,R.

COUNT. You summoned me, my Lord ?  
(*Seeing the MARCHESA, he advances to her with  
exaggerated gallantry.*)

At last, at last, I find my gracious lady,  
My queen, my Ariadne !

*Falls on one knee and kisses her hand.*

MARCHESA. Hypocrite !

COUNT (*rising*). How ? hypocrite ?

MARCHESA. You made no haste to find me,  
Though well you knew the fond disquietude  
The rumour of your sickness roused in me.

COUNT. By all the gods, you wrong me ! High and low,  
I have scoured the palace in my eagerness  
To greet my dear divinity.

DUKE. I am loth  
To jar upon so tender a duet ;  
But, sister, for the moment, love must yield  
To state-craft. I have matters of much weight  
To canvas with the Count.

MARCHESA. So I'm dismissed !  
Well, it is woman's lot.

COUNT. My Ariadne !  
Say that my peace is made ! Say you forgive me !

MARCHESA. Forgive ? You say you're faultless !

COUNT. That's the worst  
Of faults. Forgive my faultlessness !

MARCHESA. Beguiler !  
*She goes off, L., followed by the LADY, who has  
remained in the background.*

DUKE. And now to business.

COUNT. I am all attention.

DUKE. About Giovanni——

COUNT. What of him ?

DUKE. I fear  
He is prematurely skilled in one great branch  
Of state-craft——

COUNT. You would say ?

DUKE. Dissimulation.  
The boy has most audaciously thrown dust  
In your keen eyes, my Pantellaria.

COUNT. How ? In what way ?

DUKE. He feigned indifference  
To Caromonte's daughter—what's her name ?

COUNT. Lidia.

DUKE. Aye, Lidia. You believed him heart-whole.

COUNT. Why, yes !

DUKE. The fact is, he's infatuated.

COUNT. Impossible !

DUKE. Both possible and true.  
He poured out all his soul to the Marchesa.

COUNT. How he deceived me !

DUKE. To his Cousin Dafne  
He pays no heed. Her mother's in despair.  
Our plans go all awry.

*The MARCHESA has come up the steps and re-appears on the platform. She ensconces herself behind one of the pillars. The DUKE, glancing over his shoulder, assures himself of her presence.*

COUNT (*unsuspecting*). What can we do ?  
Remove her ? Banish her ?

DUKE. 'Twould but enrage him,  
And drive him to rebellion.

COUNT. Has Your Grace  
Some wiser policy in view ?

DUKE. There's one thing,  
And one thing only, that can extricate us  
Unfailingly from this embarrassment.  
Can you divine it ?

COUNT (*reflecting*). No—yes—no—you mean——?

DUKE. I mean that we must instantly contrive  
To place her once for all beyond his reach—  
In short, to marry her.

COUNT (*open-mouthed*). You cannot mean——!

DUKE. I mean just what I say : to find for her  
A husband.

COUNT. Ah, I see !

DUKE. You seem amazed.

COUNT. In nowise.

DUKE. You approve ?

COUNT. Why not ?

DUKE. The scheme  
Mislikes you ?

COUNT. Not at all.

DUKE. Speak your whole mind,  
I order you !

COUNT. A point of policy :  
Your Grace is ever loth to play the tyrant:  
Count Caromonte is of ancient race  
And stainless loyalty. Will't not be held  
An arbitrary and ungracious act  
To force a marriage on the only child  
Of such a man ?

DUKE. Unless the husband be  
So high in rank, so eminent in worth,  
That to be matched with him must seem to her,  
And to her father, an undreamt-of honour——

COUNT. And know you such a paragon ?

DUKE. I have him  
Here, 'neath my hand.  
*Laying his hand on the COUNT'S shoulder.*

COUNT (*in amazement*). Your Grace ! You cannot  
mean——!  
I misconceive you.

DUKE. You can scarce refuse  
This service to my house. You say yourself  
She's not ill-featured ; and, for her rusticity,  
Converse with your accomplished courtliness  
Will polish her apace.

COUNT. Your Grace is kind—  
But pray reflect——

DUKE. Is this your gratitude  
For honours heaped on you ?

COUNT. No, no—I am grateful—  
Misjudge me not, I pray you—very gladly  
To serve you would I make this—sacrifice.  
But—the Marchesa ?

DUKE. Pooh! Be frank with me—  
'Twill scarcely break your heart to break a match  
Of mere ambition. That which policy  
Commended to you, now it discommends—  
The larger policy excludes the less.

COUNT. My only policy is to serve Your Grace ;  
No other motive sways me——

DUKE. As for her,  
My sister, she's a princess, and will see  
What policy dictates. Her heart is set  
On wedding Dafne to Giovanni. You,  
Marrying this girl, remove the obstacle  
To that dear dream.

COUNT. True, true !

DUKE. You hesitate ?  
I ask too much of you ?

COUNT. No !—I consent,  
On one condition—that you undertake  
To make my peace with the Marchesa. She,  
I fear me, reads our contract otherwise  
Than you and I.

DUKE. You mean, her heart's engaged ?

COUNT. Although a princess, she is still a woman,  
And not, I fear me, quite insensible  
To— (*modestly*) to my person.

*The MARCHESA rushes forward.*

MARCHESA. Wretch ! I choke with rage !  
Vainglorious—insect ! Have I stooped for this ?

COUNT (*stammering and taking refuge behind the DUKE*).  
Your Grace !

MARCHESA. " Insensible to his person ", quotha !  
Duke, if the honour of your house is dear to you,  
His person you will make insensible,  
Lacking its head.

COUNT. Your Highness set a trap for me !

DUKE. Yes—and you walked head-foremost into it.

I'm in a maze ! Falsehood on every hand,  
Intrigue and treachery, environ me.  
What does it mean ?

MARCHESA. She's at the root of all—  
This minx, this baggage, Caromonte's daughter!

DUKE. Aye, she it is that fills the air with lies  
And treason——

MARCHESA. Hush ! Giovanni!

GIOVANNI *has come up the steps from the back, and enters upon a silent scene, DUKE, centre, MARCHESA, L., COUNT, R. He looks from one to another, at a loss to imagine what has been going on. At last the DUKE addresses him with great suavity.*

DUKE. So, my nephew,  
It seems you think Count Caromonte's girl,  
Though underbred, pedantic, hoydenish,  
A rustic wench, is fitted none the less  
To shine among your Aunt-Marchesa's ladies,  
An ornament to our Court ?

GIOVANNI (*painfully embarrassed*). No, no, Your Grace—  
That was a passing thought, an idle fancy—  
I pray you, heed it not.

DUKE (*a sudden outburst*). As God's in heaven,  
Heed it I will, young man ! I cannot rest  
Until this strange, elusive hamadryad,  
This enigmatic nymph, that changes shape  
Like clouds at sunset, stand on solid earth,  
In disenchanted flesh and blood, before me.  
Ho, Giulio !

