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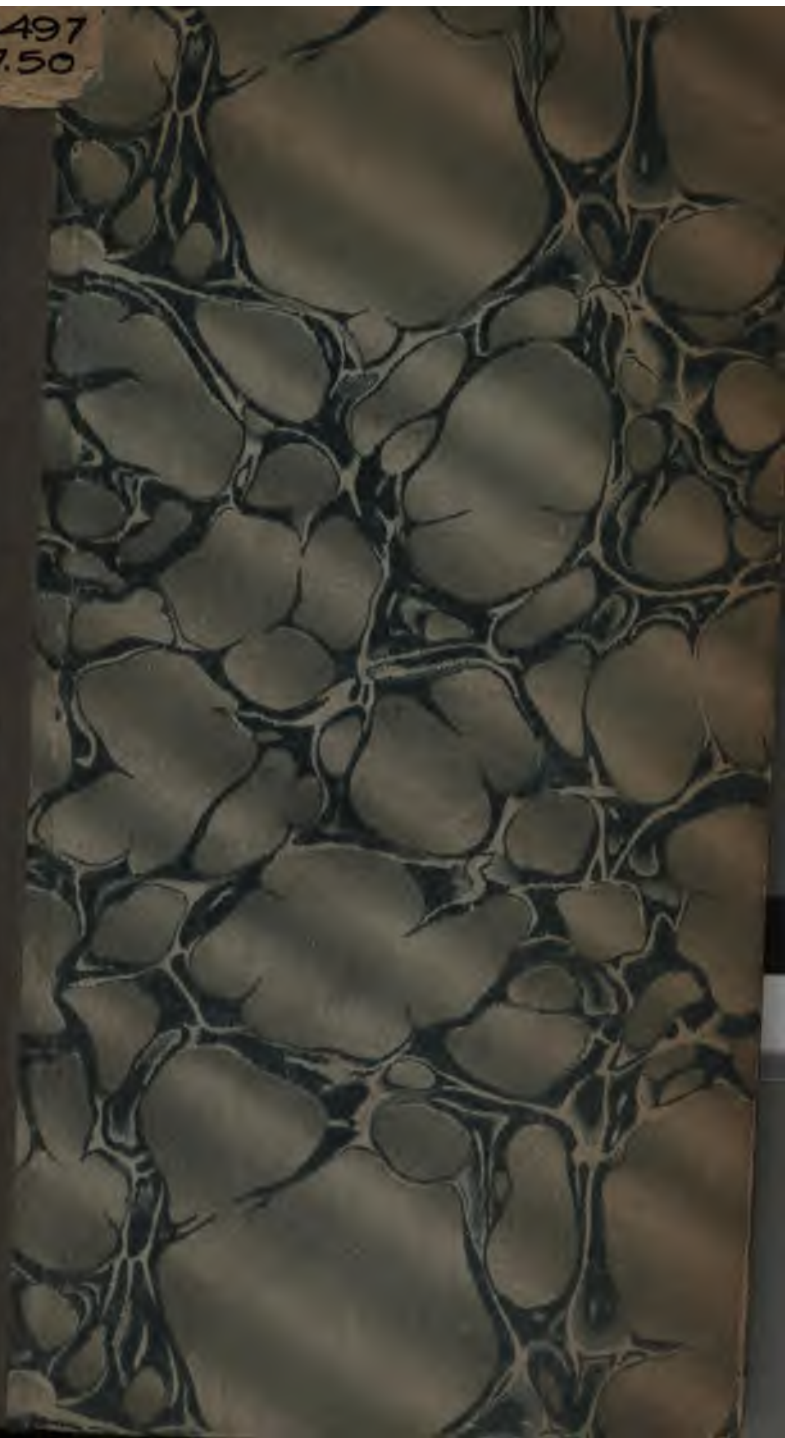
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CORINNE.

A ROMANTIC PLAY,

By ROBERT BUCHANAN,

IN FOUR ACTS.

ENTIRELY ORIGINAL.

Privately printed, not for publication.

LONDON,

1870



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FROM
THE BEQUEST OF
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1918

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

THE COMTE D'ARTOIS, *Prince of the Blood Royal.*

THE ARCHBISHOP OF PARIS.

THE ABBE DE LAROSE.

VICOMTE DE LAVERNE.

VICTOR DE BEAUVOIR, *afterwards* Comte de Calvador.

RAOUL RECAMIER, *an Artist—Brother to* Corinne.

FATHER DORE.

HENNEQUIN, *Servant to* De Larose.

MARAT, *Horse Surgeon to* d'Artois.

GAVROL, }
FAVROCHE, } *Sans-culottes.*

CORINNE, *An Actress.*

CLARISSE, Vicomtesse de La Vallée—a Widow.

VICOMTESSE DE LAVERNE.

ACTE, *Maid to* Corinne.

SCENE : Paris before, and at the outbreak of, the Revolution. Time, between 1780 and 1790.

SYNOPSIS OF SCENERY.

ACT I.

SCENE.—*A Room in the House of CORINNE.*

ACT II.

SCENE I.—*A Cottage orné in the suburbs of Paris.*

SCENE II.—*Interior of the Chapel of Nôtre Dame de la Garde.*

ACT III.

SCENE I.—*The Château De Larose (during a fête.)*

ACT IV.

SCENE I.—*The Courtyard of the Abbaye Prison.*

ACT I.

SCENE.—*An elegantly furnished apartment in the house of CORINNE, the actress.*

As the curtain rises, HENNEQUIN peeps in at door, then enters, bowing affectedly to ACTE. He is dressed in a preposterously elegant fashion, and has all the airs of a bel esprit.

Acté. Monsieur Hennequin !

Henne. My dear Mdlle. Acté ! (*Bows profoundly*) I need not ask how Mademoiselle is, for she looks positively charming (*Bowing as before*).

Acté. (*Curtseying*). And you also M. Hennequin.

