

ROYAL ENGLISH OPERA,  
COVENT GARDEN.

**THE ARMOURER  
OF NANTES:**

A GRAND ROMANTIC OPERA  
IN THREE ACTS,

COMPOSED BY

**M. W. BALFE,**

THE WORDS BY

**J. V. BRIDGEMAN.**

FIRST PRODUCED AT

THE ROYAL ENGLISH OPERA, COVENT GARDEN,

UNDER THE MANAGEMENT OF

MISS LOUISA PYNE AND MR. W. HARRISON,

*Sole Lessees,*

THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 12th, 1863.

THE OPERA PRODUCED UNDER THE SUPERINTENDENCE OF  
MR. W. WEST.

FIRST EDITION.

PRICE ONE SHILLING.

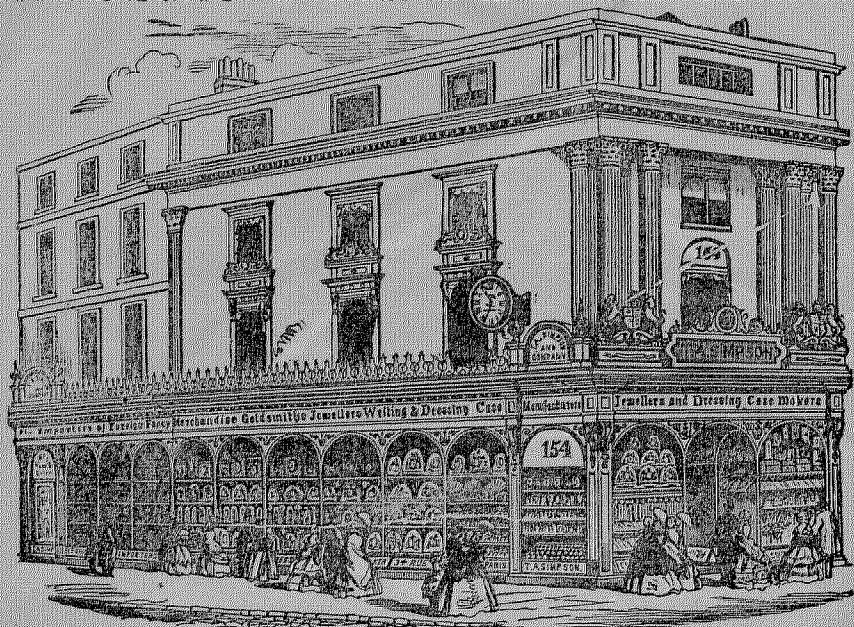
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**FR. RIC. MANSKOPF'SCHES  
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THE ARMOURER OF NANTES,

In Three Acts.

THE LIBRETTO BY J. V. BRIDGEMAN.

THE MUSIC COMPOSED BY M. W. BALFE.

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13.	Ballad ... "Truth and duty" ...	Soprano	2 6
14.	Aria ... "'Tis revenge" ...	Soprano	2 6
15.	Ballad ... "There's one who reared me, loved me" ...	Soprano	2 6
16.	Recit. and Trio ...	2 Sop. and Ten.	2 6
17.	Gipsy Dance ...	...	2 6
18.	Cavatina ... "What joy to listen" ...	Barytone	2 6
19.	Finale ...	...	9 0
<b>ACT III.</b>			
20.	Aria ... Gaoler's Song.— "He who bears the prison keys" ...	Bass	3 0
21.	Ballad ... "O, love, thou'rt like a reed bent low" ...	Tenor	2 6
22.	Invocation ... "Oh, heavenly pow'r" ...	Soprano	2 6
23.	Quartet and Duet ... "'Twas not in vain" ...	...	4 0
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## Dramatis Personæ.

THE BARON DE VILLEFRANCHE	{ <i>Envoy of Louis</i> <i>XII., of France</i> }	MR. W. H. WEISS.
FABIO FABIANI, COUNT DE BEAUVOIR ... ..		MR. SANTLEY.
RAOUL, THE ARMOURER ... ..		MR. W. HARRISON.
THE COUNT DE MOULAC	} <i>Nobles of Brittany</i> }	MR. GOODWIN.
THE COUNT DE ST. BREUX		MR. JAMES.
M. DE PLOËRCHAETEL		MR. PRICE.
M. DE KERKOUËN		MR. C. LYALL.
A JEW ... ..		MR. H. CORRI.
PASCAL ( <i>a Gaoler</i> )... ..		MR. AYNSLEY COOK.
MARIE ( <i>an Orphan</i> ) ... ..		MISS LOUISA PYNE.
ANNE, DUCHESS OF BRITTANY ... ..		MISS ANNA HILES.
DAME BERTHA ... ..		MRS. AYNSLEY COOK.

A Gaoler; a Boatman; the Headsman; Nobles; Ladies of the Court of Brittany; Pages; Herald; Men-at-Arms; Gipseys; Men and Women of the People.

SCENE—NANTES.

TIME—1498.

THIS *Libretto* is founded upon Victor Hugo's Drama of *Marie Tudor*.

J. V. B.

NOTICE TO MANAGERS.

Miss LOUISA PYNE and Mr. W. HARRISON having purchased this Opera, with the exclusive acting and singing right, all applications must be made to them in writing for permission to perform or sing the same, or any part thereof.

ROYAL ENGLISH OPERA,

*February 12th, 1863.*

## ACT I.

SCENE I.—The Banks of the Loire. At the back of the stage an old ruined Parapet, beyond which, and supposed to be on the other Side of the River, is seen a Portion of the City of Nantes with the Tower of the Palace belonging to the Dukes of Brittany rising high above the Buildings around it. A House of humble appearance at first entrance L. In a Niche at the Corner of the House a small Statue of the Virgin; over it hangs an iron cresset. Sunset.

[At the rising of the curtain a number of CITIZENS and WORK-PEOPLE, male and female, are scattered about here and there. They are all looking off towards R. In front, L., a group of NOBLES, comprising the COUNT DE MOULAC, the COUNT DE ST. BREUX, MESSIRES DE PLOËRCHATEL, DE COËTQUEN, and others, who, likewise, are looking off towards R.

PEOPLE. Our gentle sov'reign, virtuous as fair,  
Kneels at the Virgin's shrine in grateful pray'r.  
On this day was she born. May years of bliss  
Each herald in a day as bright as this!

NOBLES. (*aside*)  
A solemn mockery, forsooth, is pray'r,  
For one as wayward as the shifting air.  
The rabble's plaudits, on a day like this,  
Will scarce pass sooner than her fleeting bliss.

PRO. Blithe and tripping, crown'd with gladness,  
Pleasure visits us to day,  
Melting, by her sunny presence,  
Sorrow's ice and frost away.  
Lose no time to do her honour;

Welcome her with dance and song ;  
 Seldom does she gladden labour ;  
 Never does she do so long !  
 For, although, like some kind angel,  
 Mirth and magic smiles she brings,  
 One sad truth, alas ! is certain :  
 Like an angel, she has wings !

Nob. (*aside*)

Blithe and tripping, crown'd with gladness,  
 Pleasure rules o'er all to day ;  
 But, like ripples on the water,  
 Soon her reign will pass away !  
 Do her honour, if it please you,  
 Welcome her with dance and song ;  
 Fickle is she, like a woman ;  
 Never fond or constant long.  
 Though 'tis true that, like an angel,  
 Mirth and magic smiles she brings,  
 There's a truth that's quite as certain :  
 Like an angel, she has wings !

[SOLDIERS enter n. and compel the Crowd to retire. They then station themselves in a line across the stage. A march is now heard in the distance, n., growing gradually louder and louder as the following chorus is sung.]

PEO. & NOB. Hark ! yonder swelling strain  
 Proclaims she quits the fane !  
 PEO. Smiles shall greet her ;  
 Duty meet her,  
 And its homage freely pay ;  
 Ne'er may sadness  
 Dim her gl'ness  
 Or with cloud o'ercast her day.



NOB. (*aside*)

Smiles may greet her  
 Homage meet her,  
 Bowing humbly 'neath her sway ;  
 Soon shall sadness  
 Dim her gladness  
 Dark'ning with its clouds her day.

[Enter GUARDS ; then YOUNG GIRLS strewing flowers, and then ANNE, DUCHESS OF BRITTANY, in a magnificent litter. She is followed by PAGES, LADIES-IN-WAITING, SOLDIERS, &c. On reaching the centre of the stage, she alights, and the litter is borne off. She bows repeatedly as the PEOPLE sing the subjoined chorus.

PEO.

Hail to our Sov'reign ! hail !  
 May Heaven's blessings o'er her path be shed !  
 May Time, attended by the rosy Hours,  
 Entwine a wreath of all Life's choicest flow'rs,  
 And bind it, perfume-laden, round her head.  
 Hail to our Sov'reign ! hail !

NOB. (*aside*)

Wail ! foolish woman ! wail !  
 Stern Fate will shortly strike thy fond hopes dead.  
 A storm of sorrow o'er thy future low'rs  
 To blight and wither Fortune's gaudy flow'rs,  
 And strew thy path with cypress-wreaths instead.  
 Wail ! foolish woman ! wail !

DUC.

Thanks for this welcome, which we dearly prize,  
 As deeds not words shall show. Ere daylight dies,  
 And nature mourns its death with tears of dew,  
 In her turn will your sov'reign welcome you.  
 For once, her ancient palace is your own,  
 And state resigns the sceptre and the throne.  
 To-night we'll play the hostess—spread the feast—  
 For those who poor are not in worth the least !

PEO. Hail to our sov'reign ! hail !  
 May Heav'n's blessings o'er her path be shed !  
 May Time, attended by the rosy Hours,  
 Entwine a wreath of all Life's choicest flowers,  
 And bind it, perfume-laden, round her head.  
 Hail to our sov'reign ! hail !

NOB. (*aside*) Wail ! foolish woman, wail !  
 Stern Fate will shortly strike thy fond hopes dead.  
 A storm of sorrow o'er thy future low'rs,  
 To blight and wither fortune's gaudy flow'rs,  
 And strew thy path with cypress wreaths instead.  
 Wail ! foolish woman, wail !

DUC. The boon is ours, but ours, too, is the gain,  
 For sweet content to-night supreme shall reign.  
 It is not pomp, it is not state,  
 Though circled by a crown,  
 That best defies an adverse fate,  
 Or fortune's wayward frown ;  
 The surest charm 'gainst ev'ry ill  
 By chance or malice sent—  
 Through each harsh trial faithful still—  
 Is cheerful, calm content.  
 Without content, of little worth  
 Are dignity and fame ;  
 An empty nothing, noble birth ;  
 And riches, but a name ;  
 Yet let content dwell here below  
 And all looks clear and bright,  
 As diamonds sparkle, flash and glow,  
 When smiled upon by light.

[The DUCHESS, preceded by YOUNG GIRLS strewing flowers, and  
 by SOLDIERS, and followed by ATTENDANTS and SOLDIERS,  
 exit L., as the PEOPLE and NOBLES resume the Chorus.]

[The CROWD go off L.; the Nobles come down the front of the stage.

NOB. (*menacingly, and looking off L.*)

Gaily and swiftly,  
 Ploughing its way  
 Over the billows,  
 Crested with spray,  
 Bounds the brave vessel,  
 Heedless of fear,  
 Bathed in the sunshine,  
 Golden and clear!  
 Tempest and whirlwind  
 Harmlessly sleep,  
 Scarcely a Zephyr  
 Sports o'er the deep!  
 But woe to the bark!  
 What crash was that? Hark!  
 A quiver! a shock!  
 No more! and the rock,  
 That hardly conceal'd by the calm waters lay,  
 Has pierc'd like a monster in ambush, its prey.  
 Beware! oh, beware!  
 Though lovely and fair  
 The sunshine may gleam  
 And glint on life's stream,  
 The quiet placid tide  
 May oft, perchance, hide  
 The shoals of dark ruin; the rocks of despair!  
 When fortune looks brightest, beware, oh! beware.