(GIULIO *appears, R.*)

Ride with five men of my guard  
Straightway to Caromonte. Take my signet ring ;  
(*Hands it to him.*)

The Count well knows it—say, I order him,  
On his allegiance, to present himself  
At Court without delay : and specially,

To bring with him his daughter. Haste, away !  
Be here again ere set of sun to-morrow.

GIULIO. Trust me, Your Grace, I will. *[Exit R.*

DUKE. Meantime, Giovanni,

And you, Count, on this maxim meditate :

'Tis perilous to pluck the beard of princes.

MARCHESA. And with princesses to play fast and loose.

*The DUKE goes off, R., the MARCHESA, L., with a  
withering glare at the COUNT. He and GIOVANNI  
regard each other ruefully.*

*Curtain.*

## ACT III

*The same scene. Late afternoon light.*

DAFNE *is seated on the divan, touching a lute. The COUNT OF PANTELLARIA comes timidly and somewhat furtively up the steps at the back, sees her, and tiptoes forward.*

COUNT *(in a still small voice)*. Contessa Dafne !

DAFNE *(looks round at him, laughing)*. What ! My lost.  
lamented

Father-that-might-have-been, your ghost, I see,  
Still haunts the purlieus of your suicide.

COUNT. Have you the heart to mock a fallen man  
Who comes to beg a service ?

DAFNE. Beg a service  
Of me ? What power have I ?

COUNT. The power, perchance,  
To right a grievous wrong.

DAFNE. The victim ?

COUNT. I !

DAFNE. What magic, think you, could restore to life  
One who so resolutely has hanged himself ?

COUNT. 'Tis but the simplest thing I beg—procure me  
Speech with your lady mother.

DAFNE. Well, at least,  
Whatever other gifts you have or lack,  
You lack not courage, Count.

COUNT. Since yesterday  
In her apartments she has barred herself  
From all access.

DAFNE.               Your dauntless heart, then, prompts you  
To face the wounded tigress, and essay  
Her reconciliation ?

COUNT.               Bring me to her presence,  
And leave the rest to me.

DAFNE.               Well, I like courage  
Even in a step-sire who has lost his place.  
I answer for no consequence. Your blood  
Must be on your own head.

COUNT.               I ask no better.

DAFNE. Stand there, then, in the shade.  
*Pointing to the upper corner, L.*

COUNT.               No, here I'll stand—  
Ambush for ambush—she has shown the way.  
*Places himself behind the pillar where the MAR-  
CHESA stood in Act II.*

DAFNE (*goes to the left and calls*). Ho, mother ! mother !

MARCHESA (*within*).               Where are you, my child ?

DAFNE. Here, in the gallery. Come and see the sunset—  
You've had no air to-day.

*After a short pause, the MARCHESA enters, L.  
DAFNE leads her over to the right, as though to  
obtain a better view. The COUNT slips down L.,  
to cut off her retreat.*

DAFNE.               Lo ! how the west  
Is all ablaze !

COUNT (*throwing himself on his knees*). My princess!  
Ariadne !

MARCHESA (*turning upon him with fury*).  
You here ! And, traitorous girl, are you in league  
With this base creature ?

DAFNE.               Not in league—oh no !  
I told him he was rushing on his fate,  
And now I leave him to it. (*Moving L.*)

MARCHESA.               Dafne, stay !  
I order you !

COUNT.                    Yes, yes, Contessa Dafne—  
Hear what I have to say !

MARCHESA.                    What *can* you say, sir ?  
Think you fair words can expiate an outrage  
That blood could scarce efface ?

COUNT.                    I seek not pardon—  
I only beg you to restrain your wrath  
A little space, until you understand  
The strange fatality that urged me on,  
And made me seem disloyal.

MARCHESA.                    " Seem ", forsooth !  
Seems Satan black ? Seem leopards spotted ? Seems  
The hooded cobra deadly ?

COUNT.                    Ariadne!

MARCHESA. Is there no limit, then, to your effrontery ?  
You dare to use that name !

COUNT.                    Oh, hear me ! hear me !  
I did but play a part—a part I hated—  
Endeavouring to avert a deadly peril  
That threatened all of us—and chiefly you,  
Ungrateful Ariadne !

MARCHESA.                    Peril ! Bah !  
What idle tale, what paltry subterfuge,  
Is this ?

COUNT (*rising from his knees*). Before another hour has  
passed,  
Mayhap, you'll know the menace all too real  
And imminent.

MARCHESA.                    Why talk in nods and frowns,  
And ominous hints ? Where lies the peril ? Say !

COUNT. In one brief question let me answer you :  
You'd welcome, doubtless, to your brother's Court,  
A Duchess of Taranto ?

MARCHESA (*panic-stricken*). Are you mad ?  
Duchess ! The Duke will never wed ! In vain  
His Council has importuned him.

COUNT.                    In vain,  
Because he found no lady to his mind.

MARCHESA. You mean that now——?

COUNT. I mean that, should he see——

MARCHESA. This country wench, this girl of Caromonte's,

There's danger that he might——?

COUNT. The gravest danger !

MARCHESA. What gnat has stung you all ? Is she a sorceress ?

Such women should be burnt !

COUNT. Wait till you see her !

She might—I do not say she will, Marchesa—  
Disarm even you.

DAFNE (*bursts out laughing, and then says*). Forgive me, mother dear !

Who but must laugh to see the mischief wrought,  
The schemes overthrown, the policies confounded,  
By the mere rumour of a pretty face.  
Or—is she pretty ? One would rather guess  
Some blood-congealing Gorgon.

GIOVANNI *rushes up the steps, back, and cries, the moment he sees the MARCHESA.*

GIOVANNI. Here is Lidia,

Dear Aunt ! I waited in the outer court,  
And bade the escort bring her straight to you.

*(He goes back to the stair-head as LIDIA appears, followed by PETRONELLA, and escorted by GIULIO and a couple of men-at-arms. LIDIA and PETRONELLA are in riding-dress. GIOVANNI gives LIDIA his hand and leads her forward. The COUNT goes to the back, and, with a gesture, dismisses the escort, who retire down the steps.)*

This, Aunt, is Lidia——

MARCHESA (*cutting in*). That Contessa Lidia  
Whom fame so celebrates ! Count Pantellaria  
And Prince Giovanni are your heralds, madam,  
Your trumpeters.

LIDIA. Count Pantellaria !

I never saw him.

COUNT (*stepping forward*). I am he, my lady——

LIDIA. You, Captain Moro !

COUNT. I entreat your pardon.

LIDIA (*turning from him to the MARCHESA*).

I cannot tell, Your Highness, if your greeting  
Be kindly meant ; but this, I pray, believe :  
I came here utterly against my will,  
Yielding to force. And if my summons hither  
Was due to Prince Giovanni, I lament  
The first unkindness he has ever done me.

GIOVANNI. Nay, Lidia, 'twas not I——

MARCHESA (*interrupting*). All things conspired  
To claim your presence here. Where'er we turned,  
The Duke and I, your name encountered us.  
We could not rest till we had seen you.

LIDIA. Then  
It was indeed the Duke's command that tore me,  
My father absent, from my home ?