Henne. You flatter me ! In sad truth I fear study has already begun to tell on my complexion and ruin my liver. Ah ! we who are born poetical, must pay the penalty.

Acté. Still among the *Littérateurs*, Monsieur ?

Henne. Still, Mdlle., and always. Once, and once only, I condescended to the illiterate—'twas when we first met in the house of the banker Bouillon. Since then, I have lived with several distinguished amateurs, but at last, becoming pious during a slight attack of the gout, I joined the church !

Acté. The church !

Henne. Yes ; I am in the service of the Abbé De Larose—a master after my own heart.

Acté. Dear me ! Don't you find it very dull ?

Henne. Dull !

Acté. Pardon ! you were always so lively—such a gallant. In a religious house you can find but few opportunities for your favourite amusement.

Henne. On the contrary, 'tis my constant occupation. My Abbé is none of your whining, canting, pamphleteering canaille, but a true aristocrat. His love verses equal those of Clement Marot ; Rabelais shares his study with Saint Paul ! We divide our time equally between gallantry and religion, and when we are weary of the first, we grant ourselves absolution in the name of the other.

[*Takes snuff conceitedly.*]

Acté. How dreadfully wicked !

Henne. On the contrary, mademoiselle ! it is the true sign of humility, for society would only despair, should we give ourselves an air of superhuman virtue. See ! This little parcel—I am about to leave it for mamzelle, your mistress.

Acté. (*Taking the parcel.*) For my mistress ?

Henne. Just so ! (*Sighs.*)

Acté. Why do you sigh ?

Henne. I will be candid, mamzelle. With your figure, your carriage, your elegance, you are worthy of the aristocracy, and it pains me, absolutely, to see a lady of your charms with no higher connections.

Acté. Ah ! if you only knew my mistress !—She is an angel.

Henne. She is.—I have seen her perform repeatedly ; but an actress—mamzelle—an actress—

Acté. (*Tossing her head.*) What is your errand.

Henne. It is simple. The dear Abbé doats on mamzelle Corinne, and will call on her to-day ; but as a trifling preliminary, he has sent me on ahead with this little parcel, containing a bracelet of un-

paralleled magnificence, as a slight token of his admiration.

Acté. She will never accept it !

Henne. Is she within ?

Acté. She is out to-day attending the funeral of her friend, Mdle. Geneviève Souvertie. Ah ! monsieur Hennequin, you come on a useless errand.

Henne. Positively ! Perhaps she has already a protector ?

Acté. She has !

Henne. I thought so.—Rich ?—Noble ?—

Acté. No. Only her brother, monsieur Raoul.

Henne. Her brother ! (*laughs*). The idea !

Acté. Hush ! her voice below.—Adieu, monsieur Hennequin.

Henne. Adieu, mamzelle ! (*Kisses her hand affectedly*)
Say rather *au revoir* !

Acté. *Au revoir* ! (*Exit HENNEQUIN making a profound bow. ACTE passes over to table*). Not serve an actress ; well, whatever you may think or say M. Hennequin, I would rather be the servant of the actress Corinne than the cringing creature of the profligate Abbé de Larose. My mistress !

[*As CORINNE enters, retires up stage.*

Enter CORINNE in deep mourning, plain in the extreme. She wears a deep black Spanish veil which covers her whole head and shoulders. She seems in great agitation, and after a minute sinks trembling into a chair.

Cor. Poor Geneviève !—my friend, my more than

sister—and this is the end of a life as stainless as a snowdrop!—but as brief. That horrible scene lives before me yet. The solemn churchyard.—The funeral procession.—The pale priest suddenly appearing pointing us fiercely away from that consecrated spot. Denied her last resting place, and for what crime? Because she was like myself, an actress.—What could I do but speak aloud to the assembled people? and my words stirred their hearts, as only the truth can. A little more and they would have torn him limb from limb. Poor trembling wretch! he only did the bidding of a more powerful bigot than himself. I'll think no more of it.—The memory of that scene kills me. (*Rises and moves to table*). More correspondence! more folly! What's this? (*reads contemptuously*). "From a worshipper of Mdlle.'s transcendent genius these"—verses of course! (*Hears up letter open*). "From the journalist Daman to the actress Corinne" (*takes out slips*). Criticism! more flattery! (*throws away letter*). More folly! (*throws away another*), and—ha! more insult! (*reads, tears up letter, opens another,—pauses gently*). What's here? Violets! (*smells*). "Marie the cripple girl to Corinne the actress." Poor flowers! Already dying. I will preserve you for that poor child's sake. [*Puts flowers in water, ACTE comes down*).

Acté. Mamzelle.—This packet!

[*Places packet on table.*

Cor. Another! (*opens it*). Ah! (*opening case*), a bracelet and a letter! (*reads*) "The Abbé de Larose presents his admiring compliments to Mdlle. Corinne,

and, while sending her the enclosed offering as a slight token of his respect"—respect! "purposes calling on her this day at noon to express with his own lips his"—(*pauses*) O! infamous! To day of all days, when my heart is bleeding from that outrage.—This, too, is one of that order which deems us too foul to sleep in its consecrated ground. [*Enter ACTE, D.L.*

Acté. (Music). The Abbé de Larose.

Cor. (Starts, makes a negative gesture; but before she can speak De Larose enters D.L. He is a gay, florid-looking churchman, exquisitely dressed, highly perfumed, speaks with affected drawl and lisp; manner insufferably cool and patronising). Already!

Abbé. (Glibly). Pray forgive this intrusion, Mdlle. Pardon me for thrusting myself upon you at so early an hour, but the ardour of my admiration for your genius was so great that I could not linger. I saw your Alcestis last night.—I was entranced—amazed; It was a superb creation, and drew tears absolutely from these eyes of mine, which I assure you are not accustomed to weep. Such pathos! Such classic fire!

Cor. Do I address the Abbé De Larose?

Abbé. You do—

Cor. You wrote this letter?

Abbé. I did.—It expresses me very inadequately.

