Love and Intrigue

by Friedrich Schiller

Free public domain classic — Noveliopdf

The Project Gutenberg eBook of Love and Intrigue: A Tragedy

This eBook is for the use of anyone anywhere in the United States and most other parts of the world at no cost and with almost no restrictions whatsoever. You may copy it, give it away or re-use it under the terms of the Project Gutenberg License included with this eBook or online at www.gutenberg.org. If you are not located in the United States, you will have to check the laws of the country where you are located before using this eBook.

Title: Love and Intrigue: A Tragedy

Author: Friedrich Schiller

Release date: December 8, 2004 [eBook #6784] Most recently updated: December 30, 2020

Language: English

Other information and formats: www.gutenberg.org/ebooks/6784

Credits: Produced by Tapio Riikonen and David Widger

*** START OF THE PROJECT GUTENBERG EBOOK LOVE AND INTRIGUE: A TRAGEDY ***

Format Choice

The present format is best for most laptops and computers, and generates well to .mobi and .epub files. The higher quality images in this file do not reduce in size to fit the small screens of Tablets and Smart Phones—part of the larger images may

run off the side. Another format is available by clicking on the following line: A file with images which automatically accomodate to any screen size; this is the best choice for the small screens of Tablets and Smart Phones.

LOVE AND INTRIGUE.

A TRAGEDY. By Friedrich Schiller

DRAMATIS PERSONAE. PRESIDENT VON WALTER, Prime Minister in the Court of a German Prince. FERDINAND, his son; a Major in the Army; in love with Louisa Miller. BARON VON KALB, Court Marshal (or Chamberlain). WORM, Private Secretary to the President. MILLER, the Town Musician, and Teacher of Music. MRS. MILLER, his wife. LOUISA, the daughter of Miller, in love with Ferdinand. LADY MILFORD, the Prince's Mistress. SOPHY, attendant on Lady Milford. An old Valet in the service of the Prince. Officers, Attendants, etc.

ACT I.

SCENE I.

SCENE II.

SCENE III.

SCENE IV.

SCENE V.

SCENE VI.

SCENE VII.

ACT II.

SCENE I.

SCENE II.

SCENE III.

SCENE IV.

SCENE V.

SCENE VI.

SCENE VII.

ACT III.

SCENE I.

SCENE II.

SCENE III.

SCENE IV.

SCENE V.

SCENE VI.

ACT IV.

SCENE I.

SCENE II.

SCENE III.

SCENE IV.

SCENE V.

SCENE VI.

SCENE VII.

SCENE VIII.

SCENE IX.

ACT V.

SCENE I.

SCENE II.

SCENE III.

SCENE IV.

SCENE V.

SCENE VI.

SCENE VII.

SCENE VIII.

ACT I.

SCENE I.

MILLER—MRS. MILLER.

MILLER (walking quickly up and down the room). Once for all! The affair is becoming serious. My daughter and the baron will soon be the town-talk—my house lose its character—the president will get wind of it, and—the short and long of the matter is, I'll show the younker the door.

MRS MILLER. You did not entice him to your house—did not thrust your daughter upon him!

MILLER. Didn't entice him to my house—didn't thrust the girl upon him! Who'll believe me? I was master of my own house. I ought to have taken more care of my daughter. I should have bundled the major out at once, or have gone straight to his excellency, his papa, and disclosed all. The young baron will get off merely with a snubbing, I know that well enough, and all the blame will fall upon the fiddler.

MRS MILLER (sipping her coffee). Pooh! nonsense! How can it fall upon you? What have people to do with you? You follow your profession, and pick up pupils

wherever you can find them.

MILLER. All very fine, but please to tell me what will be the upshot of the whole affair? He can't marry the girl—marriage is out of the question, and to make her his—God help us! "Good-by t'ye!" No, no—when such a sprig of nobility has been nibbling here and there and everywhere, and has glutted himself with the devil knows what all, of course it will be a relish to my young gentleman to get a mouthful of sweet water. Take heed! Take heed! If you were dotted with eyes, and could place a sentinel for every hair of your head, he'll bamboozle her under your very nose; add one to her reckoning, take himself off, and the girl's ruined for life, left in the lurch, or, having once tasted the trade, will carry it on. (Striking his forehead.) Oh, horrible thought!

MRS MILLER. God in his mercy protect us!

MILLER. We shall want his protection. You may well say that. What other object can such a scapegrace have? The girl is handsome—well made—can show a pretty foot. How the upper story is furnished matters little. That's blinked in you women if nature has not played the niggard in other respects. Let this harum-scarum but turn over this chapter—ho! ho! his eyes will glisten like Rodney's when he got scent of a French frigate; then up with all sail and at her, and I don't blame him for it— flesh is flesh. I know that very well.

MRS MILLER. You should only read the beautiful billy-doux which the baron writes to your daughter. Gracious me! Why it's as clear as the sun at noonday that he loves her purely for her virtuous soul.

MILLER. That's the right strain! We beat the sack, but mean the ass's back. He who wishes to pay his respects to the flesh needs only a kind heart for a go-between. What did I myself? When we've once so far cleared the ground that the affections cry ready! slap! the bodies follow their example, the appetites are obedient, and the silver moon kindly plays the pimp.

MRS MILLER. And then only think of the beautiful books that the major has sent us. Your daughter always prays out of them.

MILLER (whistles). Prays! You've hit the mark. The plain, simple food of nature is much too raw and indigestible for this maccaroni gentleman's stomach. It must be cooked for him artificially in the infernal pestilential pitcher of your novel-writers. Into the fire with the rubbish! I shall have the girl taking up with—God knows what all—about heavenly fooleries that will get into her blood, like Spanish flies, and scatter to the winds the handful of Christianity that cost her father so much trouble to keep together. Into the fire with them I say! The girl will take the devil's own nonsense into her head; amidst the dreams of her fool's paradise she'll not know her own home, but forget and feel ashamed of her father, the music-master; and, lastly, I shall lose a worthy, honest son-in-law who might have nestled himself so snugly into my connections. No! damn it! (Jumps up in a passion.) I'll break the neck of it at once, and the major—yes, yes, the major! shall be shown where the carpenter made the door. (Going.)

MRS MILLER. Be civil, Miller! How many a bright shilling have his presents——

MILLER (comes back, and goes up to her). The blood money of my daughter? To Beelzebub with thee, thou infamous bawd! Sooner will I vagabondize with my violin and fiddle for a bit of bread—sooner will I break to pieces my instrument and carry dung on the sounding-board than taste a mouthful earned by my only child at the price of her soul and future happiness. Give up your cursed coffee and snuff-taking, and there will be no need to carry your daughter's face to market. I have always had my bellyful and a good shirt to my back before this confounded scamp put his nose into my crib.

MRS MILLER. Now don't be so ready to pitch the house out of window. How you flare up all of a sudden. I only meant to say that we shouldn't offend the major, because he is the son of the president.

MILLER. There lies the root of the mischief. For that reason—for that very reason the thing must be put a stop to this very day! The president, if he is a just and upright father, will give me his thanks. You must brush up my red plush, and I will go straight to his excellency. I shall say to him,—"Your excellency's son has an eye to my daughter; my daughter is not good enough to be your excellency's son's wife, but too good to be your excellency's son's strumpet, and there's an end of the matter. My name is Miller."

SCENE II.

Enter SECRETARY WORM.

MRS MILLER. Ah! Good morning, Mr. Seckertary! Have we indeed the pleasure of seeing you again?

WORM. All on my side—on my side, cousin Miller! Where a high-born cavalier's visits are received mine can be of no account whatever.

MRS MILLER. How can you think so, Mr. Seckertary? His lordship the baron, Major Ferdinand, certainly does us the honor to look in now and then; but, for all that, we don't undervalue others.

MILLER (vexed). A chair, wife, for the gentleman! Be seated, kinsman.

WORM (lays aside hat and stick, and seats himself). Well, well—and how then is my future—or past—bride? I hope she'll not be—may I not have the honor of seeing—Miss Louisa?

MRS MILLER. Thanks for inquiries, Mr. Seckertary, but my daughter is not at all proud.

MILLER (angry, jogs her with his elbow). Woman!

MRS MILLER. Sorry she can't have that honor, Mr. Seckertary. My daughter is now at mass.

WORM. I am glad to hear it,—glad to hear it. I shall have in her a pious, Christian wife!

MRS MILLER (smiling in a stupidly affected manner). Yes—but, Mr. Seckertary——

MILLER (greatly incensed, pulls her ears). Woman!

MRS MILLER. If our family can serve you in any other way—with the greatest pleasure, Mr. Seckertary——

WORM (frowning angrily). In any other way? Much obliged! much obliged!—hm! hm! hm!

MRS MILLER. But, as you yourself must see, Mr. Seckertary——

MILLER (in a rage, shaking his fist at her). Woman!

MRS MILLER. Good is good, and better is better, and one does not like to stand between fortune and one's only child (with vulgar pride). You understand me, Mr. Seckertary?

WORM. Understand. Not exac—-. Oh, yes. But what do you really mean?

MRS MILLER. Why—why—I only think—I mean—(coughs). Since then Providence has determined to make a great lady of my daughter——

WORM (jumping from his chair). What's that you say? what?

MILLER. Keep your seat, keep your seat, Mr. Secretary! The woman's an out-and-out fool! Where's the great lady to come from? How you show your donkey's ears by talking such stuff.

MRS MILLER. Scold as long as you will. I know what I know, and what the major said he said.

MILLER (snatches up his fiddle in anger). Will you hold your tongue? Shall I throw my fiddle at your head? What can you know? What can he have said? Take no notice of her clack, kinsman! Away with you to your kitchen! You'll not think me

first cousin of a fool, and that I'm looking out so high for the girl? You'll not think that of me, Mr. Secretary?

WORM. Nor have I deserved it of you, Mr. Miller! You have always shown yourself a man of your word, and my contract to your daughter was as good as signed. I hold an office that will maintain a thrifty manager; the president befriends me; the door to advancement is open to me whenever I may choose to take advantage of it. You see that my intentions towards Miss Louisa are serious; if you have been won over by a fop of rank——

MRS MILLER. Mr. Seckertary! more respect, I beg——

MILLER. Hold your tongue, I say. Never mind her, kinsman. Things remain as they were. The answer I gave you last harvest, I repeat to-day. I'll not force my daughter. If you suit her, well and good; then it's for her to see that she can be happy with you. If she shakes her head—still better—be it so, I should say—then you must be content to pocket the refusal, and part in good fellowship over a bottle with her father. 'Tis the girl who is to live with you—not I. Why should I, out of sheer caprice, fasten a husband upon the girl for whom she has no inclination? That the evil one may haunt me down like a wild beast in my old age—that in every drop I drink—in every bit of bread I bite, I might swallow the bitter reproach: Thou art the villain who destroyed his child's happiness!

MRS MILLER. The short and the long of it is—I refuse my consent downright; my daughter's intended for a lofty station, and I'll go to law if my husband is going to be talked over.

MILLER. Shall I break every bone in your body, you millclack?

WORM (to MILLER). Paternal advice goes a great way with the daughter, and I hope you know me, Mr. Miller?

MILLER. Plague take you! 'Tis the girl must know you. What an old crabstick like me can see in you is just the very last thing that a dainty young girl wants. I'll tell

you to a hair if you're the man for an orchestra—but a woman's heart is far too deep for a music-master. And then, to be frank with you—you know that I'm a blunt, straightforward fellow—you'll not give thank'ye for my advice. I'll persuade my daughter to no one—but from you Mr. Sec—I would dissuade her! A lover who calls upon the father for help—with permission—is not worth a pinch of snuff. If he has anything in him, he'll be ashamed to take that old-fashioned way of making his deserts known to his sweetheart. If he hasn't the courage, why he's a milksop, and no Louisas were born for the like of him. No! he must carry on his commerce with the daughter behind the father's back. He must manage so to win her heart, that she would rather wish both father and mother at Old Harry than give him up—or that she come herself, fall at her father's feet, and implore either for death on the rack, or the only one of her heart. That's the fellow for me! that I call love! and he who can't bring matters to that pitch with a petticoat may—stick the goose feather in his cap.

WORM (seizes hat and stick and hurries out of the room). Much obliged, Mr. Miller!

MILLER (going after him slowly). For what? for what? You haven't taken anything, Mr. Secretary! (Comes back.) He won't hear, and off he's gone. The very sight of that quill-driver is like poison and brimstone to me. An ugly, contraband knave, smuggled into the world by some lewd prank of the devil—with his malicious little pig's eyes, foxy hair, and nut-cracker chin, just as if Nature, enraged at such a bungled piece of goods, had seized the ugly monster by it, and flung him aside. No! rather than throw away my daughter on a vagabond like him, she may—God forgive me!

MRS MILLER. The wretch!—but you'll be made to keep a clean tongue in your head!

MILLER. Ay, and you too, with your pestilential baron—you, too, must put my bristles up. You're never more stupid than when you have the most occasion to show

a little sense. What's the meaning of all that trash about your daughter being a great lady? If it's to be cried out about the town to-morrow, you need only let that fellow get scent of it. He is one of your worthies who go sniffing about into people's houses, dispute upon everything, and, if a slip of the tongue happen to you, skurry with it straight to the prince, mistress, and minister, and then there's the devil to pay.

SCENE III.

Enter LOUISA with a book in her hand.

LOUISA. Good morning, dear father!

MILLER (affectionately). Bless thee, my Louisa! I rejoice to see thy thoughts are turned so diligently to thy Creator. Continue so, and his arm will support thee.

LOUISA. Oh! I am a great sinner, father! Was he not here, mother?

MRS MILLER. Who, my child?

LOUISA. Ah! I forgot that there are others in the world besides him—my head wanders so. Was he not here? Ferdinand?

MILLER (with melancholy, serious voice). I thought my Louisa had forgotten that name in her devotions?

LOUISA (after looking at him steadfastly for some time). I understand you, father. I feel the knife which stabs my conscience; but it comes too late. I can no longer pray, father. Heaven and Ferdinand divide my bleeding soul, and I fear—I fear—(after a pause). Yet no, no, good father. The painter is best praised when we forget him in the contemplation of his picture. When in the contemplation of his masterpiece, my delight makes me forget the Creator,—is not that, father, the true praise of God?

MILLER (throws himself in displeasure on a chair). There we have it! Those are the fruits of your ungodly reading.

LOUISA (uneasy, goes to the window). Where can he be now? Ah! the high-born

ladies who see him—listen to him——I am a poor forgotten maiden. (Startles at that word, and rushes to her father.) But no, no! forgive me. I do not repine at my lot. I ask but little—to think on him—that can harm no one. Ah! that I might breathe out this little spark of life in one soft fondling zephyr to cool his cheek! That this fragile floweret, youth, were a violet, on which he might tread, and I die modestly beneath his feet! I ask no more, father! Can the proud, majestic day-star punish the gnat for basking in its rays?

MILLER (deeply affected, leans on the arm of his chair, and covers his face). My child, my child, with joy would I sacrifice the remnant of my days hadst thou never seen the major.

LOUISA (terrified.) How; how? What did you say? No, no! that could not be your meaning, good father. You know not that Ferdinand is mine! You know not that God created him for me, and for my delight alone! (After a pause of recollection.) The first moment that I beheld him—and the blood rushed into my glowing cheeks—every pulse beat with joy; every throb told me, every breath whispered, '"Tis he!" And my heart, recognizing the long-desired one, repeated '"Tis he!" And the whole world was as one melodious echo of my delight! Then—oh! then was the first dawning of my soul! A thousand new sentiments arose in my bosom, as flowers arise from the earth when spring approaches. I forgot there was a world, yet never had I felt that world so dear to me! I forgot there was a God, yet never had I so loved him!

MILLER (runs to her and clasps her to his bosom). Louisa! my beloved, my admirable child! Do what thou wilt. Take all—all—my life—the baron— God is my witness—him I can never give thee! [Exit.

LOUISA. Nor would I have him now, father! Time on earth is but a stinted dewdrop in the ocean of eternity. 'Twill swiftly glide in one delicious dream of Ferdinand. I renounce him for this life! But then, mother—then when the bounds of separation

are removed—when the hated distinctions of rank no longer part us—when men will be only men—I shall bring nothing with me save my innocence! Yet often has my father told me that at the Almighty's coming riches and titles will be worthless; and that hearts alone will be beyond all price. Oh! then shall I be rich! There, tears will be reckoned for triumphs, and purity of soul be preferred to an illustrious ancestry. Then, then, mother, shall I be noble! In what will he then be superior to the girl of his heart?

MRS. MILLER (starts from her seat). Louisa! the baron! He is jumping over the fence! Where shall I hide myself?

LOUISA (begins to tremble). Oh! do not leave me, mother!

MRS MILLER. Mercy! What a figure I am. I am quite ashamed! I cannot let his lordship see me in this state!

[Exit.

SCENE IV.

LOUISA—FERDINAND. (He flies towards her—she falls back into her chair, pale and trembling. He remains standing before her—they look at each other for some moments in silence. A pause.)

FERDINAND. So pale, Louisa?

LOUISA (rising, and embracing him). It is nothing—nothing now that you are here—it is over.

FERDINAND (takes her hand and raises it to his lips). And does my Louisa still love me? My heart is yesterday's; is thine the same? I flew hither to see if thou wert happy, that I might return and be so too. But I find thee whelmed in sorrow!

LOUISA. Not so, my beloved, not so!

FERDINAND. Confess, Louisa! you are not happy. I see through your soul as

clearly as through the transparent lustre of this brilliant. No spot can harbor here unmarked by me—no thought can cloud your brow that does not reach your lover's heart. Whence comes this grief? Tell me, I beseech you! Ah! could I feel assured this mirror still remained unsullied, there'd seem to me no cloud in all the universe! Tell me, dear Louisa, what afflicts you?

LOUISA (looking at him with anxiety for a few moments). Ferdinand! couldst thou but know how such discourse exalts the tradesman's daughter——

FERDINAND (surprised). What say'st thou? Tell me, girl! how camest thou by that thought? Thou art my Louisa! who told thee thou couldst be aught else? See, false one, see, for what coldness I must chide thee! Were indeed thy whole soul absorbed by love for me, never hadst thou found time to draw comparisons! When I am with thee, my prudence is lost in one look from thine eyes: when I am absent in a dream of thee! But thou —thou canst harbor prudence in the sane breast with love! Fie on thee! Every moment bestowed on this sorrow was a robbery from affection and from me!

LOUISA (pressing his hand and shaking her head with a melancholy air). Ferdinand, you would lull my apprehensions to sleep; you would divert my eyes from the precipice into which I am falling. I can see the future! The voice of honor—your prospects, your father's anger—my nothingness. (Shuddering and suddenly drops his hands.) Ferdinand! a sword hangs over us! They would separate us!

FERDINAND (jumps up). Separate us! Whence these apprehensions, Louisa? Who can rend the bonds that bind two hearts, or separate the tones of one accord? True, I am a nobleman—but show me that my patent of nobility is older than the eternal laws of the universe—or my escutcheon more valid than the handwriting of heaven in my Louisa's eyes? "This woman is for this man?" I am son of the prime minister. For that very reason, what but love can soften the curses which my father's extortions from the country will entail upon me?

LOUISA. Oh! how I fear that father!

FERDINAND. I fear nothing—nothing but that your affection should know bounds. Let obstacles rise between us, huge as mountains, I will look upon them as a ladder by which to fly into the arms of my Louisa! The tempest of opposing fate shall but fan the flame of my affection dangers will only serve to make Louisa yet more charming. Then speak no more of terrors, my love! I myself—I will watch over thee carefully as the enchanter's dragon watches over buried gold. Trust thyself to me! thou shalt need no other angel. I will throw myself between thee and fate— for thee receive each wound. For thee will I catch each drop distilled from the cup of joy, and bring thee in the bowl of love. (Embracing affectionately.) This arm shall support my Louisa through life. Fairer than it dismissed thee, shall heaven receive thee back, and confess with delight that love alone can give perfection to the soul.

LOUISA (disengaging herself from him, greatly agitated). No more! I beseech thee, Ferdinand! no more! Couldst thou know. Oh! leave me, leave me! Little dost thou feel how these hopes rend my heart in pieces like fiends! (Going.)

FERDINAND (detaining her). Stay, Louisa! stay! Why this agitation? Why those anxious looks?

LOUISA. I had forgotten these dreams, and was happy. Now—now—from this day is the tranquillity of my heart no more. Wild impetuous wishes will torment my bosom! Go! God forgive thee! Thou hast hurled a firebrand into my young peaceful heart which nothing can extinguish! (She breaks from him, and rushes from the apartment, followed by FERDINAND.)

SCENE V.—A Chamber in the PRESIDENT.'S House.

The PRESIDENT, with the grand order of the cross about his neck, and a star at his breast—SECRETARY WORM.

PRESIDENT. A serious attachment, say you? No, no, Worm; that I never can

believe.

WORM. If your excellency pleases, I will bring proofs of my assertions.

PRESIDENT. That he has a fancy for the wench—flatters her—and, if you will, pretends to love her—all this is very possible—nay—excusable —but—and the daughter of a musician, you say?

WORM. Of Miller, the music-master.

PRESIDENT. Handsome? But that, of course.

WORM (with warmth). A most captivating and lovely blondine, who, without saying too much, might figure advantageously beside the greatest beauties of the court.

PRESIDENT (laughs). It's very plain, Worm, that you have an eye upon the jade yourself—I see that. But listen, Worm. That my son has a passion for the fair sex gives me hope that he will find favor with the ladies. He may make his way at court. The girl is handsome, you say; I am glad to think my son has taste. Can he deceive the silly wench by holding out honorable intentions—still better; it will show that he is shrewd enough to play the hypocrite when it serves his purpose. He may become prime minister—if he accomplishes his purpose! Admirable! that will prove to me that fortune favors him. Should the farce end with a chubby grandchild—incomparable! I will drink an extra bottle of Malaga to the prospects of my pedigree, and cheerfully pay the wench's lying-in expenses.

WORM. All I wish is that your excellency may not have to drink that bottle to drown your sorrow.

PRESIDENT (sternly). Worm! remember that what I once believe, I believe obstinately—that I am furious when angered. I am willing to pass over as a joke this attempt to stir my blood. That you are desirous of getting rid of your rival, I can very well comprehend, and that, because you might have some difficulty in supplanting the son, you endeavor to make a cat's-paw of the father, I can also understand—I am

even delighted to find that you are master of such excellent qualifications in the way of roguery. Only, friend Worm, pray don't make me, too, the butt of your knavery. Understand me, have a care that your cunning trench not upon my plans!

WORM. Pardon me, your excellency! If even—as you suspect—jealousy is concerned, it is only with the eye, and not with the tongue.

PRESIDENT. It would be better to dispense with it altogether. What can it matter to you, simpleton, whether you get your coin fresh from the mint, or it comes through a banker? Console yourself with the example of our nobility. Whether known to the bridegroom or not, I can assure you that, amongst us of rank, scarcely a marriage takes place but what at least half a dozen of the guests—or the footmen—can state the geometrical area of the bridegroom's paradise.

WORM (bowing). My lord! Upon this head I confess myself a plebeian.

PRESIDENT. And, besides, you may soon have the satisfaction of turning the laugh most handsomely against your rival. At this very moment it is under consideration in the cabinet, that, upon the arrival of the new duchess, Lady Milford shall apparently be discarded, and, to complete the deception, form an alliance. You know, Worm, how greatly my influence depends upon this lady—how my mightiest prospects hang upon the passions of the prince. The duke is now seeking a partner for Lady Milford. Some one else may step in—conclude the bargain for her ladyship, win the confidence of the prince, and make himself indispensable, to my cost. Now, to retain the prince in the meshes of my family, I have resolved that my Ferdinand shall marry Lady Milford. Is that clear to you?

WORM. Quite dazzling! Your excellency has at least convinced me that, compared with the president, the father is but a novice. Should the major prove as obedient a son as you show yourself a tender father, your demand may chance to be returned with a protest.

PRESIDENT. Fortunately I have never yet had to fear opposition to my will when

once I have pronounced, "It shall be so!" But now, Worm, that brings us back to our former subject! I will propose Lady Milford to my son this very day. The face which he puts upon it shall either confirm your suspicions or entirely confute them.