GIOVANNI. No, Lidia—  
The Duke's command was that Count Caromonte  
Himself should come with you to Court.

LIDIA. 'Tis true,  
My captors said so ; but before they came  
My father had set sail for Metaponto.  
In vain did I implore them to await  
His homecoming. The Duke himself, they said,  
Had charged them to fulfil their task ere nightfall.  
They have been punctual, and I am here.

*A pause of embarrassment.*

DAFNE (*goes up to LIDIA, and holds out both hands*). My  
name is Dafne, Prince Giovanni's cousin,  
And, if the Lady Lidia will accept me,  
Henceforth her friend.

LIDIA (*taking her hands*). I think I never needed  
A friend so much, nor found a kinder one.

DAFNE. Take off this riding-gear.

*She disembarrasses LIDIA of a veil, or hood, or  
both, and hands them to PETRONELLA, who stands*

fry. LIDIA *appears in a head-dress of perfect simplicity.*

COUNT (*apart to the MARCHESA*). Now do you see  
The danger I foretold ?

*She does not answer, but gazes intently at LIBIA.*

DAFNE (*to LIBIA*). Come, sit we here !

*(Leads her to the divan, and sits on her left, with an arm round her shoulder.)*

Now that, between you, you have brought to Court  
The Lady Lidia, say, what would you with her,  
Good people ?

GIOVANNI. I did not——

COUNT.

It was not I——

} *Almost  
Almost  
simultaneously.*

MARCHESA. Nor I——

DAFNE.

It was the Duke, then ? Solely he ?

Go we to him !

GIOVANNI. Stop !

MARCHESA.

Not so fast !

} *Almost  
Almost  
simultaneously.*

COUNT.

Not yet!

LIDIA. You, Prince Giovanni,—you can bear me witness  
How little I desired to come to Court.

GIOVANNI. Yes, Lidia—and I own I disobeyed you  
In praying the Marchesa——

MARCHESA.

My good nephew

Proposed for you a place among my ladies.

LIDIA. Which I, Your Highness, would, with all sub-  
mission,

Have ventured to decline.

GIOVANNI.

But afterwards,

The Count and I dispraised you to the Duke.  
Or rather, he dispraised you—called you awkward,  
Half hoyden and half pedant—I stood by  
Making no protest.

LIDIA.

And for that you claim

My thanks ?

GIOVANNI.

You do not understand.

LIDIA. No, truly,  
I do not understand. I asked for naught  
But to be left in peace. What need was there  
That you should either praise me or dispraise me ?  
Was either part the part of a true friend ?

GIOVANNI. No, Lidia : 'tis with reason you reproach  
me.  
Yet, if I could explain——

LIDIA. Why can you not ?

GIOVANNI. You would but laugh——

LIDIA. Indeed, indeed, Your Highness,  
Laughter was never further from my mood.

GIOVANNI. Well, then, the Count—no, no, I cannot  
speak it—  
'Tis ludicrous, yet hateful——

DAFNE. I will help you,  
Cousin Giovanni. Thus it is, then, Lidia :  
The Count of Pantellaria conceived  
That, should the Duke his master come to know you,  
He straightway would desire, decide, decree  
That you should be his Duchess.

LIDIA. Duchess ! I !  
*(Bursts into a peal of laughter : then turns to the*  
MARCHESA.)

Pardon, Your Highness ; but the Prince was right—  
Who would not laugh at such a pleasantry ?

DAFNE. Well, pleasantry or no, the Count and Prince,  
Scheming to stand between you and your fate,  
Lost themselves in a labyrinth of deceit,  
And did what most they dreaded—set the Duke  
On tenterhooks to see you.

LIDIA. But, Your Highness,  
And you, Contessa Dafne—surely, surely  
All this is but an idle jest. The Duke,  
My gracious sovereign, will accept my homage,  
And send me home again to-morrow—home  
To Caromonte and my father.

The MARCHESA, who has been devouring LIBIA  
with her eyes, does not reply. After a pause :

DAFNE. Speak,

Mother ! What say you ?

MARCHESA (*reflectively*). " But an idle jest! "

Is it ? I wonder !

LIDIA. How can it be other ?

'Tis but in fairy-tales that princes wed  
With beggar-maids ; and were this fairy-land,  
I am no beggar, but a simple girl,  
A rustic noble's child.

MARCHESA (*disregarding her*). Count Pantellaria—

I say not it absolves you—far from that—

But when you scented danger—you were right.

LIDIA. Danger ?

DAFNE. Yes, Lidia, you are dangerous—

And most of all because you do not know it.

LIDIA. I am bewildered.

COUNT (*to MARCHESA*). You begin at last,

Madam, to do me justice.

MARCHESA. Yes, indeed—

I now appreciate in all its grandeur  
The sacrifice you nerved yourself to make  
At the Duke's prompting.

GIOVANNI (*surprised*). Sacrifice !

COUNT (*hastily*). We stray

From the main question : what is to be done ?

LIBIA. Suppose—I cannot think it—but suppose  
Your fears were just, the Duke could never wed me  
Against my will.

COUNT. Would you obey your father ?

LIDIA. Assuredly.

COUNT. And if the Duke should beg

Count Caromonte for his daughter's hand,

What would his loyalty reply ?

LIBIA (*taken aback*). I know not—

COUNT. You mean, you know !

LIDIA. Perhaps.

COUNT. Then cease to treat  
The danger as a jest.

MARCHESA. But, Count, we are foolish  
To talk of danger. We forget, this lady  
Stands at a different point of view from ours.  
She has recovered from her first surprise,  
And what to us means fear, for her spells hope—  
A hope beyond her dreams——

LIBIA. Stay, madam, stay !  
You, Prince Giovanni, know me. Tell Her Highness  
She does me cruel wrong. This threat of marriage—  
Of loveless marriage, is a horror to me,  
And would be were the Duke an Emperor.  
How to escape it ? Tell me—tell me how ?  
I'll shrink from nothing.

GIOVANNI. Lidia, let us fly,  
Now—on the instant ! I renounce all claim  
To sovereignty, inheritance——

LIDIA. No, no—  
I will not be your ruin, Prince Giovanni—  
Rather, I'll face my own.

DAFNE. Brave Lidia !

LIDIA. No,  
Not brave, but desperate. I, with Petronella,  
Will fly alone.

COUNT. Useless ! the Duke would scour  
The country for you.

DAFNE. There is but one way  
To make all safe—and that's impossible.

LIDIA. What way ?

DAFNE. 'Tis in yourself the danger lies,  
And you'd escape it could you change yourself,  
Become another woman. But, alas !  
Who can do that ?

GIOVANNI (*excited*). Why, Lidia can !

LIBIA (*trying to stop him*).

Giovanni !

GIOVANNI. I must speak, and I will ! Unnumbered  
women

Lurk in that single form. She can put on  
Another face as one puts on a mask,  
Another soul as one puts on a garment,  
And cast them off as lightly !

LIDIA (*in distress*).

Oh, no more !

Is this the chivalry you've learnt at Court,  
Thus to betray——?

GIOVANNI.

You cannot stop me, Lidia !