[During the last two lines, the BARON DE VILLEFRANCHE has entered unperceived and come down the stage.

VIL. "When fortune looks brightest, beware, oh! beware!"

[The Nobles start, and instinctively put their hands to their swords.

Start not, Messires, for in me  
One who'll aid your cause you see.

DE M. What do these strange words imply?

VIL. Need I answer?

NOB. Yes, reply.

VIL. Grim treason stalks around your suzeraine's throne!

NOB. (*starting*)  
Grim treason!

VIL. Yes! (*sarcastically*) your wonder, I must own,  
Becomes you well; 'tis natural and true,  
Seeing the traitors, noble sirs, are—you!

DE M. M. de Villefranche—

[Putting his hand to his sword.

VIL. (*calmly*) Nay, I simply state

What I can prove, if you will only wait.

The German Kaiser long has plotted—planned—

On this fair Brittany to lay his hand.

You, noble sirs, have sent him word to say

You'll help to place the land beneath his sway,

And tear the crown from off your sov'reign's brow.

Your letter I possess—no matter how!

[Movement among the NOBLES.

That letter's treason! If it meet the eye

Of Anne of Brittany, you surely die!

Would you betray us?

NOB.

VIL.

I betray you? No!

For you and I redoubt the selfsame foe!



'Tis Fabio Fabiani. Am I right ?

NOB. You are !

VIL. You dread the ever-growing might  
Of this adventurer—this atrait knave—  
This Captain of Free Lances—this base slave—  
Where born—whence sprung—we none of us can tell ;  
But round your Duchess he has cast a spell !  
She seems to live—to govern, but for him—  
To be his slave—fulfil his ev'ry whim !  
A woman's heart, too, if I understand,  
She may, ere long, confer on him her hand.

NOB. The day on which this man she weds  
Will seal our fate ;  
The glitt'ring axe will claim our heads,  
To glut his hate !

VIL. The day on which this man she weds,  
Will seal your fate ;  
The glitt'ring axe will claim your heads,  
To glut his hate !  
If you consent to lend your aid,  
I'll save you yet.  
For him, not you, the headsman's blade,  
Revenge shall whet.  
Of Charles the Eighth, your Duchess was the wife,  
While girlhood still illum'd the dawn of life—  
A dawn soon clouded by the widow'd gloom  
Cast from the portals of a husband's tomb.  
Louis the XII, my present lord and king,  
In his turn woos her now. He fain would fling  
The lily'd mantle round her form once more,  
And seat her on the throne she graced before.

But all his hopes are vain,  
 Unless your aid I gain.  
 Grant me that, and naught shall save  
 This proud minion from a grave;  
 Naught remain to mark his fall,  
 Save a block, an axe, and pall.

NOB.

Yes, we'll help you in the task!  
 Yes, we'll grant the aid you ask!  
 To our peril we're not blind,  
 Always do we bear in mind:

The day the Duchess this man weds  
 Will seal our fate;  
 The glitt'ring axe will claim our heads  
 To glut his hate!

VII.

Help me, help me in the task!  
 Grant, O grant, the aid I ask!  
 To your peril be not blind;  
 Always bear this truth in mind:

The day the Duchess this man weds  
 Will seal your fate;  
 The glitt'ring axe will claim your heads  
 To glut his hate!

[M. DE VILLEFRANCHE makes a sign to the NOBLES, and they retire with him up the stage. He then exit at first entrance R., while the NOBLES go off at back.]

Enter MARIE hurriedly from House.

MAR. (*looking back at the house*)

Within those walls I cannot stay ;  
 They seem to weigh down ev'ry sense—  
 'To choke the words when I would pray :  
 Hence must I! quickly, quickly, hence !  
 Yet whither shall I shape my flight ?  
 Where seek contentment for the mind ?  
 My thoughts are gloomy as the night,  
 And those I cannot have behind.

Oh, would that my heart were a swift-pinion'd swallow,  
 That comes with the blossoms and flowers of spring ;  
 And, when summer quits us, is able to follow,  
 Ere tempests have ruffled the down on its wing.  
 It then would not wait till the dew-drops of morning  
 Were frozen to ice 'neath cold winter's gaunt hand ;  
 But, while the green leaves were the earth still adorning,  
 Would flit o'er the seas to some far distant land.

Yet, what though the summer should kiss vale and mountain,  
 And Nature for ever in sheen be array'd,  
 While sunshine to gold should turn streamlet and fountain,  
 Which ripple soft music through ravine and glade.  
 My heart has been struck by a shaft dipp'd in anguish,  
 And hurl'd by Remorse with an aim but too sure ;  
 Wherever it flies it will still pine and languish,  
 Nor summer nor sunshine its wound can e'er cure.

Enter DAME BERTHA from House, as MARIE is about rushing off.

DAME B. Stay, child, stay !

MAR. (*stopping*) I must have air. My brain is on fire. Why  
 does not Raoul come ?

DAME B. Did he not say he would not return to-night? that he is working on a poniard-hilt for a great and powerful lord—the Count de Beauvoir—who needs it by the dawn?

MAR. I will go to him; I will tell him all!

DAME B. Art thou mad? He would kill thee!

MAR. I care not, for I have wronged him.

DAME B. Wronged him! Nonsense! Raoul, it is true, adopted thee—brought thee up—

MAR. (*interrupting her*) With what care, what kindness, what devotion!

DAME B. But he is so much older than thou—he is poor, too. Is it not natural thou shouldst love one younger, handsomer, and richer?

MAR. I love only Raoul. In a moment of folly, madness—and misled by you, to whose care I have been confided—I spoke to the Chevalier de Coutras—I—I—who in a few weeks was to be Raoul's bride. 'Twas you who gave him access to our home!

DAME B. (*aside*) He paid me generously!

MAR. Was that well done?

DAME B. Perhaps not—perhaps not. But the evil will soon be remedied. Thou hast written to say that Raoul is absent, and that the Chevalier may speak to thee again to-night.

MAR. 'Tis for that reason I will not remain.

DAME B. Nay—thou must. Wert thou not to do so, the Chevalier might, as young gallants will, boast of the two interviews thou hast already granted him.

MAR. I—I—granted! They were forced on me. Oh! had I only told Raoul at once. But I feared for *you*! I feared that he might drive you from the shelter of his roof—that he—

DAME B. Is not thy object at this interview to inform the Chevalier thou wilt see him no more? Do so; frankly, boldly! Like a noble gentleman, he will respect your scruples, and—though, may be, with a breaking heart—retire. (*Aside*) If she



be silent only for to-night, all will be well. The Chevalier has the key, and may carry her off. (*Aloud*). Promise thou wilt say nought to Raoul to-night.

MAR. That I should conceal aught from him!—But I promise, though every moment of silence is a crime.

DAME B. There! there! And now let us in, my sweet. The dew is falling fast.

MAR. Leave me! Leave me awhile, and I will follow.

DAME B. (*aside, as she is going up towards house*) In truth, I am sorry for her, pretty innocent, but the Chevalier pays generously, and I have a duty to perform to my own dear children. Yes, the Chevalier is rich. Alack! (*looking back at MARIE*) I could almost wish he were not.

[Exit into the House.]

MAR. Could I see Raoul only for an instant, though I scarce dare look upon his face, still I should gain fresh courage. (*Looking round R.*) Ah! gracious powers; He's here!

Enter RAOUL B. He rushes up to MARIE.

MAR. (*advancing towards him, and then suddenly stopping, as if abashed*)

Ah, Raoul!

RAO. Marie!

MAR. Welcome!

RAO. Who can tell

How great a charm in that one word doth dwell.

Once more pronounce it.

MAR. Welcome!

RAO. Oh, how sweet

To hear thee, dear one, breathe it when we meet.

Jaded, parch'd, athirst, and drooping,  
 In the desert waste of life  
 Often would my sad heart falter,  
 Weary of the journey's strife !

Then, oh, then, that one word : Welcome,  
 Gives me back my strength again ;  
 'Tis the lonely palm-tree, shading  
 One green spot amid the plain.

When my spirit faints for kindness ;  
 When e'en hope's clear springs run dry ;  
 When the panting soul despairing.

From its earthly thrall would fly ;  
 Then, oh, then, that one word : Welcome,  
 Like the Prophet's rod of yore,  
 Strikes the rock, and floods of gladness  
 Down the stony surface pour.

A few short moments only can I stay,  
 For tyrant labour summons me away,  
 To do her bidding through the silent night.  
 O Raoul !

MAR.

RAO.

Marie ! O my soul's delight.

No words can e'er pourtray

My bliss, my pride,

To know thou'lt soon be mine !

My own, my bride !

MAR. (*aside*)

Ere this, could conscience slay,

I long had died !

Oh, ne'er can I be thine—

Thy true, fond bride !

RAO.

Say, Marie, dost thou love me ?

Speak !

MAR.

Love thee, Raoul ?

RAO.

Ay !

- MAR. I owe thee all.
- RAO. Dost love me—
- MAR. Dost love me, though ; reply !  
With gratitude my bosom  
Shall never cease to beat.  
My place is there, before thee ;  
To worship at thy feet !  
Thy tender care—
- RAO. Dost love me ?
- MAR. Thy kindness—
- RAO. I require  
Not thanks, but love ! Dost love me ?  
Love only, I desire !  
Were all the earth's vast treasures—  
All ocean's stores—my own,  
I'd give them, gladly give them,  
For love—*her* love—alone !
- MAR. (*aside*) Shame, rob'd in crimson blushes,  
Usurps pure Candour's throne ;  
I dare not say I love him,  
Or call myself his own !
- RAO. Oh, tell me thou dost love me.
- MAR. (*aside*) I dare not meet his eye ;  
I've basely, foully wronged him.
- RAO. Without thy love I die !
- MAR. (*aside*)  
Oh, how shall I answer him ? What shall I say ?  
Remorse rules my heart with her pitiless sway.  
Oh, hard, bitter task !  
(*Aloud*) Why, why dost thou ask ?  
Dost doubt ?
- RAO. Though thou mock me, and laugh me to scorn,

I'll lay my soul bare !  
 What torture reigns there !

By jealousy, Marie, my bosom is torn.

MAR. (*aside*)

Oh, merciful pow'rs !

RAO.

The pale spectre, Fear,

Had bent o'er my ear,

And whisper'd, "Beware; she is lovely and young !"

But that thou could'st deceive

I will no more believe,

Nor suffer my bosom by doubt to be wrung.

MAR.

Oh, Raoul, you possess a noble heart.

RAO.

My answer is, "I love !" But we must part.

MAR.

Part, Raoul, and so soon ? (*Aside*) Oh, bitter pain !

RAO.

My heart stays with thee till we meet again.

MAR.

Farewell !

RAO.

Farewell ! My bliss, my joy, my pride !

Now, but my ward, soon, soon, to be my bride !

Were all the earth's vast treasures—

All ocean's stores—my own,

I'd give them, gladly give them,

For love—thy love—alone !

MAR. (*aside*)

Shame, rob'd in crimson blushes,

Usurps pure Candour's throne !

I dare not say I love him,

Or call myself his own !