Cor. Containing this enclosure (*showing it*).

Abbé. A trifle—a mere trifle! (*aside*) She is very cool!

Cor. (Putting it down on table). Monsieur l'Abbé, I am not in the habit of receiving costly presents, especially from strangers. (*With hauteur*). Fortunately you are here to explain your intentions, other-

wise I should have had to return your offering by my lacquey.

Abbé. (Aside) She's dreadfully business-like.

Cor. Pray speak, monsieur.

Abbé. (Aside) I have it. She's determined not to commit herself without an explicit declaration. *(aloud)* Mdlle., much as your modesty may mislead you, you cannot be ignorant, I am sure, of those sentiments which—hem! you cannot—hem! be insensible to the fact that whoever beholds you must regard you with sentiments of rapture, such as glow in this bosom; you cannot—in short—*(sinking his voice and coming closer)* you must perceive that I adore you, and have but one ambition in life—to make you happy!

Cor. Have you finished?

Abbé. I have—only—

Cor. Oh! Monsieur, you have explained yourself admirably. Until to-day, I confess I had a foolish fancy that gentlemen of your order were the servants of heaven; I now perceive, from your example, they do not despise the vanities of earth.

Abbé. Mdlle., I am but human.

Cor. But are you not afraid, M. l'Abbé, that you may degrade your cloth by an association, however slight, with one of a class so despised as that to which I belong?

Abbé. (Aside) What an icicle! *(aloud)* My dear Mdlle., I profess no superhuman virtue. If I did, *(bowing profoundly)* even that would melt before charms so divine as those on which I am now gazing. Then as to your last reflection, in which you describe

yourself as the member of a despised caste. Indeed, Mdle., you do us wrong. From the king and the cardinal downwards, we of the aristocracy adore genius, and worship beauty, and are ever ready to pour at the feet of our artistic favourites all gifts, however costly, that ingenuity can devise, love select, and generosity bestow.

Cor. All but one, which you daily refuse us.

Abbé. Pray name it, it shall be yours.

Cor. Respect! instead of this, you offer us insult and degradation.

Abbé. You wrong me—I—

Cor. I have heard you, now hear me.—It is such men as you who make some of my poor sisters what they are. In what respect, Monsieur, do we differ from the women you consent to consider virtuous? We act in public, it is true; the ladies of the aristocracy are actresses in their own *salons*; we display ourselves as the living realisation of some poet's glorious dream; *you* parade your daughters as living chattels at some marriage auction.

Abbé (*Dumbfounded, attempts to speak*). Mdle.—

Cor. Adrienne Lecouvreur died in the lustre of your court, yet the church refused her christian burial. Merci Latouche spent all her wealth upon the poor, yet you denied her earth's last blessing. Geneviève Souvertie was stainless as a crystal, yet this day one of your order refused to bury her, and drove those who loved her from the consecrated ground.

Abbé. Is it possible? Believe me *I* never advised such harsh measures.

Cor. Enough! M. l'Abbé. Take your jewels and,

if you can, act for once like a christian, sell them and give their produce to the poor.

Abbé. I see, Mdle., the conduct of the church authorities in the matter of Geneviève Souvertie has naturally offended you. (*Aside*). Can the prince have been before me? Never mind! I'll spare nothing to win so superb a beauty! (*Aloud*). Mdle., I was hasty—I will give you a few hours for reflection.

Cor. Monsieur!

Abbé. At four o'clock precisely I will return and receive your answer.

Cor. You have my answer now—begone!

Abbé. Pray remember, Mdle., that the Abbé De Larose is a power in France, and that it will savour of rashness to make him your enemy when he could crown your fortunes as a friend.

Cor. Begone, sir.

[*Music.*

Abbé. Meantime, accept the assurance of my distinguished consideration.

Cor. (*Sinking into a chair*). Ah!

[*ABBE, bowing profoundly, goes up and meets
RAOUL, who enters D.R., they both look
keenly at each other as ABBE exit.*

Raoul. So Corinne! you have had company; since when, I pray, have you been assisted at matins by so fine a functionary? As I live, you are trembling. Corinne! that man has insulted you. I know it! By heavens I'll drag him back and make him ask forgiveness on his knees! (*Going hastily*). Explain then.

Cor. Stay, calm yourself.

Raoul. Calm, Corinne! when such things as that crawl in the sun, outraging nature in the name of

Heaven! nay! do not hold me; I will not follow him (*solemnly*)—let him burn with the rest.

Cor. With the rest? What do you mean?

Raoul. That the wrongs of man have at last become too much to bear, and that this France in which we dwell, will soon burn like one huge bon-fire from Paris to Marseilles. The poor lack bread, while the gay minions of the aristocracy wallow in profusion, and corruption like a leprosy covers alike the king, the State, and the Church! Well, the time is ripe.

Cor. O, Raoul! I tremble for you! you are mixed with those, I know, who are even more desperate than yourself—such words as those just uttered, if heard by an enemy, might be fatal.

Raoul. A little while longer, Corinne, and words like mine will become the common speech of men, while with one bright devouring flame the torturers are consumed. I tell you that at this very moment France is undermined, and that a thousand hands are ready to fire the train.

Cor. A conspiracy!

Raoul. Say rather a conflagration! It is no mere blow of the dwarf against the giant. But man—the people—rising up *en masse* against its torturers, while vengeance, like an avalanche, descends from heaven's supremest peaks upon their heads! Let us change the subject. We had a curious scene in front of the house last night. Yonder Abbé, as I live, was inveighing against your profession, when a certain gentleman stepped forward, gave him the lie, and took your side so ferociously that he quite routed the enemy.

Cor. Victor?

Raoul. Right, Corinne, nay, never blush, De Beauvoir's love is no secret. On reflection I have determined that he shall no longer be deceived as to the nature of his relations with thee. He must know forthwith that you can never become his wife.

Cor. Never?