WORM. Pardon me, my lord! The sullen face which he most assuredly will put upon it may be placed equally to the account of the bride you offer to him as of her from whom you wish to separate him. I would beg of you a more positive test! Propose to him some perfectly unexceptionable woman. Then, if he consents, let Secretary Worm break stones on the highway for the next three years.

PRESIDENT (biting his lips). The devil!

WORM. Such is the case, you may rest assured! The mother—stupidity itself—has, in her simplicity, betrayed all to me.

PRESIDENT (pacing the room, and trying to repress his rage). Good! this very morning, then!

WORM. Yet, let me entreat your excellency not to forget that the major— is my master's son——

PRESIDENT. No harm shall come to him, Worm.

WORM. And that my service in ridding you of an unwelcome daughter-in-law——

PRESIDENT. Should be rewarded by me helping you to a wife? That too, Worm!

WORM (bowing with delight). Eternally your lordship's slave. (Going.)

PRESIDENT (threatening him). As to what I have confided to you, Worm! If you dare but to whisper a syllable——

WORM (laughs). Then your excellency will no doubt expose my forgeries!

[Exit.

PRESIDENT. Yes, yes, you are safe enough! I hold you in the fetters of your own knavery, like a trout on the hook!

Enter SERVANT.

SERVANT. Marshal Kalb——

PRESIDENT. The very man I wished to see. Introduce him.

[Exit SERVANT.

SCENE VI.

MARSHAL KALB, in a rich but tasteless court-dress, with Chamberlain's keys, two watches, sword, three-cornered hat, and hair dressed a la Herisson. He bustles up to the PRESIDENT, and diffuses a strong scent of musk through the whole theatre—PRESIDENT.

MARSHAL. Ah! good morning, my dear baron! Quite delighted to see you again—pray forgive my not having paid my respects to you at an earlier hour—the most pressing business—the duke's bill of fare—invitation cards—arrangements for the sledge party to-day—ah!—besides it was necessary for me to be at the levee, to inform his highness of the state of the weather.

PRESIDENT. True, marshal! Such weighty concerns were not to be neglected!

MARSHAL. Then a rascally tailor, too, kept me waiting for him!

PRESIDENT. And yet ready to the moment?

MARSHAL. Nor is that all! One misfortune follows at the heels of the other to-day! Only hear me!

PRESIDENT (absent). Can it be possible?

MARSHAL. Just listen! Scarce had I quitted my carriage, when the horses became restive, and began to plunge and rear—only imagine!—splashed my breeches all over with mud! What was to be done? Fancy, my dear baron, just fancy yourself for a moment in my predicament! There I stood! the hour was late! a day's journey to return—yet to appear before his highness in this—good heavens! What did I bethink me of? I pretended to faint! They bundle me into my carriage! I drive home like

mad— change my dress—hasten back—and only think!—in spite of all this I was the first person in the antechamber! What say you to that?

PRESIDENT. A most admirable impromptu of mortal wit—but tell me, Kalb, did you speak to the duke?

MARSHAL (importantly). Full twenty minutes and a half.

PRESIDENT. Indeed? Then doubtless you have important news to impart to me?

MARSHAL (seriously, after a pause of reflection). His highness wears a Merde d'Oye beaver to-day.

PRESIDENT. God bless me!—and yet, marshal, I have even greater news to tell you. Lady Milford will soon become my daughter-in-law. That, I think will be new to you?

MARSHAL. Is it possible! And is it already agreed upon?

PRESIDENT. It is settled, marshal—and you would oblige me by forthwith waiting upon her ladyship, and preparing her to receive Ferdinand's visit. You have full liberty, also, to circulate the news of my son's approaching nuptials.

MARSHAL. My dear friend! With consummate pleasure! What can I desire more? I fly to the baroness this moment. Adieu! (Embracing him.) In less than three-quarters of an hour it shall be known throughout the town. [Skips off.

PRESIDENT (smiling contemptuously). How can people say that such creatures are of no use in the world? Now, then, Master Ferdinand must either consent or give the whole town the lie. (Rings—WORM enters.) Send my son hither. (WORM retires; the PRESIDENT walks up and down, full of thought.)

SCENE VII.

PRESIDENT—FERDINAND.

FERDINAND. In obedience to your commands, sir——

PRESIDENT. Ay, if I desire the presence of my son, I must command it—Ferdinand, I have observed you for some time past, and find no longer that open vivacity of youth which once so delighted me. An unusual sorrow broods upon your features; you shun your father; you shun society. For shame, Ferdinand! At your age a thousand irregularities are easier forgiven than one instant of idle melancholy. Leave this to me, my son! Leave the care of your future happiness to my direction, and study only to co-operate with my designs—come, Ferdinand, embrace me!

FERDINAND. You are most gracious to-day, father!

PRESIDENT. "To-day," you rogue? and your "to-day" with such a vinegar look? (Seriously.) Ferdinand! For whose sake have I trod that dangerous path which leads to the affections of the prince? For whose sake have I forever destroyed my peace with Heaven and my conscience? Hear me, Ferdinand—I am speaking to my son. For whom have I paved the way by the removal of my predecessor? a deed which the more deeply gores my inward feelings the more carefully I conceal the dagger from the world! Tell me, Ferdinand, for whose sake have I done all this?

FERDINAND (recoiling with horror). Surely not for mine, father, not for mine? Surely not on me can fall the bloody reflection of this murder? By my Almighty Maker, it were better never to have been born than to be the pretext for such a crime!

PRESIDENT. What sayest thou? How? But I will attribute these strange notions to thy romantic brain, Ferdinand; let me not lose my temper— ungrateful boy! Thus dost thou repay me for my sleepless nights? Thus for my restless anxiety to promote thy good? Thus for the never-dying scorpion of my conscience? Upon me must fall the burden of responsibility; upon me the curse, the thunderbolt of the Judge. Thou receivest thy fortune from another's hand—the crime is not attached to the inheritance.

FERDINAND (extending his right hand towards heaven). Here I solemnly abjure an inheritance which must ever remind me of a parent's guilt!

PRESIDENT. Hear me, sirrah! and do not incense me! Were you left to your own direction you would crawl through life in the dust.

FERDINAND. Oh! better, father, far, far better, than to crawl about a throne!

PRESIDENT (repressing his anger). So! Then compulsion must make you sensible of your good fortune! To that point, which, with the utmost striving a thousand others fail to reach, you have been exalted in your very sleep. At twelve you received a commission; at twenty a command. I have succeeded in obtaining for you the duke's patronage. He bids you lay aside your uniform, and share with me his favor and his confidence. He spoke of titles—embassies—of honors bestowed but upon few. A glorious prospect spreads itself before you! The direct path to the place next the throne lies open to you! Nay, to the throne itself, if the actual power of ruling is equivalent to the mere symbol. Does not that idea awaken your ambition?

FERDINAND. No! My ideas of greatness and happiness differ widely from yours. Your happiness is but seldom known, except by the misery of others. Envy, terror, hatred are the melancholy mirrors in which the smiles of princes are reflected. Tears, curses, and the wailings of despair, the horrid banquet that feasts your supposed elect of fortune; intoxicated with these they rush headlong into eternity, staggering to the throne of judgment. My ideas of happiness teach me to look for its fountain in myself! All my wishes lie centered in my heart!

PRESIDENT. Masterly! Inimitable! Admirable! The first schooling I have received these thirty years! Pity that the brain at fifty should be so dull at learning! But—that such talent may not rust, I will place one by your side on whom you can practise your harlequinade follies at pleasure. You will resolve—resolve this very day—to take a wife.

FERDINAND (starting back amazed). Father!

PRESIDENT. Answer me not. I have made proposals, in your name, to Lady Milford. You will instantly determine upon going to her, and declaring yourself her

bridegroom.

FERDINAND. Lady Milford! father?

PRESIDENT. I presume she is not unknown to you!

FERDINAND (passionately). To what brothel is she unknown through the dukedom? But pardon me, dearest father! It is ridiculous to imagine that your proposal can be serious. Would you call yourself father of that infamous son who married a licensed prostitute?

PRESIDENT. Nay, more. I would ask her hand myself, if she would take a man of fifty. Would not you call yourself that infamous father's son?

FERDINAND. No! as God lives! that would I not!

PRESIDENT. An audacity, by my honor! which I pardon for its excessive singularity.

FERDINAND. I entreat you, father, release me from a demand which would render it insupportable to call myself your son.

PRESIDENT. Are you distracted, boy? What reasonable man would not thirst after a distinction which makes him, as one of a trio, the equal and co-partner of his sovereign?

FERDINAND. You are quite an enigma to me, father! "A distinction," do you call it? A distinction to share that with a prince, wherein he places himself on a level with the meanest of his subjects? (The PRESIDENT bursts into a loud laugh.) You may scoff—I must submit to it in a father. With what countenance should I support the gaze of the meanest laborer, who at least receives an undivided person as the portion of his bride? With what countenance should I present myself before the world? before the prince? nay, before the harlot herself, who seeks to wash out in my shame the brandmarks of her honor?

PRESIDENT. Where in the world couldst thou collect such notions, boy?

FERDINAND. I implore you, father, by heaven and earth! By thus sacrificing your only son you can never become so happy as you will make him miserable! If my life can be a step to your advancement, dispose of it. My life you gave me; and I will never hesitate a moment to sacrifice it wholly to your welfare. But my honor, father! If you deprive me of this, the giving me life was a mere trick of wanton cruelty, and I must equally curse the parent and the pander.

PRESIDENT (tapping him on the shoulder in a friendly manner). That's as it should be, my dear boy! Now I see that you are a brave and noble fellow, and worthy of the first woman in the dukedom. You shall have her. This very day you shall be affianced to the Countess of Ostheim.

FERDINAND (in new disorder). Is this, then, destined to be the hour of my destruction?

PRESIDENT (regarding him with an eye of suspicion). In this union, I imagine, you can have no objection on the score of honor?

FERDINAND. None, father, none whatever. Frederica of Ostheim would make any other the happiest of men. (Aside, in the greatest agitation.) His kindness rends in pieces that remnant of my heart which his cruelty left unwounded.

PRESIDENT (his eye still fixed upon him). I expect your gratitude, Ferdinand!

FERDINAND (rushes towards him and kisses his hands). Father, your goodness awakens every spark of sentiment in my bosom. Father! receive my warmest thanks for your kind intentions. Your choice is unexceptionable! But I cannot—I dare not—pity me, father, I never can love the countess.

PRESIDENT (draws back). Ha! ha! now I've caught you, young gentleman! The cunning fox has tumbled into the trap. Oh, you artful hypocrite! It was not then honor which made you refuse Lady Milford? It was not the woman, but the nuptials which alarmed you! (FERDINAND stands petrified for a moment; then recovers himself and prepares to quit the chamber hastily.) Whither now? Stay, sir. Is this the

respect due to your father? (FERDINAND returns slowly.) Her ladyship expects you. The duke has my promise! Both court and city believe all is settled. If thou makest me appear a liar, boy! If, before the duke—the lady—the court and city—thou shouldst make me appear a liar!—tremble, boy!—or when I have gained information of certain circumstances—how now? Why does the color so suddenly forsake your cheeks?

2pb024 (110K)

FERDINAND (pale and trembling). How? What? Nothing—it is nothing, my father!

PRESIDENT (casting upon him a dreadful look). Should there be cause. If I should discover the source whence this obstinacy proceeds! Boy! boy! the very suspicion drives me distracted! Leave me this moment. 'Tis now the hour of parade. As soon as the word is given, go thou to her ladyship. At my nod a dukedom trembles; we shall see whether a disobedient son dare dispute my will! (Going, returns.) Remember, sir! fail not to wait on Lady Milford, or dread my anger!

[Exit.

FERDINAND (awakens, as if from a dream). Is he gone? Was that a father's voice? Yes, I will go—I will see her—I will say such things to her—hold such a mirror before her eyes. Then, base woman, shouldst thou still demand my hand—in the presence of the assembled nobles, the military, and the people—gird thyself with all the pride of thy native Britain—I, a German youth, will spurn thee!

[Exit.

ACT II.

SCENE I.—A room in LADY MILFORD'S house. On the right of the stage

stands a sofa, on the left a pianoforte.

LADY MILFORD, in a loose but elegant negligee, is running her hand over the keys of the pianoforte as SOPHY advances from the window.

SOPHY. The parade is over, and the officers are separating, but I see no signs of the major.

LADY MILFORD (rises and walks up and down the room in visible agitation). I know not what ails me to-day, Sophy! I never felt so before—you say you do not see him! It is evident enough that he is by no means impatient for this meeting—my heart feels oppressed as if by some heavy crime. Go! Sophy, order the most spirited horse in the stable to be saddled for me—I must away into the open air where I may look on the blue sky and hear the busy hum of man. I must dispel this gloominess by change and motion.

SOPHY. If you feel out of spirits, my lady, why not invite company! Let the prince give an entertainment here, or have the ombre table brought to you. If the prince and all his court were at my beck and call I would let no whim or fancy trouble me!

LADY MILFORD (throwing herself on the couch). Pray, spare me. I would gladly give a jewel in exchange for every hour's respite from the infliction of such company! I always have my rooms tapestried with these creatures! Narrow-minded, miserable beings, who are quite shocked if by chance a candid and heartfelt word should escape one's lips! and stand aghast as though they saw an apparition; slaves, moved by a single puppet-wire, which I can govern as easily as the threads of my embroidery! What can I have in common with such insipid wretches, whose souls, like their watches, are regulated by machinery? What pleasure can I have in the society of people whose answers to my questions I know beforehand? How can I hold communion with men who dare not venture on an opinion of their own lest it should differ from mine! Away with them—I care not to ride a horse that has not spirit enough to champ the bit! (Goes to the window.)

SOPHY. But surely, my lady, you except the prince, the handsomest, the wittiest, and the most gallant man in all his duchy.

LADY MILFORD (returning). Yes, in his duchy, that was well said—and it is only a royal duchy, Sophy, that could in the least excuse my weakness. You say the world envies me! Poor thing! It should rather pity me! Believe me, of all who drink of the streams of royal bounty there is none more miserable than the sovereign's favorite, for he who is great and mighty in the eyes of others comes to her but as the humble suppliant! It is true that by the talisman of his greatness he can realize every wish of my heart as readily as the magician calls forth the fairy palace from the depths of the earth! He can place the luxuries of both Indies upon my table, turn the barren wilderness to a paradise, can bid the broad rivers of his land play in triumphal arches over my path, or expend all the hard-earned gains of his subjects in a single feu-de-joie to my honor. But can he school his heart to respond to one great or ardent emotion? Can he extort one noble thought from his weak and indigent brain? Alas! my heart is thirsting amid all this ocean of splendor; what avail, then, a thousand virtuous sentiments when I am only permitted to indulge in the pleasures of the senses.

SOFHY (regarding her with surprise). Dear lady, you amaze me! how long is it since I entered your service?

LADY MILFORD. Do you ask because this is the first day on which you have learnt to know me? I have sold my honor to the prince, it is true, but my heart is still my own—a heart, dear Sophy, which even yet may be worth the acceptance of an honorable man—a heart over which the pestilential blast of courtly corruption has passed as the breath which for a moment dims the mirror's lustre. Believe me my spirit would long since have revolted against this miserable thraldom could my ambition have submitted to see another advanced to my place.

SOPHY. And could a heart like yours so readily surrender itself to mere ambition?

LADY MILFORD (with energy). Has it not already been avenged? nay, is it not even at this very moment making me pay a heavy atonement (with emphasis laying her hand on SOPHY'S shoulder)? Believe me, Sophy, woman has but to choose between ruling and serving, but the utmost joy of power is a worthless possession if the mightier joy of being slave to the man we love be denied us.

SOPHY. A truth, dear lady, which I could least of all have expected to hear from your lips!

LADY MILFORD. And wherefore, Sophy? Does not woman show, by her childish mode of swaying the sceptre of power, that she is only fit to go in leading-strings! Have not my fickle humors—my eager pursuit of wild dissipation—betrayed to you that I sought in these to stifle the still wilder throbbings of my heart?

SOPHY (starting back with surprise). This from you, my lady?

LADY MILFORD (continuing with increasing energy). Appease these throbbings. Give me the man in whom my thoughts are centered—the man I adore, without whom life were worse than death. Let me but hear from his lips that the tears of love with which my eyes are bedewed outvie the gems that sparkle in my hair, and I will throw at the feet of the prince his heart and his dukedom, and flee to the uttermost parts of the earth with the man of my love!

SOPHY (looking at her in alarm). Heavens! my lady! control your emotion——

LADY MILFORD (in surprise). You change color! To what have I given utterance? Yet, since I have said thus much, let me say still more—let my confidence be a pledge of your fidelity,—I will tell you all.

SOPHY (looking anxiously around). I fear my lady—I dread it—I have heard enough!

LADY MILFORD. This alliance with the major—you, like the rest of the world, believe to be the result of a court intrigue—Sophy, blush not—be not ashamed of me—it is the work of—my love!

SOPHY. Heavens! As I suspected!

LADY MILFORD. Yes, Sophy, they are all deceived. The weak prince—the diplomatic baron—the silly marshal—each and all of these are firmly convinced that this marriage is a most infallible means of preserving me to the prince, and of uniting us still more firmly! But this will prove the very means of separating us forever, and bursting asunder these execrable bonds. The cheater cheated—outwitted by a weak woman. Ye yourselves are leading me to the man of my heart—this was all I sought. Let him but once be mine—be but mine—then, oh, then, a long farewell to all this despicable pomp!

SCENE II.—An old valet of the DUKE'S, with a casket of jewels. The

former.

VALET. His serene highness begs your ladyship's acceptance of these jewels as a nuptial present. They have just arrived from Venice.

LADY MILFORD (opens the casket and starts back in astonishment). What did these jewels cost the duke?

VALET. Nothing!

LADY MILFORD. Nothing! Are you beside yourself? (retreating a step or two.) Old man! you fix on me a look as though you would pierce me through. Did you say these precious jewels cost nothing?

VALET. Yesterday seven thousand children of the land left their homes to go to America—they pay for all.

LADY MILFORD (sets the casket suddenly down, and paces up and down the room; after a pause, to the VALET). What distresses you, old man? you are weeping!

VALET (wiping his eyes, and trembling violently). Yes, for these jewels. My two sons are among the number.

LADY MILFORD. But they went not by compulsion?

VALET (laughing bitterly). Oh! dear no! they were all volunteers! There were certainly some few forward lads who pushed to the front of the ranks and inquired of the colonel at what price the prince sold his subjects per yoke, upon which our gracious ruler ordered the regiments to be marched to the parade, and the malcontents to be shot. We heard the report of the muskets, and saw brains and blood spurting about us, while the whole band shouted—"Hurrah for America!"

LADY MILFORD. And I heard nothing of all this! saw nothing!

VALET. No, most gracious lady, because you rode off to the bear-hunt with his highness just at the moment the drum was beating for the march. 'Tis a pity your ladyship missed the pleasure of the sight—here, crying children might be seen following their wretched father—there, a mother distracted with grief was rushing forward to throw her tender infant among the bristling bayonets—here, a bride and bridegroom were separated with the sabre's stroke—and there, graybeards were seen to stand in despair, and fling their very crutches after their sons in the New World —and, in the midst of all this, the drums were beating loudly, that the prayers and lamentations might not reach the Almighty ear.

LADY MILFORD (rising in violent emotion). Away with these jewels—their rays pierce my bosom like the flames of hell. Moderate your grief, old man. Your children shall be restored to you. You shall again clasp them to your bosom.

VALET (with warmth). Yes, heaven knows! We shall meet again! As they passed the city gates they turned round and cried aloud: "God bless our wives and children—long life to our gracious sovereign. At the day of judgment we shall all meet again!"

LADY MILFORD (walks up and down the room in great agitation). Horrible! most

horrible!—and they would persuade me that I had dried up all the tears in the land. Now, indeed, my eyes are fearfully opened! Go—tell the prince that I will thank him in person! (As the valet is going she drops the purse into his hat.) And take this as a recompense for the truth you have revealed to me.

VALET (throws the purse with contempt on the table). Keep it, with your other treasures. [Exit.

LADY MILFORD (looking after him in astonishment). Sophy, follow him, and inquire his name. His sons shall be restored to him. (SOPHY goes. LADY MILFORD becomes absorbed in thought. Pause. Then to SOPHY as she returns.) Was there not a report that some town on the frontier had been destroyed by fire, and four hundred families reduced to beggary? (She rings.)

SOPHY. What has made your ladyship just think of that? Yes—such was certainly the fact, and most of these poor creatures are either compelled to serve their creditors as bondsmen, or are dragging out their miserable days in the depths of the royal silver mines.

Enter a SERVANT. What are your ladyship's commands?

LADY MILFORD (giving him the case of jewels). Carry this to my treasurer without delay. Let the jewels be sold and the money distributed among the four hundred families who were ruined by the fire.

SOPHY. Consider, my lady, the risk you run of displeasing his highness.

LADY MILFORD (with dignity). Should I encircle my brows with the curses of his subjects? (Makes a sign to the servant, who goes away with the jewel case.) Wouldst thou have me dragged to the earth by the dreadful weight of the tears of misery? Nay! Sophy, it is better far to wear false jewels on the brow, and to have the consciousness of a good deed within the breast!

SOPHY. But diamonds of such value! Why not rather give some that are less precious? Truly, my lady, it is an unpardonable act.

LADY MILFORD. Foolish girl! For this deed more brilliants and pearls will flow for me in one moment than kings ever wore in their richest diadems! Ay, and infinitely more beautiful!

SERVANT enters. Major von Walter!

SOPHY (running hastily to the help of LADY MILFORD, who seems fainting). Heavens, my lady, you change color!

LADY MILFORD. The first man who ever made me tremble. (To the SERVANT.) I am not well—but stay—what said the major?—how? O Sophy! I look sadly ill, do I not?

SOPHY. I entreat you, my lady, compose yourself.

SERVANT. Is it your ladyship's wish that I should deny you to the major?

LADY MILFORD (hesitating). Tell him—I shall be happy to see him. (Exit SERVANT.) What shall I say to him, Sophy? how shall I receive him? I will be silent—alas! I fear he will despise my weakness. He will—ah, me! what sad forebodings oppress my heart! You are going Sophy! stay, yet—no, no—he comes—yes, stay, stay with me——

SOPHY. Collect yourself, my lady, the major——

SCENE III.—FERDINAND VON WALTER. The former.

FERDINAND (with a slight bow). I hope I do not interrupt your ladyship?

LADY MILFORD (with visible emotion). Not at all, baron—not in the least.

FERDINAND. I wait on your ladyship, at the command of my father.

LADY MILFORD. Therein I am his debtor.

FERDINAND. And I am charged to announce to you that our marriage is determined on. Thus far I fulfil the commission of my father.

LADY MILFORD (changing color and trembling). And not of your own heart?

FERDINAND. Ministers and panders have no concern with hearts.

LADY MILFORD (almost speechless with emotion). And you yourself—have you nothing to add?

FERDINAND (looking at SOPHY). Much! my lady, much!

LADY MILFORD (motions to SOPHY to withdraw). May I beg you to take a seat by my side?

FERDINAND. I will be brief, lady.

LADY MILFORD. Well!

FERDINAND. I am a man of honor!

LADY MILFORD. Whose worth I know how to appreciate.

FERDINAND. I am of noble birth!

LADY MILFORD. Noble as any in the land!

FERDINAND. A soldier!

LADY MILFORD (in a soft, affectionate manner). Thus far you have only enumerated advantages which you share in common with many others. Why are you so silent regarding those noble qualities which are peculiarly your own?

FERDINAND (coldly). Here they would be out of place.

LADY MILFORD (with increasing agitation). In what light am I to understand this prelude?

FERDINAND (slowly, and with emphasis). As the protest of the voice of honor—should you think proper to enforce the possession of my hand!

LADY MILFORD (starting with indignation). Major von Walter! What language is this?

FERDINAND (calmly). The language of my heart—of my unspotted name—and of

this true sword.

LADY MILFORD. Your sword was given to you by the prince.