[RAOUL leads MARIE towards the house. On the threshold, she turns and kisses his hand; she then goes in. RAOUL proceeds slowly towards R.]

Enter a JEW.

JEW. Stay ! Do you not recognise me ?

RAO. Yes. For the last few days you have been lurking about my house.



JEW. To speak to you—and alone.

RAO. Say on!

JEW. Sixteen years ago, Etienne, Count de Brissac, was shot in the streets of Nantes, and his partisans hacked to pieces. The bullets flew like hail across the Loire.

RAO. I recollect it well.

JEW. A young man, poor and laborious, was working in his shop. Hearing some one knock, he opened the door, and perceived a stranger at the threshold. The stranger bore in his arms a poor little infant, who was sobbing bitterly. He laid it down and said, "This little innocent is fatherless and motherless." With these words he left. The workman had himself neither father nor mother. He adopted the orphan. He tended—cherished—loved—her. For her he forgot all else. The workman was yourself! The infant—

RAO. Marie! But wherefore do you tell me this? Would you take her from me?

JEW. You see I am acquainted with your affairs. Raoul, watch well your house to-night.

RAO. Wherefore? Wherefore?

JEW. Return not to your work. Remain and watch. Now, for your own sake, retire awhile. Should you hear me call, rush to my aid.

RAO. (*going off R.*) This is most strange.

[Exit.

JEW. All goes well. This Raoul is brave. If needs be, he will protect me. I think I hear the plash of oars and the sound of a guitar. (*He goes up to the parapet.*) Yes; it is he.

[The sound of a guitar is heard, and then a voice, gradually growing louder and louder, and singing the following:—

A flower is beauty, by fairy hands planted;

Few, few things on earth with its charms can compare;

It holds ev'ry eye by its bright hues enchanted ;  
 It shames all the gems which a monarch can wear.  
 But soon, ah, too soon, do its glories decay ;  
 Its perfume grows faint, and its fair blossoms fade ;  
 Then quick let us pluck it, in Life's sunny May,  
 Ere low in the dust its fresh verdure is laid.

JEW. He lands. He dismisses the boatman. He is here !

[JEW comes down. FABIO FABIANI enters enveloped in a large cloak, and proceeds towards the house, L.

JEW. Stay ! One word !

FAB. A word with me ?

I have no leisure—

JEW. (*coolly*) We shall see.

FAB. (*looking at him*)

Though you cresset's feeble light,  
 Struggling faintly through the night,

Is not quite as bright as day,

I, methinks, may boldly say,

From the form and yellow hue

Of thy cap, thou seem'st a Jew.

JEW. Jew I am.

FAB. Thy name.

JEW. (*with malicious meaning*) Suppose  
 'Stead of mine, I thine disclose,  
 Gallant Count de Beauvoir !

FAB. Hush !

JEW. Ay ! for rage, perhaps, might flush  
 O'er your trusting sov'reign's cheek,  
 If she knew whom here you seek !

FAB. Whom I seek ?

JEW. Yes ! I refer,  
 As you 're well aware, to her  
 Whom the arm'rer, Raoul, there

[Pointing to house, L.

Guards with fond and jealous care.

Why you seek her, shall I say?

FAB. 'Tis because I love her.

JEW. Nay!

Love has not the least to do  
With the reason why you woo.

FAB. By surprise I'm overcome!  
Were my conscience, friend, not dumb,  
I should think it spoke, I ween,  
'Neath a Jewish gabardine.

JEW. As your Conscience, then, forsooth,  
I will speak, and speak the truth.

FAB. Ah! by the rood!  
The joke is good!

My Conscience speak the truth! No, no!  
She never should  
E'en though she would.

JEW. The joke is splendid! Ah! ah!—oh!  
The joke is good!  
That's understood!

His Conscience ne'er spake truth—No, no!  
But, if she would,  
Perhaps she could—

I'll teach her how it's done! Oh! oh!  
The Duchess loves you,—as she's amply shown:  
Would raise you, so you hope, to share her throne—  
Already has she made you Count de Beauvoir—

FAB. Well—

JEW. Count de Monléon—and still more to swell  
Your list of dignities, there's yet a third:  
The Lordship of La Roche-Bernard, conferred  
A few short days ago. All this is much,  
But not enough you think. You yearn to clutch  
More solid gifts within your grasping hand

You long for well-built châteaux—forests—land !  
 Not titles ! When King Charles the Eighth of France  
 'Gainst Brittany his armies bade advance,  
 The Count de Brissac brav'd the Frenchman's sword,  
 And fell while battling for his duke and lord.  
 His only child, a daughter, on the night  
 The Count thus perish'd in the glorious fight,  
 Was either kill'd, or carried off by stealth—  
 So people thought. The Count's broad lands and wealth  
 Reverted to the Crown. That wealth—those lands—  
 You've just accepted from your sovereign's hands.

FAB. Well ! what of that ?

JEW. But were the girl alive !

The gift is valueless, should she survive !—

She is alive, your spies have found—

FAB. (*imperatively*) Speak low !

JEW. And all your riches melt away like snow.

Some would have stabb'd the girl—but you do worse :

You, for some object, would her fame asperse.

FAB. Insolent varlet—

JEW. 'Tis your Conscience speaks.

FAB. Ah ! by the rood !

The joke is good !

My Conscience speak the truth ! No ! no !

She never should,

E'en though she would.

The joke is splendid ! Ah ! ah !—oh !

JEW. The joke is good !

That's understood !

His Conscience ne'er spake truth ! No ! no !

But, if she would,

Perhaps she could ;

I'll teach her how it's done ! Oh ! oh !

FAB. Now, by my Halidom, the Jew knows all!

JEW. I know enough to bring about your fall!

FAB. What would you have?

JEW. If anyone possess'd  
The documents and papers which attest  
The birth, existence, and undoubted claim  
Of this young maiden to her father's name  
And fair estates, farewell your cherish'd self;  
You'd be as poor as even Job himself.

FAB. But no one has them!

JEW. There you're wrong, I fear.

FAB. Who is it?

JEW. I!

FAB. 'Tis false!

Where are they?

JEW. (*placing his hands on his breast*) Here!

FAB. I—I must have them!

JEW. P'rhaps. If you will pay

The price I covet.

FAB. There's my purse, Jew.

JEW. Nay!

Would you have mine, Count?

What, my gold you spurn?

FAB. It is not money

Which will serve my turn.

A certain parchment you must spare  
Which always next your heart you wear,  
For in it, by a fearful oath  
The Duchess Anne has pledged her troth  
To freely grant, denying naught,  
Whatever boon or grace is sought  
By him who owns that precious scroll.  
You're well inform'd upon my soul.

FAB.

JEW.  
 But let me know your object—aim.  
 We'll play a frank and open game.  
 Your plans and schemes, you see, I've told,  
 And mine, in turn, I'll now unfold.  
 My life, sir Count, was once preserv'd  
 By Marie's father. This deserv'd  
 Its due requital. Death I brav'd  
 To pay the debt, and Marie sav'd.  
 Compell'd to seek the East, next day,  
 By pirates I was borne away,  
 And sixteen years in fetters pass'd,  
 I gain'd my liberty at last.  
 The moment I was free, I came  
 In time to save the girl from shame.  
 You're jesting?

FAB.

JEW.

FAB.

JEW.

Mine's no jesting mood.  
 You're really charming, by the rood!  
 Your Duchess needs a heavy loan.  
 If once the parchment scroll I own,  
 To raise the loan—

FAB. (*mockingly*)

And profit share;

Is't not so, Jew?—

JEW.

Will be my care.

FAB.

Cunning and clever

Is your intent.

Never, though, never,

Can I consent.

Aught but the scroll, Jew,

Freely I'll give;

That, on my soul, Jew,

Not while I live!

Were I to yield ye

That which you crave,

Nothing might save me  
 From, p'rhaps, a grave.  
 While I retain it,  
 All I defy;—  
 So I obtain it,  
 Little care I!

JEW.

FAB. To-morrow, I might be disgrac'd!  
 JEW. To me, that matters naught.

By that, and nothing else on earth,  
 The deeds I hold are bought.

FAB.

Base infidel! you've gain'd the day,  
 The papers!

[Takes parchment from his pocket.

JEW.

Yes! when I peruse  
 The scroll, and view the writing there—  
 So just a wish you can't refuse!

[They go up to the cresset. FABIANI, standing behind the JEW.  
 holds in his left hand the parchment for the latter's perusal.  
 The JEW casts his eyes over the scroll.

JEW. (*reading*)

"We, Anne of Brittany"—

(*Speaks*) 'Tis well.

You see I'm wary, Count; like you.

'Gainst ev'ry trick, or chance I guard.

FAB. (*drawing his dagger with his right hand, and stabbing the JEW*)

Save this—save this! accursed Jew!

JEW. Ah, traitor! Ah! Help, help, for heaven's sake!

[He falls. In falling, he throws behind him in the shade a sealed  
 packet, which FABIANI does not perceive.

FAB. For shame! thy cries the good folk near will wake.

[He stabs him again, and leans over the body.

He's dead, I think ! The papers—

[He searches the body.

There are none !

The Jew ! He would have robb'd me. No, not one.  
I've soil'd my blade for naught. I've spilt his blood  
In vain ! I'll fling his body in the flood.  
The boatman, if still here, shall lend his aid.

[He goes up to the back of the stage, and disappears behind the parapet.

Enter RAOUL, E.

RAOUL. I heard a cry !

[He perceives the body on the ground beneath the cresset.

Ah ! Murder !

JEW. (*raising himself a little*)

I'm betray'd !

Thou com'st too late !

[He points to the papers he has thrown behind him.

Those papers !

[RAOUL picks up the papers.

So ! they prove

That Marie—object of thy true, pure love—

Is heiress to the Count de Brissac—ay !

My murd'rer—Count de Beauvoir—ah ! I die.

[Sinks on the ground.

Revenge thyself and me !

[He dies.

RAO.

Alas, he's dead !]

Revenge myself and him—for so he said—

The Count de Beauvoir—Marie !—What dark plot  
Is weaving round me ? Some one nears the spot.

Re-enter FABIANI from behind the parapet.



RAO. A man lies murder'd here!

FAB. (*mockingly*) A man? a Jew!

RAO. Who—who is the assassin?

FAB. I—or you!

RAO. Wretch! It is you.

FAB. (*contemptuously*) Well, and suppose it were?

RAO. I'll give thee up to justice!

FAB. Have a care!

That one of us has dealt the fatal blow  
Is clear as day, but who shall ever know  
Which one it was? *Thy* birth is low and base,  
While I 'mid kings and princes take my place.  
A noble slays a Jew, and pays a fine;  
To rabble-scum, like thee, the laws assign  
Death as the punishment of such a deed.

RAO. Do I hear rightly?

FAB. Come! My help you need

To fling this Jewish carcase in the stream.

RAO. (*in a bewildered tone, and speaking to himself*)

No witness to the deed! No proof!—I dream—  
I surely dream!

FAB. Come! come! thou'rt wasting time.

Refuse, and *thee* I charge—

RAO. With what?

FAB. This crime.

Whose word the other's, think'st thou, will outweigh?

RAO. What must I do, ye heav'nly powers!

FAB. Obey!

RAO. Escape is hopeless!

FAB. So I say.

RAO. And therefore—

FAB. Therefore?

RAO. (*with despair*) I obey!

FAB. A wise reply!

[RAOUL takes the body by the head, and FABIO by the feet.  
In this way they throw it over the parapet.

FAB. (*coming down the stage*) At present, I scarce know  
Which of us two did really deal the blow.  
And now, good night, my comrade.