Raoul. Never! Between you and him there yawns a gulf impassable as death. He is a spendthrift, a weak, good-natured *bon enfant*. But to crown all he is an aristocrat. The taint of his caste is upon him.

Cor. No! no! He is heart and soul with the people, like thyself a democrat, a republican.

Raoul. Just so, despised and outcast for the present, with small hope of ever attaining to the patent of nobility, he talks the language of democracy; but mark me, should fortune ever lift him to the level of his caste, he will show himself what he really is, by birth, by blood—an enemy to mankind.

[VICTOR heard singing.]

Cor. His voice!

Enter VICTOR, a handsome shabbily attired young man, his manner eager and gay, chills in seeing RAOUL.

Victor. Ah! Corinne, I am late, but I was busy with my opera—could not snatch myself away.

Cor. (*Repelling him quietly and indicating RAOUL's presence*).

Victor. Ah, Raoul! you here!

Raoul. As you see (*sternly*). Pray do not let me chill the ardour of your greeting—proceed.

Victor. Plague on him!

Raoul. We were just discussing you. I was telling Corinne that, despite your advanced opinions, you seem a marvellous favourite with the aristocracy ; not contented with, last night, launching a thrust at a bishop, you aspired to a *tête-à-tête* with a prince.

Victor. Indeed ! After all one cannot cut one's relations.

Raoul. Just so, but methought, what would his friends at the Cave of Cato think, if they saw in such fine company, the pseudo-democrat, Victor de Beauvoir.

Victor. The pseudo-democrat !—My friend, that's scarcely civil.

Cor. Victor !

Raoul. Nay, Corinne : if he dislike my epithet, he knows I shall be happy to explain it at any time. Meantime I will leave you (*aside to Cor.*) Give him his *coup de grâce* at once. Let him know that in aspiring to your hand, he presumes too much on your pity, and on my forbearance. [*Exit* RAOUL, *D.R.*]

Victor. Whew ! Is he gone ? (*Springing up and embracing CORINNE*). My dear Corinne, your brother is an admirable fellow, but he never forgets there is a "De" in my name. Has anything in particular happened to ruffle him ?

Cor. Nothing ! but you heard him—he suspects—

Victor. That's it. He suspects, is ever suspecting. By Bacchus, I have half a mind to tell him, and be done with it. After all we have not sinned beyond redemption in simply concealing our marriage. What say you ? shall we kneel to this Rhadamanthus of thine, avow all, and beg his pardon ?

Cor. You jest, Victor ; but you forget the duty I owe my brother.

Victor. Duty ! Come, come !

Cor. I owe him both duty and love. When we were cast friendless upon the world he was to me a father as well as brother. Poor though we were, he saw me gently cared for day by day ; and when his work was done he would read aloud the books we loved. One night, how vividly do I remember it, he took me to the theatre, and there flashed before my delighted vision the whole wonder and glory of "Athalie." I sat spellbound, drinking in the enchantment. From that night our dismal garret became the stage whereon I trod in pride. The day came when I cried to him to let me realise this dream and devote my life to its fruition. His face darkened. 'Corinne !' said he, "think again ! Few tread the path you seek without a broken heart or blighted name. Shouldst thou fail, the world will be to thee mere dead sea fruit ! Shouldst thou fall, life will be a grave to me." I promised to be faithful to our noble art—never to sully it by aught that's vile, and at length won his consent ; the rest you know. I was successful ; all went well with us ; I had no secrets from my brother till——

Victor. One day a shabby Eros fell at your feet expecting to receive your scorn, but gaining instead your pity and your love. Well, Corinne ! Perchance I may one day astonish you. Suppose now I was to come into my title and fortune as many a wretched beggar hath ere now !

Cor. Who cares for fortune ! can I not win enough for both ?

Victor. It galls me, nevertheless, to be the beggar of your bounty. Did I not see far away the prospect of rewarding your goodness I should die of shame.

Cor. Oh, hush ! Remember you are my husband.

Victor. There lies my wound—a cipher—a thing for the finger of scorn to point at were our secret known.

Cor. Not so ; you are what I honour beyond all the riches of the earth—all its fame, all its glory—an honest man.

Enter ACTE.

Acté. (Aside to COR.) Monsieur the Abbé De Larose.

Cor. (Aside). That man again ! Ah ! a thought !
(Aloud to VICTOR). Victor, withdraw into the shadow of that curtain. You shall learn what belief the world has in the honour of an actress.

[VICTOR goes wondering behind the curtains.]

Exit ACTE. Enter ABBE D. L.

Abbé. A thousand pardons *(looking at jewelled watch)*, I am five minutes behind the time. Let me trust, Mdle., that you have reflected on the advantages to be derived from my friendship and protection.

Cor. Oh, Monsieur ! I have almost forgotten your proposal ; will you kindly repeat it. Stay, I remember. You, the great Abbé de Larose, light of the Church, Cupid of the Cathedral, being anxious to disembarass yourself of superfluous riches, can conceive no better way of attaining your object than by taking another mistress.

Abbé. (Aside). He! he! She's quite merry now, but dreadfully plain spoken. [*Snuffs.*]

Cor. I need not tell you, M. l'Abbé, how greatly I value the honour you offer me, how amazed I am at your condescension in dreaming of casting so humble a vessel as myself into the odour of sanctity. Well, you have given me time for reflection, and I have reflected.

Abbé. (eagerly). And you have decided——

Cor. That having already one protector, I have not the slightest necessity for another. Permit me to introduce you. [*VICTOR advances from behind curtain.*]

Abbé. Introduce me! Perdition! (*recognising VICTOR*) Ah! what's this? Is it possible?

Cor. You recognise him?

Abbé. I can't be mistaken—it is—of course! My dear friend, let me have the honour of shaking you by the hand! [*Shakes hands.*]

Victor. The devil!

Abbé. Between ourselves, I ought to be angry with you as my rival; but when I visited our charming friend I had no idea she had already a protector. Lucky man! Wealth—honour—love—all showering at your feet at once.