FERDINAND. 'Twas the state which gave it, by the hands of the prince. God bestowed on me an honest heart. My nobility is derived from a line of ancestry extending through centuries.

LADY MILFORD. But the authority of the prince——

FERDINAND (with warmth). Can he subvert the laws of humanity, or stamp glory on our actions as easily as he stamps value on the coin of his realm? He himself is not raised above the laws of honor, although he may stifle its whispers with gold—and shroud his infamy in robes of ermine! But enough of this, lady!—it is too late now to talk of blasted prospects—or of the desecration of ancestry—or of that nice sense of honor—girded on with my sword—or of the world's opinion. All these I am ready to trample under foot as soon as you have proved to me that the reward is not inferior to the sacrifice.

LADY MILFORD (in extreme distress turning away). Major! I have not deserved this!

FERDINAND (taking her hand). Pardon me, lady—we are without witnesses. The circumstance which brings us together to-day—and only to-day— justifies me, nay, compels me, to reveal to you my most secret feelings. I cannot comprehend, lady, how a being gifted with so much beauty and spirit—qualities which a man cannot fail to admire—could throw herself away on a prince incapable of valuing aught beyond her mere person—and yet not feel some visitings of shame, when she steps forth to offer her heart to a man of honor!

LADY MILFORD (looking at him with an air of pride). Say on, sir, without reserve.

FERDINAND. You call yourself an Englishwoman—pardon me, lady, I can hardly believe you. The free-born daughter of the freest people under heaven—a people too proud to imitate even foreign virtues—would surely never have sold herself to

foreign vices! It is not possible, lady, that you should be a native of Britain, unless indeed your heart be as much below as the sons of Britannia vaunt theirs to be above all others!

LADY MILFORD. Have you done, sir?

FERDINAND. Womanly vanity—passions—temperament—a natural appetite for pleasure—all these might, perhaps, be pleaded in extenuation—for virtue often survives honor—and many who once trod the paths of infamy have subsequently reconciled themselves to society by the performance of noble deeds, and have thus thrown a halo of glory round their evil doings—but if this were so, whence comes the monstrous extortion that now oppresses the people with a weight never before known? This I would ask in the name of my fatherland—and now, lady, I have done!

LADY MILFORD (with gentleness and dignity). This is the first time, Baron von Walter, that words such as these have been addressed to me—and you are the only man to whom I would in return have vouchsafed an answer. Your rejection of my hand commands my esteem. Your invectives against my heart have my full forgiveness, for I will not believe you sincere, since he who dares hold such language to a woman, that could ruin him in an instant—must either believe that she possesses a great and noble heart— or must be the most desperate of madmen. That you ascribe the misery of this land to me may He forgive, before whose throne you, and I, and the prince shall one day meet! But, as in my person you have insulted the daughter of Britain, so in vindication of my country's honor you must hear my exculpation.

FERDINAND (leaning on his sword). Lady, I listen with interest.

LADY MILFORD. Hear, then, that which I have never yet breathed to mortal, and which none but yourself will ever learn from my lips. I am not the low adventurer you suppose me, sir! Nay! did I listen to the voice of pride, I might even boast

myself to be of royal birth; I am descended from the unhappy Thomas Norfolk, who paid the penalty of his adherence to the cause of Mary, Queen of Scots, by a bloody death on the scaffold. My father, who, as royal chamberlain, had once enjoyed his sovereign's confidence, was accused of maintaining treasonable relations with France, and was condemned and executed by a decree of the Parliament of Great Britain. Our estates were confiscated, and our family banished from their native soil. My mother died on the day of my father's execution, and I—then a girl of fourteen—fled to Germany with one faithful attendant. A casket of jewels, and this crucifix, placed in my bosom by my dying mother, were all my fortune!

[FERDINAND, absorbed in thought, surveys LADY MILFORD with looks of compassion and sympathy.

LADY MILFORD (continuing with increased emotion). Without a name— without protection or property—a foreigner and an orphan, I reached Hamburg. I had learnt nothing but a little French, and to run my fingers over the embroidery frame, or the keys of my harpsichord. But, though I was ignorant of all useful arts, I had learnt full well to feast off gold and silver, to sleep beneath silken hangings, to bid attendant pages obey my voice, and to listen to the honeyed words of flattery and adulation. Six years passed away in sorrow and in sadness—the remnant of my scanty means was fast melting away—my old and faithful nurse was no more—and— and then it was that fate brought your sovereign to Hamburg. I was walking beside the shores of the Elbe, wondering, as I gazed on its waters, whether they or my sorrows were the deeper, when the duke crossed my path. He followed me, traced me to my humble abode, and, casting himself at my feet, vowed that he loved me. (She pauses, and, after struggling with her emotion, continues in a voice choked by tears.) All the images of my happy childhood were revived in hues of delusive brightness—while the future lowered before me black as the grave. My heart panted for communion with another—and I sank into the arms opened to receive me! (Turning away.) And now you condemn me!

FERDINAND (greatly agitated, follows her and leads her back). Lady! heavens! what do I hear! What have I done? The guilt of my conduct is unveiled in all its deformity! It is impossible you should forgive me.

LADY MILFORD (endeavoring to overcome her emotion). Hear me on! The prince, it is true, overcame my unprotected youth, but the blood of the Howards still glowed within my veins, and never ceased to reproach me; that I, the descendant of royal ancestors, should stoop to be a prince's paramour! Pride and destiny still contended in my bosom, when the duke brought me hither, where SCENEs the most revolting burst upon my sight! The voluptuousness of the great is an insatiable hyena—the craving of whose appetite demands perpetual victims. Fearfully had it laid this country waste separating bridegroom and bride—and tearing asunder even the holy bonds of marriage. Here it had destroyed the tranquil happiness of a whole family—there the blighting pest had seized on a young and inexperienced heart, and expiring victims called down bitter imprecations on the heads of the undoers. It was then that I stepped forth between the lamb and the tiger, and, in a moment of dalliance, extorted from the duke his royal promise that this revolting licentiousness should cease.

FERDINAND (pacing the room in violent agitation). No more, lady! No more!

LADY MILFORD. This gloomy period was succeeded by one still more gloomy. The court swarmed with French and Italian adventurers—the royal sceptre became the plaything of Parisian harlots, and the people writhed and bled beneath their capricious rule. Each had her day. I saw them sink before me, one by one, for I was the most skilful coquette of all! It was then that I seized and wielded the tyrant's sceptre whilst he slumbered voluptuously in my embrace—then, Walter, thy country, for the first time, felt the hand of humanity, and reposed in confidence on my bosom. (A pause, during which she gazes upon him with tenderness.) Oh! 'that the man, by whom, of all others, I least wish to be misunderstood, should compel me

to turn braggart and parade my unobtrusive virtues to the glare of admiration! Walter, I have burst open the doors of prisons—I have cancelled death-warrants and shortened many a frightful eternity upon the galleys. Into wounds beyond my power to heal I have at least poured soothing balsam. I have hurled mighty villains to the earth, and oft with the tears of a harlot saved the cause of innocence from impending ruin. Ah! young man, how sweet were then my feelings! How proudly did these actions teach my heart to support the reproaches of my noble blood! And now comes the man who alone can repay me for all that I have suffered—the man, whom perhaps my relenting destiny created as a compensation for former sorrows—the man, whom with ardent affection, I already clasped in my dreams.

FERDINAND (interrupting her). Hold, lady, hold! You exceed the bounds of our conference! You undertook to clear yourself from reproach, and you make me a criminal! Spare me, I beseech you! Spare a heart already overwhelmed by confusion and remorse!

LADY MILFORD (grasping his hand). You must hear me, Walter! hear me now or never. Long enough has the heroine sustained me; now you must feel the whole weight of these tears! Mark me, Walter! Should an unfortunate—impetuously, irresistibly attracted towards you—clasp you to her bosom full of unutterable, inextinguishable love—should this unfortunate—bowed down with the consciousness of shame—disgusted with vicious pleasures—heroically exalted by the inspiration of virtue—throw herself—thus into your arms (embracing him in an eager and supplicating manner); should she do this, and you still pronounce the freezing word "Honor!" Should she pray that through you she might be saved—that through you she might be restored to her hopes of heaven! (Turning away her head, and speaking in a hollow, faltering voice.) Or should she, her prayer refused, listen to the voice of despair, and to escape from your image plunge herself into yet more fearful depths of infamy and vice——

FERDINAND (breaking from her in great emotion). No, by heaven! This is more than I can endure! Lady, I am compelled—Heaven and earth compels me—to make the honest avowal of my sentiments and situation.

LADY MILFORD (hastening from him). Oh! not now! By all that is holy I entreat you—spare me in this dreadful moment when my lacerated heart bleeds from a thousand wounds. Be your decision life or death—I dare not—I will not hear it!

FERDINAND. I entreat you, lady! I insist! What I have to say will mitigate my offence, and warmly plead your forgiveness for the past. I have been deceived in you, lady. I expected—nay, I wished to find you deserving my contempt. I came determined to insult you, and to make myself the object of your hate. Happy would it have been for us both had my purpose succeeded! (He pauses; then proceeds in a gentle and faltering voice.) Lady, I love!—I love a maid of humble birth—Louisa Miller is her name, the daughter of a music-master. (LADY MILFORD turns away pale and greatly agitated.) I know into what an abyss I plunge myself; but, though prudence bids me conceal my passion, honor overpowers its precepts. I am the criminal—I first destroyed the golden calm of Louisa's innocence—I lulled her heart with aspiring hopes, and surrendered it, like a betrayer, a prey to the wildest of passions. You will bid me remember my rank—my birth—my father—schemes of aggrandisement. But in vain—I love! My hopes become more fervent as the breach widens between nature and the mere conventions of society— between my resolution and worldly prejudices! We shall see whether love or interest is victorious. (LADY MILFORD during this has retired to the extreme end of the apartment, and covers her face with both hands. FERDINAND approaches her.) Have you aught to answer, lady?

LADY MILFORD (in a tone of intense suffering). Nothing! Nothing! but that you destroy yourself and me—and, with us yet a third.

FERDINAND. A third?

LADY MILFORD. Never can you marry Louisa; never can you be happy with me. We shall all be the victims of your father's rashness. I can never hope to possess the heart of a husband who has been forced to give me his hand.

FERDINAND. Forced, lady? Forced? And yet given? Will you enforce a hand without a heart? Will you tear from a maiden a man who is the whole world to her? Will you tear a maiden from a man who has centered all his hopes of happiness on her alone? Will you do this, lady? you who but a moment before were the lofty, noble-minded daughter of Britain?

LADY MILFORD. I will because I must! (earnestly and firmly). My passions, Walter, overcome my tenderness for you. My honor has no alternative. Our union is the talk of the whole city. Every eye, every shaft of ridicule is bent against me. 'Twere a stain which time could never efface should a subject of the prince reject my hand! Appease your father if you have the power! Defend yourself as you best may! my resolution is taken. The mine is fired and I abide the issue.

[Exit. FERDINAND remains in speechless astonishment for some moments; then rushes wildly out.

SCENE IV.—Miller's House.

MILLER meeting LOUISA and MRS. MILLER.

MILLER. Ay! ay! I told you how it would be!

LOUISA (hastening to him with anxiety). What, father? What?

MILLER (running up and down the room). My cloak, there. Quick, quick! I must be beforehand with him. My cloak, I say! Yes, yes! this was just what I expected!

LOUISA. For God's sake, father! tell me?

MRS. MILLER. What is the matter, Miller? What alarms you?

MILLER (throwing down his wig). Let that go to the friezer. What is the matter,

indeed? And my beard, too, is nearly half an inch long. What's the matter? What do you think, you old carrion. The devil has broke loose, and you may look out for squalls.

MRS. MILLER. There, now, that's just the way! When anything goes wrong it is always my fault.

MILLER. Your fault? Yes, you brimstone fagot! and whose else should it be? This very morning when you were holding forth about that confounded major, did I not say then what would be the consequence? That knave, Worm, has blabbed.

MRS. MILLER. Gracious heavens! But how do you know?

MILLER. How do I know? Look yonder! a messenger of the minister is already at the door inquiring for the fiddler.

LOUISA (turning pale, and sitting down). Oh! God! I am in agony!

MILLER. And you, too, with that languishing air? (laughs bitterly). But, right! Right! There is an old saying that where the devil keeps a breeding-cage he is sure to hatch a handsome daughter.

MRS. MILLER. But how do you know that Louisa is in question? You may have been recommended to the duke; he may want you in his orchestra.

MILLER (jumping up, and seizing his fiddlestick). May the sulphurous rain of hell consume thee! Orchestra, indeed! Ay, where you, you old procuress, shall howl the treble whilst my smarting back groans the base (Throwing himself upon a chair.) Oh! God in heaven!

LOUISA (sinks on the sofa, pale as death). Father! Mother! Oh! my heart sinks within me.

MILLER (starting up with anger). But let me only lay hands on that infernal quill-driver! I'll make him skip—be it in this world or the next; if I don't pound him to a jelly, body and soul; if I don't write all the Ten Commandments, the seven

Penitential Psalms, the five books of Moses, and the whole of the Prophets upon his rascally hide so distinctly that the blue hieroglyphics shall be legible at the day of judgment—if I don't, may I——

MRS. MILLER. Yes, yes, curse and swear your hardest! That's the way to frighten the devil! Oh, dear! Oh, dear! Oh, gracious heavens! What shall we do? Who can advise us? Speak, Miller, speak; this silence distracts me! (She runs screaming up and down the room.)

MILLER. I will instantly to the minister! I will open my mouth boldly, and tell him all from beginning to end. You knew it before me, and ought to have given me a hint of what was going on! The girl might yet have been advised. It might still have been time to save her! But, no! There was something for your meddling and making, and you must needs add fuel to the fire. Now you have made your bed you may lie on it. As you have brewed so you may drink; I shall take my daughter under my arm and be off with her over the borders.

SCENE V.

MILLER, MRS. MILLER, LOUISA, FERDINND.

(All speaking together).

FERDINAND (rushes in, terrified, and out of breath). Has my father been here? LOUISA (starts back in horror). His father? Gracious heaven! MRS. MILLER (wringing her hands). The minister here? Then it's all over with us! MILLER (laughs bitterly). Thank God! Thank God! Now comes our benefit!

FERDINAND (rushing towards LOUISA, and clasping her in his arms). Mine thou art, though heaven and hell were placed between us!

LOUISA. I am doomed! Speak, Ferdinand! Did you not utter that dreaded name? Your father?

FERDINAND. Be not alarmed! the danger has passed! I have thee again! again thou hast me! Let me regain my breath on thy dear bosom. It was a dreadful hour!

LOUISA. What was a dreadful hour? Answer me, Ferdinand! I die with apprehension!

FERDINAND (drawing back, gazing upon her earnestly, then in a solemn tone). An hour, Louisa, when another's form stepped between my heart and thee—an hour in which my love grew pale before my conscience—when Louisa ceased to be all in all to Ferdinand!

[LOUISA sinks back upon her chair, and conceals her face.

(FERDINAND stands before her in speechless agitation, then turns away from her suddenly and exclaims). Never, never! Baroness, 'tis impossible! you ask too much! Never can I sacrifice this innocence at your shrine. No, by the eternal God! I cannot recall my oath, which speaks to me from thy soul—thrilling eyes louder than the thunders of heaven! Behold, lady! Inhuman father, look on this! Would you have me destroy this angel? Shall my perfidy kindle a hell in this heavenly bosom? (turning towards her with firmness). No! I will bear her to thy throne, Almighty Judge! Thy voice shall declare if my affection be a crime. (He grasps her hand, and raises her from the sofa.) Courage, my beloved!—thou hast conquered—and I come forth a victor from the terrible conflict!

LOUISA. No, no, Ferdinand, conceal nothing from me! Declare boldly the dreadful decree! You named your father! You spoke of the baroness! The shivering of death seizes my heart! 'Tis said she is about to be married!

FERDINAND (quite overcome, throws himself at her feet). Yes, and to me, dear unfortunate. Such is my father's will!

LOUISA (after a deep pause, in a tremulous voice, but with assumed resignation). Well! Why am I thus affrighted? Has not my dear father often told me that you never could be mine? But I was obstinate, and believed him not. (A second pause;

she falls weeping into her father's arms.) Father, thy daughter is thine own again! Father, forgive me! 'Twas not your child's fault that the dream was so heavenly—the waking so terrible!

MILLER. Louisa! Louisa! O merciful heaven! she has lost her senses! My daughter! My poor child! Curses upon thy seducer! Curses upon the pandering mother who threw thee in his way!

MRS. MILLER (weeping on LOUISA'S neck). Daughter, do I deserve this curse? God forgive you, major! What has this poor lamb done that you bring this misery upon her?

FERDINAND (with resolution). I will unravel the meshes of these intrigues. I will burst asunder these iron chains of prejudice. As a free-born man will I make my choice, and crush these insect souls with the colossal force of my love! [Going.

LOUISA (rises trembling from the sofa, and attempts to follow him). Stay, oh, stay! Whither are you going? Father! Mother! He deserts us in this fearful hour!

MRS. MILLER (hastens towards him, and detains him). The president is coming hither? He will ill-use my child! He will ill-use us all,—and yet, major, you are going to leave us.

MILLER (laughs hysterically). Leave us. Of course he is! What should hinder him? The girl has given him all she had. (Grasping FERDINAND with one hand, and LOUISA with the other.) Listen to me, young gentleman. The only way out of my house is over my daughter's body. If you possess one single spark of honor await your father's coming; tell him, deceiver, how you stole her young and inexperienced heart; or, by the God who made me! (thrusting LOUISA towards him with violence and passion) you shall crush before my eyes this trembling worm whom love for you has brought to shame and infamy!

FERDINAND (returns, and walks to and fro in deep thought). 'Tis true, the President's power is great—parental authority is a mighty word—even crimes claim

respect when concealed within its folds. He may push that authority far—very far! But love goes beyond it. Hear me, Louisa; give me thy hand! (clasping it firmly). As surely as I hope for Heaven's mercy in my dying hour, I swear that the moment which separates these hands shall also rend asunder the thread that binds me to existence!

LOUISA. You terrify me! Turn from me! Your lips tremble! Your eyes roll fearfully!

FERDINAND. Nay, Louisa! fear nothing! It is not madness which prompts my oath! 'tis the choicest gift of Heaven, decision, sent to my aid at that critical moment, when an oppressed bosom can only find relief in some desperate remedy. I love thee, Louisa! Thou shalt be mine! 'Tis resolved! And now for my father!

[He rushes out, and is met by the PRESIDENT.

SCENE VI.

MILLER, MRS. MILLER, LOUISA, FERDINAND, PRESIDENT, with SERVANTS.

PRESIDENT (as he enters). So! here he is! (All start in terror.)

FERDINAND (retiring a few paces). In the house of innocence!

PRESIDENT. Where a son learns obedience to his father!

FERDINAND. Permit me to——

PRESIDENT (interrupting him, turns to MILLER). The father, I presume?

MILLER. I am Miller, the musician.

PRESIDENT (to MRS. MILLER). And you, the mother?

MRS. MILLER. Yes, alas! her unfortunate mother!

FERDINAND (to MILLER.) Father, take Louisa to her chamber—she is fainting.

PRESIDENT. An unnecessary precaution! I will soon arouse her. (To LOUISA.) How long have you been acquainted with the President's son?

LOUISA (with timidity). Of the President's son I have never thought. Ferdinand von Walter has paid his addresses to me since November last.

FERDINAND. And he adores her!

PRESIDENT (to LOUISA). Has he given you any assurance of his love?

FERDINAND. But a few minutes since, the most solemn, and God was my witness.

PRESIDENT (to his son angrily). Silence! You shall have opportunity enough of confessing your folly. (To LOUISA.) I await your answer.

LOUISA. He swore eternal love to me.

FERDINAND. And I will keep my oath.

PRESIDENT (to FERDINAND). Must I command your silence? (To LOUISA). Did you accept his rash vows?

LOUISA (with tenderness). I did, and gave him mine in exchange.

FERDINAND (resolutely). The bond is irrevocable——

PRESIDENT (to FERDINAND). If you dare to interrupt me again I'll teach you better manners. (To LOUISA, sneeringly.) And he paid handsomely every time, no doubt?

LOUISA. I do not understand your question.

PRESIDENT (with an insulting laugh). Oh, indeed! Well, I only meant to hint that—as everything has its price—I hope you have been more provident than to bestow your favors gratis—or perhaps you were satisfied with merely participating in the pleasure? Eh? how was it?

FERDINAND (infuriated). Hell and confusion! What does this mean?

LOUISA (to FERDINAND, with dignity and emotion). Baron von Walter, now you

are free!

FERDINAND. Father! virtue though clothed in a beggar's garb commands respect!

PRESIDENT (laughing aloud). A most excellent joke! The father is commanded to honor his son's strumpet!

LOUISA. Oh! Heaven and earth! (Sinks down in a swoon.)

FERDINAND (drawing his sword). Father, you gave me life, and, till now, I acknowledged your claim on it. That debt is cancelled. (Replaces his sword in the scabbard, and points to LOUISA.) There lies the bond of filial duty torn to atoms!

MILLER (who has stood apart trembling, now comes forward, by turns gnashing his teeth in rage, and shrinking back in terror). Your excellency, the child is the father's second self. No offence, I hope! Who strikes the child hits the father—blow for blow—that's our rule here. No offence, I hope!

MRS. MILLER. God have mercy on us! Now the old man has begun—we shall all catch it with a vengeance!

PRESIDENT (who has not understood what MILLER said). What? is the old pander stirred up? We shall have something to settle together presently, Mr. Pander!

MILLER. You mistake me, my lord. My name is Miller, at your service for an adagio—but, as to ladybirds, I cannot serve you. As long as there is such an assortment at court, we poor citizens can't afford to lay in stock! No offence, I hope!

MRS. MILLER. For Heaven's sake, man, hold your tongue! would you ruin both wife and child?

FERDINAND (to his father). You play but a sorry part here, my lord, and might well have dispensed with these witnesses.

MILLER (coming nearer, with increasing confidence). To be plain and above board—No offence, I hope—your excellency may have it all your own way in the Cabinet—but this is my house. I'm your most obedient, very humble servant when I

wait upon you with a petition, but the rude, unmannerly intruder I have the right to bundle out—no offence, I hope!

PRESIDENT (pale with anger, and approaching MILLER). What? What's that you dare to utter?

MILLER (retreating a few steps). Only a little bit of my mind sir—no offence, I hope!

PRESIDENT (furiously). Insolent villain! Your impertinence shall procure you a lodging in prison. (To his servants). Call in the officers of justice! Away! (Some of the attendants go out. The PRESIDENT paces the stage with a furious air.) The father shall to prison; the mother and her strumpet daughter to the pillory! Justice shall lend her sword to my rage! For this insult will I have ample amends. Shall such contemptible creatures thwart my plans, and set father and son against each other with impunity? Tremble, miscreants! I will glut my hate in your destruction—the whole brood of you—father, mother, and daughter shall be sacrificed to my vengeance!

FERDINAND (to MILLER, in a collected and firm manner). Oh! not so! Fear not, friends! I am your protector. (Turning to the PRESIDENT, with deference). Be not so rash, father! For your own sake let me beg of you no violence. There is a corner of my heart where the name of father has never yet been heard. Oh! press not into that!

PRESIDENT. Silence, unworthy boy! Rouse not my anger to greater fury!

MILLER (recovering from a stupor). Wife, look you to your daughter! I fly to the duke. His highness' tailor—God be praised for reminding me of it at this moment—learns the flute of me—I cannot fail of success. (Is hastening off.)

PRESIDENT. To the duke, will you? Have you forgotten that I am the threshold over which you must pass, or failing, perish? To the duke, you fool? Try to reach him with your lamentations, when, reduced to a living skeleton, you lie buried in a

dungeon five fathoms deep, where light and sound never enter; where darkness goggles at hell with gloating eyes! There gnash thy teeth in anguish; there rattle thy chains in despair, and groan, "Woe is me! This is beyond human endurance!"

SCENE VII.

Officers of Justice—the former.

FERDINAND (flies to LOUISA, who, overcome with fear, faints in his arms.) Louisa!—Help, for God's sake! Terror overpowers her!