[He proceeds towards the house, but turns round on observing  
that RAOUL follows him.

What! yet here!

Ah! I forgot. Of course—the reason's clear.  
Thou would'st be paid. There's money.

[He offers his purse.

Waiting still?

Wait there all night, if such should be thy will,  
And count the stars in yonder dark blue sky;  
They all grow pale before my charmer's eye.

[He goes up to the door, and seems about to open it.

RAO. Hold! Say whither thou would'st go!

FAB. Whither?

RAO. Yes!

FAB. 'Tis late to roam;

So, as thou perforce will'st know,  
Learn that I'm returning home!

RAO. Home?

Yes, home! My words are clear.

FAB. Dost assert yon house is thine?

RAO. Worthy friend, thou'rt deaf, I fear.

FAB. Yes! yon house, I say, is mine!

RAO. What strange suspicions dart

Across my brain,

And tear my throbbing heart

With fangs of pain!

- FAB. Why does he not depart,  
But here remain ?  
What passion seems to start  
Each swelling vein ?
- RAO. Thou say'st yon house belongs to thee ?
- FAB. To me—or to my mistress ! Ay !
- RAO. What ! Marie ! She thy mistress ? She !  
With scorn I fling thee back the lie.
- FAB. 'Tis something new for one so base,  
To wag his tongue at this rude pace,  
And thus to brave my wrath !  
(*Aside*) Cold steel must cool his burning rage ;  
Some trusty blade his hate assuage,  
And strike him from my path !
- RAO. Repeat thy words ! Thou dost not dare !
- FAB. Since 't is thy will, with pleasure.  
I say the house thou seest there  
Contains a gem, a treasure !  
My mistress—Marie—somewhat staid,  
And coy in outward seeming,  
But still a charming, fond, young maid,  
With love and beauty teeming.
- RAO. And now hear *mé* ! my answer, villain, note !  
*I* say thou liest—liest in thy throat !  
I am her future husband !
- FAB. I,  
Messire de Coutras !
- RAO. Nay ! Again a lie !  
Thou art the Count de Beauvoir !
- FAB. I must own  
To night my name to ev'ry wretch seems known.  
(*Aside*) This man is dang'rous. Ere to-morrow's sun  
Rise in the east, his earthly course is run !

RAO. Confess—confess that thou hast lied !  
She's not thy mistress.

FAB. Since I'm thus defied,  
Peruse that letter.

[Takes a letter from his pocket, and gives it to RAOUL.

RAO. (*taking the letter and glancing over it*)  
Can it really be !

This is, indeed, her writing which I see !  
(*Reading*) "To-night, I am alone, and thou may'st come !"  
Despair and grief life's startled pulses numb !  
Thou hast degraded all I hold most dear !  
This hand shall smite thee dead !

FAB. (*Contemptuously*)  
'Tis good ! most bravely said !  
Where is thy sword ! See—(*puts his hand to his sword*)  
Mine is here.

RAO.  
O rage ! O bitter scorn !  
The poor and lowly born  
Dare wear no weapon ready to their grasp !  
But never will I rest  
Till, pluck'd from out thy breast,  
I clutch thy heart, and watch its dying gasp !

FAB. (*aside*) Ere to-morrow's sun shall rise  
By the steel he surely dies !  
(*Aloud*) There ! be calm ! the girl is thine,  
All my rights I here resign.  
And, when thou would'st seek her, see—  
Thou may'st need it—take this key !

[He throws a key down at RAOUL's feet.

Or against the casement knock  
Thrice. The door she'll soon unlock.  
Thus with favours I requite  
Threats and menaces. Good night !

RAO. Not all thy blood shall e'er efface  
 The loathsome stain, the slimy trace,  
 That marks thy false tongue's path.  
 No pow'r on earth shall e'er assuage  
 My bitter hate, my burning rage,  
 Or screen thee from my wrath !

FAB. 'Tis something new for one so base,  
 To wag his tongue at this rude pace,  
 And thus to brave my wrath !

(*Aside*) Cold steel must cool his burning rage ;  
 Some trusty blade his hate assuage,  
 And strike him from my path !

[Exit at back, L.

RAO. (*solus*) Gone ! gone ! and I still live !  
 Relentless fate !

Oh ! had I grasp'd a sword !

[He perceives on the ground the poniard with which FABIANI has killed the Jew. He darts upon it with savage eagerness.

Thou com'st too late !

My fond, pure love betray'd !

My Marie lost !

Revenge ! deep ! bloody ! swift !

Whate'er the cost ;

Ah ! who will lend his aid,

My rage to slake,

And, in return, my life

As payment take.

[M. DE VILLEFRANCHE comes slowly down the stage, and approaches RAOUL steadily and silently.

I—I will !

VIL.

RAO.

Thou ?

VIL.

Yes ; I !

RAO.

Who art thou ?

VIL.

He

Thou pray'd'st for, even now !

RAO.

And know'st thou *me*?

VIL.

Thou 'rt yon proud upstart's foe—

The man I need!

RAO.

His death!

VIL.

Thy life!

RAO.

'Tis thine!

VIL.

Agreed!

RAO.

Agreed!

[RAOUL grasps the hand of M. DE VILLEFRANCHE. At this moment, FABIO FABIANI is heard singing on the river.

FAB.

A flower is beauty, by fairy hands planted;

Few, few things on earth with its charms can compare;

It holds ev'ry eye by its bright hues enchanted;

It shames all the gems which a monarch can wear.

RAO. & VIL. (*starting*)

Ah! 'Tis he!

VIL.

Let death avenge

Thy injured honour!

RAO.

Yes! Revenge!

END OF ACT I.

## ACT II.

SCENE I.—An Apartment in the Palace of the DUCHESS OF BRIT-TANY. On one side a Fall-stool, surmounted by a Crucifix. Doors R. and L. Large Folding-doors at Back. A portion of the Back of the Apartment is hung with long Tapestry.

[At the rising of the Curtain, the NOBLES and LADIES of the Court are grouped about the Stage. They are in hunting costume.

NOBLES & LADIES.

To the forest, to the forest,  
Dames and gallants, let us hie,  
Where the antler'd sylvan monarchs  
'Mid the tangled thickets lie.  
Though the buck perhaps escape us,  
Not in vain will be the chase,  
Since 't is in the jocund greenwood  
Health, too, has her resting-place.  
As we ride,  
Ev'ry stride  
Leaves old limping Care behind;  
Tell us where  
Aught so rare  
As the hunter's life we find!

[Enter the DUCHESS and FABIANI, followed by ATTENDANTS.  
Both the DUCHESS and FABIANI are magnificently dressed.

Duc. Think us not wayward that our mind we change;  
We shall not hunt to day,  
But in our palace stay.  
The Count (*pointing to FABIANI*) has promised something  
new and strange:  
Some dancers of the Gipseys' nomad race  
Would fain their skill display.

To wile an hour away  
 We'll see them, and to-morrow seek the chase;  
 Then, as we dash along,  
 We'll join you in your song :

DUC., FAB., NOB., & LAD.

To the forest, to the forest,  
 Dames and gallants, let us hie,  
 Where the antler'd sylvan monarchs  
 'Mid the tangled thickets lie.  
 Though the buck perhaps escape us,  
 Not in vain will be the chase,  
 Since 't is in the jocund green-wood  
 Health, too, has her resting-place.

As we ride,  
 Every stride  
 Leaves old limping Care behind ;  
 Tell us where  
 Aught so rare  
 As the hunter's life we find !

[The NOBLES and LADIES bow lowly and exeunt at back.

FAB. My gracious sov'reign—

Nay, cold words like these  
 Seem the warm current of my love to freeze.  
 Why should the coward tongue leave unexpress'd  
 The passion glowing in my faithful breast ?

Vast as the ocean,  
 Boundless and free,  
 Is my devotion,  
 Dearest, to thee !

DUC. Will it ne'er alter,  
 Never decay ;  
 Weaken and falter ;  
 Languish away ?



- FAB. My heart is closely link'd to thine,  
By fond affection's chain.
- DUC. But Time, perchance, may snap the bond  
With ruthless hand in twain.
- FAB. Nay; sooner shall he pluck the stars  
From Heav'n's blue vault above,  
Than tear from out my constant heart  
My pure and only love.  
Vast as the ocean,  
Boundless and free,  
Is my devotion,  
Dearest, to thee!
- DUC. May it ne'er alter,  
Never decay;  
Weaken and falter;  
Languish away!
- FAB. Now, now as I love, will I love on for ever.  
Oh! doubt not my words!
- DUC. I would fondly believe!
- FAB. Ah! not even Death two fond lovers can sever,  
For Heaven replaces the Earth which they leave.
- DUC. & FAB. Love, if true, can never die!  
Like the soul, 'tis not of earth.  
Death but bids it seek on high  
Those bright spheres that saw its birth.
- DUC. And now withdraw. Affairs of state demand  
An hour.
- FAB. An hour!
- DUC. Go!
- FAB. Harsh, unkind command
- DUC. Obey; and bring the Gipseys' merry train  
On thy return.
- FAB. Ah! parting is such pain  
E'en for a single hour!

DUC.

'Twill soon be past,

While—

As thou say'st—for aye doth true love last !

FAB. &amp; DUC. Love, if true, can never die !

Like the soul, 'tis not of earth.

Death but bids it seek on high

Those bright spheres which saw its birth.

[Enter M. DE VILLEFRANCHE]

DUC. Thou hast heard all ?

VIL.

Each lying word he said,

The trait'rous knave !

DUC.

The forfeit be his head.

Is faith then plighted only to deceive,

And woman doom'd but shatter'd hopes to grieve ?

VIL.

Not till Time his glass shall shiver,

Not till winds shall cease to blow,

Not till ocean, stream, and river

On their course no more shall flow—

Not till then shall trusting Beauty

Oft enchain inconstant man ;

Life is short, but truth and duty

Own a far, far shorter span.

Are not bubbles quickly broken,

Bursting e'en without a touch ?

Lovers' vows are bubbles spoken—

Foolish woman, deem them such.

Bear in mind the light which fitters

O'er the fen with treach'rous ray !

Those who follow where it glitters,

Find it falsely leads astray.

DUC.

*(who has been seated during the above ballad, now rises and says)*

But still the charge may not be true.

VIL. I made it, and will prove it, too.  
The girl awaits your pleasure.

DUC. (*eagerly*) Where ?

VIL. Without.

DUC. I'll see her. All I'll dare.

To wreak my vengeance—glut my hate.

\* [Suddenly and fiercely.  
And he she wrong'd ?

VIL. I bade him wait

Till summon'd.

DUC. Let him now appear.

VIL. Your wish shall be obey'd. He's here.

[Bows and exit by side-door *x*

DUC.

Passion's black and murky night  
Veils fair Pity from my sight ;  
Hides Remorse, as in a shroud,  
Darker than a thunder-cloud.  
One grim form alone the eye  
Through the gloom can still descry :  
'Tis Revenge, whose lurid hand  
Brandishes a flaming brand.  
Deeply, deeply, he shall rue  
I was fond and he untrue !

Enter from side-door, *R.*, M. DE VILLEFRANCHE and RAOUL.

RAO. (*to M. DE VILLEFRANCHE, and pointing to the DUCHESS*)  
Who is this lady ?