Victor. What on earth do you mean?

Abbé. Is it possible you have not heard the news! Scarce had we parted last night when I saw a courier in search of you. The Count, your cousin, has died without issue. The Calvador title and estate are yours. My lord Count, I congratulate you.

Cor. (Astonished). Lord Count! Victor!

Victor. (Throwing up his hat.) Eureka ! my chance in the lottery has at last turned out a prize (*music*). M. l'Abbé, this lady just now introduced me to you as her protector ; let me in my turn introduce her to you as my wife. We are already married in secret, but ere long I shall lead her publicly to the altar, where she will take her true title—the Countess of Calvador.

Towards the conclusion of this speech Raoul appears at D.R. He seems thunderstruck, and slowly approaches Corinne.

Abbé. Marry an actress !

Raoul. Marry an aristocrat !

ACT II.

SCENE I.—*Exterior of a Cottage orné near Versailles.
Distant View of Paris. D.R.*

Music.

CORINNE *discovered seated on garden chair near porch, which is covered with roses and creepers. ACTE is up stage, looking off.*

Cor. Acté, what is the hour ?

Acté. Five, madame.

Cor. My lord should be returned. Do you see anything of the carriage ?

Acté. Nothing, madame (*a pause*). But some one approaches—it is madame's brother, M. Raoul.

[*Music. ACTE crosses and exit, L.*

Cor. (Starting up). Raoul!

Enter RAOUL. He is dressed in artist's costume, almost like a workman of the faubourgs: as he enters, he comes down, and MARAT appears up stage, where he remains, examining flowers, etc.

Raoul! Good morrow, Corinne. What! astonished to see me thus early? The afternoon was warm, my painting-room close as a dungeon—so I strolled hither. Is *he* at home?

Cor. Victor? No.

Raoul. So much the better. In the presence of that man my passions choke me.

Cor. Are we not forgiven?

Raoul. You I forgive. Lamentation and anger are useless, but do not ask me to forgive the cowardly author of the wrong.

Cor. Raoul! Do you not forget that I am Victor's wife?

Raoul. It seems I have to learn my lesson yet! Corinne, you loved me once!

Cor. (Embracing him). And now — and ever, Raoul.

Raoul. Since we were left to fight the world, you have been my only care; for you I struggled—yet unknown to you—with a half-broken heart. 'Tis true; I have been stabbed to the quick—my heart has bled such tears as you, I pray, may never know; and, she who wronged me, was, like your lover, an aristocrat!

Cor. You loved her?

Raoul. I was a boy, and in a boy's soul love becomes a firebrand. How first we met, how with her ringing

laugh, her siren voice, she led me to my doom, it matters not; she fooled me to the quick. When with low breath, I tried to quote the jargon of democracy, "How love doth level all, how in heaven's eyes all men and women have the right to love;" she smiled and murmured low, "'Tis true." Mad with these words I dared to unveil my feelings; she froze to ice at once, and swiftly to my heart of hearts she stabbed me with her scorn.

Cor. My poor brother!

Raoul. I left her!—From that hour my soul was given to you, my sister, and to liberty; long have I toiled to forge strange weapons for the eager hands of man. I toiled—I struggled—had forgot my wrong—when in a black hour fell that thunderbolt—your marriage with another of that caste on whom I swore revenge.

Marat. (*Coming down.*) Revenge is sweet! Madame, —good day!

[*Saluting.*

Cor. (*Startled.*) Who is this gentleman?

Raoul. A good friend of mine, M. Marat,—my sister Corinne.

Marat. Madame and myself are old friends; many a time have I been delighted with her performances. I shall never forget her Clytemnestra; 'twas fury incarnate!

Cor. (*Aside.*) What a horrible countenance!

Marat. Just now, madame, like myself, has a fleeting connection with the aristocracy. She has been betrayed into making an aristocrat happy. I am constrained to keeping an aristocrat's horses in good

health. Both bonds are perhaps fleeting—it needs no very sharp instrument to cut asunder either one or the other.

Raoul. Marat, take care !

Cor. The gentleman's looks are significant, but I scarcely understand them.

Marat. No *gentleman*, if you please. The *man* Marat, hunted into ignominy for having the courage of his opinions, doctoring horses and asses when he would fain be relieving society of its plethora ; clinging to the skirts of M. le Comte d'Artois, and ready at any moment to feed upon his feeder, in short, something between a genius and a wild beast, and your brother's most devoted friend. [*Goes up.*

Cor. Is the man mad ?

Raoul. On the contrary, a prophet !

Cor. A prophet ! of nothing good or beautiful !

Raoul. No, of the shambles ! Look at his frame, twisted and deformed ; look at his eyes, bloodshot with his soul's famine ; hear his voice, the very hiss of the snake. Such as he is, your aristocrats have made him ; I brought him hither that thou mightest see him. Mark him well ! for the day is not far distant when such as he, the loveless Spirit of the earth, hideous, pitiless, will rule the world, and for all man's centuries of sorrow demand a terrible account !

Enter ACTE.—Music.

Acté. My lord is approaching, but not alone.

Cor. Who is with him ?

Acté. Several ladies and gentlemen ; they are coming up the avenue. [*Exit ACTÉ into cottage.*]

Cor. Raoul ! For my sake, say nothing violent.
[*Goes up.*]

Enter VICTOR, the VICOMTE and VICOMTESSE DE LAVERNE, and CLARISSE, L.

Victor. This way, my dear aunt ; here is the cottage.

Vicom. Charming ! a nest of roses ! (*superciliously*). Where is the queen of Roses herself ?

Victor. Behold her ! Corinne !

Vicom. Mademoiselle—I mean, madame, I am enchanted to meet you ; this is not the first time I have been so charmed,—I have seen you twenty times upon the stage !

Lav. In Clytemnestra,—Phædra,—superb !

Vicom. This is my niece, and Victor's cousin, madame la Comtesse de la Vallée.