Marchesa ! Dafne ! You would never dream,  
To see her now, how hateful she can make herself!  
She'll play the shrew, the termagant, the vixen,  
The haughty madam, the affected minx,  
So absolutely, one might almost doubt  
Which was the real Lidia.

DAFNE.

Is this true ?

LIDIA. 'Tis true that my dear father and the Prince  
Have sometimes laughed to see me personate  
This or that vanity or folly——

DAFNE.

Well,

*Be*, then, another woman—let the Duke  
Find your dispraisers in the right, and hold  
Your praise an empty legend !

LIDIA.

Can you counsel

Such levity, such disrespect ? Meseems  
There has been trickery enough already.

MARCHESA. Your shrinking, madam, from the ducal  
crown

Can scarce be violent, if you shrink still more  
From such a harmless——

DAFNE.

Mother, you are unjust.

Lidia shall not be goaded. But, in truth,  
I think she might consent.

LIDIA.

You have called yourself

My friend ?

DAFNE.

I *am* your friend.

LIBIA. And *as* my friend  
You urge me on, sincerely, soberly,  
To this audacious venture ? (DAFNE *nods.*) Be it so !  
To me it seems that failure and success  
Are perilous alike ; but since the blame,  
If blame there be, will fall on me alone——

GIOVANNI. No, Lidia ; I will share it. But take heart!  
You cannot fail. Come after what come may,  
The immediate's danger's past.

LIDIA (*to* GIOVANNI). Which of my vices  
Shall I regale the Duke withal ?

GIOVANNI. Superbia !  
The very thing to affright him !

LIDIA. But my tires ?  
My head-dress ?

DAFNE. Mother, you can furnish her  
With vanities enough.

MARCHESA. Yes, I—or you.

DAFNE. Come, then, prepare. (*Leading her out, L.*) Go  
some one to the Duke,  
And tell him that Count Caromonte's daughter  
Awaits him here.

COUNT. Be that my task. [*Exit R.*

LIDIA. Giovanni,  
You must be absent, else, were I unmask'd,  
'Twould be apparent that you shared my guilt.

GIOVANNI. Yes, I will go ; but not because I fear  
Discovery.

LIDIA. Go—go. My mind misgives me,  
But——

DAFNE. But the die is cast. Come, Lidia dear !  
*She and LIDIA go off, L., followed by PETRONELLA.*  
*The MARCHESA claps her hands. A servant*  
*enters, L.*

MARCHESA. Lights ho !  
*The servant beckons to another. They light the*  
*candles in the sconces at the back, and also*

*lower<sup>d</sup>, light and haul up again the chandelier  
(or coloured lantern) in the centre, which throws  
a much stronger light than the other candles.  
Meanwhile :*

GIOVANNI. You were not kind to Lidia, Aunt;  
How has she angered you ?

MARCHESA. No, no, Giovanni,  
She has not angered me. 'Tis true I find her—  
Well—inconvenient—in more ways than one.

GIOVANNI. You know, at least, that when I praised her  
to you  
I spoke the simple truth.

MARCHESA. Perhaps you did.  
But simple truth is often, as you'll find,  
Of all things the most inconvenient. Hush !  
The Duke !

GIOVANNI. I am gone !  
*He goes out by the platform and down the steps.  
The DUKE, ushered in by COUNT PANTELLARIA,  
enters, R. The COUNT also slips off by the  
platform.*

DUKE. Ah, sister—you have seen  
This marvel-maid that's turned our little world  
All upside-down ?

MARCHESA. Yes, brother, I have seen her.

DUKE. Well—and what say you ?

MARCHESA. Why, Your Grace well knows,  
A woman's judgement of another woman  
Is seldom just.

DUKE. I have not hitherto  
Found you distrust your insight.

MARCHESA. I prefer  
In this case to say nothing.

DUKE. More and more  
The mystery confounds me. You—even you—  
Before this girl stand tongue-tied. Is she, then,  
Some strange enchantress ?

MARCHESA. You shall see and judge.  
DAFNE leads LIDIA in, L., in a fantastic head-dress, yet not so extravagant as that of *Superbia* in Act I. She wears an enormous hoop, and high-heeled shoes which notably alter her stature. Her fingers are covered with rings, and she is markedly made-up. Though not an outrageous caricature, she is a painful contrast to the natural LIDIA.

DAFNE. This, Uncle, is Count Caromonte's daughter,  
The Lady Lidia. She has come to Court,  
Obedient to your call.

LIDIA makes an elaborately artificial curtsy, and then speaks in an audible whisper to DAFNE.

LIDIA. Ought I to kiss  
His Lordship's hand ?

DAFNE nods. LIDIA awkwardly possesses herself of the DUKE's hand, he meanwhile standing, petrified, and kisses it, with another low curtsy.

MARCHESA. Come, Dafne, we will leave  
The Duke to make acquaintance with his guest.  
They go off, L., as naturally as they can.

DUKE. I do not see your father with you, madam,  
Yet I commanded him——

LIDIA (*speaking with uncontrollable volubility, in an affected, high-pitched voice, and with a mincing accent*). My noble sire

Sailed, may it please Your Grace, two days ago  
For Metaponto ; and the captain gentleman  
Who brought Your Graced summons would not  
bide

For his return. He said Your Grace enjoined  
The utmost festination.

DUKE. What is that ?

LIDIA. Why, speed, celerity !

DUKE. Ah! Pardon me—  
My Latin's rusty. I desired, indeed,  
With some impatience, the felicity

I now enjoy, of seeing face to face  
A lady so renowned.

LIDIA. Your Grace o'erwhelms me !  
Renowned ! Oh la ! But I confess I yearned  
To come to Court ; for truly in the country  
The men are yokels and the women sluts,  
Devoid of breeding : you would hardly guess,  
Your Grace, how their rusticity offends  
Persons of delicate sensibilities.

DUKE (*seating himself on the divan*). So your ambition  
is to shine at Court ?

LIDIA (*taking a chair and planting herself, uninvited, in front of him*). To shine I will not say, for  
modesty  
Has always been, of all the virtues, that  
To which I am most addicted. But in truth  
My soul aspires, the Court's my native hemisphere,  
And rural life to me is banishment.  
I feel myself—Your Grace will understand—  
Save for my sex, like Ovid 'mong the Scythians.

DUKE. Your ladyship has learning ?

LIDIA. Nay, Your Grace,  
Call it not learning ! True, my noble sire  
Has made me mistress of the languages—  
I know my Plato, my Thucydides,  
My Cicero, my Flaccus, Juvenal,  
My Mantuan, my Patavine, my—

DUKE. Hold !  
We'll keep the catalogue for another time,  
So please you. For the nonce, I fain would learn  
Whether my nephew, Prince Giovanni, shared  
Your studies ?

LIDIA. Prince Giovanni ? Yes, dear child,  
He battled bravely with his accidence.  
But scholarship—the relish for the tongues—  
Your Grace well knows—is not for every one.  
He toiled, as Flaccus phrases it, *invita*  
*Minerva*—or, in the vernacular,  
Against the grain.