VIL. The Duchess !

RAO. The Duchess ! (*Is about to kneel.*)

DUC. Yes ; I am the Duchess ; and you, Raoul, the armourer.  
'Tis now no time for empty homage. Listen. You have been  
foully wronged. (*RAOUL starts.*) You seek revenge—as I do.  
Your revenge shall be deep, terrible, speedy ; your dishonour shall  
be wiped out with the blood of him who has injured you, provided  
that, without a question, you will obey my commands, however

strang they may appear ; Fabio shall die, if you will consent to die like him.

RAO. Madame, I would no longer die !

[The DUCHESS and M. DE VILLEFRANCHE start in surprise.

DUC. This does not agree with what (*looking at M. DE VILLEFRANCHE*) I have been told.

RAO. She is not guilty—Marie is not guilty !

[An expression of satisfaction steals over the face of the DUCHESS as she glances at M. DE VILLEFRANCHE, who replies by an incredulous gesture.

RAO. I heard a man boast he was her lover. Who shall say he did not lie ? I saw a letter in her handwriting. How do I know she was not compelled to write that letter ? Oh ! Madam, through the long weary night did I battle with Suspicion, and her twin-sister, Despair. But doubts, like spectres, vanished with the dawn. Marie is innocent—innocent !

[The DUCHESS, seemingly much relieved, again exchanges glances with M. DE VILLEFRANCHE.

VIL. But supposing she herself confessed her guilt, would you then do the Duchess's bidding : would you then give your life in exchange for vengeance ?

RAO. Ay ! on one condition.

VIL. That condition—

DUC. (*interrupting him as though again yielding to doubt. To*

RAOUL) You shall tell us later. At present, conceal yourself behind yonder hangings.

[Points to hangings at back of the stage. RAOUL bows, goes up to the hangings and conceals himself behind them. The DUCHESS then makes a sign to M. DE VILLEFRANCHE, who exit by door L., whence MARIE issues, pale and trembling, the instant afterwards.

DUC. Approach ! You know who I am ?

MAR. (*in a low voice*) Yes, Madam !

DUC. (*looking fixedly at MARIE*) At present you know, also, the real name and title of your gallant lover, the so-styled Chevalier de Coutras !

MAR. I do, Madam.

DUC. (*eagerly*) Who is he? (*MARIE is silent*) Do you not see I await your reply, or are my wishes disregarded?

MAR. The Count de Beauvoir.

DUC. (*aside*) It is but too true! (*Aloud*) You informed him he might visit you last night, methinks—and alone—

MAR. Ah! Madam—

DUC. Answer! Is it not so?

MAR. Spare me!

MAR. Yes; I did.

DUC. Come, let me hear the pretty tale—when, where, it was you saw him first.

MAR. It was—(*suddenly stopping, and flinging herself on her knees before the DUCHESS*) Oh, Madam, if not as my sovereign, at least as a woman, spare me the recital of my shame—my folly.

Behold me, crush'd by sorrow,

Bow'd down by cruel fate;

From thy lips, sov'reign lady,

My sentence I await.

DUC. From *my* lips! 'Tis another

Shall punish thee, not I!

MAR. Whoe'er he be, oh, hear me;

With one request comply!

There's one who rear'd me—lov'd me—

Liv'd, breath'd, for me alone;

Who fondly hop'd to wed me,

And claim me as his own.

Ne'er tell him that I wrong'd him;

Ne'er syllable my shame;

Let him, at least, not curse me,

Nor shudder at my name!

Oh! let the sun of gladness

One bright ray o'er me cast,

Ere, 'neath the waves of sadness,

It sinks, for ever past.

A pure, bright, priceless jewel  
 My heart was deem'd by him;  
 Oh, let not dark suspicion  
 Its lustre ever dim;  
 Ne'er let him know 't was worthless;  
 Ne'er say this gem, so rare,  
 Shone but like frozen dewdrops  
 To melt away in air!  
 Oh, let the sun of gladness  
 One bright ray o'er me cast,  
 Ere, 'neath the waves of sadness,  
 It sinks, for ever past.

DUC. The man thou fear'st has heard,  
 Believe me, ev'ry word!  
 MAR. Do I now hear aright!  
 DUC. 'Tis *he* shall judge—and smite!

[*RAOUL* advances from behind the tapestry. *MARIE*, for a moment, seems paralysed with terror. A short pause.

MAR. (*aside*) Sickly terror, ghastly dread,  
 Crush me with a hand of lead!  
 Beneath their grasp  
 I scarce can gasp;  
 Yet my heart is beating still,  
 Cannot shame and sorrow kill?

DUC. (*aside*) Retribution, deep and dread  
 Now shall strike this Fabio's head.  
 Yon man's firm grasp  
 The steel shall clasp,  
 Which, when guided by my will,  
 Ruthless, pitiless, shall kill.

RAO. (*aside*) Hope, bliss, joy, all, all, have fled ;  
 Desolation reigns instead.  
 Death's hand I clasp  
 With eager grasp ;  
 Let me but my task fulfil,  
 Death may come whene'er he will.

RAO. My life is yours.

DUC. 'Tis well!

MAR. (*aside*) His life! What would he imply?

RAO. On one condition—as I have already said.

DUC. Name it. Whatever it is, I grant it.

RAO. A Noble of your Court has aided me—employed my skill  
 —and led me on the way to fame and fortune.

DUC. Well?

RAO. Before I die, I fain would make his kindness some return.

DUC. Speak on!

MAR. (*aside*) He speaks of others not of me!

RAO. This Noble woos a maiden whom he deems of humble  
 birth. But 'tis not so. She is the long-lost child of one whose  
 father died to serve the cause of yours.

DUC. His name! His name!

RAO. The Count de Brissac, Madam.

DUC. Why, his child is dead.

RAO. 'Twas thought so, but she lives!

DUC. If this be true, conduct her to me, and a sovereign's care  
 shall partially replace a father's love.

RAO. And would you restore her the wealth and lands you  
 granted lately to the Count de Beauvoir?

DUC. Ay, surely!

RAO. And you further pledge your word that this same Noble,  
 who in secret woos her, shall take her for his wife? On this  
 condition my life is yours.

DUC. All this I promise!

RAO. You must swear it!

DUC. By all that I revere; by the memory of my father; by the honour of my mother; by all my hopes of mercy; I swear to grant what you ask.

RAO. The compact is sealed. The Noble is the Count de Beauvoir—

MAR. (*aside*) Gracious powers!

DUC. Beware!

RAO. The Count de Brissac's long-lost daughter, yonder weeping maiden there.

MAR. (*aside*) What do I hear!

DUC. Your words are false. What proofs have you?

RAO. (*producing the packet he received from the Jew*) These!

DUC. (*snatching the papers from him, and flinging them on a table near her*) My—my rage is growing past control. Supposing even yonder papers bear out your assertion, think not they bind me. Nought binds a sov'reign!—

RAO. Save her oath!

DUC. But—but—if the Count refuse to wed her.

RAO. Your power must force him to do her right—to veil with *his* name the stain he has cast upon *hers*!

MAR. Oh, Raoul! No, no! Spare me this last pang. Spare—spare me this!

RAO. So be it. Restore her then her father's wealth and rank, and I am ready to do your bidding.

DUC. You, in your turn, must swear!

RAO. (*placing his hand upon the crucifix*) Most solemnly I swear!

DUC. Enough!

[Takes the papers from the table on which they were flung, and, going up the stage, throws herself upon a couch. She opens the packet of papers, and peruses them eagerly.]

MAR. (*aside*) What mystery is concealed in his oath! I fain—fain would speak, but dare not! Ah!

RAO. (*aside*) She faints—she—she weeps!—yet what is she now to me? Naught! naught! Why does each fibre in my body quiver thus!



MAR. The tear-drops dim your eyes. Speak to me, Raoul, speak

RAO. I must not, dare not, listen!

DUC. (*coming forward. To MARIE*) Retire awhile. I would speak to this man alone.

[MARIE exit by door L.

C. (*to RAOUL*) Have you a weapon—a dagger?

RAO. (*taking FABIANI'S dagger from his bosom*) Here is one, Madam.

DUC. Keep it in thy hand. (*She hastily clutches hold of his arm, and exclaims in a loud voice*) M. de Villefranche! Help! help!

[Enter hurriedly M. DE VILLEFRANCHE, M. DE MOULAC, and GUARDS.

DUC. Seize this man. He would have assassinated me, but I stayed his arm in time!

RAO. Madam!

DUC. (*aside to him*) Have you already forgotten our compact? (*Aloud*) You are all witnesses that, when you entered, he had still the dagger in his hand! Let the Headsman be summoned. I shall need him. (*ONE OF THE GUARDS exit at back*). M. de Moulac, is the Count de Beauvoir in the palace?

DE MOU. Together with the Court, he is without. He awaits your pleasure to introduce the Gipsej band of which he spoke.

DUC. (*aside to M. DE VILLEFRANCHE*) He suspects nothing?

VIL. (*aside to the DUCHESS*) Nothing.

DUC. Admit the Count de Beauvoir and my Court.

[The DUCHESS seats herself in front of the stage, R. M. DE VILLEFRANCHE goes up to folding doors at back. He throws them open, and FABIANI, with the NOBLES and LADIES of the Court enter, followed by a troop of GIPSEYS. The NOBLES and LADIES of the Court range themselves on each side of the stage.

FAB. Madam, yonder are the Zingari, who would fain amuse you with some of the wild dances of their people.

DUC. We will see them.

[FABIANI again bows, and makes a sign to the GIPSEYS.

### BALLET.

[Exeunt GIPSEYS.

DUC. (to FABIANI) Count, we thank you. (*In a low voice to him*) I would speak with you.

[Advances to front of the stage.

FAB. How sweet it is to listen once more to your voice after so long an absence. An hour—an age.

DUC. Nay, you must not complain. I have done nought but think of *you*.

FAB. Is it possible! Repeat, repeat those words.

DUC. I swear it! for I love you—as you love me.

FAB.       What joy to listen as the sea  
              Wooes mournfully, at night, the shore;  
              What joy to hear, from brake and tree,  
              The birds their flood of music pour;  
              What joy to hearken as the breeze  
              Wafts whispers to us from above;  
              But how much greater still than these,  
              The joy to hear thee say, "I love!"

DUC.       E'en while thou wast away, each thought  
              Dwelt but with thee, with thee alone!

FAB.       Oh, words with bliss ecstatic fraught,  
              Almost for absence you atone!

DUC.       I've plann'd a foolish, fond surprise;  
              Some one is here thou knew'st of old!

FAB.       Who is it?

DUC.       Canst thou not surmise?

FAB. I cannot.

DUC. No? She's there. Behold!

[FABIANI turns round and perceives MARIE on the threshold of the door, L. He starts.

FAB. (*aside*) What do I see! I tremble

DUC. Dost know you girl?

FAB. Not I.

DUC. (*sarcastically*)

I thought she might resemble  
Thy lov'd one, Count.

(*To MARIE*)

Draw nigh.

LAD. & NOB. Who is the maiden there

Whose cheek seems blanch'd with care?

DUC. (*To FAB.*)

Art sure thou'rt not mistaken?

(*To MARIE*) Dost *thou* know *him*?

MAR. I do.

DUC. (*To FAB.*)

Thy sluggard mem'ry waken—

FAB. Her words are false.

DUC. They're true.

LAD. & NOB. (*pointing to the DUCHESS*)

See, like lightning through the skies,

Anger flashes from her eyes.

DUC. Thou dost not know her, dastard slave?

'Tis false, 'tis false, thou perjurd knave.

LAD. & NOB. What wild, strange words are these we hear?

[They are on the point of retiring when the DUCHESS stops them.

DUC. One moment, prithee. All draw near.

[The LADIES and NOBLES advance.