[MILLER, catching up his cane and putting on his hat, prepares for defense. MRS. MILLER throws herself on her knees before the PRESIDENT.

PRESIDENT (to the officers, showing his star). Arrest these offenders in the duke's name. Boy, let go that strumpet! Fainting or not—when once her neck is fitted with the iron collar the mob will pelt her till she revives.

MRS. MILLER. Mercy, your excellency! Mercy! mercy!

MILLER (snatching her from the ground with violence). Kneel to God, you howling fool, and not to villains—since I must to prison any way!

PRESIDENT (biting his lips.) You may be out in your reckoning, scoundrel! There are still gallows to spare! (To the officers.) Must I repeat my orders?

[They approach LOUISA—FERDINAND places himself before her.

FERDINAND (fiercely). Touch her who dare! (He draws his sword and flourishes it.) Let no one presume to lay a finger on her, whose life is not well insured. (To the PRESIDENT.) As you value your own safety, father, urge me no further!

PRESIDENT (to the officers in a threatening voice). At your peril, cowards! (They again attempt to seize LOUISA.)

FERDINAND. Hell and furies! Back, I say! (Driving them away.) Once more, father, I warn you—have some thought for your own safety! Drive me not to

extremity!

PRESIDENT (enraged to the officers). Scoundrels! Is this your obedience? (The officers renew their efforts.)

FERDINAND. Well, if it must be so (attacking and wounding several of them), Justice forgive me!

PRESIDENT (exasperated to the utmost). Let me see whether I, too, must feel your weapon! (He seizes LOUISA and delivers her to an officer.)

FERDINAND (laughing bitterly). Father! father! Your conduct is a galling satire upon Providence, who has so ill understood her people as to make bad statesmen of excellent executioners!

PRESIDENT (to the officers). Away with her!

FERDINAND. Father, if I cannot prevent it, she must stand in the pillory—but by her side will also stand the son of the president. Do you still insist?

PRESIDENT. The more entertaining will be the exhibition. Away with her!

FERDINAND. I will pledge the honor of an officer's sword for her. Do you still insist?

PRESIDENT. Your sword is already familiar with disgrace. Away! away! You know my will.

FERDINAND (wrests LOUISA from the officer and holds her with one arm, with the other points his sword at her bosom.) Father, rather than tamely see my wife branded with infamy I will plunge this sword into her bosom. Do you still insist?

PRESIDENT. Do it, if the point be sharp enough!

FERDINAND (releases LOUISA, and looks wildly towards heaven). Be thou witness, Almighty God, that I have left no human means untried to save her! Forgive me now if I have recourse to hellish means. While you are leading her to the pillory (speaking loudly in the PRESIDENT'S ear), I will publish throughout the town a

pleasant history of how a president's chair may be gained! [Exit.

PRESIDENT (as if thunder-struck). How? What said he? Ferdinand! Release her instantly! (Rushes after his son.)

ACT III.

SCENE I.

Room at the President's. Enter PRESIDENT and WORM.

PRESIDENT. That was an infernal piece of business!

WORM. Just what I feared, your excellency. Opposition may inflame the enthusiast, but never converts him.

PRESIDENT. I had placed my whole reliance upon the success of this attempt. I made no doubt but if the girl were once publicly disgraced, he would be obliged as an officer and a gentleman to resign her.

WORM. An admirable idea!—had you but succeeded in disgracing her.

PRESIDENT. And yet—when I reflect on the matter coolly—I ought not to have suffered myself to be overawed. It was a threat which he never could have meant seriously.

WORM. Be not too certain of that! There is no folly too gross for excited passion! You say that the baron has always looked upon government with an eye of disapprobation. I can readily believe it. The principles which he brought with him from college are ill-suited to our atmosphere. What have the fantastic visions of personal nobility and greatness of soul to do in court, where 'tis the perfection of wisdom to be great and little by turns, as occasion demands? The baron is too young and too fiery to take pleasure in the slow and crooked paths of intrigue. That alone can give impulse to his ambition which seems glorious and romantic!

PRESIDENT (impatiently). But how will these sagacious remarks advance our affairs?

WORM. They will point out to your excellency where the wound lies, and so, perhaps, help you to find a remedy. Such a character—pardon the observation—ought never to have been made a confidant, or should never have been roused to enmity. He detests the means by which you have risen to power! Perhaps it is only the son that has hitherto sealed the lips of the betrayer! Give him but a fair opportunity for throwing off the bonds imposed upon him by nature! only convince him, by unrelenting opposition to his passion, that you are no longer an affectionate father, and that moment the duties of a patriot will rush upon him with irresistible force! Nay, the high-wrought idea of offering so unparalleled a sacrifice at the shrine of justice might of itself alone have charms sufficient to reconcile him to the ruin of a parent!

PRESIDENT. Worm! Worm! To what a horrible abyss do you lead me!

WORM. Never fear, my lord, I will lead you back in safety! May I speak without restraint?

PRESIDENT (throwing himself into a seat). Freely, as felon with felon.

WORM. Forgive me, then. It seems to me that you have to ascribe all your influence as president to the courtly art of intrigue; why not resort to the same means for attaining your ends as a father? I well remember with what seeming frankness you invited your predecessor to a game at piquet, and caroused half the night with him over bumpers of Burgundy; and yet it was the same night on which the great mine you had planned to annihilate him was to explode. Why did you make a public exhibition of enmity to the major? You should by no means have let it appear that you knew anything of his love affair. You should have made the girl the object of your attacks and have preserved the affection of your son; like the prudent general who does not engage the prime of the enemy's force but creates disaffection among

the ranks?

PRESIDENT. How could this have been effected?

WORM. In the simplest manner—even now the game is not entirely lost! Forget for a time that you are a father. Do not contend against a passion which opposition only renders more formidable. Leave me to hatch, from the heat of their own passions, the basilisk which shall destroy them.

PRESIDENT. I am all attention.

WORM. Either my knowledge of human character is very small, or the major is as impetuous in jealousy as in love. Make him suspect the girl's constancy,—whether probable or not does not signify. One grain of leaven will be enough to ferment the whole mass.

PRESIDENT. But where shall we find that grain?

WORM. Now, then, I come to the point. But first explain to me how much depends upon the major's compliance. How far is it of consequence that the romance with the music-master's daughter should be brought to a conclusion and the marriage with Lady Milford effected?

PRESIDENT. How can you ask me, Worm? If the match with Lady Milford is broken off I stand a fair chance of losing my whole influence; on the other hand, if I force the major's consent, of losing my head.

WORM (with animation). Now have the kindness to listen to me. The major must be entangled in a web. Your whole power must be employed against his mistress. We must make her write a love-letter, address it to a third party, and contrive to drop it cleverly in the way of the major.

PRESIDENT. Absurd proposal! As if she would consent to sign her own death-warrant.

WORM. She must do so if you will but let me follow my own plan. I know her

gentle heart thoroughly; she has but two vulnerable sides by which her conscience can be attacked; they are her father and the major. The latter is entirely out of the question; we must, therefore, make the most of the musician.

PRESIDENT. In what way?

WORM. From the description your excellency gave me of what passed in his house nothing can be easier than to terrify the father with the threat of a criminal process. The person of his favorite, and of the keeper of the seals, is in some degree the representative of the duke himself, and he who offends the former is guilty of treason towards the latter. At any rate I will engage with these pretences to conjure up such a phantom as shall scare the poor devil out of his seven senses.

PRESIDENT. But recollect, Worm, the affair must not be carried so far as to become serious.

WORM. Nor shall it. It shall be carried no further than is necessary to frighten the family into our toils. The musician, therefore, must be quietly arrested. To make the necessity yet more urgent, we may also take possession of the mother;—and then we begin to talk of criminal process, of the scaffold, and of imprisonment for life, and make the daughter's letter the sole condition of the parent's release.

PRESIDENT. Excellent! Excellent! Now I begin to understand you!

WORM. Louisa loves her father—I might say even to adoration! The danger which threatens his life, or at least his freedom—the reproaches of her conscience for being the cause of his misfortunes—the impossibility of ever becoming the major's wife—the confusion of her brain, which I take upon myself to produce—all these considerations make our plan certain of success. She must be caught in the snare.

PRESIDENT. But my son—will he not instantly get scent of it? Will it not make him yet more desperate?

WORM. Leave that to me, your excellency! The old folks shall not be set at liberty till they and their daughter have taken the most solemn oath to keep the whole

transaction secret, and never to confess the deception.

PRESIDENT. An oath! Ridiculous! What restraint can an oath be?

WORM. None upon us, my lord, but the most binding upon people of their stamp. Observe, how dexterously by this measure we shall both reach the goal of our desires. The girl loses at once the affection of her lover, and her good name; the parents will lower their tone, and, thoroughly humbled by misfortune, will esteem it an act of mercy, if, by giving her my hand, I re-establish their daughter's reputation.

PRESIDENT (shaking his head and smiling). Artful villain! I confess myself outdone—no devil could spin a finer snare! The scholar excels his master. The next question is, to whom must the letter be addressed— with whom to accuse her of having an intrigue?

WORM. It must necessarily be some one who has all to gain or all to lose by your son's decision in this affair.

PRESIDENT (after a moment's reflection). I can think of no one but the marshal.

WORM (shrugs his shoulders). The marshal! He would certainly not be my choice were I Louisa Miller.

PRESIDENT. And why not? What a strange notion! A man who dresses in the height of fashion—who carries with him an atmosphere of eau de mille fleurs and musk—who can garnish every silly speech with a handful of ducats—could all this possibly fail to overcome the delicacy of a tradesman's daughter? No, no, my good friend, jealousy is not quite so hard of belief. I shall send for the marshal immediately. (Rings.)

WORM. While your excellency takes care of him, and of the fiddler's arrest, I will go and indite the aforesaid letter.

PRESIDENT (seats himself at his writing-table). Do so; and, as soon as it is ready, bring it hither for my perusal.

[Exit WORM. [The PRESIDENT, having written, rises and hands the paper to a servant who enters.

See this arrest executed without a moment's delay, and let Marshal von Kalb be informed that I wish to see him immediately.

SERVANT. The marshal's carriage has just stopped at your lordship's door.

PRESIDENT. So much the better—as for the arrest, let it be managed with such precaution that no disturbance arise.

SERVANT. I will take care, my lord.

PRESIDENT. You understand me? The business must be kept quite secret.

SERVANT. Your excellency shall be obeyed.

[Exit SERVANT.

SCENE II.

The PRESIDENT—MARSHALL KALB.

MARSHAL (hastily). I have just looked in, en passant, my dear friend! How are you? How do you get on? We are to have the grand opera Dido to-night! Such a conflagration!—a whole town will be in flames!—you will come to the blaze of course—eh?

PRESIDENT. I have conflagration enough in my own house, one that threatens the destruction of all I possess. Be seated, my dear marshal. You arrive very opportunely to give me your advice and assistance in a certain business which will either advance our fortunes or utterly ruin us both!

MARSHAL. Don't alarm me so, my dear friend!

PRESIDENT. As I said before, it must exalt or ruin us entirely! You know my project respecting the major and Lady Milford—you are not ignorant how necessary this union is to secure both our fortunes! Marshal, our plans threaten to come to

naught. My son refuses to marry her!

MARSHAL. Refuses! Refuses to marry her? But, my goodness! I have published the news through the whole town. The union is the general topic of conversation.

PRESIDENT. Then you will be talked of by all the town as a spreader of false reports,—in short, Ferdinand loves another.

MARSHAL. Pooh! you are joking! As if that were an obstacle?

PRESIDENT. With such an enthusiast a most insurmountable one!

MARSHAL. Can he be mad enough to spurn his good-fortune? Eh?

PRESIDENT. Ask him yourself and you'll hear what he will answer.

MARSHAL. But, mon Dieu! what can he answer?

PRESIDENT. That he will publish to the world the crime by which we rose to power—that he will denounce our forged letters and receipts—that he will send us both to the scaffold. That is what he can answer.

MARSHAL. Are you out of your mind?

PRESIDENT. Nay, that is what he has already answered? He was actually on the point of putting these threats into execution; and it was only by the most abject submission that I could persuade him to abandon his design. What say you to this, marshal?

MARSHAL (with a look of bewildered stupidity). I am at my wits' end!

PRESIDENT. That might have blown over. But my spies have just brought me notice that the grand cupbearer, von Bock, is on the point of offering himself as a suitor to her ladyship.

MARSHAL. You drive me distracted! Whom did you say? Von Bock? Don't you know that we are mortal enemies? And don't you know why?

PRESIDENT. The first word that I ever heard of it!

MARSHAL. My dear count! You shall hear—your hair will stand on end! You must remember the famous court ball—it is now just twenty years ago. It was the first time that English country-dances were introduced—you remember how the hot wax trickled from the great chandelier on Count Meerschaum's blue and silver domino. Surely, you cannot have forgotten that affair!

PRESIDENT. Who could forget so remarkable a circumstance!

MARSHAL. Well, then, in the heat of the dance Princess Amelia lost her garter. The whole ball, as you may imagine, was instantly thrown into confusion. Von Bock and myself—we were then fellow-pages—crept through the whole saloon in search of the garter. At length I discovered it. Von Bock perceives my good-fortune—rushes forward—tears it from my hands, and, just fancy—presents it to the princess, and so cheated me of the honor I had so fortunately earned. What do you think of that?

PRESIDENT. 'Twas most insolent!

MARSHAL. I thought I should have fainted upon the spot. A trick so malicious was beyond the powers of mortal endurance. At length I recovered myself; and, approaching the princess, said,—"Von Bock, 'tis true, was fortunate enough to present the garter to your highness; but he who first discovered that treasure finds his reward in silence, and is dumb!"

PRESIDENT. Bravo, marshal! Admirably said! Most admirable!

MARSHAL. And is dumb! But till the day of judgment will I remember his conduct—the mean, sneaking sycophant! And as if that were not aggravation enough, he actually, as we were struggling on the ground for the garter, rubbed all the powder from one side of my peruke with his sleeve, and ruined me for the rest of the evening.

PRESIDENT. This is the man who will marry Lady Milford, and consequently soon take the lead at court.

MARSHAL. You plunge a dagger in my heart! But why must he? Why should he

marry her? Why he? Where is the necessity?

PRESIDENT. Because Ferdinand refuses her, and there is no other candidate.

MARSHAL. But is there no possible method of obtaining your son's consent? Let the measure be ever so extravagant or desperate—there is nothing to which I should not willingly consent in order to supplant the hated von Bock.

PRESIDENT. I know but one means of accomplishing this, and that rests entirely with you.

MARSHAL. With me? Name it, my dear count, name it!

PRESIDENT. You must set Ferdinand and his mistress against each other.

MARSHAL. Against each other? How do you mean?—and how would that be possible.

PRESIDENT. Everything is ours could we make him suspect the girl.

MARSHAL. Ah, of theft, you mean?

PRESIDENT. Pshaw!—he would never believe that! No, no—I mean that she is carrying on an intrigue with another.

MARSHAL. And this other, who is he to be?

PRESIDENT. Yourself!

MARSHAL. How? Must I be her lover? Is she of noble birth?

PRESIDENT. What signifies that? What an idea!—she is the daughter of a musician.

MARSHAL. A plebeian?—that will never do!

PRESIDENT. What will never do? Nonsense, man! Who in the name of wonder would think of asking a pair of rosy cheeks for their owner's pedigree?

MARSHAL. But consider, my dear count, a married man! And my reputation at court!

PRESIDENT. Oh! that's quite another thing! I beg a thousand pardons, marshal; I was not aware that a man of unblemished morals held a higher place in your estimation than a man of power! Let us break up our conference.

MARSHAL. Be not so hasty, count. I did not mean to say that.

PRESIDENT (coldly.) No—no! You are perfectly right. I, too, am weary of office. I shall throw up the game, tender my resignation to the duke, and congratulate von Bock on his accession to the premiership. This duchy is not all the world.

MARSHAL. And what am I to do? It is very fine for you to talk thus! You are a man of learning! But I—mon Dieu! What shall I be if his highness dismisses me?

PRESIDENT. A stale jest!—a thing out of fashion!

MARSHAL. I implore you, my dearest, my most valued friend. Abandon those thoughts. I will consent to everything!

PRESIDENT. Will you lend your name to an assignation to which this Louisa Miller shall invite you in writing?

MARSHAL. Well, in God's name let it be so!

PRESIDENT. And drop the letter where the major cannot fail to find it.

MARSHAL. For instance, on the parade, where I can let it fall as if accidentally in drawing out my handkerchief.

PRESIDENT. And when the baron questions you will you assume the character of a favored rival?

MARSHAL. Mort de ma vie! I'll teach him manners! I'll cure him of interfering in my amours!

PRESIDENT. Good! Now you speak in the right key. The letter shall be written immediately! Come in the evening to receive it, and we will talk over the part you are to play.

MARSHAL. I will be with you the instant I have paid sixteen visits of the very

highest importance. Permit me, therefore, to take my leave without delay. (Going.)

PRESIDENT (rings). I reckon upon your discretion, marshal.

MARSHAL (calls back). Ah, mon Dieu! you know me!

[Exit MARSHAL.

SCENE III.

The PRESIDENT and WORM.

WORM. The music-master and his wife have been arrested without the least disturbance. Will your excellency read this letter?

PRESIDENT (having read it). Excellent! Excellent, my dear secretary! poison like this would convert health itself into jaundiced leprosy. The marshal, too, has taken the bait. Now then away with my proposals to the father, and then lose no time—with the daughter.

[Exeunt on different sides.

SCENE IV.—Room in MILLER'S House.

LOUISA and FERDINAND.

LOUISA. Cease, I implore you! I expect no more days of happiness. All my hopes are levelled with the dust.

FERDINAND. All mine are exalted to heaven! My father's passions are roused! He will direct his whole artillery against us! He will force me to become an unnatural son. I will not answer for my filial duty. Rage and despair will wring from me the dark secret that my father is an assassin! The son will deliver the parent into the hands of the executioner. This is a moment of extreme danger, and extreme danger alone could prompt my love to take so daring a leap! Hear me, Louisa! A thought, vast and immeasurable as my love, has arisen in my soul—Thou, Louisa, and I, and

Love! Lies not a whole heaven within this circle? Or dost thou feel that there is still something wanting?

LOUISA. Oh! cease! No more! I tremble to think what you would say.

FERDINAND. If we have no longer a claim upon the world, why should we seek its approbation? Why venture where nothing can be gained and all may be lost? Will thine eyes sparkle less brightly reflected by the Baltic waves than by the waters of the Rhine or the Elbe? Where Louise loves me there is my native land! Thy footsteps will make the wild and sandy desert far more attractive than the marble halls of my ancestors. Shall we miss the pomp of cities? Be we where we may, Louisa, a sun will rise and a sun will set— SCENEs before which the most glorious achievements of art grow pale and dim! Though we serve God no more in his consecrated churches, yet the night shall spread her solemn shadows round us; the changing moon shall hear our confession, and a glorious congregation of stars join in our prayers! Think you our talk of love can ever be exhausted! Oh, no! One smile from Louisa were a theme for centuries—the dream of life will be over ere I can exhaust the charms of a single tear.

LOUISA. And hast thou no duty save that of love?

FERDINAND (embracing her). None so sacred as thy peace of mind!

LOUISA (very seriously). Cease, then, and leave me. I have a father who possesses no treasure save one only daughter. To-morrow he will be sixty years old—that he will fall a victim to the vengeance of the President is most certain!

FERDINAND (interrupting her). He shall accompany us. Therefore no more objections, my beloved. I will go and convert my valuables into gold, and raise money on my father's credit! It is lawful to plunder a robber, and are not his treasures the price for which he has sold his country? This night, when the clock strikes one, a carriage will stop at your door—throw yourself into it, and we fly!

LOUISA. Pursued by your father's curse! a curse, unthinking one, which is never

pronounced in vain even by murderers—which the avenging angel hears when uttered by a malefactor in his last agony—which, like a fury, will fearfully pursue the fugitives from shore to shore! No, my beloved! If naught but a crime can preserve you to me, I still have courage to resign you!

FERDINAND (mutters gloomily). Indeed!

LOUISA. Resign you? Oh! horrible beyond all measure is the thought. Horrible enough to pierce the immortal spirit and pale the glowing cheeks of joy! Ferdinand! To resign you! Yet how can one resign what one never possessed? Your heart is the property of your station. My claim was sacrilege, and, shuddering, I withdraw it!

FERDINAND (with convulsed features, and biting his underlip). You withdraw it!

LOUISA. Nay! look upon me, dearest Ferdinand. Gnash not your teeth so bitterly! Come, let my example rouse your slumbering courage. Let me be the heroine of this moment. Let me restore to a father his lost son. I will renounce a union which would sever the bonds by which society is held together, and overthrow the landmarks of social order. I am the criminal. My bosom has nourished proud and foolish wishes, and my present misery is a just punishment. Oh! leave me then the sweet, the consoling idea that mine is the sacrifice. Canst thou deny me this last satisfaction? (FERDINAND, stupefied with agitation and anger, seizes a violin and strikes a few notes upon it; and then tears away the strings, dashes the instrument upon the ground, and, stamping it to pieces, bursts into a loud laugh.) Walter! God in Heaven! What mean you? Be not thus unmanned! This hour requires fortitude; it is the hour of separation! You have a heart, dear Walter; I know that heart—warm as life is your love—boundless and immeasurable—bestow it on one more noble, more worthy—she need not envy the most fortunate of her sex! (Striving to repress her tears.) You shall see me no more! Leave the vain disappointed girl to bewail her sorrow in sad and lonely seclusion; where her tears will flow unheeded. Dead and gone are all my hopes of happiness in this world; yet still shall I inhale ever and

anon the perfumes of the faded wreath! (Giving him her trembling hand, while her face is turned away.) Baron Walter, farewell!

FERDINAND (recovering from the stupor in which he was plunged). Louisa, I fly! Do you indeed refuse to follow me?

LOUISA (who has retreated to the further end of the apartment, conceals her countenance with her hands). My duty bids me stay, and suffer.

FERDINAND. Serpent! thou liest—some other motive chains thee here!

LOUISA (in a tone of the most heartfelt sorrow). Encourage that belief. Haply it may make our parting more supportable.

FERDINAND. What? Oppose freezing duty to fiery love! And dost thou think to cheat me with that delusion? Some rival detains thee here, and woe be to thee and him should my suspicions be confirmed!

[Exit.

SCENE V.

LOUISA (she remains for some time motionless in the seat upon which she has thrown herself. At length she rises, comes forward, and looks timidly around). Where can my parents be? My father promised to return in a few minutes; yet full five dreadful hours have passed since his departure. Should any accident——good Heavens! What is come over me? Why does my heart palpitate so violently? (Here WORM enters, and remains standing unobserved in the background.) It can be nothing real. 'Tis but the terrible delusion of my over-heated blood. When once the soul is wrapped in terror the eye behold spectres in every shadow.

SCENE VI.

LOUISA and WORM.

WORM (approaches her). Good evening, miss.

LOUISA. Heavens! who speaks! (Perceives him, and starts back in terror.) Ha! Dreadful! dreadful! I fear some dire misfortune is even now realizing the forebodings of my soul! (To WORM, with a look of disdain.) Do you seek the president? he is no longer here.

WORM. 'Tis you I seek, miss!

LOUISA. I wonder, then, that you did not direct your steps towards the market-place.

WORM. What should I do there?

LOUISA. Release your betrothed from the pillory.

WORM. Louisa, you cherish some false suspicion——

LOUISA (sharply interrupting him). What is your business with me?

WORM. I come with a message from your father.

LOUISA (agitated). From my father? Oh! Where is my father?

WORM. Where he would fain not be!

LOUISA. Quick, quick, for God's sake! Oh! my foreboding heart! Where is my father!

WORM. In prison, if you needs must know!

LOUISA (with a look towards heaven). This, too! This, too! In prison, said you? And why in prison?

WORM. It is the duke's order.

LOUISA. The duke's?

WORM. Who thinking his own dignity offended by the insults offered to the person of his representative——

LOUISA. How? How? Oh ye Almighty Powers!

WORM.——Has resolved to inflict the most exemplary punishment.