DUKE. How kindly you translate for me !  
Giovanni, it would seem, in the vernacular,  
Is little better than a dunce.

LID I A. Oh, no !  
Your Grace's kinsman ! All I meant was this :  
His hawk, his horse, his hound were more to him  
Than all the poets and philosophers.  
Your Grace did wisely—could Your Grace, indeed,  
Do otherwise ?—in ordering him back  
To Court. My noble sire and I combined,  
Strive as we might, could not preserve his manners  
From just a shade, the merest, veriest tinge  
Of rustical inelegance.

DUKE. The Court,  
You think, will mend his breeding ?

LIDIA (*minaudant*). He has but  
To make Your Grace his pattern, to acquire  
The poise, the polish, the grand air, that I  
Sought vainly to impart to him. In truth—  
'Twixt you and me, Your Grace—the Prince pre-  
ferred  
The talk of horseboys, grooms and kennel-men  
To my society !

DUKE. Incredible!

LIDIA. Strange, and yet true ! Alas, the careless gods  
Scatter their gifts at random. To the Prince,  
Born in the purple, they denied ambition.  
To me they gave, among my cradle-gifts,  
The soul of Cleopatra or Semiramis.  
My blood, Your Grace well knows, is of the noblest—  
We trace our lineage back to Charlemagne—  
And something in my soaring soul assures me  
Our late eclipse will not endure for ever.  
Your Grace will understand——

DUKE (*rising*). No, madam, no !  
Your soaring soul leaves mine too far behind.  
And now my duties call me—I must leave you.  
My sister, the Marchesa, and my niece  
Will entertain you till your noble sire  
Shall come for you——

LIDIA (*who has also risen*). Shall come for me ! Your  
Grace,

Say not that you design to send me home !  
After one fleeting glimpse of heaven, to banish me  
Back to the rustical, the vulgar earth !  
That were barbarity ! The Prince, your nephew,  
Spoke of a place among your sister's ladies——

DUKE. The Prince spoke rashly——

LIDIA (*as though enraged*). Is it even so ?  
This petty Court rejects me ! Well, my Lord,  
This let me tell you—Fate reserves for me  
Some larger, more illustrious hemisphere !  
I bid Your Grace adieu ! I humbly beg  
Your licence to return at dawn to-morrow  
To Caromonte. I will not await  
My father's coming——

DUKE (*interrupting*). Hark ! what noise is that ?  
*A slight clash of swords and a loud altercation  
are heard from the stair at the back, the voices  
those of COUNT CAROMONTE and GIULIO.*

CAROMONTE (*still unseen*). You brought her here, you  
say ? Then I will follow !  
No lackey's sword shall stay me !

DUKE (*calls out*). Who goes there !

LIDIA (*shrinking into the corner, back L., in unaffected  
terror*). Oh, God ! my father !

CAROMONTE, *sword in hand, appears in the moon-  
light at the top of the steps, thrusting GIULIO  
aside.*

DUKE (*his hand on his sword-hilt*). Stand there !

CAROMONTE, *seeing the DUKE, sheaths his sword  
and rushes forward. He does not see LIDIA.*

CAROMONTE (*kneeling to the DUKE*). Pardon ! pardon,  
Your Grace ! A father, seeking his lost child,  
Kneels at your judgement seat !

DUKE. Here is your daughter,  
Count Caromonte.

CAROMONTE *turns, sees her, and springs up.*

CAROMONTE.                    This my daughter ! This !

LIDIA (*sinking on her knees before him*). Your most unhappy daughter.

CAROMONTE.                    God in heaven !  
Is this my Lidia ? This bedizened thing !  
What devilish enchantment have we here ?  
Or rather—what audacious mummery ?  
Speak, wretched girl !

DUKE.                                Stay ! tell me first *your* tale,  
Old man ! How come you here ? What part have  
you  
In this ill-omened plot ?

CAROMONTE.                    Part ? I have none.  
I sailed for Metaponto yesterday,  
Intending three days' stay. A black scirocco  
Drove back my bark. Arrived at home, I found  
No Lidia, but a letter waiting me,  
To tell me that Your Grace's men-at-arms,  
Almost by force, were bearing her to Court.  
I sprang to horse : my spurs, you see, are red !  
And that is all I know.

DUKE.                                Now, mistress, you !  
It seems that from your " noble sire " you have  
hidden  
Your eagerness to shine at Court. Is he,  
Or I, your dupe ?

LIDIA, *still kneeling, has as far as possible divested herself of her gewgaws. She now arises, somewhat dishevelled, but in the main like herself.*

CAROMONTE.                    Speak, Lidia ! You were ever  
A dutiful, a modest girl—how comes it  
I find you thus disgraced ?

LIDIA (*disjointedly*).                    Disgraced indeed !  
My shame o'erwhelms me. All the fault is mine.  
My idle vanity—you know, my father,  
My trick of personation you yourself  
Have praised—and I was angered that His Grace  
Should hale me hither like a criminal—

I thought—my sober judgement stands aghast  
At such effrontery—I thought to rouse  
Disgust in him, and make him straightway send me  
Back to my home, to Caromonte.

DUKE. Count,

Think you, is this the truth ?

CAROMONTE. I would have staked  
My life on Lidia's truthfulness—but no !  
So impudent a prank is too unlike her.  
In part at least, if not throughout her tale,  
I think she is lying.

DUKE (*vehemently*). I am sure she is !  
Some plot, some treachery, lies behind it all,  
And, if I die for't, I'll unravel it!  
Ho, there ! Marchesa ! Dafne !—Giulio, call  
The guard ! Go, find Count Pantellaria  
And Prince Giovanni, and arrest them both !  
Place sentinels at their chamber doors—Fll question  
them

Myself, apart.

*Ever since the entrance of CAROMONTE, GIULIO  
has stood at the stair-head, watching the scene.  
He now salutes and goes off, R. Shortly before  
his exit, the MARCHESA and DAFNE enter, L.*

MARCHESA. Why, brother, what is this ?

DUKE. Yes, what is this ? That's what I mean to learn—  
For you, even you, I much misdoubt, Marchesa,  
Are in the plot. Some game of hoodman-blind  
Is here afoot, and I the victim of it.  
But you shall see I am not lightly hoodwinked !  
You shall repent——!

MARCHESA. Your Grace ! my brother ! hear me——

DUKE. Silence to-night ! First I will wring the truth  
From Pantellaria and Giovanni. You  
Shall speak to-morrow. To your chambers now !  
(*To CAROMONTE*) Your daughter, Count, I leave to  
your surveillance.

Keep her apart from these two—Highnesses,  
Lest she concoct with them some devilment.

Follow me now.—Ladies, you've had your jest  
To-day—to-morrow comes the reckoning !

*The MARCHESA stands utterly crestfallen, L., DAFNE,  
looking at her, struggles to suppress her laughter.  
LIBIA has run, weeping, to her father's arms.  
They are following the DUKE out, R., as*

*The Curtain falls.*

## ACT IV

*The same scene. Morning light.*

*The DUKE is pacing up and down. The MARCHESA, DAFNE, GIOVANNI, PANTELLARIA (in this order, from left to right) are seated in a row, more or less like prisoners at the bar.*

DUKE. You'd have me think, then, as I understand,  
That you have earned my gratitude ?