DUC. (*pointing to FAB.*)

Observe you haughty upstart well,

And note the tale I'll briefly tell—

I lov'd him once.

LAD. &amp; NOB.

What!

DUC.

Ah! you start.

But listen! Yes, I gave my heart!  
 He trampled it beneath his feet;  
 His oaths were lies; his vows, deceit;  
 While swearing boundless love for me,  
 He wooed another!

[Points to MARIE.]

This is she

He now declares he knows her not,  
 He *shall* before he leaves the spot.  
 He does not know her! I will spur  
 The truant mem'ry of the cur;  
 Her rank, name, title, birth, unfold.  
 The Count de Brissac's child behold!

LAD. &amp; NOB. The Count de Brissac's child!

DUC.

Nay, more!

MAR. (*aside to the Duchess*)

Oh! let them still the rest ignore.

DUC.

Yes, yes, she owns an honour'd name,  
 But yet another she can claim,

DUC.

'Tis that—

LAD. &amp; NOB.

Speak on; we fain would know.

DUC.

Of leman to Count Fabio.

LAD. & NOB. (*aside*).

What wild strange words are those we hear?  
 The motive of her rage is clear.

MAR.

That name will echo in my ear

When cold and lifeless on my bier.

FAB. (*aside*)

My secret she has learnt, 'tis clear.

Yet, courage! What have I to fear?

MAR. (*aside*)

My mouth is parched, my tongue is weak;

But horror lends it strength to speak.

[Aloud, to the NOBLES and LADIES of the Court.]

As you hope to merit  
 Mercy from above,  
 Ne'er believe I foster'd  
 This man's guilty love.  
 Though my girlish folly  
 Triumph'd for a while,  
 Guilt, dark guilt, my bosom  
 Ne'er did yet defile.  
 Slander, like a serpent,  
 Wounds with poisonous tongue ;  
 All it strikes—the noble,  
 Base-born, old, and young.  
 Pause, ere you condemn me ;  
 Think on what you do ;  
 I am now the victim ;  
 The next may, p'rhaps, be *you*.

DUC. No more ; thy guilt already thou'st confess'd.

(To FABIANI)

Yield up your sword.

[FABIANI gives his sword to one of the NOBLES]

FAB. 'Tis there ; but I protest.

What have I done ?—I never knew  
 That 'twas a crime a maid to woo.

DUC. Now, by my faith, I'm mock'd—defied.  
 To take my life you basely tried.

FAB. To take your life !

LAD. & NOB. Secure him straight.

FAB. The charge is prompted by your hate.

DUC. 'Twas here, and that not long ago,  
 Your bribed assassin struck the blow.  
 M. de Villefranche and De Moulac stay'd  
 His arm, and snatch'd the murd'rous blade  
 From out his grasp.

LAD. & NOB. Our blood runs cold.

DUC. His steel was pointed with your gold.

FAB. I spurn the charge. You have no proof.  
Where lurks the murd'rer ?

DUC. 'Neath this roof !

FAB. You do but joke !

DUC. If you would see

His features, do so.

[RAOUL advances from behind the GUARDS, who have hitherto concealed him. M. DE VILLEFRANCHE follows him.

RAO. I am he !

LAD. & NOB. His crime no more can he deny.  
Stern justice wills it. He must die !

FAB. (*aside*) Hate flashes wildly from her eye,  
And stabs me with a bravo's lie !

DUC. (*aside*) The charge in vain would he deny.  
My vengeance wills it. He must die !

VIL. (*aside*) 'Tis bravely plann'd. The end draws nigh.  
To serve my purpose, he must die !

RAO. (*aside*) The world I quit without a sigh.  
My only wish is now to die.

MAR. (*to RAO.*) A murd'rer, thou ! Oh, quick deny  
The monstrous charge, or see me die !

FAB. This man is paid.

RAO. Most true !

I am ; but 't is by you

FAB. By me ?

RAO. (*taking from his bosom the purse FABIANI gave him*)

Your purse behold !

You gave it fill'd with gold.

See here, your arms and crest.

FAB. (*aside*) Doubt—horror—fills my breast !

(*Aloud*) I know thee not ! Canst show

The steel that struck the blow ?

VIL. (*producing FABIANI'S dagger*)

'Tis here! Upon the hilt

Your cipher gleams!

LAD. & NOB.

His guilt

Needs no more proof; 't is plain.

FAB.

And yet I still maintain

I know him not.

RAO. (*aside*)

'Tis true

At night he smote the Jew

And could not well discern

My features then, perhaps; Learn

That I am Raoul!

FAB. (*starting*)

What!

RAO.

The Arm'rer. You've forgot,

Methinks, the heavy debt

You owe my honour yet:

The payment now I claim——

Your blood against *my* shame.

FAB. (*aside*)

All, I see is over now!

(*Aloud*)

Yes! I know him, I avow!

DUO.

So, at length, he owns his crime.

MAR. (*to RAO.*)

Oh! retract, while yet 'tis time!

Recollect: *thou*, too, wilt fall.

What thou now hast said, recall!

RAO.

Hear me all assert once more

What my tongue avow'd before——

An assassin is the Count,

And yon dagger there,

Torn from me, belong'd to him.

This by Heav'n I swear!

[At this moment, the folding doors at back are flung open. The NOBLES range themselves on each side. In the middle of the doorway is seen the HEADSMAN; he is dressed in a suit of black and red; on his face he has a black mask; on his shoulder a long sword in scabbard. An involuntary shudder runs through all present.

NOB. The Headsman 'tis! oh, ghastly, fearful, sight,  
That fills the soul with horrible affright.

RAO. (to FABIO) Ah! villain! he you once defied  
Has now redeem'd his word.  
You'll now no more my threats deride.

[Pointing to the HEADSMAN.

At length I've found a sword!

FAB. (aside) I'll boldly meet, with Death as guide,  
Hate's fell, unjust award;  
And brave, with stern, unbending pride,  
Yon Headsman's gleaming sword.

DUO. (aside) Fond love within my breast has died;  
Grim Hate now whets the sword,  
And co'ning falsehood, haughty pride,  
Obtains its just reward.

VIL. (aside). 'Tis good with calm one's time to bide;  
My aim is now assur'd.  
'Twas not in vain that I relied  
On yonder Headsman's sword.

MAR. (to RAOUL.)  
On me, too, Raoul, by thy side,  
Shall fall the Headsman's sword;  
In death I yet will be thy bride,  
To thee and love restor'd.

NOB. & LAD.  
Stern vengeance will not be denied;  
She whet's the fatal sword—  
For Hate now reigns where loving pride  
So fondly once adored!



### ACT III.

SCENE I.—A large vaulted chamber in the Castle of Nantes. Doors R. and L., leading to two cells. A small window strongly barred, R., looking on the Loire. To L., a window, also barred, looking upon the Town of Nantes. A secret door R. and one L. At the back, a gallery, with a balcony beyond, and looking out upon the court-yard of the Castle.

Enter PASCAL, U. E. R.

PAS. (*looking towards the door of cell, L.*)

Poor Raoul! quickly doth thy end draw nigh!  
One fleeting day—but one—and thou must die!  
Once from a wat'ry grave thou rescued'st me;  
Would, in my turn, that I could now save thee.  
Pshaw! Tears! I fancied that my heart had grown  
From flesh and blood, to be but senseless stone.  
My occupation's gone, unless I close  
The door of Pity upon others' woes!

He who bears the prison-keys,  
If he yearns for rest or ease,  
Must not let his cheek grow pale—  
Must not start—at sorrow's wail.

Would he not  
Bemoan a lot

Worse than that his pris'ners know,  
Let their cry be promptly drown'd  
In the merry, rattling sound  
Of his keys, where'er he go!

Jingle, jangle, clink, clank, clank!  
That will smother sob and sigh,  
Stealing from the dungeons dank,  
Where the wretched captives lie.  
Jingle, jangle, clink, clank, clank!  
Jingle, jangle, clink, clank!

[Jingling his keys.]

Tis all in vain. Ah! but this is folly! (*Goes up to door, L., which he opens*) Raoul!

[*RAOUL* appears at the door of the cell, and comes rapidly down the stage.

*RAO.* (*eagerly*) Well, Pascal!

*PAS.* It is for Fabio. But your turn will come only too soon. To-day, 'tis he; to-morrow, 'twill be you.

*RAO.* Of what do you speak?

*PAS.* Of the scaffold, building even now!

*RAO.* I care not for the scaffold. 'Twas of *her*—of Marie—that I spoke! Need I again remind you of my doubts—my anguish? Day by day, for a weary month, have I beheld her through the grating of my cell. Day by day have I beheld her, pale and weeping at the foot of the old keep. But Fabiani is a captive like myself. For whom does she come—for him or me? This, this it is that I would learn before I die. Oh, Pascal, my doubts are killing me. Perhaps she is near us even now. Good, kind friend, seek her out. Ask, ask, if indeed she comes for one who yet loves her but too well.

*PAS.* Who yet loves her?

*RAO.* Fondly, doatingly! Do not attempt to reason with me, but grant me this last request.

*PAS.* Well, so be it. I will leave you here till my return. Here, at least, you can breathe freely, while in yonder cell—ah! (*Goes off humming*)

“Jingle, jangle, clink, clank, clank.”

*RAO.* Yes, my love for her is a portion of my heart itself. Naught can ever tear it thence.

Oh, love, thou'rt like a reed, bent low;

When storms sweep o'er the plain;

But rising, when storms cease to blow,

Unhurt—unscath'd—again.

Although betray'd, deceiv'd, beguil'd,

With ev'ry hope o'erthrown;

I love her still, as when she smil'd,

And said, “I'm thine alone!”

As tender leaves and perfum'd flow'rs  
 Burst forth to welcome spring,  
 While day, entranc'd, draws out the hours  
 To hear the sweet birds sing :  
 Again would bliss its buds unfold,  
 As once in times long flown,  
 If she but whisper'd, as of old :  
 "I'm thine ! I'm thine alone !"

Re-enter PASCAL.

PAS. I could not see her. But retire ! some one approaches.

RAO. (*going up to cell, L.*) Oh, Pascal ! would my weary life  
 were o'er.

[Exit into cell.

PAS. (*bolting the door*) Poor Raoul ! it will be so, ere long.  
 Pshaw !

[Exit at back, singing

Jingle, jangle, clink, clank, clank,

Jingle, jangle, clink, clank !

Enter M. DE VILLEFRANCHE and M. DE KERKOUEN.

VIL. Ay ; 'tis strange. But the Duchess knows not her own  
 mind. Listen, M. De Kerkouën, we are old friends. On you, as  
 the governor of the castle, I depend. If you are ordered——  
 Mar their plan by delay. Let me but have two hours, and the  
 game is mine, while you, old friend, will change the keys of the  
 castle at Nantes for those of the Bastille, at Paris. You under-  
 stand.

KER. I do.

VIL. Some one approaches. (*Aside, as he is going off*) The day  
 is mine.

[Exit.

KER. (*also, as is he going off*) Governor of the Bastille ! The  
 prize is worth the risk.

[Exit at back.

Enter cautiously a GAOLER, followed by MARIE, COUNTESS DE BRISSAC.

GAO. This, Madam, is the spot, and yonder doors (*pointing to*

*doors of the two dungeons R. and L.)* are those of their two dungeons.

MAR. It is well.

GAO. The promis'd guerdon—

MAR. (*Unclasping a bracelet from her arm, and giving it to him*)  
Take it!

GAO. I rely upon your word that you will not betray me.

[Exit.