LOUISA. This was still wanting! This! Yes, in truth. I now feel that my heart does love another besides Ferdinand! That could not be allowed to escape! The prince's dignity offended? Heavenly Providence! Save, oh! save my sinking faith! (After a moment's pause, she turns to WORM.) And Ferdinand?

WORM. Must choose between Lady Milford's hand and his father's curse and disinheritance.

LOUISA. Terrible choice!—and yet—yet is he the happier of the two. He has no father to lose—and yet to have none is misery enough! My father imprisoned for treason—my Ferdinand compelled to choose between Lady Milford's hand or a parent's curse and disinheritance! Truly admirable! for even villany so perfect is perfection! Perfection? No! something is still wanting to complete that. Where is my mother?

WORM. In the house of correction.

LOUISA (with a smile of despair). Now the measure is full! It is full, and I am free—released from all duties—all sorrows—all joys! Released even from Providence! I have nothing more to do with it! (A dreadful pause.) Have you aught else to communicate? Speak freely—now I can hear anything with indifference.

WORM. All that has happened you already know.

LOUISA. But not that which is yet to happen! (Another pause, during which she surveys WORM from head to foot.) Unfortunate man! you have entered on a melancholy employment, which can never lead you to happiness. To cause misery to others is sad enough—but to be the messenger of evil is horrible indeed—to be the first to shriek the screech-owl's song, to stand by when the bleeding heart trembles upon the iron shaft of necessity, and the Christian doubts the existence of a God—Heaven protect me! Wert thou paid a ton of gold for every tear of anguish which thou must witness, I would not be a wretch like thee! What is there yet to

happen?

WORM. I know not.

LOUISA. You pretend not to know? This light-shunning embassy trembles at the sound of words, but the spectre betrays itself in your ghastly visage. What is there yet to happen? You said the duke will inflict upon him a most exemplary punishment. What call you exemplary?

WORM. Ask me no more.

LOUISA. Terrible man! Some hangman must have schooled thee! Else thou hast not so well learned to prolong the torture of thy victim before giving the finishing stroke to the agonized heart! Speak! What fate awaits my father? Death thou canst announce with a laughing sneer—what then must that be which thou dost hesitate to disclose? Speak out! Let me at once receive the overwhelming weight of thy tidings! What fate awaits my father?

WORM. A criminal process.

LOUISA. But what is that? I am an ignorant, innocent girl, and understand but little of your fearful terms of law. What mean you by a criminal process?

WORM. Judgment upon life or death.

LOUISA (firmly). Ah! I thank you.

[Exit hastily by a side door.

WORM (alarmed). What means this? Should the simpleton perchance— confusion! Surely she will not—I must follow her. I am answerable for her life. (As he is going towards the door, LOUISA returns, wrapped in a cloak.)

LOUISA. Your pardon, Mr. Secretary, I must lock the door.

WORM. Whither in such haste?

LOUISA (passing him). To the duke.

WORM (alarmed, detains her). How? Whither?

LOUISA. To the duke. Do you not hear? Even to that very duke whose will is to decide upon my father's life or death. Yet no?—'tis not his will that decides, but the will of wicked men who surround his throne. He lends naught to this process, save the shadow of his majesty, and his royal signature.

WORM (with a burst of laughter). To the duke!

LOUISA. I know the meaning of that sneering laugh—you would tell me that I shall find no compassion there. But though I may meet (God preserve me!) with nothing but scorn—scorn at my sorrows—yet will I to the duke. I have been told that the great never know what misery is; that they fly from the knowledge of it. But I will teach the duke what misery is; I will paint to him, in all the writhing agonies of death, what misery is; I will cry aloud in wailings that shall creep through the very marrow of his bones, what misery is; and, while at my picture his hairs shall stand on end like quills upon the porcupine, will I shriek into his affrighted ear, that in the hour of death the sinews of these mighty gods of earth shall shrivel and shrink, and that at the day of judgment beggars and kings shall be weighed together in the same balance (Going.)

WORM (ironically). By all means go to the duke! You can really do nothing more prudent; I advise you heartily to the step. Only go, and I give you my word that the duke will grant your suit.

LOUISA (stopping suddenly). What said you? Do you yourself advise the step? (Returns hastily). What am I about to do? Something wicked surely, since this man approves it—how know you that the prince will grant my suit?

WORM. Because he will not have to grant it unrewarded.

LOUISA. Not unrewarded? And what price does he set on his humanity?

WORM. The person of the fair suppliant will be payment enough!

LOUISA (stopping for a moment in mute dismay—in a feeble voice). Almighty God!

WORM. And I trust that you will not think your father's life over-valued when 'tis purchased at so gracious a price.

LOUISA (with great indignation). True, oh! true! The great are entrenched from truth behind their own vices, safely as behind the swords of cherubim. The Almighty protect thee, father! Your child can die— but not sin for thee.

WORM. This will be agreeable news for the poor disconsolate old man. "My Louisa," says he, "has bowed me down to the earth; but my Louisa will raise me up again." I hasten to him with your answer. (Affects to be about to depart.)

LOUISA (flies after him and holds him back). Stay! stay! one moment's patience! How nimble this Satan is, when his business is to drive humanity distracted! I have bowed him to the earth! I must raise him up again! Speak to me! Counsel me! What can I, what must I do?

WORM. There is but one means of saving him!

LOUISA. What is that means?

WORM. And your father approves of it——

LOUISA. My father? Oh! name that means.

WORM. It is easy for you to execute.

LOUISA. I know of nothing harder than infamy!

WORM. Suppose you were to release the major from his engagement?

LOUISA. Release him! Do you mock me? Do you call that a choice to which force compelled me?

WORM. You mistake me, dear girl! The major must resign you willingly, and be the first to retract his engagement.

LOUISA. That he will never do.

WORM. So it appears. Should we, do you think, have had recourse to you were it not that you alone are able to help us?

LOUISA. I cannot compel him to hate me.

WORM. We will try! Be seated.

LOUISA (drawing back). Man! What is brooding in thy artful brain?

WORM. Be seated. Here are paper, pens, and ink. Write what I dictate.

LOUISA (sitting down in the greatest uneasiness). What must I write? To whom must I write?

WORM. To your father's executioner.

LOUISA. Ah! How well thou knowest to torture souls to thy purpose. (Takes a pen.)

WORM (dictating to her). "My dear Sir (LOUISA writes with a trembling hand,) three days, three insupportable days, have already passed—already passed—since last we met."

LOUISA (starts, and lays down her pen). To whom is the letter?

WORM. To your father's executioner.

LOUISA. Oh! my God!

WORM. "But for this you must blame the major—the major—who watches me all day with the vigilance of an Argus."

LOUISA (starting up). Villany! Villany beyond all precedent! To whom is the letter?

WORM. To your father's executioner.

LOUISA (paces to and fro, wringing her hands). No, no, no! This is tyrannical! Oh Heaven! If mortals provoke thee, punish them like mortals; but wherefore must I be placed between two precipices? Wherefore am I hurled by turns from death to infamy, from infamy to death? Wherefore is my neck made the footstool of this blood-sucking fiend? No; do what thou wilt, I will never write that!

WORM (seizing his hat). As you please, miss! It rests entirely on your own

pleasure!

LOUISA. Pleasure, say'st thou? On my own pleasure? Go, barbarian! Suspend some unfortunate over the pit of hell; then make your demands, and ask your victim if it be his pleasure to grant your request! Oh! Thou knowest but too well that the bonds of nature bind our hearts as firmly as chains! But all is now alike indifferent. Dictate! I cease to think! Artifices of hell, I yield to ye! (She resumes her seat at the table.)

WORM. "With the vigilance of an Argus." Have you written it?

LOUISA. Proceed, proceed!

WORM. "The president was here yesterday. It was amusing to see how warm the poor major was in defence of my honor."

LOUISA. Excellent! Excellent! Oh! Admirable! Quick! quick, go on!

WORM. "I had recourse to a swoon—a swoon—that I might not laugh aloud"——

LOUISA. Oh, Heavens!

WORM. "But the mask which I have worn so long is becoming insupportable—insupportable. Oh! if I could but rid myself of him."

LOUISA (rises, and walks a few turns with her head bent down, as if she sought something upon the floor: then returns to her place, and continues to write). "Rid myself of him."

WORM. "He will be on duty to-morrow—observe when he leaves me, and hasten to the usual place." Have you written "the usual place?"

LOUISA. Everything, everything!

WORM. "To the usual place, to meet your devotedly attached Louisa."

LOUISA. Now then, the address?

WORM. "To Marshal von Kalb."

LOUISA. Eternal Providence! A name as foreign to my ear as these scandalous lines are to my heart! (She rises, and for some moments surveys the writing with a vacant gaze. At length she hands it to WORM, speaking in a voice trembling and exhausted.) Take it, Sir! What I now put into your hands is my good name. It is Ferdinand—it is the whole joy of my life! You have it, and now I am a beggar——

WORM. Oh! Not so! Despair not, dear girl! You inspire me with the most heartfelt pity! Perhaps—who knows? I might even now overlook certain parts of your conduct—yes! Heaven is my witness, how deeply I compassionate your sorrows!

LOUISA (giving him a piercing look). Do not explain yourself! You are on the point of asking something more terrible than all.

WORM (attempting to kiss her hand). What if I asked this little hand? Would that be terrible, Louisa?

LOUISA (with great indignation). Yes! for I should strangle you on the bridal night: and for such a deed I would joyfully yield my body to be torn on the rack! (She is going, but comes hurriedly back.) Is all settled between us, sir? May the dove be released?

WORM. A trifle yet remains, maiden! You must swear, by the holy sacrament, to acknowledge this letter for your free and voluntary act.

LOUISA. Oh God! Oh God! And wilt thou grant thine own seal to confirm the works of hell? (WORM leads her away.)

ACT IV.

SCENE I. Saloon in the PRESIDENT'S House.

FERDINAND VON WALTER enters in great excitement with an open letter in his hand, and is met by a SERVANT.

FERDINAND. Is the marshal here?

SERVANT. My lord, his highness the president is inquiring for you.

FERDINAND. Fire and fury! I ask is the marshal here?

SERVANT. His honor is engaged at the faro-table, above stairs.

FERDINAND. Tell his honor, in the name of all the devils in hell, to make his appearance this instant!

[Exit SERVANT.

SCENE II.

FERDINAND (hastily reading the letter, at one moment seeming petrified with astonishment, at the next pacing the room with fury). Impossible! quite impossible! A form so heavenly cannot hide so devilish a heart. And yet!—and yet! Though all the angels of heaven should descend on earth and proclaim her innocence—though heaven and earth, the Creator and the created, should, with one accord, vouch for her innocence—it is her hand, her own hand! Treachery, monstrous, infernal treachery, such as humanity never before witnessed! This, then, was the reason she so resolutely opposed our flight! This it was—Oh, God! Now I awake from my dream! Now the veil is lifted! This, then, is why she surrendered with so much seeming heroism her claims on my affection, and all but cheated me with her saint-like demeanor! (He traverses the chamber rapidly, and then remains for some moments in deep thought.) To fathom my heart to its very core! To reciprocate every lofty sentiment, every gentle emotion, every fiery ebullition! To sympathize with every secret breathing of my soul! To study me even in her tears! To mount with me to the sublimest heights of passion—to brave with me, undaunted, each fearful precipice! God of heaven! And was all this deceit? mere grimace? Oh, if falsehood can assume so lovely an appearance of truth why has no devil yet lied himself back into heaven?

When I unfolded to her the dangers which threatened our affection, with what convincing artifice did the false one turn pale! With what overpowering dignity did she repulse my father's licentious scoffs! yet at that very moment the deceiver was conscious of her guilt! Nay, did she not even undergo the fiery ordeal of truth? Forsooth, the hypocrite fainted! What must now be thy language, sensibility, since coquettes faint? How wilt thou vindicate thyself, innocence?—for even strumpets faint?

She knows her power over me—she has seen through my very heart! My soul shone conspicuous in my eyes at the blush of her first kiss. And that she should have felt nothing! or perhaps felt only the triumph of her art; whilst my happy delirium fancied that in her I embraced a whole heaven, my wildest wishes were hushed! No thought but of her and eternity was present to my mind. Oh, God! and yet she felt nothing? Nothing? but that her artifice had triumphed! That her charms were flattered! Death and vengeance! Nothing, but that I was betrayed!

SCENE III.

FERDINAND, the MARSHAL.

MARSHAL (tripping into the room). I am told, my dear baron, that you have expressed a wish——

FERDINAND (muttering to himself). To break your rascally neck. (Aloud.) Marshal, this letter must have dropped out of your pocket on parade. (With a malicious smile.) And I have been the fortunate finder.

MARSHAL. You?

FERDINAND. By a singular coincidence! Now, balance thy account with heaven!

MARSHAL. You quite alarm me, baron!

FERDINAND. Read it, sir, read it! (Turning from him.) If I am not good enough for

a lover perhaps I may do for a pimp. (While the MARSHAL reads, FERDINAND goes to the wall and takes down the pistols.)

KALB (throws the letter upon the table, and rushes off). Confusion!

FERDINAND (leads him back by the arm). Wait a little, my dear marshal! The intelligence contained in that letter appears to be agreeable! The finder must have his reward. (Showing him the pistols.)

MARSHAL (starts back in alarm). Have you lost your senses, baron?

FERDINAND (in a terrible voice). I have more than enough left to rid the world of such a scoundrel as you! Choose one of these instantly! (He forces a pistol into the MARSHAL'S hand, and then draws out his handkerchief.) And now take the other end of this handkerchief! It was given me by the strumpet herself!

MARSHAL. What, shoot over the handkerchief? Baron, are you mad? What can you be thinking of?

FERDINAND. Lay hold of it, I say! or you will be sure to miss your aim, coward! How the coward trembles! You should thank God, you pitiful coward, that you have a chance for once of getting something in your empty brain-box. (The MARSHAL takes to his heels.) Gently, gently! I'll take care of that. (Overtakes him and bolts the door.)

MARSHAL. Surely you will not fight in the chamber?

FERDINAND. As if you were worth the trouble of a walk beyond the boundaries! The report, my dear fellow, will be louder, and, for the first time, you will make some noise in the world. Now, then, take hold!

MARSHAL (wiping his forehead). Yet consider, I entreat. Would you risk your precious life, young and promising as you are, in this desperate manner?

FERDINAND. Take hold, I say! I have nothing more to do in this world!

MARSHAL. But I have much, my dearest, most excellent friend!

FERDINAND. Thou, wretch—thou? What hast thou to do, but to play the stop-gap, where honest men keep aloof! To stretch or shrink seven times in an instant, like the butterfly on a pin? To be privy registrar in chief and clerk of the jordan? To be the cap-and-bell buffoon on which your master sharpens his wit? Well, well, let it be so. I will carry you about with me, as I would a marmot of rare training. You shall skip and dance, like a tamed monkey, to the howling of the damned; fetch, carry, and serve; and with your courtly arts enliven the wailings of everlasting despair!

MARSHAL. Anything you please, dear major! Whatever you please! Only take away the pistols!

FERDINAND. How he stands there, poor trembling wretch! There he stands, a blot on the sixth day of creation. He looks as if he were a piratical counterfeit of the Almighty original. Pity, eternal pity! that an atom of brains should lie wasting in so barren a skull! That single atom bestowed upon a baboon might have made him a perfect man, whereas it is now a mere useless fragment. And that she should share her heart with a thing like this! Monstrous! Incredible! A wretch more formed to wean from sin than to excite it!

MARSHAL. Praised be Heaven! he is getting witty.

FERDINAND. I will let him live! That toleration which spares the caterpillar shall be extended to him! Men shall look on him in wonder, and, shrugging their shoulders, admire the wise dispensation of Providence, which can feed its creatures with husks and scourings; which spreads the table for the raven on the gallows, and for the courtier in the slime of majesty. We wonder at the wisdom of Providence, which even in the world of spirits maintains its staff of venomous reptiles for the dissemination of poison. (Relapsing into rage.) But such vermin shall not pollute my rose; sooner will I crush it to atoms (seizing the MARSHAL and shaking him roughly), thus—and thus—and thus——

MARSHAL. Oh! God, that I were away from here! hundreds of miles away in the

asylum for maniacs at Paris! Anywhere but near this man!

FERDINAND. Villain! If she be no longer pure! Villain! If thou hast profaned where I worshipped! (with increased fury). If thou hast polluted, where I believed myself the god! (Pausing suddenly; then in a solemn terrible voice.) It were better for thee, villain, to flee to hell, than to encounter my wrath in heaven! Confess! To what extent has your unhallowed love proceeded?

MARSHAL. Let me go! I will confess everything.

FERDINAND. Oh! it must be more rapturous even to be her licentious paramour than to burn with the purest flame for any other! Would she surrender her charms to unlicensed pleasure she might dissolve the soul itself to sin, and make voluptuousness pass for virtue (pressing his pistol against the MARSHAL'S breast). To what extremities have you proceeded? Confess this instant or I fire!

MARSHAL. There is nothing at all in it, I assure you! There is not a syllable of truth in the whole business! Have but a moment's patience! You are deceived, indeed you are!

FERDINAND (furiously). And dare you remind me of that, villain? To what extremities have you proceeded? Confess, or you are a dead man!

MARSHAL. Mon Dieu! My God! You mistake my words! Only listen for a moment. When a father——

FERDINAND (still more enraged). No doubt! He threw his daughter into your arms? And how far have you proceeded? Confess, or I will murder you!

MARSHAL. You rave! You will not listen! I never saw her! I don't know her! I know nothing at all about her!

FERDINAND (drawing back). You never saw her? You don't know her? Know nothing at all about her? Louisa is lost to me forever on thy account, and yet in one breath hast thou denied her thrice. Go, wretch, go (he gives him a blow with the

pistol, and thrusts him out of the chamber); powder were thrown away on such a miscreant.

[Exit MARSHAL.

SCENE IV.

FERDINAND (after a long silence, during which his countenance declares him to be agitated by some dreadful idea). Forever lost? Yes, false unfortunate, both are lost! Ay, by the Almighty God! if I am lost, thou art so too. Judge of the world, ask her not from me! She is mine. For her sake I renounced the whole world—abandoned all thy glorious creation. Leave me the maid, great Judge of the world! Millions of souls pour out their plaints to thee—turn on them thine eye of compassion, but leave me, Almighty Judge—leave me to myself. (Clasping his hands in agony.) Can the bountiful, the munificent Creator be covetous of one miserable soul, and that soul the worst of his creation? The maiden is mine! Once I was her god, but now I am her devil!

(Fixes his eyes with terrible expression.)

An eternity passed with her upon the rack of everlasting perdition! Her melting eye-balls riveted on mine! Our blazing locks entwined together! Our shrieks of agony dissolving into one! And then to renew to her my vows of love, and chant unceasingly her broken oaths! God! God! The union is dreadful—and eternal! (As he is about to rush off, the PRESIDENT meets him.)

SCENE V.

FERDINAND, the PRESIDENT.

FERDINAND (starting back). Ha! my father.

PRESIDENT. I am glad to meet with you, Ferdinand! I come to bring you some

pleasant news—something that will certainly surprise you, my dear son. Shall we be seated?

FERDINAND (after gazing upon him for some time with a vacant stare). My father! (Going to him with emotion, and grasping his hand.) My father! (Kissing it, and falling at his feet.) Oh, father!

PRESIDENT. What is the matter? Rise, my son. Your hand burns and trembles!

FERDINAND (wildly). Forgive my ingratitude, father! I am a lost man! I have misinterpreted your kindness! Your meaning was so truly—truly paternal! Oh! you had a prophetic soul! Now it is too late! Pardon! pardon! Your blessing, my dear father!

PRESIDENT (feigning astonishment). Arise, my son! Recollect that your words to me are riddles!

FERDINAND. This Louisa, dear father! Oh! You understand mankind! Your anger was so just, so noble, so truly the zeal of a father! had not its very earnestness led you to mistake the way. This Louisa!

PRESIDENT. Spare me, dear boy! Curses on my severity! come to entreat your forgiveness——

FERDINAND. Forgiveness from me! Curse me rather. Your disapproval was wisdom! Your severity was heavenly mercy! This Louisa, father——

PRESIDENT. Is a noble, a lovely girl! I recall my too rash suspicions! She has won my entire esteem!

FERDINAND (starting up). What? You, too? Father, even you? And is she not, father, the very personification of innocence? And is it not so natural to love this maiden?

PRESIDENT. Say, rather, 'twere a crime not to love her.

FERDINAND. Incredible! wonderful! And you, too, who can so thoroughly see

through the heart! And you, who saw her faults with the eyes of hatred! Oh, unexampled hypocrisy! This Louisa, father!

PRESIDENT. Is worthy to be my daughter! Her virtues supply the want of ancestry, her beauty the want of fortune. My prudential maxims yield to the force of your attachment. Louisa shall be yours!

FERDINAND. Naught but this wanting! Father, farewell! (Rushes out of the apartment.)

PRESIDENT (following him). Stay, my son, stay! Whither do you fly?

SCENE VI.—A magnificent Saloon in LADY MILFORD'S House.

Enter LADY MILFORD and SOPHIA.

LADY MILFORD. You have seen her then? Will she come?

SOPHIA. Yes, in a moment! She was in dishabille, and only requested time to change her dress.

LADY MILFORD. Speak not of her. Silence! I tremble like a criminal at the prospect of beholding that fortunate woman whose heart sympathizes thus cruelly with my own. And how did she receive my invitation?

SOPHIA. She seemed surprised, became thoughtful, fixed her eyes on me steadfastly, and for a while remained silent. I was already prepared for her excuses, when she returned me this answer with a look that quite astonished me; "Tell your mistress that she commands what I myself intended to request to-morrow."

LADY MILFORD. Leave me, Sophia! Pity me! I must blush if she is but an ordinary woman—despair if she is more!

SOPHIA. But, my lady! it is not in this spirit that a rival should be received! Remember who you are! Summon to your aid your birth, your rank, your power! A

prouder soul should heighten the gorgeous splendor of your appearance.

LADY MILFORD (in a fit of absence). What is the simpleton babbling about?

SOPHIA (maliciously). Or, is it, perhaps, by chance that to-day, in particular, you are adorned with your most costly brilliants? by chance that you are to-day arrayed in your most sumptuous robes? that your antechamber is crowded with guards and pages; and that the tradesman's daughter is to be received in the most stately apartment of the palace?

LADY MILFORD (angry and nettled). This is outrageous! Insupportable! Oh that woman should have such argus-eyes for woman's weakness! How low, how irretrievably low must I have fallen when such a creature has power to fathom me!

LADY MILFORD, SOPHIA, a SERVANT.

SERVANT (entering). Ma'mselle Miller waits.

LADY MILFORD (to SOPHIA). Hence with you! Leave the room instantly! (Imperiously, as the latter hesitates.) Must I repeat my orders? (SOPHIA retires—LADY MILFORD takes a few turns hastily.) So; 'tis well that I have been excited! I am in the fitter mood for this meeting. (To the SERVANT.) Let her approach.

[Exit SERVANT. LADY MILFORD throws herself upon the sofa, and assumes a negligent but studied attitude.

SCENE VII.

LADY MILFORD, LOUISA. LOUISA enters timidly, and remains standing at a great distance from LADY MILFORD, who has turned her back towards her, and for some time watches her attentively in the opposite looking-glass. After a pause——-

LOUISA. Noble lady, I await your commands.

LADY MILFORD (turning towards LOUISA, and making a slight and distant motion with her head.) Oh! Are you there? I presume the young lady—a certain——. Pray what is your name?

LOUISA (somewhat sensitively). My father's name is Miller. Your ladyship expressed a wish to see his daughter.

LADY MILFORD. True, true! I remember. The poor musician's daughter, of whom we were speaking the other day. (Aside, after a pause.) Very interesting, but no beauty! (To LOUISA.) Come nearer, my child. (Again aside.) Eyes well practised in weeping. Oh! How I love those eyes! (Aloud.) Nearer—come nearer! Quite close! I really think, my good child, that you are afraid of me!

LOUISA (with firmness and dignity). No, my lady—I despise the opinion of the multitude!