MARCHESA. I, at least,  
Deserve no censure.

DUKE. 'Twas your Christian duty  
To shield me from temptation ?

MARCHESA. **So I thought,**  
And so I think.

DUKE. Do you, too, plead not guilty,  
Contessa Dafne ?

DAFNE. Uncle, I confess  
I loved the jest, and had but little thought  
On consequences. But my chiefest guilt  
Was that I took the lead in tempting Lidia  
To play a part unworthy of her.

DUKE. So  
You sinned 'gainst her, not me ?

DAFNE. You have said it, Uncle.

DUKE. And Prince Giovanni ? May we hear your plea ?

GIOVANNI. One single plea is mine—my love for Lidia.  
I dreamt not of it, till you parted us ;

But then a sudden revelation told me  
That dukedoms, empires, life itself were naught  
To me, without my friend, my guardian angel,  
The lodestar of my soul.

DUKE. And she ? She loved you ?

GIOVANNI. She loved me as a sister, but rebuked me  
With all the sternness in her gentle nature,  
When I rebelled against Your Grace's will  
That severed us. She would not suffer me  
To speak, to think, of summoning her to Court.  
Whoever erred, Lidia is blameless. I—  
My folly and my cowardice—have enmeshed her  
In wiles she dreamed not of. I'd plead my youth,  
But she is younger still.

DUKE. Now let us hear  
Count Pantellaria's defence ?

MARCHESA. I, too,  
Would gladly learn it.

COUNT. My defence, Your Grace ?  
Pray tell me first of what offence I stand  
Accused, unless it be a too unbounded  
Devotion to Your Grace's interests,  
Your Grace's will. Your fixed and firm aversion  
From marriage well I knew—

DUKE. And feared this girl  
Might marry me against my will ?

COUNT. You hold  
The thought preposterous ? How many a man—  
Nay more, how many a duke—think you, my Lord,  
Against his will has worn the chains of wedlock ?

DUKE. Which you, to save me, would yourself have  
donned,  
Thus sacrificing all your tender hopes,  
Your high ambitions ! Selfless, matchless friend !  
My gratitude wellnigh unmans me.

*(With a sudden change from sugared irony to  
vehemence)* But—  
One thing from all this tangled coil results :

The girl who, howsoe'er unwillingly,  
Dwells in the heart of it, is something more  
Than common—has an influence all her own,  
Resistless, not to men alone, but women.  
Now I, my friends, am of heroic mood :  
I scorn to flee from danger, love to face it.  
Wherefore I am resolved to meet this Lidia  
In her own person, and myself decide  
Wherein her magic lies.

*(As though lost in reflection.)*

Almost, it seems  
As if the Fates had spun a subtle web  
To bring her to me in a blaze of light,  
A halo of renown. The gods' designs  
Who shall unravel ? Seeing Fve refrained  
So long from marriage, can it be——? Who knows ?  
I prithee, Dafne, find Count Caromonte,  
And say I crave some conference with his daughter,  
Here and alone.

[DAFNE goes off, R.]

MARCHESA. But this is madness, brother !

DUKE. Is it ? Perhaps. When all the world is mad,  
Shall I be sane ? I love not singularity.

MARCHESA *(as she goes off, L.)*. I wash my hands of it.

DUKE *(when she is gone)*. So, at the last,  
They are apt to do, who thrust superfluous fingers  
In other people's pies.

GIovANNi *(as he goes towards the platform)*. Uncle, have  
pity!  
Drive me not to despair !

DUKE. Greatness, my nephew,  
Brings with it pains a lowlier lot escapes.  
I have a duty to the commonwealth  
And to our race. As yet I know not clearly  
What duty craves of me ; but when I know,  
Both I and you must bow to her decree.

[GIOVANNI goes off, disconsolate, down the steps.]

COUNT *(coming forward)*. Your Grace——

DUKE. You still would interpose, dear Count,  
Between me and my destiny ? No, no—  
I'll meet with fortitude whatever awaits me,  
And leave you free to mind your own affairs,  
Not, I imagine, quite uncomplicated.

*The COUNT shrugs his shoulders and follows GIOVANNI.*

*A moment's pause, while the DUKE walks up and down, his hands behind his back, reflecting. Then CAROMONTE enters, R., leading in LIDIA, who curtsies, but not deeply.*

CAROMONTE. My liege, I bring you here my penitent child,

Misguided—may I say ?—rather than guilty.

DUKE. Of that, Count Caromonte, I must judge—  
Such is my will.

CAROMONTE. I bow to it, Your Grace ;  
Yet trust my faithful service may deflect  
Your justice on the side of lenity.

DUKE. It shall not be forgotten.

CAROMONTE (*apart to LIDIA, kissing her forehead*).  
Courage, Lidia !

Be your true self ! *[Exit R.*

*The DUKE takes one or two more turns up and down the room, in silence ; then turns upon LIDIA who is standing, dejected, R.*

DUKE. You do not kiss my hand,  
As yesterday you did.

LIDIA. Must yesterday  
Stain all my days to follow ?

DUKE. God Himself  
Could not expunge it from the calendar.

LIDIA. Princes should be more merciful than God,  
Since they, too, may need mercy.

DUKE. So you thought  
You were a captive in an ogre's den,  
And every trick of cozenage was lawful

That made for your escape ? You thought to fool  
The stupid ogre, and then laugh at him  
With your accomplices ?

LIDIA. Not *with* them—no !  
I thought I'd never see the Court again.

DUKE. But, back at Caromonte, you'd have laughed  
To think how wise we princes deemed ourselves,  
And how a girl could trick us.

LIDIA. Put it *SO*,  
Sir, if you must. But I—I do not think  
That, back at Caromonte, I'd have laughed.

DUKE. Know you that playing with a prince's trust,  
And fooling him, is—treason ?

LIDIA. If it be,  
Allot my punishment. I can but say  
I meant no ill to you. My one desire  
Was to escape without delay from Court,  
Lest Prince Giovanni suffer.

DUKE. Prince Giovanni !

LIDIA. He thought our childish friendship could endure.  
I knew it must not—knew he must forget me  
As quickly as he might.

DUKE. He could not bear,  
You mean, to see you as his uncle's bride ?

LIDIA. Must you recall that foolishness ? It needed  
No such fantastic fear to make me shun  
The Court.

DUKE. You're sure the fear, then, was fantastic ?

LIDIA. Why must you play with me as cat with mouse ?  
My fault is patent—must my punishment  
Be more humiliation ?

DUKE. Yesterday  
" Your Grace ", " Your Grace " was ever on your  
lips ;  
To-day you pay me not the commonest meed  
Of courtesy.

LIDIA. Can I be too unlike

What yesterday I was ? I beg you, sir,  
To pass your judgement on me, and dismiss me.

DUKE. My judgement ?