MAR. These walls fill my soul with dread! They seem to shut out hope! But I will see him despite of every obstacle, for I confide in a higher power than that of man!

[Kneels

Oh! Heavenly Pow'r,

At this sad hour,

In thee alone I trust!

Thou—only thou—

Canst aid me now

Or raise me from the dust!

When, tempest-tost,

Hope's bark seems lost

On Sorrow's rock-bound shore,

With thee as guide,

It yet shall ride

O'er joy's calm waves once more!

Ah! I hear footsteps!

[She rises and conceals herself hastily behind a pillar.

Enter the DUCHESS and M. DE VILLEFRANCHE.

Duc. See, the change astonishes you? I repeat; It is not my pleasure he should die.

Vil. If he be not executed to-day, the nobles will conspire against your throne.

Duc. Let them. Mark me well. He shall *not* die. Here (*taking a parchment from her bosom*) is a parchment, in which I have sworn to grant him the boon he may choose to ask. He asks his life. I will respect my oath.

VIL. (*aside*) The die is cast! (*Aloud and bowing low.*) I withdraw. It is your nobility who have just spoken by my lips.

DUC. I care not!

VIL. (*aside*) At present, let me try the people.

[Bows again and exit.]

DUC. (*looking after him*) His countenance wore a strange expression. He is capable of stirring the rabble up to a revolt. But I will yet frustrate his plans. It must not be known that 'twas I who saved Fabio! How—how shall I—ah! who waits without?

Enter M. DE KERKOUËN and PASCAL.

DUC. Ah! M. de Kerkouën, you and yonder man (*pointing to PASCAL*) must instantly facilitate the escape of the Count de Beauvoir.

KER. Madam —

DUC. Nay, no reply—you hate him, I know—all, all hate him! Even that gaoler, doubtless, hates him!

PAS. Madam, I do!

DUC. (*aside*) Alas! alas! whom can I trust! (*Aloud*) Is there no one who will save Count Fabio?

MAR. (*coming from behind the pillar*)

Yes, Madam! One! She's here!

PAS. (*aside*) What! Marie!

DUC. Ah! draw near!

'Twas not in vain to Heav'n I pray'd

To grant its succour—lend its aid.

Deserted, as I thought, by all,

One friend, at least, obeys my call!

KER. (*aside*)

Whate'er their plans, the wished-for aid

Until too late shall be delayed.

Detested! hated! loath'd by all,

Shall Fabio on the scaffold fall!

MAR. (*aside*) 'Twas not in vain to Heav'n I pray'd  
 To grant its succour—lend its aid.  
 No more doth dread my soul enthrall!  
 I'll save him yet, or with him fall!

PAS. (*aside*) Most foully, Raoul, thou'rt betray'd—  
 May Heav'n forgive thee, wretched maid,  
 Nor, in thy need, the fact recall,  
 'Twas thy hand work'd his blood-stain'd pall.

DUC. (*turning to MARIE*)  
 Who art thou, who in my distress  
 Wouldst help me?

[MARIE removes her veil.

Can I trust my eyes?

The Countess Marie!

Madam, yes!

MAR.

DUC.

How cam'st thou hither? Speak!

MAR. (*imploringly*).

Time flies!

DUC.

'Tis true. No matter how thou'st gain'd  
 An entrance here—thou'rt come to save  
 Him who has both our loves obtain'd,  
 And snatch him from the headsman's glaive.  
 Such *is* my purpose.

MAR.

DUC.

Bravely said!

I once abhorr'd thee—oh, forgive!  
 I bless thee now—my hate is dead,  
 For Fabio, thanks to thee, shall live!

DUC. & MAR.

Though all else may alter,  
 Love still is the same.  
 Ne'er, ne'er does it falter,  
 If worthy its name!

DUC. (*to MARIE.*)

In this, *my* hand must not appear.  
 (*Aside*) The Frenchman's dark intrigues I fear.



PAS. (*aside*)

Most foully, Raoul, thou'rt betrayed !  
 May Heaven forgive thee, wretched maid,  
 Nor in thy need the fact recall,  
 'Twas thy hand work'd his blood-stain'd pall.

[The DUCHESS again kisses MARIE and exit rapidly]

MAR. (*to M. DE KERKOUEN.*)

You heard the words the Duchess spoke !  
 A boat ; (*To PASCAL*) thy keys ; (*To M. DE KERKOUEN*)  
 a hat and cloak !

KER. An hour, at least, shall I require  
 To do, fair dame, as you desire.

MAR. Employ all speed, for pity's sake.  
 Your life, remember, is at stake.

[M. DE KERKOUEN bows and exit. MARIE looks anxiously after him. PASCAL goes up to FABIO'S cell, and is about to unlock the door.]

MAR. What would'st thou ?

PAS. Your commands fulfil.

MAR. Who lingers there ?

(*Aside*) Oh ! heart, be still !

PAS. The Count de Beauvoir !

MAR. Quickly tell

Who 'tis that pines in yonder cell.

[Pointing to door L.]

PAS. 'Tis one too base-born, mean and low,  
 For dames so high as you to know.

A poor, deserted friendless knave !

MAR. 'Tis he that I have come to save !  
 Unbar the door !

PAS. Have I been wrong !

And is she true ? I —

Bah ! my song.

[Repeats, in a low voice, as he turns to unfasten the door,



Jingle, jangle, clink, clank, clank ;  
 That will smother sob and sigh  
 Stealing from the dungeon's dank,  
 Where the wretched captives lie !  
 Jingle, jangle, clink, clank, clank ;  
 Jingle, jangle, clink, clank !

[He undoes the door

Raoul !

[RAOUL appears at the door.

RAO. Ah, Marie, is it thou !

Forgive me, thou'rt a Countess now.

MAR. I come to save thee !

RAO. Save me ! What !

PAS. (*aside*) Save him ! What !

MAR. Oh, listen, Raoul, spurn me not.

Despise, condemn me, if thou wilt,

Believe (*in a faltering voice*) for ever in my guilt ;

But let me save thee. Ere to night

Will all be ready for thy flight.

RAO. Thanks, lady, thanks ; but you must know

I would not live.

MAR. Oh, say not so !

RAO. What good is life, when you no more

Can love as once to love you swore.

MAR. Your words are like a ray of light,

Shot through the gloom of sorrow's night ;

A gleam of hope from heav'n above !

Dost still care, Raoul, for my love ?

Oh, if I dar'd

Believe you shar'd

Those feelings which I now must smother,

Here, at thy feet,

Would I repeat,

I never—never, lov'd another !

My heart to you  
 Was always true,  
 And sacred as your own, my honour!  
 Oh, Raoul, see  
 On bended knee  
 A wretched girl! Have pity on her!

RAO. Thou lov'st me yet?

MAR. Ah! more than aye!

RAO. If bliss could kill

I—I—should die!

MAR. Flee—flee—for here

I suffocate!

RAO. But, Marie, dear—

My joy 's too great!

'Twill fade away;

It cannot be!

MAR. Again I say

I love but thee!

MAR. & RAO.

Once more my heart awakes to bliss!  
 Once more I feel hope's throbbing kiss.  
 Grief blighted not—it foster'd, cherish'd,  
 The joys I thought had long since perish'd,  
 As winter's cold, but kindly snow  
 Protects the flow'rets hid below!  
 Now, now, indeed, I yearn to live  
 For thou'lt be mine!

Alas! forgive

My folly! I forgot that now

A coronet adorns your brow—

Forgot the noble name you bear.

MAR. I know one, Raoul, still more fair—

More noble—holy!

'Tis the name

Which, as thy faithful wife, I claim!

RAO. & MAR.

Once more my heart awakes to bliss,  
Once more I feel hope's throbbing kiss !  
Grief blighted not—it foster'd, cherish'd,  
The joys I thought had long since perish'd,  
As winter's cold, but kindly snow  
Protects the flow'rets hid below !

[RAOUL embraces her tenderly. While he still clasps her to his breast, PASCAL comes up silently, takes her hand and kisses it. MARIE looks round.

PAS. 'Tis only Pascal, lady. I—I—I—*Aside*) I—I think I am changed to some old water-god.

Jingle, jangle, clink, clank, clank ;  
Jingle, jangle, clink, clank.

[For the last few minutes a confused murmur, as of a large and tumultuous crowd, has been heard. It becomes louder and louder. The stage begins to grow dark.

MAR. (*suddenly*) What cries are those ?

PEO. (*without, faintly at first*) Death to Fabio !

MAR. What do they say ? They approach !

PAS. (*going up to the window which commands a view of the city, and looking out*) I see a wild, dense crowd. Ah, they bear down the men-at-arms !

MAR. (*clinging to RAOUL*) Oh, heaven ! they would, perhaps prevent thy flight !

[M. DE KERKOUEN, carrying in his hand a hat and cloak, and followed by a BOATMAN, suddenly enters by a secret door, R.

KER. Lose not a moment, Count. The people have learnt, I know not how, that the Duchess would aid your escape. This boatman will guide you (*suddenly perceiving RAOUL'S face*). 'Tis not he. (*To MARIE, who has taken the hat and cloak, and given them to RAOUL*) Fair Countess, is it thus you do the bidding of her Highness ?

MAR. (*clasping her hands*) Oh, pity!

KER. Good. I have said and witnessed naught. (*Aside*) This suits my plan.

[Goes up to window overlooking the city.

PAS. (*giving his keys to RAOUL*) Here are the keys. Haste haste, for you have twelve doors to open ere you are free.

RAO. (*to MARIE*) Farewell.

MAR. (*embracing him*) Farewell.

KER. (*who has come down the stage again. Aside to BOATMAN*) Remember my directions. For fear of accidents, be not too hasty.

RAO. (*tearing himself away from MARIE*) Farewell, farewell!

[RAOUL and BOATMAN exeunt through secret door, R.

MAR. (*sinking on her knees*) Saved!

PAS. (*after closing the door of cell L., raises MARIE.*) Come. Thank Heaven! All goes well.

[Takes MARIE's hand and exit with her through secret door R.

KER. Deftly done! Count Fabio is doomed, and I am Governor of the Bastille! There's one point, though, which rather mars the This joke may cost me, perhaps, my head.

[The DUCHESS and M. DE VILLEFRANCHE enter rapidly at back, followed by M. DE MOULAC and other NOBLEMEN with drawn swords, HERALDS, MEN-AT-ARMS, PAGES, with torches, etc. The tumult without has increased.

DUC. (*to M. DE KERKOUEN*) Has Count Fabio yet escaped?

KER. (*hesitating*) Not yet!

KER. (*aside*) The deuce!

PEO. (*without*) Death, death to Fabio!

VIL. (*coming down from gallery at back*) The People have obtained possession of the Court-yard.

PEO. Down with the traitor! He must die!

DUC. (*to M. DE KERKOUEN, and pointing to cell, R.*) open yonder dungeon! He shall yet escape!

PEO. (*without*) Death to Fabio!

VIL. Choose, Madam! (*pointing to dungeon, R.*) His head or your Crown!

DUC. Will none of you defend me, Messires?

MOU. You, Madam, yes; but Fabio, no.

DUC. (*supporting herself on one of the PAGES*) Ah! my courage abandons me! I—I—white-livered cravens! Not soldiers—not nobles are ye, but butchers! Do—do as you will!

[She sinks down again upon the PAGE'S shoulder. M. DE VILLEFRANCHE makes a sign to two HERALDS. He then proceeds, followed by them, to the balcony. Immediately he makes his appearance on the latter, there is a profound silence among the PEOPLE.]