LADY MILFORD (aside). Well, to be sure! She has learnt this boldness from him. (To LOUISA.) You have been recommended to me, miss! I am told that you have been decently educated, and are well disposed. I can readily believe it; besides, I would not, for the world, doubt the word of so warm an advocate.

LOUISA. And yet I remember no one, my lady, who would be at the trouble to seek your ladyship's patronage for me!

LADY MILFORD (significantly). Does that imply my unworthiness, or your humility?

LOUISA. Your words are beyond my comprehension, lady.

LADY MILFORD. More cunning than I should have expected from that open countenance. (To LOUISA.) Your name is Louisa, I believe? May I inquire your age?

LOUISA. Sixteen, just turned.

LADY MILFORD (starting up). Ha! There it is! Sixteen! The first pulsation of love!

The first sweet vibration upon the yet unsounded harp! Nothing is more fascinating. (To LOUISA.) Be seated, lovely girl—I am anxious about you. (To herself.) And he, too, loves for the first time! What wonder, if the ruddy morning beams should meet and blend? (To LOUISA, taking her hand affectionately.) 'Tis settled: I will make your fortune. (To herself.) Oh! there is nothing in it: nothing, but the sweet transient vision of youth! (To LOUISA, patting her on the cheek.) My Sophy is on the point of leaving me to be married: you shall have her place. But just sixteen? Oh! it can never last.

LOUISA (kissing her hand respectfully). Receive my thanks, lady, for your intended favors, and believe me not the less grateful though I may decline to accept them.

LADY MILFORD (relapsing into disdain and anger). Only hear the great lady! Girls of your station generally think themselves fortunate to obtain such promotion. What is your dependence, my dainty one? Are these fingers too delicate for work?—or is it your pretty baby-face that makes you give yourself these airs?

LOUISA. My face, lady, is as little of my own choice as my station!

LADY MILFORD. Perhaps you believe that your beauty will last forever? Poor creature! Whoever put that into your head—be he who he may—has deceived both you and himself! The colors of those cheeks are not burnt in with fire: what your mirror passes off upon you as solid and enduring is but a slight tinselling, which, sooner or later, will rub off in the hands of the purchaser. What then, will you do?

LOUISA. Pity the purchaser, lady, who bought a diamond because it appeared to be set in gold.

LADY MILFORD (affecting not to hear her). A damsel of your age has ever two mirrors, the real one, and her admirer. The flattering complaisance of the latter counterbalances the rough honesty of the former. What the one proclaims frightful pock-marks, the other declares to be dimples that would adorn the Graces. The credulous maid believes only so much of the former as is confirmed by the latter,

and hies from one to the other till she confounds their testimonies, and concludes by fancying them to be both of one opinion. Why do you stare at me so?

LOUISA. Pardon me, lady! I was just then pitying those gorgeous sparkling brilliants, which are unconscious that their possessor is so strenuous a foe to vanity.

LADY MILFORD (reddening). No evasion, miss. Were it not that you depend upon personal attractions, what in the world could induce you to reject a situation, the only one where you can acquire polish of manners and divest yourself of your plebeian prejudices?

LOUISA. And with them, I presume, my plebeian innocence!

LADY MILFORD. Preposterous objection! The most dissolute libertine dares not to disrespect our sex, unless we ourselves encourage him by advances. Prove what you are; make manifest your virtue and honor, and I will guarantee your innocence from danger.

LOUISA. Of that, lady, permit me to entertain a doubt! The palaces of certain ladies are but too often made a theatre for the most unbridled licentiousness. Who will believe that a poor musician's daughter could have the heroism to plunge into the midst of contagion and yet preserve herself untainted? Who will believe that Lady Milford would perpetually hold a scorpion to her breast, and lavish her wealth to purchase the advantage of every moment feeling her cheeks dyed with the crimson blush of shame? I will be frank, lady!—while I adorned you for some assignation, could you meet my eye unabashed? Could you endure my glance when you returned? Oh! better, far better, would it be that oceans should roll between us—that we should inhabit different climes! Beware, my lady!—hours of temperance, moments of satiety might intrude; the gnawing worm of remorse might plant its sting in your bosom, and then what a torment would it be for you to read in the countenance of your handmaid that calm serenity with which virtue ever rewards an uncorrupted heart! (Retiring a few steps.) Once more, gracious lady, I entreat your

pardon!

LADY MILFORD (extremely agitated). Insupportable, that she should tell me this! Still more insupportable, that what she tells is true! (Turning to LOUISA, and looking at her steadfastly.) Girl! girl! this artifice does not blind me. Mere opinions do not speak out so warmly. Beneath the cloak of these sentiments lurks some far dearer interest. 'Tis that which makes my service particularly distasteful—which gives such energy to your language. (In a threatening voice.) What it is I am determined to discover.

LOUISA (with calm dignity). And what if you do discover it? Suppose the contemptuous trampling of your foot should rouse the injured worm, which its Creator has furnished with a sting to protect it against misusage. I fear not your vengeance, lady! The poor criminal extended on the rack can look unappalled even on the dissolution of the world. My misery is so exquisite that even sincerity cannot draw down upon me any further infliction! (After a pause.) You say that you would raise me from the obscurity of my station. I will not examine the motives of this suspicious favor. I will only ask, what could induce you to think me so foolish as to blush at my station? What could induce you to become the architect of my happiness, before you knew whether I was willing to receive that happiness at your hands? I had forever renounced all claims upon the pleasures of the world. I had forgiven fortune that she had dealt with me so niggardly. Ah! why do you remind me of all this. If the Almighty himself hides his glory from the eyes of his creatures, lest the highest seraph should be overwhelmed by a sense of his own insignificance, why should mortals be so cruelly compassionate? Lady, lady! why is your vaunted happiness so anxious to excite the envy and wonder of the wretched? Does your bliss stand in need of the exhibition of despair for entertainment? Oh! rather grant me that blindness which alone can reconcile me to my barbarous lot! The insect feels itself as happy in a drop of water as though that drop was a paradise: so happy, and so contented! till some one tells it of a world of water, where navies ride and

whales disport themselves! But you wish to make me happy, say you? (After a pause, she advances towards LADY MILFORD, and asks her suddenly.) Are you happy, lady? (LADY MILFORD turns from her hastily, and overpowered. LOUISA follows her, and lays her hand upon her bosom.) Does this heart wear the smile of its station? Could we now exchange breast for breast, and fate for fate—were I, in childlike innocence, to ask you on your conscience—were I to ask you as a mother— would you really counsel me to make the exchange?

LADY MILFORD (greatly excited, throwing herself on the sofa). Intolerable! Incomprehensible! No, Louisa, no! This greatness of thought is not your own, and your conceptions are too fiery, too full of youth, to be inspired by your father. Deceive me not! I detect another teacher——

LOUISA (looking piercingly at her). I cannot but wonder, my lady, that you should have only just discovered that other teacher, and yet have previously shown so much anxiety to patronize me!

LADY MILFORD (starting up). 'Tis not to be borne! Well, then, since I cannot escape you, I know him—know everything—know more than I wish to know! (Suddenly restraining herself, then continuing with a violence which by degrees increases to frenzy.) But dare, unhappy one!—dare but still to love, or be beloved by him! What did I say? Dare but to think of him, or to be one of his thoughts! I am powerful, unhappy one!— dreadful in my vengeance! As sure as there is a God in heaven thou art lost forever!

LOUISA (undaunted). Past all redemption, my lady, the moment you succeed in compelling him to love you!

LADY MILFORD. I understand you—but I care not for his love! I will conquer this disgraceful passion. I will torture my own heart; but thine will I crush to atoms! Rocks and chasms will I hurl between you. I will rush, like a fury, into the heaven of your joys. My name shall affright your loves as a spectre scares an assassin. That

young and blooming form in his embrace shall wither to a skeleton. I cannot be blest with him— neither shalt thou. Know, wretched girl; that to blast the happiness of others is in itself a happiness!

LOUISA. A happiness, my lady, which is already beyond your reach! Seek not to deceive your own heart! You are incapable of executing what you threaten! You are incapable of torturing a being who has done you no wrong—but whose misfortune it is that her feelings have been sensible to impressions like your own. But I love you for these transports, my lady!

LADY MILFORD (recovering herself). Where am I? What have I done? What sentiments have I betrayed? To whom have I betrayed them? Oh, Louisa, noble, great, divine soul, forgive the ravings of a maniac! Fear not, my child! I will not injure a hair of thy head! Name thy wishes! Ask what thou wilt! I will serve thee with all my power; I will be thy friend— thy sister! Thou art poor; look (taking off her brilliants), I will sell these jewels—sell my wardrobe—my carriages and horses—all shall be thine—grant me but Ferdinand!

LOUISA (draws back indignantly). Does she mock my despair?—or is she really innocent of participation in that cruel deed? Ha! then I may yet assume the heroine, and make my surrender of him pass for a sacrifice! (Remains for a while absorbed in thought, then approaches LADY MILFORD, seizes her hand, and gazes on her with a fixed and significant look.) Take him, lady! I here voluntarily resign the man whom hellish arts have torn from my bleeding bosom! Perchance you know it not, my lady! but you have destroyed the paradise of two lovers; you have torn asunder two hearts which God had linked together; you have crushed a creature not less dear to him than yourself, and no less created for happiness; one by whom he was worshipped as sincerely as by you; but who, henceforth, will worship him no more. But the Almighty is ever open to receive the last groan of the trampled worm. He will not look on with indifference when creatures in his keeping are murdered. Now

Ferdinand is yours. Take him, lady, take him! Rush into his arms! Drag him with you to the altar! But forget not that the spectre of a suicide will rush between you and the bridal kiss. God be merciful! No choice is left me! (Rushes out of the chamber.)

SCENE VIII.

LADY MILFORD alone, in extreme agitation, gazing on the door by which LOUISA left. At length she recovers from her stupor.

LADY MILFORD. What was that? What preys so on my heart? What said the unhappy one? Still, O heaven, the dreadful, damning words ring in my ears! "Take him! Take him!" What should I take, unfortunate? the bequest of your dying groan—the fearful legacy of your despair? Gracious heaven! am I then fallen so low? Am I so suddenly hurled from the towering throne of my pride that I greedily await what a beggar's generosity may throw me in the last struggle of death? "Take him! Take him!" And with what a tone was it uttered!—with what a look! What! Amelia! is it for this thou hast overleaped the bounds of thy sex? For this didst thou vaunt the glorious title of a free-born Briton, that thy boasted edifice of honor might sink before the nobler soul of a despised and lowly maiden? No, proud unfortunate! No! Amelia Milford may blush for shame,—but shall never be despised. I, too, have courage to resign. (She walks a few paces with a majestic gait.) Hide thyself, weak, suffering woman! Hence, ye sweet and golden dreams of love! Magnanimity alone be now my guide. These lovers are lost, or Amelia must withdraw her claim, and renounce the prince's heart. (After a pause, with animation.) It is determined! The dreadful obstacle is removed—broken are the bonds which bound me to the duke—torn from my bosom this raging passion. Virtue, into thy arms I throw myself. Receive thy repentant daughter. Ha! how happy do I feel! How suddenly relieved my heart, and how exalted! Glorious as the setting sun, will I this day

descend from the pinnacle of my greatness; my grandeur shall expire with my love, and my own heart be the only sharer of my proud exile! (Going to her writing-table with a determined air.) It must be done at once—now, on the spot—before the recollection of Ferdinand renews the cruel conflict in my bosom! (She seats herself, and begins to write).

SCENE IX.

LADY MILFORD, an ATTENDANT, SOPHIA, afterwards the MARSHAL, and then SERVANTS.

SERVANT. Marshal von Kalb is in the ante-chamber, and brings a message from his highness.

LADY MILFORD (not hearing him in the eagerness of writing). How the illustrious puppet will stare! The idea is singular enough, I own, the presuming to astonish his serene numskull. In what confusion will his court be thrown! The whole country will be in a ferment.

SERVANT and SOPHIA. Marshal von Kalb, my lady!

LADY MILFORD (turning round). Who? the marshal? So much the better! Such creatures were designed by nature to carry the ass' panniers.

[Exit SERVANT.

SOPHIA (approaching anxiously). If I were not fearful, my lady, that you would think it presumption. (LADY MILFORD continuing to write eagerly.) Louisa Miller rushed madly to the hall—you are agitated—you speak to yourself. (LADY MILFORD continues writing.) I am quite alarmed. What can have happened? (The MARSHAL enters, making repeated bows at LADY MILFORD'S back; as she takes no notice of him, he comes nearer, stands behind her chair, touches the hem of her dress, and imprints a kiss on it, saying in a tremulous voice.) His serene

highness——

LADY MILFORD (while she peruses hastily what she has written). He will tax me with black ingratitude! "I was poor and forsaken! He raised me from misery! From misery." Detestable exchange! Annul my bond, seducer! The blush of my eternal shame repays my debt with interest.

MARSHAL (after endeavoring in vain to catch her eye). Your ladyship seems somewhat absent. I take the liberty of permitting myself the boldness (very loud)—his serene highness, my lady, has sent me to inquire whether you mean to honor this evening's gala with your presence, or the theatre?

LADY MILFORD (rising, with a laugh). One or the other, sweet sir. In the meantime take this paper to your duke for his dessert. (To SOPHIA.) Do you, Sophia, give directions to have my carriage brought to the door without delay, and call my whole household together in this saloon.

SOPHIA (goes out in great astonishment). Heavens! What do I forebode? What will this end in?

MARSHAL. You seem excited, my lady!

LADY MILFORD. The greater the chance of my letting you into a little truth. Rejoice, my Lord Marshal! There is a place vacant at court. A fine time for panders. (As the MARSHAL throws a look of suspicion upon the paper.) Read it, read it! 'Tis my desire that the contents should be made public. (While he reads it, the domestics enter, and range themselves in the background.)

MARSHAL (reading). "Your highness—an engagement, broken by you so lightly, can no longer be binding on me. The happiness of your subjects was the condition of my love. For three years the deception has lasted. The veil at length falls from my eyes! I look with disgust on favors which are stained with the tears of your subjects. Bestow the love which I can no longer accept upon your weeping country, and learn from a British princess compassion to your German people. Within an hour I shall

have quitted your dominions. JOANNA NORFOLK"

SERVANTS (exclaiming to each other in astonishment). Quitted the dominions!

MARSHAL (replaces the letter upon the table in terror). God forbid, my dear and most excellent lady! The bearer of such a letter would be as mad as the writer!

LADY MILFORD. That is your concern, you pink of a courtier! Alas! I am sorry to know that you, and such as you, would choke even in the utterance of what others dare to do. My advice is that you bake the letter in a venison pasty, so that his most serene highness may find it on his plate!

MARSHAL. God preserve me! What presumption! Ponder well, I entreat you. Reflect on the disgrace which you will bring down upon yourself, my lady!

LADY MILFORD (turning to the assembled domestics, and addressing them in the deepest emotion). You seem amazed, good people; and anxiously awaiting the solution of this riddle? Draw nearer, my friends! You have served me truly and affectionately; have looked into my eyes rather than my purse. My pleasure was your study, my approbation your pride! Woe is me, that the remembrance of your fidelity must be the record of my unworthiness! Unhappy fate, that the darkest season of my life should have been the brightest of yours! (Her eyes suffused with tears.) We must part, my children. Lady Milford has ceased to exist, and Joanna of Norfolk is too poor to repay your love. What little wealth I have my treasurer will share among you. This palace belongs to the duke. The poorest of you will quit it far richer than his mistress! Farewell, my children! (She extends her hand, which they all in turn kiss, with marks of sorrow and affection.) I understand you, my good people! Farewell! forever farewell! (Struggling with her feelings.) I hear the carriage at the door. (She tears herself away, and is hurrying out when the MARSHAL arrests her progress.) How, now? Pitiful creature, art thou still there?

MARSHAL (who all this while has been gazing in vacant astonishment at the letter). And must I be the person to put this letter into the most august hands of his most

serene highness?

LADY MILFORD. Pitiful creature, even thou! Thou must deliver into his most august hands, and convey to his most august ears, that, as I cannot go barefoot to Loretto, I will support myself by the labor of my hands, that I may be purified from the disgrace of having condescended to rule him. (She hurries off—the rest silently disperse.)

ACT V.

SCENE I.—Twilight; a room in MILLER'S house.

LOUISA sits silent and motionless in a dark corner of the room, her head reclining upon her hand. After a long pause, MILLER enters with a lantern, the light of which he casts anxiously round the chamber, without observing LOUISA, he then puts his hat on the table, and sets down the lantern. LOUISA, MILLER.

MILLER. She is not here either. No, she is not here! I have wandered through every street; I have sought her with every acquaintance; I have inquired at every door! No one has seen my child! (A silence of some moments.) Patience, poor unhappy father! Patience till morning; then perhaps the corpse of your only one may come floating to shore. Oh, God in heaven! What though my heart has hung too idolatrously upon this daughter, yet surely the punishment is severe! Heavenly Father! Surely it is severe! I will not murmur, Heavenly Father; but the punishment is indeed severe! (Throws himself sorrowfully into a chair.)

LOUISA (without moving from her seat). Thou dost well, wretched old man! Learn betimes to lose.

MILLER (starts up eagerly). Ah! art thou there, my child? Art thou there? But wherefore thus alone, and without a light?

LOUISA. Yet am I not alone. When all things around me are dark and gloomy then have I the companionship which most I love.

MILLER. God defend thee, my child! The worm of conscience alone wakes and watches with the owl; none shun the light but criminals and evil spirits.

LOUISA. And eternity, father, which speaks to the soul in solitude!

MILLER. Louisa, my child! What words are these?

LOUISA (rises, and comes forward). I have fought a hard fight—you know it, father! but God gave me the strength! The fight is over! Father, our sex is called timid and weak; believe it no more! We tremble at a spider, but the black monster, corruption, we hug to our arms in sport! This for your edification, father. Your Louisa is merry.

MILLER. I had rather you wept. It would, please me better.

LOUISA. How I will outwit him, father! How I shall cheat the tyrant! Love is more crafty than malice, and bolder—he knew not that, the man of the unlucky star! Oh! they are cunning so long as they have but to do with the head; but when they have to grapple with the heart the villains are at fault. He thought to seal his treachery with an oath! Oaths, father, may bind the living, but death dissolves even the iron bonds of the sacrament! Ferdinand will learn to know his Louisa. Father, will you deliver this letter for me? Will you do me the kindness?

MILLER. To whom, my child?

LOUISA. Strange question! Infinitude and my heart together had not space enough for a single thought but of him. To whom else should I write?

MILLER (anxiously). Hear me, Louisa! I must read this letter!

LOUISA. As you please, father! but you will not understand it. The characters lie there like inanimate corpses, and live but for the eye of love.

MILLER (reading). "You are betrayed, Ferdinand! An unparalleled piece of villany

has dissolved the union of our hearts; but a dreadful vow binds my tongue, and your father has spies stationed upon every side. But, if thou hast courage, my beloved, I know a place where oaths no longer bind, and where spies cannot enter." (MILLER stops short, and gazes upon her steadfastly.)

LOUISA. Why that earnest look, father? Read what follows.

MILLER. "But thou must be fearless enough to wander through a gloomy path with no other guides than God and thy Louisa. Thou must have no companion but love; leave behind all thy hopes, all thy tumultuous wishes—thou wilt need nothing on this journey but thy heart. Darest thou come; then set out as the bell tolls twelve from the Carmelite Tower. Dost thou fear; then erase from the vocabulary of thy sex's virtues the word courage, for a maiden will have put thee to shame." (MILLER lays down the letter and fixes his eyes upon the ground in deep sorrow. At length he turns to LOUISA, and says, in a low, broken voice) Daughter, where is that place?

LOUISA. Don't you know it, father? Do you really not know it? 'Tis strange! I have described it unmistakably! Ferdinand will not fail to find it.

MILLER. Pray speak plainer!

LOUISA. I can think of no pleasing name for it just now! You must not be alarmed, father, if the name I give it has a terrible sound. That place,——Oh! why has no lover invented a name for it! He would have chosen the softest, the sweetest—that place, my dear father—but you must not interrupt me—that place is—the grave!

MILLER (staggering to a seat). Oh, God!

LOUISA (hastens to him, and supports him). Nay, father, be not alarmed! These are but terrors which hover round an empty word! Take away the name and the grave will seem to be a bridal-bed over which Aurora spreads her golden canopy and spring strews her fairest flowers. None but a groaning sinner pictures death as a skeleton; to others he is a gentle, smiling boy, blooming as the god of love, but not so false—a silent, ministering spirit who guides the exhausted pilgrim through the

desert of eternity, unlocks for him the fairy palace of everlasting joy, invites him in with friendly smiles, and vanishes forever!

MILLER. What meanest thou, my child? Surely, thou wilt not lay guilty hands on thine own life?

LOUISA. Speak not thus, father! To quit a community from which I am already rejected, to fly voluntarily to a place from which I cannot much longer be absent, is that a sin?

MILLER. Suicide is the most horrible of sins, my child. 'Tis the only one that can never he repented, since death arrives at the moment the crime is committed.

LOUISA (stands motionless with horror). That is dreadful! But my death will not be so sudden, father. I will spring into the river, and while the waters are closing over me, cry to the Almighty for mercy and forgiveness!

MILLER. That is to say, you will repent the theft as soon as the treasure is secure! Daughter! Daughter! beware how you mock your God when you most need his help! Oh! you have gone far, far astray! You have forgotten the worship of your Creator, and he has withdrawn his protecting hand from you!

LOUISA. Is it, then, a crime to love, father?

MILLER. So long as thou lovest God thou wilt never love man to idolatry. Thou hast bowed me down low, my only one! low! very low! perhaps to the grave! Yet will I not increase the sadness of thy heart. Daughter! I gave vent to my feelings as I entered. I thought myself alone! Thou hast overheard me! and why should I longer conceal the truth. Thou wert my idol! Hear me, Louisa, if there is yet room in thy heart for a father's feelings. Thou wert my all! Of thine own thou hast nothing more to lose, but I have my all at stake! My life depends on thee! My hairs are turning gray, Louisa; they show that the time is drawing nigh with me when fathers look for a return of the capital invested in the hearts of their children. Wilt thou defraud me of this, Louisa? Wilt thou away and bear with thee all the wealth of thy father?

LOUISA (kissing his hand in the deepest emotion). No, father, no! I go from this world deeply in your debt, and will repay you with usury in the world to come.

MILLER. Beware, my child, lest thy reckoning should be false! (very earnestly and solemnly). Art thou certain that we shall meet in that world to come? Lo! how the color fades from thy cheek! My child must feel that I can scarcely overtake her in that other world if she hurries there before me. (LOUISA throws herself shuddering into his arms, he clasps her warmly to his bosom, and continues in a tone of fervent adjuration.) Oh! Louisa! Louisa! Fallen, perhaps already lost, daughter! Treasure in thy heart the solemn counsels of a father! I cannot eternally watch over thee! I may snatch the dagger from thy hands; but thou canst let out life with a bodkin. I may remove poison from thy reach; but thou canst strangle thyself with a necklace. Louisa! Louisa! I can only warn thee. Wilt thou rush boldly forward till the perfidious phantom which lured thee on vanishes at the awful brink of eternity? Wilt thou dare approach the throne of the Omniscient with the lie on thy lips? "At thy call am I here, Creator!" while thy guilty eyes are in search only of their mortal idol! And when thou shalt see this perishable god of thine own creation, a worm like thee, writhing at the Almighty's feet; when thou shalt hear him in the awful moment give the lie to thy guilty daring, and blast thy delusive hopes of eternal mercy, which the wretch implores in vain for himself; what then! (Louder and more fervently), What, then, unhappy one? (He clasps her still closer to his bosom, and gazes upon her with wild and piercing looks; then suddenly disengages himself.) I can do no more! (Raising his right hand towards heaven.) Immortal Judge, I can do no more to save this soul from ruin! Louisa, do what thou wilt. Offer up a sacrifice at the altar of this idolized youth that shall make thy evil genius howl for transport and thy good angels forsake thee in despair. Go on! Heap sin upon sin,—add to them this, the last, the heaviest,—and, if the scale be still too light throw in my curse to complete the measure. Here is a knife; pierce thy own heart, and (weeping aloud and rushing away), and with it, thy father's!