LIDIA. Yes.

DUKE. You challenge it ?

LIDIA. I do.

DUKE. What should you say, then, were my judgement  
this :

" In expiation of the grievous crime  
Of cozening her liege lord and sovereign,  
The Lady Lidia is condemned to share  
The ridicule her arts have brought upon him,  
Together with all other pains and privileges  
Appurtenant to the Dukedom of Taranto,  
By entering with him into holy wedlock,  
And reigning as his Duchess " ?

LIDIA (*after a pause*). Ah, my Lord,  
I see you are pleasant—you retaliate  
For my irreverence in mocking you,  
By making me the butt for mockery.  
Well, I rejoice to find you hold my error  
A theme for mirth. You feel I have blushed enough,  
And deign to let me smile with you in parting.  
I thank Your Grace (*a deep curtsy*) and humbly take  
my leave. (*She turns away.*)

DUKE. No ! stay ! I do not grant you leave !

LIDIA. You have  
Further commands for me ?

DUKE. Yes ; I command you  
To lend a patient hearing to my suit,  
And answer it in sober earnestness,  
As I, believe me, urge it.

LIDIA. You are merciless.  
Well, since no less contents you, I will feign  
To take your suit in earnest, and will feign  
To give it answer no less solemnly,  
Thus : " With all dutiful submission, I  
Decline the honour of your proffered hand,

Your Dukedom and its high appurtenances."  
Your Grace is answered.

DUKE. Headstrong girl ! will nought  
Persuade you that I jest not ?

LIDIA. That, indeed,  
Were treason—to suppose Your Grace in earnest.

DUKE (*takes her hand and leads her over to the divan, L.*).

Lidia, sit here and listen—I, your Prince,  
Command it! When I saw you yesterday,  
I was not wholly hoodwinked. 'Neath the mask,  
The antic mask, I saw your peerless beauty,  
And guessed that there was something hid from me,  
Some riddle that I could not read. To-day,  
All being manifest, I see in you  
A girl in years, and yet a noble woman,  
Compact of wisdom, courage, dignity,  
All virtues and all graces of a Queen.  
Nay, listen !—Since I deemed that such a woman  
Could not be found, were proclamation made  
Through all the length and breadth of Italy,  
I had renounced remarriage, and resolved  
To let the dukedom pass to young Giovanni,  
My nephew. But no promise nor no law  
Binds me to that design. You see, my hair  
Is scarcely grizzled. All the best of life  
Yet lies before me—share it with me, Lidia !  
Make my reign glorious, make my manhood happy,  
My race a race of heaven-appointed princes.  
You know me not, you love me not, you say ?  
Oh, but you shall—shall know me and shall love me.  
Love begets love ; and he—yon foolish Count—  
Deemed rightly when he deemed that for the Duke  
To see you were to love you.

(LIDIA *bursts into tears.*)

Ha ! you weep !

Your heart is touched at last.

LIDIA. What shall I say ?

Now first I see the greatness of my fault,  
And in your magnanimity, your goodness,  
I find my bitter punishment.

DUKE. Nay, nay—  
Ere long we'll laugh together in remembering  
How first we met, how first we set our wits  
Against each other—and, in very truth,  
Had not your father burst upon the scene,  
I think you had won the day.

LIDIA. Would that I had !  
For then you quickly had forgotten me.  
Now—for I think, my Lord, you are sincere—  
You will remember me, I fear, with pain.

DUKE. Remember you ?

LIDIA. When I am gone.

DUKE. You mean——?

LIDIA. I mean that you have won my reverence,  
My gratitude, all that my heart can give you—  
But I can never, never be your wife.

DUKE. You will not wed me ?

LIDIA. Cannot, must not, will not.

DUKE. Your reasons——?

LIDIA. Must be secret, even from you.

DUKE. Lidia, if I should call your father hither,  
And beg of him your hand in marriage——?

LIDIA. He  
Would joyfully accord it.

DUKE. Then——?

LIDIA. The thought,  
When yesterday Count Pantellaria  
Menaced me with it, did indeed appal me.  
But now it has no terrors for me—now  
I know you, and I know you great and generous.  
You want a free-born woman for your mate,  
Not a poor slave who wears abhorred chains.

DUKE. Abhorred! Is my love abhorrent to you ?

LIDIA. It makes me very proud and very sad—  
Proud that you so esteem me ; sad to know  
That I can give you but a subject's love,  
Never a wife's.

DUKE. Ah, then I see too clearly  
The truth ! The secret I must never know  
Too easily I guess ! You love Giovanni !  
Perhaps are plighted to him.

LIDIA. No, my Lord !  
The Prince and I were comrades—nothing more.

DUKE. But you *do* love him !

LIDIA. Did I call you generous  
A moment since ? Must I unsay the word ?  
I tell the secrets of my heart to God,  
Not to an earthly prince. All that concerns you  
Is this : when I return to Caromonte  
I promise you, by all my hopes of heaven,  
If my endeavour so can order it,  
Never to see Giovanni's face again,  
Never to cross his path. No act or thought  
Of mine shall come between him and his birthright,  
His duty to his race.

*During her last words—but not overhearing them  
—GIOVANNI appears, coming hastily up the  
steps at the back. He now rushes forward in  
great excitement.*

GIOVANNI. Lidia, my Lidia !  
I can endure this agony no longer—  
No longer shall he torture you ! Your Highness,  
Do with me what you will ! Imprison—banish me !  
What care I for inheritance or rule,  
For life itself, if heartless, pitiless power  
Robs me of all the joy, the worth of life,  
In parting me from Lidia.

LIDIA (*wringing her hands*). Oh, Giovanni,  
What have you done ! (*Turning to the DUKE*) Sir,  
be a prince indeed,  
And pardon—

DUKE (*vehemently*). Stop, I order you ! (*To GIOVANNI*)  
Young man,  
I take you at your word—I banish you,  
Dismiss you from the order of succession,  
And leave you to your fate. For you, my lady,

You overrate my generosity.  
Your father's loyalty I know will grant me  
That which I crave, and you can but submit.

GIOVANNI. That which you crave ?

DUKE. This lady's hand.

GIOVANNI. No, no !

Accursed tyrant, that shall never be !

*Draws his dagger, and is making at the DUKE,  
when LIDIA seizes his arm.*

LIDIA. Giovanni, dear Giovanni, drop your dagger  
And listen to me ! *(He lets the dagger fall.)*  
You, my Lord, as well.

DUKE. Pick up that plaything, sir, and hand it to me.

*(GIOVANNI stands sullenly immovable. LIDIA picks  
up the dagger and hands it to the DUKE, who  
tosses it down on the table, R.)*

Edged tools are not for boys.