Raoul. (*Starting aside*). She here !—

Vicom. Clarisse, this is the—the young person to whom Victor is contracted !

Victor. Married, you mean. Yes, Clarisse, this is my wife !

Clar. (*Very coldly*). Indeed !

Lav. Madame is not alone ; who are these gentlemen ?

Victor. Raoul, here ! (*Aside*). And in that costume (*Aloud*). Aunt, this is Corinne's brother, M. Raoul Recamier.

Clar. (*Aside*). Raoul here !

Lav. An artizan, I presume, from his dress ?

Raoul. Precisely, an artizan.

Victor. M. Raoul is scarcely correct in his description of himself—he is an artist.

Raoul. Something of the sort. In that capacity I have before now had the honour of studying the features of your niece, the Vicomtesse de la Vallée.

[*Bows coldly, to which CLARISSE returns the like.*

Clar. (Moved, aside). He looks handsomer than ever.

Vicom. (Pointing to MARAT). And this other ? Another of madame's brothers ?

Marat. (With a mock bow). I have not the honour, I am merely the brother of humanity.

Vicom. (Aside). Frightful figure !

Victor. I do not know this gentleman !

Marat. Excuse me !

Victor. Indeed ?

Marat. We have met before at the cave of Cato, when my lord was an aspiring tribune of the people. He spoke excellently against his own order ; I should not have guessed from his expressions that he had within him the potency of so distinguished an aristocrat.

Victor. (Aloud). My dear aunt,—

Vicom. Pray don't explain, I am charmed ! I dote on odd people. So, this is one of your democrats ; he looks like one. [*Surveys MARAT coolly from head to foot with her eye-glass.*

Marat. (Bowing grotesquely). The man, Marat.

Vicom. Their sentiments are so amusing : Liberty, Equality, and Fraternity !

Marat. Blood !—Fire !—Terror !

Vicom. Down with all things and everybody !

Marat. Death to the aristocrats ! Bread to the poor !

Vicom. How horrible !—I mean how charming !

Marat. (*Bows to the ground.*) An unexpected pleasure !

Raoul. Marat !—Forbear !

Vicom. Victor !

Victor. My dear aunt.

Vicom. I do not know that we need linger, we came to see your bride, and we have seen her.

Clar. We congratulate you on your connections.

Vicom. You are determined on this public marriage.

Victor. Certainly ! All is arranged for to-morrow.—(*VICOMTESSE and CLARISSE smile.*) Perdition take me if I can conceive the cause of your merriment ; you seem mightily amused.

Vicom. My dear boy ! so we are !

Victor. At what, I beg ?

Clar. Ah ! that is our secret. (*To CORINNE.*) Madame I have the honour to wish you a good day !

Lav. And a pleasant bridegroom.—Egad !

Vicom. And a happy bridal, my dear.

Cor. What can they mean ?

Victor. I do not understand ! They seem to have just gone mad !

Marat. No ; that took place centuries ago.

Victor. Sir !

Marat. Yes ; when the aristocrats first starved the

people ! They have been raving ever since ! Happily the people are preparing the poor lunatics an asylum ! Perhaps here ! Perhaps in Heaven !—or possibly in the other place !

Clar. Victor, will you take a suggestion ?

Victor. Well !

Clar. If you wish to make the ceremony of to-morrow as striking as possible, get that monster in the spectacles to give the bride away.

Marat. I shall be delighted. As Clytemnestra to Agamemnon may she be to him !

Cor. Victor, silence that man !

Clar. Pray don't silence him on our account. If M. Raoul Recamier is his keeper, and he likes to go about exhibiting a *bear*, I for one have no objection.

Laverne. "Ursus major" ! he ! he ! he !

Raoul. Madame is right. I am sure my friend will pardon the comparison when he learns its full force. A bear is strong, can bite—can kill. Woe to those who come within his clutches, as even beauty and pride may do some day. Come, Marat.

Marat. Ladies, the bear bids you an affectionate adieu. If politeness permitted, he would like to embrace you.

Vicom. Ugh ! [*Exeunt* MARAT and RAOUL.]

Clar. If that monster had looked at me any longer I should have fainted. Come, aunt.

Vicom. With pleasure, Victor. Madame, *au revoir* till to-morrow.

Clar. At the bridal ! Ah ! ah ! ah !

Lav. Pardon me, had you not some difficulty in

procuring a functionary willing to perform the ceremony?

Victor. I had, thanks to the infamous Abbé De La-rose; but at last, like Diogenes, I found my honest man, the good Father Doré, of Nôtre Dame de la Garde.

Vicom. He will marry you?

Victor. He will perform publicly the same office which has already been performed in private.

Vicom. I shall certainly be present.

Clar. And I.

Lav. And I! he! he! he!

Victor. You astonish me! I thought——

Vicom. You thought I objected to this union. So I do; but since you are determined, I shall certainly see the affair through, it will be so odd.

Victor. Odd!

Clar. At a wedding such amusing *surprises* often occur!

Victor. Clarisse!

Lav. It is not every day a noble marries an actress. He! he! he!

Vicom. (to *Laverne*). Gaspar, your arm! Victor! Pray beg madame the actress to husband her strength, we all expect great things of to-morrow's performance; and as there will be a large and critical audience, the ordeal may be very trying.

[*Exeunt VICOMTE, VICOMTESSE and CLARISSE laughing.*]

Cor. What do they mean? Their looks—their words all suggest something dreadful. Why didst thou bring them here? Oh! would I had never seen them!

Victor. Do not heed them. Think only of to-morrow. *[Embracing her.]*

Cor. It is to-morrow that I fear! They seem to threaten (*clinging to him*). Oh, Victor, whatever issue comes, I am your wife?

Victor. Aye! now in the sight of heaven; to-morrow, in sight of man.

Cor. Yes! yes! I know thy heart is faithful unto me and to the people.