VIL. People of Nantes, the Duchess bids me tell you that within an hour, Count Fabio Fabiani, covered with a funeral veil, a gag of iron in his mouth, and a lighted torch in his hand, shall be publicly decapitated, in expiation of the attempt made, at his suggestion, upon your sovereign's life.

PEO. Long live the Duchess!

VIL. The booming of a cannon shall announce to all when he mounts the scaffold; a second will be heard when he lays his head upon the block; and a third, when his head shall be severed from his trunk!

PEO. Illuminate! illuminate!

VIL. This night the castle and city shall be illuminated in sign of public rejoicing. Long live the Duchess!

HER. & PEO. Long live the Duchess!

PEO. Death to Fabio!

[M. DE VILLEFRANCHE comes forward, and is about to address the DUCHESS. She makes a sign for him and all the other persons present to leave her. They do so. As M. DE KERKOUEN, however, is going out, she rushes up, and seizing his arm brings him to the front of the stage.]

DUC. You—you have played me false!

KER. (*aside*) Confound it! (*Aloud.*) I—

DUC. Save Count Fabio, or, like him, you die !

KER. Save him, madam, it is impossible !

DUC. (*calmly*) 'Tis good !

KER. But—(*Aside*) Her eye bodes evil ! (*Aloud*) Naught will appease the people but a human life.

DUC. I care not, so it be not his.

KER. Ah ! It is night ! The prisoner is concealed by a long veil ! He is gagged ! Wait madam, wait. (*Aside*) The boatman may still be below. (*Runs up to the window overlooking the Loire.*) Yes, yes ! he is ! (*Aside*) Thank heaven ! (*He snatches up one of the torches left by the PAGES, and waves it out of the window.* *Aside*) He replies to my signal ! He turns the boat back towards the castle. It enters the old water gate. (*Aloud*) Madam, I will answer for Count Fabio.

DUC. (*looking fixedly at him*) Remember, I will keep my word.

[The DUCHESS exits at bac .

KER. I am sorry, Messire de Villefranche, but there is no help for it. Count Fabio must take our friend the Armourer's place in the boat, and the Armourer, the Count's place on the scaffold. The Duches will keep her word ! and I—will keep my head.

[M. DE KERKOUEN exits R.

SCENE II. — Another Chamber in the Castle of Nantes. At the back of the stage a large archway, across which runs a gallery. That portion of the archway, which is lower than the gallery is shut in by white hangings. To the R., a second archway, through which is seen a flight of stairs leading to the gallery. To the L., a third archway, through which is visible a flight of stairs, leading to the basement of the building. A few dim lamps are suspended from the roof, but that which really illuminates the place is a reddish glare—as though from some immense furnace—piercing the white hangings at back.

[When the Scene opens, the shadow of the DUCHESS, perfectly motionless, is perceived on the white drapery at back.

PASCAL, followed by MARIE, enters cautiously through small secret door, L.

PAS. Each outlet's clos'd. Here, lady, must we wait  
Till all is over ; till the People's hate

Is slak'd in Fabio's blood. To make quite sure,  
They watch, with jealous care, each gate—each door.

MAR.

Unhappy man !

PAS.

He wronged you.

MAR.

He's forgiven—

By me, at least ! Oh ! may he be by Heaven !

[PASCAL looks at her, and is about to speak. He checks himself, however, and, kissing her hand, hums in a low voice to himself :

PAS.

Jingle, jangle, clink, clank, clank ;

Jingle, jangle, clink, clank !

MAR. (*startling with affright, at seeing the shadow of the DUCHESS at back*)

Ye gracious Pow'rs ! See, Pascal, see !

PAS.

Hush ! 'tis the lioness at bay !

MAR.

The Duchess ?

PAS.

Silence ! Yes ! 'Tis she.

MAR.

What sounds are those which come this way !

[The following chorus of MONKS is heard indistinctly at first, but gradually growing louder.

Pray for him now doom'd to die !

Seek his pardon from on high !

Soon his soul shall pass away ;

Soon his form be lifeless clay !

Pray ! pray ! pray !

[A Funeral Procession appears in the Gallery, L. The Procession descends the flight of stairs, R., and then that, L. The MONKS chant the chorus till it dies away as the Procession recedes from view. MARIE gazes after it with an expression of horror. Previously to this, M. DE VILLEFRANCHE has appeared in the Gallery.

VIL. (*aside*) Strange doubts within my bosom rise—

Yes ! if I dare trust my eyes,

Yon pris'ner is not Fabio.

The Count is not so tall as he—

Or so, at least, it seems to me.

The truth, the truth, I'll quickly know.

Messire de Kerkouën, I fear

There's something like deception here.

[He follows rapidly the Procession down the flight of stairs, *L.*

PAS. (*coming down the stage with MARIE*)

The egress, now may, p'rhaps, be free ;

Wait, lady, till I go and see.

[Exit down flight of stairs.

MAR. (*looking towards the flight of stairs, R.*)

Poor wretched man !

I see him now.

Thank Heaven, Raoul,

'Twas not thou !

[The DUCHESS draws the curtain at back partially aside, and comes slowly down the stage, without perceiving MARIE.

MAR. The Duchess! Oh, if she suspect

The truth! My heart beats high with fear.

DUC. Who's there—the Countess Marie ?

MAR. Yes.

DUC. Thou'st naught to dread, poor girl. Look here.

[She takes MARIE by the hand, and, advancing rapidly towards the curtain at back, draws it aside violently. A balcony is visible, and, beyond it, the town of Nantes brilliantly illuminated, the illumination completely lighting the stage.

DUC. Look down, look down,

On yon vile town,

Bath'd in a light like that of day.



[An immense outcry resounds below. Confused shouts, "Death to the traitor," "Down with Fabio." The bell of the Cathedral is heard to toll, and continues to toll, at intervals, during the remainder of the scene.]

Dost hear their glee ?

Laugh, laugh with me.

We've robb'd them, Marie, of their prey.

'Tis not for Fabio that yon bell is toll'd,

Although they think so.

MAR. (*aside*)

Ah, my blood runs cold !

(*Aloud*) For whom else, then ? Oh, speak !

DUC.

For whom ?

MAR. (*with increasing anxiety*)

Yes, Madam —

DUC.

I forget his name.

But 't is the other—

MAR.

Dost thou mean—

DUC.

The arm'rer,

MAR.

Raoul ?

DUC.

Yes, the same !

MAR.

It cannot be ;

I saw him flee !

DUC.

Hast thou, too, sought to cheat, deceive me ?

Was *this* thy aid ?

His flight was stayed—

'Twas *he* beneath the veil, believe me !

MAR.

'Twas he !

DUC. (*sternly*)

No more !

All now is o'er.

MAR.

Not so ! The people yet I'll waken

From out their dream

In which they deem

'Tis Fabiani they have taken !

[She is about to rush up to the back of the stage, when the DUCHESS grasps her by the hand.

DUC. I charge thee, as thou valu'st life,  
Remain, nor dare to leave the spot!

MAR. Unhand me, madam!

DUC. Fear my wrath!

MAR. Spare, spare your threats, I heed them not!

[She breaks away, and is about to run up to the back of the stage, when the report of a cannon is heard.

MAR. Great Heavens!

DUC. The scaffold he ascends!

He kneels—

[A second cannon is heard.

MAR. He's lost! I gasp for breath!

Stay!

[A third cannon is heard.

Ah!

[Suddenly the curtain at back is flung aside, and M. DE VILLEFRANCHE appears, grasping RAOUL by the hand. MARIE and RAOUL rush into each other's arms.

MAR. 'Tis Raoul!

RAO. Dear Marie!

DUC. (to M. DE VILLEFRANCHE)

Fabio—speak!

VIL. Has paid the debt Guilt ow'd to Death!

Enter NOBLES, LADIES OF THE COURT, HERALDS, PAGES, SOLDIERS,  
MEN AND WOMEN OF THE PEOPLE, etc.

[On hearing the words of M. DE VILLEFRANCHE, the DUCHESS falls into the arms of the LADIES round her.

RAO. Marie, best-lov'd angel, welcome!

Ne'er was joy like mine before!

'Tis a gem in sombre setting,

Shining through past grief the more!

MAR. Welcome, best-lov'd Raoul, welcome!  
 Naught shall ever part us more!  
 Mad with joy my heart is beating,  
 As it never beat before.

VIL. (*aside, looking towards MARIE and RAOUL*)  
 Let them coo like doves, and welcome,  
 Now that of my aim I'm sure.

[Looking towards the DUCHESS.

Soon as Queen—her griefs forgetting—  
 Shall she visit France once more.

PAS. Heav'n be thank'd! Oh, sight most welcome,  
 All their troubles now are o'er!  
 "Jingle, jangle"—pshaw! I'm getting  
 Weaker even than before!

PEO. Welcome! honest Raoul, welcome!  
 Tyranny's harsh reign is o'er!  
 May thy heart, the past forgetting,  
 Know but gladness evermore!

MAR. Ah! wildly and madly  
 Throbs my fond heart!  
 Kind Fate from my bosom  
 Plucks sorrow's dart.  
 Beloved one! adored one  
 Bliss is now mine;  
 The past is forgotten,  
 Thine am I—thine!

CURTAIN FALLS.

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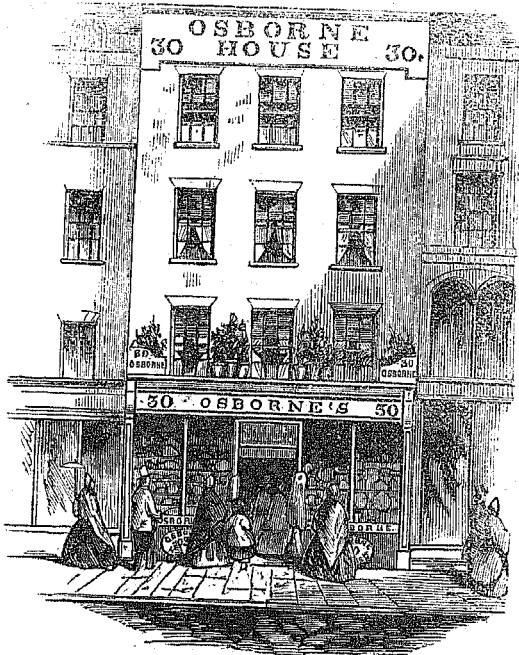
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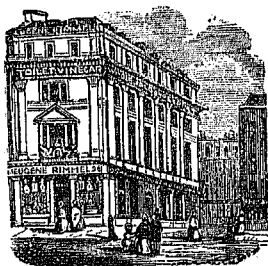
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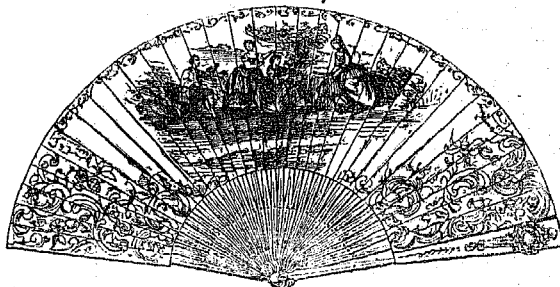
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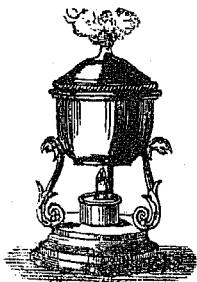
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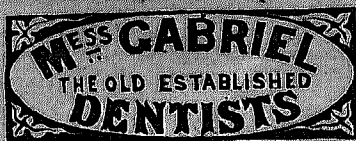
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