LOUISA (following and detaining him). Stay! stay! Oh! father, father!— to think that affection should wound more cruelly than a tyrant's rage! What shall I?—I cannot!—what must I do?

MILLER. If thy lover's kisses burn hotter than thy father's tears—then die!

LOUISA (after a violent internal struggle, firmly). Father! Here is my hand! I will—God! God! what am I doing! What would I?—father, I swear. Woe is me! Criminal that I am where'er I turn! Father, be it so! Ferdinand. God, look down upon the act! Thus I destroy the last memorial of him. (Tearing the letter.)

MILLER (throwing himself in ecstasy upon her neck). There spoke my daughter! Look up, my child! Thou hast lost a lover, but thou hast made a father happy. (Embracing her, and alternately laughing and crying.) My child! my child! I was not worthy to live so blest a moment! God knows how I, poor miserable sinner, became possessed of such an angel! My Louisa! My paradise! Oh! I know but little of love; but that to rend its bonds must be a bitter grief I can well believe!

LOUISA. But let us hasten from this place, my father! Let us fly from the city, where my companions scoff at me, and my good name is lost forever—let us away, far away, from a spot where every object tells of my ruined happiness,—let us fly if it be possible!

MILLER. Whither thou wilt, my daughter! The bread of the Lord grows everywhere, and He will grant ears to listen to my music. Yes! we will fly and leave all behind. I will set the story of your sorrows to the lute, and sing of the daughter who rent her own heart to preserve her father's. We will beg with the ballad from door to door, and sweet will be the alms bestowed by the hand of weeping sympathy!

SCENE II.

The former; FERDINAND.

LOUISA (who perceives him first, throws herself shrieking into MILLER'S arms). God! There he is! I am lost!

MILLER. Who? Where?

LOUISA (points, with averted face, to the MAJOR, and presses closer to her father). 'Tis he! 'Tis he! himself! Look round, father, look round!—he comes to murder me!

MILLER (perceives him and starts back). How, baron? You here?

FERDINAND (approaches slowly, stands opposite to LOUISA, and fixes a stern and piercing look upon her. After a pause, he says). Stricken conscience, I thank thee! Thy confession is dreadful, but swift and true, and spares me the torment of an explanation! Good evening, Miller!

MILLER. For God's sake! baron, what seek you? What brings you hither? What means this surprise?

FERDINAND. I knew a time when the day was divided into seconds, when eagerness for my presence hung upon the weights of the tardy clock, and when every pulse-throb was counted until the moment of my coming. How is it that I now surprise?

MILLER. Oh, leave us, leave us, baron! If but one spark of humanity still linger in your bosom;—if you seek not utterly to destroy her whom you profess to love, fly from this house, stay not one moment longer. The blessing of God deserted us when your foot first crossed its threshold. You have brought misery under a roof where all before was joy and happiness. Are you not yet content? Do you seek to deepen the wound which your fatal passion has planted in the heart of my only child?

FERDINAND. Strange father, I have come to bring joyful tidings to your daughter.

MILLER. Perchance fresh hopes, to add to her despair. Away, away, thou messenger of ill! Thy looks belie thy words.

FERDINAND. At length the goal of my hopes appears in view! Lady Milford, the

most fearful obstacle to our love, has this moment fled the land. My father sanctions my choice. Fate grows weary of persecuting us, and our propitious stars now blaze in the ascendant—I am come to fulfil my plighted troth, and to lead my bride to the altar.

MILLER. Dost thou hear him, my child? Dost thou hear him mock at thy cheated hopes? Oh, truly, baron! It is so worthy of the deceiver to make a jest of his own crime!

FERDINAND. You think I am jesting? By my honor I am not! My protestations are as true as the love of my Louisa, and I will keep them as sacred as she has kept her oaths. Nothing to me is more sacred. Can you still doubt? Still no joyful blush upon the cheek of my fair bride? 'Tis strange! Falsehood must needs be here the current coin, since truth finds so little credit. You mistrust my words, it seems? Then read this written testimony. (He throws LOUISA her letter to the MARSHAL. She opens it, and sinks upon the floor pale as death.)

MILLER (not observing this). What can this mean, baron? I do not understand you.

FERDINAND. (leads him to LOUISA). But your daughter has understood me well.

MILLER (throws himself on his knees beside her). Oh, God! my child!

FERDINAND. Pale as a corpse! 'Tis thus your daughter pleases me the best. Your demure and virtuous daughter was never half so lovely as with that deathlike paleness. The blast of the day of judgment, which strips the varnish from every lie, has wafted the painted colors from her cheek, or the juggler might have cheated even the angels of light. This is her fairest countenance. Now for the first time do I see it in its truth. Let me kiss it. (He approaches her.)

MILLER. Back! Away, boy! Trifle not with a father's feelings. I could not defend her from your caresses, but I can from your insults.

FERDINAND. What wouldst thou, old man? With thee I have naught to do. Engage not in a game so irrevocably lost. Or hast thou, too, been wiser than I thought? Hast

thou employed the wisdom of thy sixty years in pandering to thy daughter's amours, and disgraced those hoary locks with the office of a pimp? Oh! if it be not so, wretched old man, then lay thyself down and die. There is still time. Thou mayest breathe by last in the sweet delusion, "I was a happy father!" Wait but a moment longer and thine own hand will dash to her infernal home this poisonous viper; thou wilt curse the gift, and him who gave it, and sink to the grave in blasphemy and despair. (To LOUISA.) Speak, wretched one, speak! Didst thou write this letter?

MILLER (to LOUISA, impressively). For God's sake, daughter, forget not! forget not!

LOUISA. Oh, father—that letter!

FERDINAND. Oh! that it should have fallen into the wrong hands. Now blessed be the accident! It has effected more than the most consummate prudence, and will at the day of judgment avail more than the united wisdom of sages. Accident, did I say? Oh! Providence directs, when a sparrow falls, why not when a devil is unmasked? But I will be answered! Didst thou write that letter?

MILLER (to LOUISA, in a tone of entreaty). Be firm, my child, be firm! But a single "Yes," and all will be over.

FERDINAND. Excellent! excellent! The father, too, is deceived! All, all are deceived by her! Look, how the perfidious one stands there; even her tongue refuses participation in her last lie. I adjure thee by that God so terrible and true—didst thou write that letter?

LOUISA (after a painful struggle, with firmness and decision). I did!

FERDINAND (stands aghast). No! As my soul liveth, thou hast lied. Even innocence itself, when extended on the rack, confesses crime which it never committed—I ask too passionately. Is it not so, Louisa? Thou didst but confess, because I asked passionately?

LOUISA. I confessed the truth!

FERDINAND. No, I tell thee! No! no! Thou didst not write that letter! It is not like thy hand! And, even though it were, why should it be more difficult to counterfeit a writing than to undo a heart? Tell me truly, Louisa! Yet no, no, do not! Thou mightest say yes again, and then I were lost forever. A lie, Louisa! A lie! Oh! if thou didst but know one now—if thou wouldst utter it with that open angelic mien—if thou wouldst but persuade mine ear and eye, though it should deceive my heart ever so monstrously! Oh, Louisa! Then might truth depart in the same breath—depart from our creation, and the sacred cause itself henceforth bow her stiff neck to the courtly arts of deception.

LOUISA. By the Almighty God! by Him who is so terrible and true! I did!

FERDINAND (after a pause, with the expression of the most heartfelt sorrow). Woman! Woman! With what a face thou standest now before me! Offer Paradise with that look, and even in the regions of the damned thou wilt find no purchaser. Didst thou know what thou wert to me, Louisa? Impossible! No! thou knewest not that thou wert my all—all! 'Tis a poor insignificant word! but eternity itself can scarcely circumscribe it. Within it systems of worlds can roll their mighty orbs. All! and to sport with it so wickedly. Oh, 'tis horrible.

LOUISA. Baron von Walter, you have heard my confession! I have pronounced my own condemnation! Now go! Fly from a house where you have been so unhappy.

FERDINAND. 'Tis well! 'tis well! You see I am calm; calm, too, they say, is the shuddering land through which the plague has swept. I am calm. Yet ere I go, Louisa, one more request! It shall be my last. My brain burns with fever! I need refreshment! Will you make me some lemonade?

[Exit LOUISA.

SCENE III.

FERDINAND and MILLER. They both pace up and down without speaking, on

opposite sides of the room, for some minutes.

MILLER (standing still at length, and regarding the MAJOR with a sorrowful air). Dear baron, perhaps it may alleviate your distress to say that I feel for you most deeply.

FERDINAND. Enough of this, Miller. (Silence again for some moments.) Miller, I forget what first brought me to your house. What was the occasion of it?

MILLER. How, baron? Don't you remember? You came to take lessons on the flute.

FERDINAND (suddenly). And I beheld his daughter! (Another pause.) You have not kept your faith with me, friend! You were to provide me with repose for my leisure hours; but you betrayed me and sold me scorpions. (Observing MILLER'S agitation.) Tremble not, good old man! (falling deeply affected on his neck)—the fault was none of thine!

MILLER (wiping his eyes). Heaven knows, it was not!

FERDINAND (traversing the room, plunged in the most gloomy meditation). Strange! Oh! beyond conception strange, are the Almighty's dealings with us! How often do terrific weights hang upon slender, almost invisible threads! Did man but know that he should eat death in a particular apple! Hem! Could he but know that! (He walks a few more turns; then stops suddenly, and grasps MILLER'S hand with strong emotion.) Friend, I have paid dearly for thy lessons—and thou, too, hast been no gainer— perhaps mayst even lose thy all. (Quitting him dejectedly.) Unhappy flute-playing, would that it never entered my brain!

MILLER (striving to repress his feelings). The lemonade is long in coming. I will inquire after it, if you will excuse me.

FERDINAND. No hurry, dear Miller! (Muttering to himself.) At least to her father there is none. Stay here a moment. What was I about to ask you? Ay, I remember! Is Louisa your only daughter? Have you no other child?

MILLER (warmly). I have no other, baron, and I wish for no other. That child is my only solace in this world, and on her have I embarked my whole stock of affection.

FERDINAND (much agitated). Ha! Pray see for the drink, good Miller!

[Exit MILLER.

SCENE IV.

FERDINAND alone.

FERDINAND. His only child! Dost thou feel that, murderer? His only one! Murderer, didst thou hear, his only one? The man has nothing in God's wide world but his instrument and that only daughter! And wilt thou rob him of her?

Rob him? Rob a beggar of his last pittance? Break the lame man's crutch, and cast the fragments at his feet? How? Have I the heart to do this? And when he hastens home, impatient to reckon in his daughter's smiles the whole sum of his happiness; and when he enters the chamber, and there lies the rose—withered—dead—crushed—his last, his only, his sustaining hope. Ha! And when he stands before her, and all nature looks on in breathless horror, while his vacant eye wanders hopelessly through the gloom of futurity, and seeks God, but finds him nowhere, and then returns disappointed and despairing! Great God! and has not my father, too, an only son? an only child, but not his only treasure. (After a pause.) Yet stay! What will the old man lose? She who could wantonly jest with the most sacred feelings of love, will she make a father happy? She cannot! She will not! And I deserve thanks for crushing this viper ere the parent feels its sting.

SCENE V.

MILLER returning, and FERDINAND.

MILLER. You shall be served instantly, baron! The poor thing is sitting without,

weeping as though her heart would break! Your drink will be mingled with her tears.

FERDINAND. 'Twere well for her were it only with tears! We were speaking of my lessons, Miller. (Taking out a purse.) I remember that I am still in your debt.

MILLER. How? What? Go along with you, baron! What do you take me for? There is time enough for payment. Do not put such an affront on me; we are not together for the last time, please God.

FERDINAND. Who can tell? Take your money. It is for life or death.

MILLER (laughing). Oh! for the matter of that, baron! As regards that I don't think I should run much risk with you!

FERDINAND. You would run the greatest. Have you never heard that youths have died. That damsels and youths have died, the children of hope, the airy castles of their disappointed parents? What is safe from age and worms has often perished by a thunderbolt. Even your Louisa is not immortal.

MILLER. God gave her to me.

FERDINAND. Hear me! I say to you your Louisa is not immortal. That daughter is the apple of your eye; you hang upon her with your whole heart and soul. Be prudent, Miller! None but a desperate gamester stakes his all upon a single cast. The merchant would be called a madman who embarked his whole fortune in one ship. Think upon this, and remember that I warned you. But why do you not take your money?

MILLER. How, baron, how? All that enormous purse? What can you be thinking of?

FERDINAND. Upon my debt! There! (Throws a heavy purse on the table; some gold drops out.) I cannot hold the dross to eternity.

MILLER (astonished). Mercy on us! what is this? The sound was not of silver! (Goes to the table and cries out in astonishment.) In heaven's name, baron, what

means this? What are you about? You must be out of your mind! (Clasping his hands.) There it lies! or I am bewitched. 'Tis damnable! I feel it now; the beauteous, shining, glorious heap of gold! No, Satan, thou shalt not catch my soul with this!

FERDINAND. Have you drunk old wine, or new, Miller?

MILLER (violently). Death and furies! Look yourself, then. It is gold!

FERDINAND. And what of that?

MILLER. Let me implore you, baron! In the name of all the saints in heaven, I entreat you! It is gold!

FERDINAND. An extraordinary thing, it must be admitted.

MILLER (after a pause; addressing him with emotion). Noble sir, I am a plain, straightforward man—do you wish to tempt me to some piece of knavery?—for, heaven knows, that so much gold cannot be got honestly!

FERDINAND (moved). Make yourself quite easy, dear Miller! You have well earned the money. God forbid that I should use it to the corruption of your conscience!

MILLER (jumping about like a madman). It is mine, then! Mine indeed! Mine with the knowledge and consent of God! (Hastening to the door.) Daughter, wife, hurrah, come hither! (Returning.) But, for heaven's sake, how have I all at once deserved this awful treasure? How am I to earn it? How repay it, eh?

FERDINAND. Not by your music lessons, Miller! With this gold do I pay you for (stops suddenly, and shudders)—I pay you—(after a pause, with emotion)—for my three months' unhappy dream of your daughter!

MILLER (taking his hand and pressing it affectionately). Most gracious sir! were you some poor and low-born citizen, and my daughter refused your love, I would pierce her heart with my own hands. (Returning to the gold in a sorrowful tone.) But then I shall have all, and you nothing— and I should have to give up all this glorious

heap again, eh?

FERDINAND. Let not that thought distress you, friend. I am about to quit this country, and in that to which I am journeying such coin is not current.

MILLER (still fixing his eyes in transport on the money). Mine, then, it remains? Mine? Yet it grieves me that you are going to leave us. Only just wait a little and you shall see how I'll come out! I'll hold up my head with the best of them. (Puts on his hat with an air, and struts up and down the room.) I'll give my lessons in the great concert-room, and won't I smoke away at the best puyke varinas—and, when you catch me again fiddling at the penny-hop, may the devil take me!

FERDINAND. Stay, Miller! Be silent, and gather up your gold. (Mysteriously.) Keep silence only for this one evening, and do me the favor henceforward to give no more music lessons.

MILLER (still more vehemently grasping his hand, full of inward joy). And my daughter, baron! my daughter! (Letting go.) No, no! Money does not make the man—whether I feed on vegetables or on partridges, enough is enough, and this coat will do very well as long as the sunbeams don't peep in at the elbows. To me money is mere dross. But my girl shall benefit by the blessing; whatever wish I can read in her eyes shall be gratified.

FERDINAND (suddenly interrupting him). Oh! silence! silence!

MILLER (still more warmly). And she shall learn to speak French like a born native, and to dance minuets, and to sing, so that people shall read of her in the newspapers; and she shall wear a cap like the judge's daughter, and a kidebarri [meaning, no doubt, Cul de Paris, a bustle], as they call it; and the fiddler's daughter shall be talked of for twenty miles round.

FERDINAND. (seizing his hand in extreme agitation). No more! no more! For God's sake be silent! Be silent but for this one night; 'tis the only favor I ask of you.

SCENE VI.

LOUISA with a glass of lemonade; the former.

LOUISA (her eyes swelled with weeping, and trembling voice, while she presents the glass to FERDINAND). Tell me, if it be not to your taste.

FERDINAND (takes the glass, places it on the table, and turns to MILLER). Oh! I had almost forgotten! Good Miller, I have a request to make. Will you do me a little favor?

MILLER. A thousand with pleasure! What are your commands?

FERDINAND. My father will expect me at table. Unfortunately I am in very ill humor. 'Twould be insupportable to me just now to mix in society. Will you go to my father and excuse my absence?

LOUISA (terrified, interrupts him hastily). Oh, let me go!

MILLER. Am I to see the president himself?

FERDINAND. Not himself. Give your message to one of the servants in the ante-chamber. Here is my watch as a credential that I sent you. I shall be here when you return. You will wait for an answer.

LOUISA (very anxiously). Cannot I be the bearer of your message?

FERDINAND (to MILLER, who is going). Stay—one thing more! Here is a letter to my father, which I received this evening enclosed in one to myself. Perhaps on business of importance. You may as well deliver it at the same time.

MILLER (going). Very well, baron!

LOUISA (stopping him, and speaking in a tone of the most exquisite terror). But, dear father, I could do all this very well! Pray let me go!

MILLER. It is night, my child! and you must not venture out alone!

[Exit.

FERDINAND. Light your father down, Louisa. (LOUISA takes a candle and follows MILLER. FERDINAND in the meantime approaches the table and throws poison into the lemonade). Yes! she must die! The higher powers look down, and nod their terrible assent. The vengeance of heaven subscribes to my decree. Her good angels forsake her, and leave her to her fate!

SCENE VII.

FERDINAND and LOUISA. LOUISA re-enters slowly with the light, places it on the table, and stops on the opposite side of the room, her eyes fixed on the ground, except when she raises them to him with timid, stolen glances. He stands opposite, looking steadfastly on the earth—a long and deep silence.

LOUISA. If you will accompany me, Baron von Walter, I will try a piece on the harpsichord! (She opens the instrument. FERDINAND makes no answer. A pause.)

LOUISA. You owe me a revenge at chess. Will you play a game with me, Baron von Walter? (Another pause.)

LOUISA. I have begun the pocketbook, baron, which I promised to embroider for you. Will you look at the design? (Still a pause.)

LOUISA. Oh! I am very wretched!

FERDINAND (without changing his attitude). That may well be!

LOUISA. It is not my fault, Baron von Walter, that you are so badly entertained!

FERDINAND (with an insulting laugh). You are not to blame for my bashful modesty——

LOUISA. I am quite aware that we are no longer fit companions. I confess that I was terrified when you sent away my father. I believe, Baron von Walter, that this moment is equally insupportable to us both. Permit me to ask some of my acquaintances to join us.

FERDINAND. Yes, pray do so! And I too will go and invite some of mine.

LOUISA (looking at him with surprise). Baron von Walter!

FERDINAND (very spitefully). By my honor, the most fortunate idea that in our situation could ever enter mortal brain? Let us change this wearisome duet into sport and merriment, and by the aid of certain gallantries, revenge ourselves on the caprices of love.

LOUISA. You are merry, Baron von Walter!

FERDINAND. Oh! wonderfully so! The very street-boys would hunt me through the market-place for a merry-andrew! In fact, Louisa, your example has inspired me—you shall be my teacher. They are fools who prate of endless affection—never-ending sameness grows flat and insipid —variety alone gives zest to pleasure. Have with you, Louisa, we are now of one mind. We will skip from amour to amour, whirl from vice to vice; you in one direction, I in another. Perhaps I may recover my lost tranquillity in some brothel. Perhaps, when our merry race is run, and we become two mouldering skeletons, chance again may bring us together with the most pleasing surprise, and we may, as in a melodrama, recognize each other by a common feature of disease—that mother whom her children can never disavow. Then, perhaps, disgust and shame may create that union between us which could not be effected by the most tender love.

2pb102 (120K)

LOUISA. Oh, Walter! Walter! Thou art already unhappy—wilt thou deserve to be so?

FERDINAND (muttering passionately through his teeth). Unhappy? Who told thee so? Woman, thou art too vile to have any feelings of thine own; how, then, canst thou judge of the feelings of others? Unhappy, did she say?—ha! that word would call my anger from the grave! She knew that I must become unhappy. Death and damnation! she knew it, and yet betrayed me! Look to it, serpent! That was thy only

chance of forgiveness. This confession has condemned thee. Till now I thought to palliate thy crime with thy simplicity, and in my contempt thou hadst well nigh escaped my vengeance (seizing the glass hastily). Thou wert not thoughtless, then—thou wert not simple—thou wert nor more nor less than a devil! (He drinks.) The drink is bad, like thy soul! Taste it!

LOUISA. Oh, heavens! 'Twas not without reason that I dreaded this meeting.

FERDINAND (imperiously). Drink! I say.

[LOUISA, offended, takes the glass and drinks. The moment she raises the cup to her lips, FERDINAND turns away with a sudden paleness, and recedes to the further corner of the chamber.]

LOUISA. The lemonade is good.

FERDINAND (his face averted and shuddering.) Much good may it do thee!

LOUISA (sets down the glass). Oh! could you but know, Walter, how cruelly you wrong me!

FERDINAND. Indeed!

LOUISA. A time will come, Walter——

FERDINAND (advancing). Oh! we have done with time.

LOUISA. When the remembrance of this evening will lie heavy on your heart!

FERDINAND (begins to walk to and fro more vehemently, and to become more agitated; he throws away his sash and sword.) Farewell the prince's service!

LOUISA. My God! what mean you!

FERDINAND. I am hot, and oppressed. I would be more at ease.

LOUISA. Drink! drink! it will cool you.

FERDINAND. That it will, most effectually. The strumpet, though, is kind-hearted! Ay, ay, so are they all!

LOUISA (rushing into his arms with the deepest expression of love). That to thy Louisa, Ferdinand?

FERDINAND (thrusting her from him). Away! away! Hence with those soft and melting eyes! they subdue me. Come to me, snake, in all thy monstrous terrors! Spring upon me, scorpion! Display thy hideous folds, and rear thy proud coils to heaven! Stand before my eyes, hateful as the abyss of hell e'er saw thee! but not in that angel form! Take any shape but that! 'Tis too late. I must crush thee like a viper, or despair! Mercy on thy soul!

LOUISA. Oh! that it should come to this!

FERDINAND (gazing on her). So fair a work of the heavenly artist! Who would believe it? Who can believe it? (Taking her hand and elevating it.) I will not arraign thy ordinations, oh! incomprehensible Creator! Yet wherefore didst thou pour thy poison into such beauteous vessels? Can crime inhabit so fair a region? Oh! 'tis strange! 'tis passing strange!

LOUISA. To hear this, and yet be compelled to silence!

FERDINAND. And that soft, melodious voice! How can broken chords discourse such harmony? (Gazing rapturously upon her figure.) All so lovely! so full of symmetry! so divinely perfect! Throughout the whole such signs that 'twas the favorite work of God! By heaven, as though all mankind had been created but to practise the Creator, ere he modelled this his masterpiece! And that the Almighty should have failed in the soul alone? Is it possible that this monstrous abortion of nature should have escaped as perfect? (Quitting her hastily.) Or did God see an angel's form rising beneath his chisel, and balance the error by giving her a heart wicked in proportion?

LOUISA. Alas for this criminal wilfulness! Rather than confess his own rashness, he accuses the wisdom of heaven!

FERDINAND (falls upon her neck, weeping bitterly). Yet once more, my Louisa!

Yet once again, as on the day of our first kiss, when you faltered forth the name of Ferdinand, and the first endearing "Thou!" trembled on thy burning lips. Oh! a harvest of endless and unutterable joys seemed to me at that moment to be budding forth. There lay eternity like a bright May-day before our eyes; thousands of golden years, fair as brides, danced around our souls. Then was I so happy! Oh! Louisa! Louisa! Louisa! Why hast thou used me thus?

LOUISA. Weep, Walter, weep! Your compassion will be more just towards me than your wrath.