Victor. Then never fear! Nor doubt nor fear can enter where love dwells. And yet—but let us go in. A chill creeps over me, and the sun is setting. *[Exeunt.]*

SCENE II.—*Interior of Chapel of Notre Dame de la Garde.—View of the high altar, lit up by window of painted glass.*

Enter ABBE DE LAROSE and FATHER DORE.

Abbé. I tell thee, father, thou hast no choice but to act as our venerable Archbishop desires. The public marriage of a peer of France with an actress must not be solemnised. Such are the injunctions.

Doré. It is a cruelty! A crime!

Abbé. It is simply justice. The stainless stream of French nobility would be polluted were such an union possible. The scandal must be avoided. There will be a great gathering of illustrious people to see thee perform thy duty; and, mark me, if that duty is well done, thy fortune is made.

Doré. I will not move in it. Let his Grace himself come hither and forbid these nuptials if he pleases; my duty is to perform them. Unless I have his own great sign and seal, I will not stir.

Abbé. Come. Have I not told thee over and over again, that, did not his sickness keep him to his couch, he would himself arise and from yon altar make protestation. Nor is the Archbishop alone outraged ! The Court ! the Prince !

Doré. Speak not of them. I serve a supreme Prince, whose will I must obey.

Abbé. (*After a pause, watching him*). Is this thy final answer ?

Doré. It is.

Abbé. Then look thou to it ; for I will bear it straightway to his Grace : repeating moreover thy shameful and seditious words.

Doré. M. l'Abbé !

Abbé. Spare protestations ; we know thee well.

Doré. No ! M. l'Abbé—thou dost not know me, but I know thee ! and since thou threatenest, will tell thee what thou art ; thou art a *roué* and a sensualist.

Abbé. These words to me !

Doré. These words and more, M. l'Abbé ! In all this hideous business of to-day, I see thy hand. Who knows not thine iniquity ? Ere yet this lady was a wedded wife, thou didst with infamous solicitation assail her virtue !

Abbé. It is false !

Doré. 'Tis true ! true as it is that thine is the hand now raised against her happiness ! May heaven yet baffle thee !

Abbé. Enough, old man ! I will waste no more speech on thee ; thou shalt smart for thine insolence ! A pamphleteer ! a socialist ! teach me mine office !

After this the deluge !

[*Exit* ABBE.

Doré. Go thy ways ! conjure all the powers that
be against me. I will not aid thee.

[*Low music from the altar.*

(*Solemnly.*)

No ! Blessed is the union of pure souls,
Who, sweetly smiling, join their gentle loves
In one fair garland, lily white and pure.
Blessed be they if at the day of death
It still be found as fair and pure and sweet
As when fresh from the bride and bridegroom's hands
It fell upon the altar of the Lord. (*Church bells.*)

[*FATHER DORÉ goes slowly up the aisle.*

Enter D'ARTOIS, VICOMTE LAVERNE, VICOMTESSE and
CLARISSE, *followed by others.*

Lav. I trust we are in time.

D'Artois. Have no fear ! you will see all.—The
bridal procession, the thunder-clap.

Lav. Delicious !

Clar. I declare I pity the young creature, but of
course society would be destroyed if such affairs were
possible.

D'Artois. Certainly !

Vicom. I always thought Victor a true De Beauvoir,
but in matters of this sort he is almost a free thinker.
One would have understood it before he came into
the title ; but now, it is ridiculous beyond measure.

D'Artois. Her influence over the gentleman is
obviously immense. She would lead him blindfold to
destruction.

[*Music.*

D'Artois. They are approaching! Pray accept my arm.

Clar. Your Highness is too good!

[*They range themselves down stage R. and L.*

Enter bridal procession. VICTOR and friends down L.,

RAOUL alone. Enter CORINNE, preceded by bridesmaids strewing flowers. They range down R.

CORINNE and VICTOR advance, join hands and kneel.

Choral music from choir. FATHER DORÉ comes down to meet them. He extends his arms in benediction over them as they kneel to him. Enter ABBÉ DE LAROSE hastily.

Abbé. Room for his Grace the Archbishop of Paris!
The Archbishop!

[*VICTOR and CORINNE rise. General confusion.*

Victor. What means this?

Abbé. Silence! silence!

[*Enter the Archbishop, attended.*

Arch. Where is the priest who would perform this day the nuptial rites?

Doré. Here.

Arch. Father Doré! we sent to thee by a worthy messenger our interdict. Why didst thou not obey?

Doré. Because I distrusted that messenger; because I believed no living soul would wish to break this blessed bridal.

Arch. This accursed bridal! Knowest thou not the quality of the bridegroom, and the unworthiness of the bride?

Doré. (Raising his hands solemnly). In sight of
heaven, when man and woman kneel,
These twain are equal by that holy pact,

Of that meek covenant their souls partake.

Distinctions are abolished, afterwards

That plight once blest must last !

D'Artois. Blasphemy ! i' faith !

Arch. What voice is that, which with such hollow infidelities profane this sacred place ! nay, sir, silence, and stand back ! stand back, I say, sir. We will speak with thee again, and in a rounder fashion. Where is the bridegroom ?

Victor. I am here ! What hideous jest is this ?

Arch. Is thy name Victor de Beauvoir, Count of Calvador ?

Victor. It is.

Arch. Knight of the Royal Orders, and peer of France ?

Victor. The same.

Arch. Lord Count, it grieves me to see thy soul so cast into the toils of the tempter, so deluded by the fatal beauty of a woman, as to endanger thy name, thy honour, the honour of the order to which thou dost belong. This marriage cannot proceed !—On thy allegiance and thy faith come from that woman's side.

Cor. Victor ! Raoul ! O ! what means this ?

Arch. It means, Corinne, that the church forbids Thy marriage with a noble peer of France, These and thy former nuptials are null ; His blood and thine may never mix, no more Than quicksilver with wine !

Cor. (Wildly). My crime ?—my crime ?—What have I done, that on my innocent head you pour this degradation ?