*LIDIA takes GIOVANNI'S left hand in her right, and  
faces the DUKE.*

LIDIA. Nor power for men  
Who tyrannously abuse it. One brief moment  
Has changed the world for me. You say my father  
Will grant you what you crave ; and, yesterday,  
My duty, so I thought, would have constrained me  
To yield to his commands. To-day, not so !  
I would not wed you though my father dragged me  
In fetters to the altar ! I would die  
Before I did myself so huge a wrong.  
When Prince Giovanni still was Prince Giovanni  
I bade him wear the bonds of princely birth  
In dutiful submission, and forget  
The poor girl-playmate of his youth, or think of her  
But as a sister lost to him for ever.  
But now the scene is changed ! His loving kinsman,  
Loving no more, becomes his unjust judge,  
Strips him of rank and heritage, and sends him  
Forth into exile. Well, Your Highness, I  
Go with him—or to prison, if your power

Should thus see fit to punish our rebellion.

You read (*red*) my secret rightly, sir—

(*Putting her arm round GIOVANNI'S shoulder.*)

I love you,

Dear, dear Giovanni, faithful, kind Giovanni !

It wrung my heart to lose you : to regain you,

Though all the world besides be lost to us,

Is joy unspeakable.

GIOVANNI (*takes her in his arms and kisses her*). My

brave, sweet Lidia !

My friend, my love, my mate !

LIDIA.

Sir, you have seen

The first kiss of a loving girl and boy

Who owe to you their happiness, whate'er

The doom that now awaits them.

*They stand side by side and hand in hand, facing the DUKE, who paces up and down two or three times, with his hands behind his back, scowling at them, like a baffled tyrant. At last he comes to a resolve, claps his hands, and calls.*

DUKE.

Ho, there ! Giulio !

(*After a certain time, during which the DUKE casts black glances at them over his shoulder, GIULIO appears, R.*)

Summon the Count of Caromonte hither—

Also Count Pantellaria.

(*Exit GIULIO, R. The DUKE crosses to the left and calls.*)

Marchesa,

I crave your presence !

(*To GIOVANNI*)

Pick your dagger up,

And sheathe it. Were that act of madness known

Your head would pay for it. Your rank rebellion

Is crime enough without that crown to it.

(*GIOVANNI crosses and sheathes his dagger. As he is returning to LIDIA, the DUKE interposes.*)

Nay, stand apart ! Shall two unblushing rebels

Defy me in the face of all the world ?

COUNT CAROMONTE *enters, R.*

CAROMONTE. Your Grace desires my presence ?

DUKE. Sir, I do.

I but await the coming of my chamberlain,  
Count Pantellaria, and of my sister,  
Ere I explain my summons.

(PANTELLARIA enters, R., almost simultaneously  
with the appearance of the MARCHESA and DAFNÉ,  
L. GIULIO enters after PANTELLARIA.)

Sister, come—

Affairs of state require your presence. Giulio,  
Two chairs here side by side.

(He indicates by gestures that GIULIO is to place  
the two chairs, which stand against the pillars  
at the back, in the centre of the scene. GIULIO  
does so. The DUKE gives the MARCHESA his  
hand, and leads her to the left-hand chair.)

Be seated, madam.

(He himself sits in the right-hand chair. DAFNE  
stands a little behind her mother; CAROMONTE  
near LIDIA, down L., GIOVANNI and PANTEL-  
LARIA, R.)

With all formality, Count Caromonte,  
In presence of these noble witnesses,  
I beg for your consent—

GIOVANNI (*a despairing cry*). No, no—'tis monstrous !

DUKE (*unperturbed*). To the betrothal of your daughter,  
Lidia,

With this hot-headed boy.

CAROMONTE. The Prince !

GIOVANNI (*petrified*). With me !

DUKE. You know him, sir, and know as well as I  
How slight are his deserts. But should she wait  
To find her peer, 'tis like she'd die a maid ;  
And—failing here alone in wisdom—she  
Has given her heart to him. I ask your blessing  
Upon their union.

CAROMONTE. Lidia, is this the truth ?

(LIDIA, who has stood immovable, though she and

GIOVANNI *have exchanged glances of amazement and joy, runs to her father's arms and smiles up at him.*)

What can I say, Your Grace ? I am overjoyed.  
Her blood will leave no stain upon your scutcheon,  
And—

*(Looking to GIOVANNI who crosses and takes his outstretched hand)*

by God's grace, dear boy, the best of daughters  
Will make the best of wives.

LIDIA *takes GIOVANNI'S right hand in her left, and leads him before the DUKE, saying :*

LIDIA. Giovanni, kneel !

*(GIOVANNI kneels straight in front of the DUKE, LIDIA a little to the DUKE'S left, therefore somewhat in profile)*

*(With downcast eyes)* Your Grace, two happy children, on their knees,

Ask your forgiveness for their ignorant errors.

*(Then, looking up at him)* And, should you know of any one who needs

Forgiveness at their hands, assure him of it.

DUKE *(rising, and assisting her).* Rise, Lidia—and Giovanni, turn away—

I must impart a secret to my niece.

*(Leads her forward and speaks to her apart)*

You said I played with you as cat with mouse.

No, Lidia—'twas in earnest that I pleaded.

Had your dear heart been yours to give, I think

I might have won it. But that petulant boy

Had youth and long affection on his side ;

And who could dream of finding happiness

In sundering youth from youth ? None but a madman.

Dear Lidia, give me any crumbs of love

Your heart can spare—and make a man of him !

*(Then he says aloud.)*

Princess, I kiss your hand— *(Does so, saying apart)*  
since you refuse

That courtesy to me.

*Turns and talks apart to CAROMONTE. The MARCHESA has watched the earlier part of the scene with helpless indignation. At the line " will make the best of wives ", she speaks angrily to DAFNE, who replies laughingly. At the line " a secret to my niece ", DAFNE comes forward and watches the DUKE and LIDIA, while PANTELLARIA steals up behind the MARCHESA'S seat and begins pleading with her. When the DUKE leaves LIDIA, DAFNE comes forward and embraces her.*

DAFNE. I, dearest Lidia,  
Unwittingly have helped you to your love ;  
And you, unwittingly, have done the like  
By me—my mother now can scarce oppose  
My marriage with Giannotto.

LIDIA. Dearest Dafne !  
My friend in need, my friend for evermore.  
*The MARCHESA has gradually softened to the  
COUNT, and they now come forward.*

COUNT. Your Grace, this noble lady has forgiven  
My trespasses—if trespasses they were.

MARCHESA. " *If trespasses* ", forsooth! He ought to  
*say,*  
My Lord, that he's confessed and been absolved.

DUKE. Well, well; forgiveness is in fashion ; I  
Pardon you, Count—you are still my chamberlain.  
Take order straightway for the Prince's marriage.  
And—

*(With intention, looking towards LIDIA, who has  
joined GIOVANNI)*

see that no rusticity offend  
Persons of delicate sensibilities.

LIDIA. Spare me, Your Grace. Be that exploit for ever  
Wiped from our memories.

DUKE (*mimicking the Superbia manner*). Since modesty  
Has always been, of all the virtues, that  
To which you're most addicted.

LIDIA (*with a touch of Superbid*).      Sir, beware !  
Or that accomplished lady may return  
To Court, her native hemisphere.

DUKE (*in panic*).      Forbid it,  
Merciful Heaven !

*Curtain.*

THE END