FERDINAND. You deceive yourself. These are not nature's tears! not that warm delicious dew which flows like balsam on the wounded soul, and drives the chilled current of feeling swiftly along its course. They are solitary ice-cold drops! the awful, eternal farewell of my love! (With fearful solemnity, laying his hand on her head.) They are tears for thy soul, Louisa! tears for the Deity, whose inexhaustible beneficence has here missed its aim, and whose noblest work is cast away thus wantonly. Oh methinks the whole universe should clothe itself in black, and weep at the fearful example now passing in its centre. 'Tis but a common sorrow when mortals fall and Paradise is lost; but, when the plague extends its ravages to angels, then should there be wailing throughout the whole creation!

LOUISA. Drive me not to extremities, Walter. I have fortitude equal to most, but it must not be tried by a more than human test. Walter! one word, and then—we part forever. A dreadful fatality has deranged the language of our hearts. Dared I unclose these lips, Walter, I could tell thee things! I could——But cruel fate has alike fettered my tongue and my heart, and I must endure in silence, even though you revile me as a common strumpet.

FERDINAND. Dost thou feel well, Louisa?

LOUISA. Why that question?

FERDINAND. It would grieve me shouldst thou be called hence with a lie upon thy

lips.

LOUISA. I implore you, Walter——

FERDINAND (in violent agitation). No! no! That revenge were too satanic! No! God forbid! I will not extend my anger beyond the grave! Louisa, didst thou love the marshal? Thou wilt leave this room no more!

LOUISA (sitting down). Ask what you will. I shall give no answer.

FERDINAND (in a solemn voice). Take heed for thy immortal soul! Louisa! Didst thou love the marshal? Thou wilt leave this room no more!

LOUISA. I shall give no answer.

FERDINAND (throwing himself on his knees before her in the deepest emotion). Louisa! Didst thou love the marshal? Before this light burns out—thou wilt stand—before the throne of God!

LOUISA (starting from her seat in terror). Merciful Jesus! what was that? And I feel so ill! (She falls back into her chair.)

FERDINAND. Already? Oh, woman, thou eternal paradox! thy delicate nerves can sport with crimes at which manhood trembles; yet one poor grain of arsenic destroys them utterly!

LOUISA. Poison! poison! Oh! Almighty God!

FERDINAND. I fear it is so! Thy lemonade was seasoned in hell! Thou hast pledged death in the draught!

LOUISA. To die! To die! All-merciful God! Poison in my drink! And to die! Oh! have mercy on my soul, thou Father in heaven!

FERDINAND. Ay, be that thy chief concern: I will join thee in that prayer.

LOUISA. And my mother! My father, too! Saviour of the world! My poor forlorn father! Is there then no hope? And I so young, and yet no hope? And must I die so soon?

FERDINAND. There is no hope! None!—you are already doomed! But be calm. We shall journey together.

LOUISA. Thou too, Ferdinand? Poison, Ferdinand! From thee! Oh! God forgive him! God of mercy, lay not this crime on him!

FERDINAND. Look to your own account. I fear it stands but ill.

LOUISA. Ferdinand! Ferdinand! Oh! I can be no longer silent. Death— death absolves all oaths. Ferdinand! Heaven and earth contain nothing more unfortunate than thou! I die innocent, Ferdinand!

FERDINAND (terrified). Ah! What do I hear? Would she rush into the presence of her Maker with a lie on her lips?

LOUISA. I lie not! I do not lie! In my whole life I never lied but once! Ugh! what an icy shivering creeps through my veins! When I wrote that letter to the marshal.

FERDINAND. Ha! That letter! Blessed be to God! Now I am myself again!

LOUISA (her voice every moment becomes more indistinct. Her fingers tremble with a convulsive motion). That letter. Prepare yourself for a terrible disclosure! My hand wrote what my heart abhorred. It was dictated by your father! (Ferdinand stands like a statue petrified with horror. After a long silence, he falls upon the floor as if struck by lightning.) Oh! that sorrowful act!——Ferdinand—I was compelled— forgive me—thy Louisa would have preferred death—but my father—his life in danger! They were so crafty in their villany.

FERDINAND (starting furiously from the ground). God be thanked! The poison spares me yet! (He seizes his sword.)

LOUISA (growing weaker by degrees). Alas! what would you? He is thy father!

FERDINAND (in the most ungovernable fury). A murderer—the murderer of his son; he must along with us that the Judge of the world may pour his wrath on the guilty alone. (Hastening away).

LOUISA. My dying Redeemer pardoned his murderers,—may God pardon thee and thy father! (She dies.)

FERDINAND (turns quickly round, and perceives her in the convulsions of death, throws himself distractedly on the body). Stay! stay! Fly not from me, angel of light! (Takes her hand, but lets it fall again instantly.) Cold! cold and damp! her soul has flown! (Starting up suddenly.) God of my Louisa! Mercy! Mercy for the most accursed of murderers! Such was her dying prayer! How fair, how lovely even in death! The pitying destroyer has touched gently on those heavenly features. That sweetness was no mask—the hand of death even has not removed it! (After a pause.) But how is this? why do I feel nothing. Will the vigor of my youth save me? Thankless care! That shall it not. (He seizes the glass.)

SCENE VIII.

FERDINAND, the PRESIDENT, WORM, and SERVANTS, who all rush in alarm into the room. Afterwards MILLER, with a crowd, and OFFICERS of justice, who assemble in the background.

PRESIDENT (an open letter in his hand). My son! what means this? I never can believe——

FERDINAND (throwing the glass at his feet). Convince thyself, murderer! (The PRESIDENT staggers back. All stand speechless. A dreadful pause.)

PRESIDENT. My son! Why hast thou done this?

FERDINAND (without looking at him). Why, to be sure I ought first to have asked the statesman whether the trick suited his cards. Admirably fine and skilful, I confess, was the scheme of jealousy to break the bond of our hearts! The calculation shows a master-mind; 'twas pity only that indignant love would not move on wires like thy wooden puppets.

PRESIDENT (looking round the circle with rolling eyes). Is there no one here who weeps for a despairing father?

MILLER (calling behind the SCENEs). Let me in! For God's sake, let me in!

FERDINAND. She is now a saint in heaven! Her cause is in the hands of another! (He opens the door for MILLER, who rushes in, followed by officers of justice and a crowd of people.)

MILLER (in the most dreadful alarm). My child! My child! Poison, they cry—poison has been here! My daughter! Where art thou?

FERDINAND (leading him between the PRESIDENT and LOUISA'S corpse). I am innocent. Thank this man for the deed.

MILLER (throwing himself on the body). Oh, Jesus!

FERDINAND. In few words, father!—they begin to be precious to me. I have been robbed of my life by villanous artifice—robbed of it by you! How I may stand with God I tremble to think, but a deliberate villain I have never been! Be my final judgment what it will, may it not fall on thee! But I have committed murder! (In a loud and fearful voice.) A murder whose weight thou canst not hope that I should drag alone before the judgment-seat of God. Here I solemnly bequeath to thee the heaviest, the bloodiest part; how thou mayst answer it be that thy care! (Leading him to LOUISA.) Here, barbarian! Feast thine eyes on the terrible fruits of thy intrigues! Upon this face thy name is inscribed in the convulsions of death, and will be registered by the destroying angel! May a form like this draw thy curtain when thou sleepest, and grasp thee with its clay-cold hand! May a form like this flit before thy soul when thou diest, and drive away thy expiring prayer for mercy! May a form like this stand by thy grave at the resurrection, and before the throne of God when he pronounces thy doom! (He faints, the servants receive him in their arms.)

PRESIDENT (extending his arms convulsively towards heaven). Not from me, Judge of the world. Ask not these souls from me, but from him! (Pointing to

WORM.)

WORM (starting). From me?

PRESIDENT. Accursed villain, from thee! From thee, Satan! Thou gavest the serpent's counsel! thine be the responsibility; their blood be not on my head, but on thine!

WORM. On mine! on mine! (laughing hysterically.) Oh! Excellent! Now I understand the gratitude of devils. On mine, thou senseless villain! Was he my son? Was I thy master? Mine the responsibility? Ha! by this sight which freezes the very marrow in my bones! Mine it shall be! I will brave destruction, but thou shalt perish with me. Away! away! Cry murder in the streets! Awaken justice! Bind me, officers! Lead me hence! I will discover secrets which shall make the hearer's blood run cold. (Going.)

PRESIDENT (detaining him). Surely, madman, thou wilt not dare?

WORM (tapping him on the shoulder). I will, though,—comrade, I will! I am mad, 'tis true; but my madness is thy work, and now I will act like a madman! Arm in arm with thee will I to the scaffold! Arm in arm with thee to hell! Oh! how it tickles my fancy, villain, to be damned with thee! (The officers carry him off.)

MILLER (who has lain upon LOUISA'S corpse in silent anguish, starts suddenly up, and throws the purse before the MAJOR'S feet.) Poisoner, take back thy accursed gold! Didst thou think to purchase my child with it? (Rushes distractedly out of the chamber.)

FERDINAND (in a voice scarcely audible). Follow him! He is desperate. The gold must be taken care of for his use; 'tis the dreadful acknowlegment of my debt to him. Louisa! I come! Farewell! On this altar let me breathe my last.

PRESIDENT (recovering from his stupor). Ferdinand! my son! Not one last look for a despairing father? (FERDINAND is laid by the side of LOUISA.)

FERDINAND. My last must sue to God for mercy on myself.

PRESIDENT (falling down before him in the most dreadful agony). The Creator and the created abandon me! Not one last look to cheer me in the hour of death! (FERDINAND stretches out his trembling hand to him, and expires.)

PRESIDENT (springing up). He forgave me! (To the OFFICERS.) Now, lead on, sirs! I am your prisoner.

[Exit, followed by the OFFICERS; the curtain falls. [Exit, followed by the OFFICERS; the curtain falls.

*** END OF THE PROJECT GUTENBERG EBOOK LOVE AND INTRIGUE: A TRAGEDY ***

Updated editions will replace the previous one—the old editions will be renamed.

Creating the works from print editions not protected by U.S. copyright law means that no one owns a United States copyright in these works, so the Foundation (and you!) can copy and distribute it in the United States without permission and without paying copyright royalties. Special rules, set forth in the General Terms of Use part of this license, apply to copying and distributing Project Gutenberg™ electronic works to protect the PROJECT GUTENBERG™ concept and trademark. Project Gutenberg is a registered trademark, and may not be used if you charge for an eBook, except by following the terms of the trademark license, including paying royalties for use of the Project Gutenberg trademark. If you do not charge anything for copies of this eBook, complying with the trademark license is very easy. You may use this eBook for nearly any purpose such as creation of derivative works, reports, performances and research. Project Gutenberg eBooks may be modified and printed and given away—you may do practically ANYTHING in the United States with eBooks not protected by U.S. copyright law. Redistribution is subject to the trademark license, especially commercial redistribution.

START: FULL LICENSE

THE FULL PROJECT GUTENBERG™ LICENSE

PLEASE READ THIS BEFORE YOU DISTRIBUTE OR USE THIS WORK

To protect the Project Gutenberg™ mission of promoting the free distribution of electronic works, by using or distributing this work (or any other work associated in any way with the phrase “Project Gutenberg”), you agree to comply with all the terms of the Full Project Gutenberg License available with this file or online at www.gutenberg.org/license.

Section 1. General Terms of Use and Redistributing Project Gutenberg electronic works

1.A. By reading or using any part of this Project Gutenberg electronic work, you indicate that you have read, understand, agree to and accept all the terms of this license and intellectual property (trademark/copyright) agreement. If you do not agree to abide by all the terms of this agreement, you must cease using and return or destroy all copies of Project Gutenberg electronic works in your possession. If you paid a fee for obtaining a copy of or access to a Project Gutenberg electronic work and you do not agree to be bound by the terms of this agreement, you may obtain a refund from the person or entity to whom you paid the fee as set forth in paragraph 1.E.8.

1.B. “Project Gutenberg” is a registered trademark. It may only be used on or associated in any way with an electronic work by people who agree to be bound by the terms of this agreement. There are a few things that you can do with most Project Gutenberg electronic works even without complying with the full terms of this agreement. See paragraph 1.C below. There are a lot of things you can do with Project Gutenberg electronic works if you follow the terms of this agreement and help preserve free future access to Project Gutenberg electronic works. See paragraph 1.E below.

1.C. The Project Gutenberg Literary Archive Foundation (“the Foundation” or PGLAF), owns a compilation copyright in the collection of Project Gutenberg electronic works. Nearly all the individual works in the collection are in the public domain in the United States. If an individual work is unprotected by copyright law in the United States and you are located in the United States, we do not claim a right to prevent you from copying, distributing, performing, displaying or creating derivative works based on the work as long as all references to Project Gutenberg are removed. Of course, we hope that you will support the Project Gutenberg mission of promoting free access to electronic works by freely sharing Project Gutenberg works in compliance with the terms of this agreement for keeping the Project Gutenberg name associated with the work. You can easily comply with the terms of this agreement by keeping this work in the same format with its attached full Project Gutenberg License when you share it without charge with others.

1.D. The copyright laws of the place where you are located also govern what you can do with this work. Copyright laws in most countries are in a constant state of change. If you are outside the United States, check the laws of your country in addition to the terms of this agreement before downloading, copying, displaying, performing, distributing or creating derivative works based on this work or any other Project Gutenberg work. The Foundation makes no representations concerning the copyright status of any work in any country other than the United States.

1.E. Unless you have removed all references to Project Gutenberg:

1.E.1. The following sentence, with active links to, or other immediate access to, the full Project Gutenberg License must appear prominently whenever any copy of a Project Gutenberg work (any work on which the phrase “Project Gutenberg” appears, or with which the phrase “Project Gutenberg” is associated) is accessed, displayed, performed, viewed, copied or distributed:

This eBook is for the use of anyone anywhere in the United States and most other

parts of the world at no cost and with almost no restrictions whatsoever. You may copy it, give it away or re-use it under the terms of the Project Gutenberg™ License included with this eBook or online at www.gutenberg.org. If you are not located in the United States, you will have to check the laws of the country where you are located before using this eBook.

1.E.2. If an individual Project Gutenberg electronic work is derived from texts not protected by U.S. copyright law (does not contain a notice indicating that it is posted with permission of the copyright holder), the work can be copied and distributed to anyone in the United States without paying any fees or charges. If you are redistributing or providing access to a work with the phrase “Project Gutenberg” associated with or appearing on the work, you must comply either with the requirements of paragraphs 1.E.1 through 1.E.7 or obtain permission for the use of the work and the Project Gutenberg trademark as set forth in paragraphs 1.E.8 or 1.E.9.

1.E.3. If an individual Project Gutenberg electronic work is posted with the permission of the copyright holder, your use and distribution must comply with both paragraphs 1.E.1 through 1.E.7 and any additional terms imposed by the copyright holder. Additional terms will be linked to the Project Gutenberg License for all works posted with the permission of the copyright holder found at the beginning of this work.

1.E.4. Do not unlink or detach or remove the full Project Gutenberg License terms from this work, or any files containing a part of this work or any other work associated with Project Gutenberg.

1.E.5. Do not copy, display, perform, distribute or redistribute this electronic work, or any part of this electronic work, without prominently displaying the sentence set forth in paragraph 1.E.1 with active links or immediate access to the full terms of the Project Gutenberg License.

1.E.6. You may convert to and distribute this work in any binary, compressed, marked up, nonproprietary or proprietary form, including any word processing or hypertext form. However, if you provide access to or distribute copies of a Project Gutenberg work in a format other than “Plain Vanilla ASCII” or other format used in the official version posted on the official Project Gutenberg website (www.gutenberg.org), you must, at no additional cost, fee or expense to the user, provide a copy, a means of exporting a copy, or a means of obtaining a copy upon request, of the work in its original “Plain Vanilla ASCII” or other form. Any alternate format must include the full Project Gutenberg License as specified in paragraph 1.E.1.

1.E.7. Do not charge a fee for access to, viewing, displaying, performing, copying or distributing any Project Gutenberg works unless you comply with paragraph 1.E.8 or 1.E.9.

1.E.8. You may charge a reasonable fee for copies of or providing access to or distributing Project Gutenberg electronic works provided that:

• You pay a royalty fee of 20% of the gross profits you derive from the use of Project Gutenberg works calculated using the method you already use to calculate your applicable taxes. The fee is owed to the owner of the Project Gutenberg trademark, but he has agreed to donate royalties under this paragraph to the Project Gutenberg Literary Archive Foundation. Royalty payments must be paid within 60 days following each date on which you prepare (or are legally required to prepare) your periodic tax returns. Royalty payments should be clearly marked as such and sent to the Project Gutenberg Literary Archive Foundation at the address specified in Section 4, “Information about donations to the Project Gutenberg Literary Archive Foundation.” • You provide a full refund of any money paid by a user who notifies you in writing (or by e-mail) within 30 days of receipt that s/he does not agree to the terms of the full Project Gutenberg™ License. You must require such a user to

return or destroy all copies of the works possessed in a physical medium and discontinue all use of and all access to other copies of Project Gutenberg™ works. • You provide, in accordance with paragraph 1.F.3, a full refund of any money paid for a work or a replacement copy, if a defect in the electronic work is discovered and reported to you within 90 days of receipt of the work. • You comply with all other terms of this agreement for free distribution of Project Gutenberg™ works.

1.E.9. If you wish to charge a fee or distribute a Project Gutenberg™ electronic work or group of works on different terms than are set forth in this agreement, you must obtain permission in writing from the Project Gutenberg Literary Archive Foundation, the manager of the Project Gutenberg™ trademark. Contact the Foundation as set forth in Section 3 below.

1.F.

1.F.1. Project Gutenberg volunteers and employees expend considerable effort to identify, do copyright research on, transcribe and proofread works not protected by U.S. copyright law in creating the Project Gutenberg™ collection. Despite these efforts, Project Gutenberg™ electronic works, and the medium on which they may be stored, may contain “Defects,” such as, but not limited to, incomplete, inaccurate or corrupt data, transcription errors, a copyright or other intellectual property infringement, a defective or damaged disk or other medium, a computer virus, or computer codes that damage or cannot be read by your equipment.

1.F.2. LIMITED WARRANTY, DISCLAIMER OF DAMAGES - Except for the “Right of Replacement or Refund” described in paragraph 1.F.3, the Project Gutenberg Literary Archive Foundation, the owner of the Project Gutenberg™ trademark, and any other party distributing a Project Gutenberg™ electronic work under this agreement, disclaim all liability to you for damages, costs and expenses, including legal fees. YOU AGREE THAT YOU HAVE NO REMEDIES FOR NEGLIGENCE, STRICT LIABILITY, BREACH OF WARRANTY OR BREACH

OF CONTRACT EXCEPT THOSE PROVIDED IN PARAGRAPH 1.F.3. YOU AGREE THAT THE FOUNDATION, THE TRADEMARK OWNER, AND ANY DISTRIBUTOR UNDER THIS AGREEMENT WILL NOT BE LIABLE TO YOU FOR ACTUAL, DIRECT, INDIRECT, CONSEQUENTIAL, PUNITIVE OR INCIDENTAL DAMAGES EVEN IF YOU GIVE NOTICE OF THE POSSIBILITY OF SUCH DAMAGE.

1.F.3. LIMITED RIGHT OF REPLACEMENT OR REFUND - If you discover a defect in this electronic work within 90 days of receiving it, you can receive a refund of the money (if any) you paid for it by sending a written explanation to the person you received the work from. If you received the work on a physical medium, you must return the medium with your written explanation. The person or entity that provided you with the defective work may elect to provide a replacement copy in lieu of a refund. If you received the work electronically, the person or entity providing it to you may choose to give you a second opportunity to receive the work electronically in lieu of a refund. If the second copy is also defective, you may demand a refund in writing without further opportunities to fix the problem.

1.F.4. Except for the limited right of replacement or refund set forth in paragraph 1.F.3, this work is provided to you ‘AS-IS’, WITH NO OTHER WARRANTIES OF ANY KIND, EXPRESS OR IMPLIED, INCLUDING BUT NOT LIMITED TO WARRANTIES OF MERCHANTABILITY OR FITNESS FOR ANY PURPOSE.

1.F.5. Some states do not allow disclaimers of certain implied warranties or the exclusion or limitation of certain types of damages. If any disclaimer or limitation set forth in this agreement violates the law of the state applicable to this agreement, the agreement shall be interpreted to make the maximum disclaimer or limitation permitted by the applicable state law. The invalidity or unenforceability of any provision of this agreement shall not void the remaining provisions.

1.F.6. INDEMNITY - You agree to indemnify and hold the Foundation, the

trademark owner, any agent or employee of the Foundation, anyone providing copies of Project Gutenberg™ electronic works in accordance with this agreement, and any volunteers associated with the production, promotion and distribution of Project Gutenberg™ electronic works, harmless from all liability, costs and expenses, including legal fees, that arise directly or indirectly from any of the following which you do or cause to occur: (a) distribution of this or any Project Gutenberg work, (b) alteration, modification, or additions or deletions to any Project Gutenberg work, and (c) any Defect you cause.

Section 2. Information about the Mission of Project Gutenberg

Project Gutenberg is synonymous with the free distribution of electronic works in formats readable by the widest variety of computers including obsolete, old, middle-aged and new computers. It exists because of the efforts of hundreds of volunteers and donations from people in all walks of life.

Volunteers and financial support to provide volunteers with the assistance they need are critical to reaching Project Gutenberg’s goals and ensuring that the Project Gutenberg collection will remain freely available for generations to come. In 2001, the Project Gutenberg Literary Archive Foundation was created to provide a secure and permanent future for Project Gutenberg and future generations. To learn more about the Project Gutenberg Literary Archive Foundation and how your efforts and donations can help, see Sections 3 and 4 and the Foundation information page at www.gutenberg.org.

Section 3. Information about the Project Gutenberg Literary Archive Foundation

The Project Gutenberg Literary Archive Foundation is a non-profit 501(c)(3) educational corporation organized under the laws of the state of Mississippi and granted tax exempt status by the Internal Revenue Service. The Foundation’s EIN or federal tax identification number is 64-6221541. Contributions to the Project Gutenberg Literary Archive Foundation are tax deductible to the full extent

permitted by U.S. federal laws and your state's laws.

The Foundation's business office is located at 41 Watchung Plaza #516, Montclair NJ 07042, USA, +1 (862) 621-9288. Email contact links and up to date contact information can be found at the Foundation's website and official page at www.gutenberg.org/contact

Section 4. Information about Donations to the Project Gutenberg Literary Archive Foundation

Project Gutenberg™ depends upon and cannot survive without widespread public support and donations to carry out its mission of increasing the number of public domain and licensed works that can be freely distributed in machine-readable form accessible by the widest array of equipment including outdated equipment. Many small donations ($1 to $5,000) are particularly important to maintaining tax exempt status with the IRS.

The Foundation is committed to complying with the laws regulating charities and charitable donations in all 50 states of the United States. Compliance requirements are not uniform and it takes a considerable effort, much paperwork and many fees to meet and keep up with these requirements. We do not solicit donations in locations where we have not received written confirmation of compliance. To SEND DONATIONS or determine the status of compliance for any particular state visit www.gutenberg.org/donate.

While we cannot and do not solicit contributions from states where we have not met the solicitation requirements, we know of no prohibition against accepting unsolicited donations from donors in such states who approach us with offers to donate.

International donations are gratefully accepted, but we cannot make any statements concerning tax treatment of donations received from outside the United States. U.S. laws alone swamp our small staff.

Please check the Project Gutenberg web pages for current donation methods and addresses. Donations are accepted in a number of other ways including checks, online payments and credit card donations. To donate, please visit: www.gutenberg.org/donate.

Section 5. General Information About Project Gutenberg electronic works

Professor Michael S. Hart was the originator of the Project Gutenberg concept of a library of electronic works that could be freely shared with anyone. For forty years, he produced and distributed Project Gutenberg eBooks with only a loose network of volunteer support.

Project Gutenberg eBooks are often created from several printed editions, all of which are confirmed as not protected by copyright in the U.S. unless a copyright notice is included. Thus, we do not necessarily keep eBooks in compliance with any particular paper edition.

Most people start at our website which has the main PG search facility: www.gutenberg.org.

This website includes information about Project Gutenberg, including how to make donations to the Project Gutenberg Literary Archive Foundation, how to help produce our new eBooks, and how to subscribe to our email newsletter to hear about new eBooks.