Arch. (Sternly). What hast thou done? Ask rather what thou art! By what cheats wouldst thou, an actress, into the sacred limits creep of France's noble and anointed peers?

Raoul. O! curses on the tongue that stabs her gentle heart!

Abbé. (Whispers aside to ARCH.)

Arch. (Pointing to RAOUL). Arrest that man!

Raoul. Stand back! By heaven, he dies who touches me. *(To VICTOR)* Man, art thou dumb? wilt tamely bear this wrong? speak, aristocrat!

Arch. Arrest that man, I say!

[Archers advance behind RAOUL, disarm and seize him.]

We know him for a traitor to the king,
A midnight plotter and a democrat,
And brother to the woman there, Corinne!
(To VICTOR) Lord Count, well mayst thou bless the
Church's care,
Which saves thee in thy foolish soul's despite
From linking thy great fortune and thy fame,
With things so base!

Cor. Victor! Victor!

Victor. Oh, speak, my love!

Cor. Victor! they cannot—dare not!

In heaven's sight we are one—
No hand of man may part us now!
The blessing hath been spoken already on our loves.
Stand by my side; here, place thy hand in mine!

Victor (Does as he is requested).

Cor. They dare not tear thee from me !

Arch. (*Raises his hand*).

Abbé. Silence !

Arch. My son, I charge thee, on thy soul, let go that woman's hand !

Raoul. I charge thee, too, aristocrat, stir not, on thy life !

Arch. Thy former nuptials, impiously performed,
Are void, the legal courts, as well as heaven's priest,
Agree that woman is thy paramour,
But never can become thy wedded wife.
If not for pride, for pity's sake, forbear !
For thou degradest her a thousand-fold
By making her thy shameful concubine.

Victor. (*Appears greatly agitated*).

Arch. I tear thy bonds away as rotten reeds,
I snatch thee from perdition and from shame.

[*Music to end of Act.*

I charge thee for the third time in the name
Of that proud house whereto thou dost belong,
In name of law and country, right, and king,
Last in the name of heaven and the church,
Let go that woman's hand.

[*Archbishop uplifts crozier ; all watch VICTOR. VICTOR drops CORINNE'S hand, falls on his knees, and buries face in hands. RAOUL comes forward, as if to spring on VICTOR. CORINNE shrieks in horror.*

TABLEAU.

CURTAIN.

ACT III.

SCENE I. — *Exterior of Chateau De Larose, large window, R., lawns, flower garden, fountains, statues, etc.*
Music. Ladies and Gentlemen in court costume promenading or seated on rustic seats. Some masked.

Enter DE LAROSE, LAVERNE, VICOMTESSE, *etc.* — *Music.*

Vicom. My dear Abbé, your entertainment is princely.

Abbé. You are pleased to flatter. I do my humble endeavour to make my guests comfortable, that is all.

Vicom. Is it possible that his Highness the Prince will attend.

Abbé. I have his conditional promise.

Enter HENNEQUIN, *L.*, *he crosses R.*

Hennequin !

Henne. Monsieur !

Abbé. Is all prepared for the illumination ?

Henne. It is, Monsieur.

[*Exit* HENNEQUIN, *Chateau, R.*

Vicom. The illumination ! Delightful !

Abbé. Oh ! a mere trifle : a pretty little idea of my own, to imitate the night feasts of the ancients. It is now sunset ; when twilight falls, the groves will be lit, and a mask of nymphs and satyrs—a capital idea of the worthy Archbishop's—will be seen on the lawn.

(*Looks off*). Who comes here? your nephew as I live!—a lady on his arm.

Lav. Ah! his cousin, Clarisse.

Abbé. Will it be a match, think you?

Lav. I trust so: she used to dote on him.

[*Music. They retire up.*]

Enter VICTOR and CLARISSE.

Clar. But why do you wear black?

Victor. For the dead!

Clar. Positively!—For a near relation?

Victor. Yes!—for my wife!

Clar. Your wife!—O, Victor!

Victor. The church has torn us asunder, and she is dead to me, nevertheless I pay her memory the decent compliment of mourning.

Clar. But the woman—the lady—I mean, lives?

Victor. I know not. Since that fatal hour we parted at the altar, I have never seen her face or heard her name! She sank from me as utterly as one buried! Peace to her wherever she walks, in this world or another.

Abbé. (Coming forward). Welcome, Count.

Victor. (Coldly). Ah! good morrow! Aunt! thou here?

Vicom. Why not? I was dull, and Gaspar proposed to bring me.

Lav. (Aside). Parbleu! and I tried a hundred devices to come alone.

Vicom. I heard our good Abbé was a sly rogue, and that his private entertainments were superb; besides

that, one had a chance of seeing improper people—authors, artists, actresses, and all that; I dote on improper people.

Lav. (*Chuckles wickedly*). And so do I! he! he! he!

Vicom. Gaspar!

Lav. My soul!

Vicom. Don't be ridiculous! I said I like to examine these oddities—at a distance—to inspect them like curious fish, or stuffed birds in a cage.

[*Looks at groups with eyeglass—superciliously.*

I must say I am rather disappointed, the people here are so much like ourselves! Clarisse, you seem *ennuyée*.

Clar. Indeed? No! (*Yawning*) I am enchanted.

[*Gay music heard off L.*

Lav. What music is that?

Abbé. The band in the great balcony. I ordered them to be silent till the Prince's arrival!

Lav. The Prince!

Vicom. Adonis!

Clar. Oh! Let us hasten to see him!

Abbé. This way—through the Citron Walk.

[*They group.*

Victor. (*Detaining Abbé*). Abbé—one word—

Abbé. My dear Count, you must excuse me, his Royal Highness—

Victor. Must wait. I came hither to meet you face to face, and I will not be denied.

Abbé. Really— [*Exeunt LAV., VICOM., CLAR., etc.*

Victor. Since that fatal day, when from my side my bride was torn; since in my miserable cowardice, I trembled before the thunders of an old dotard, I have

not known a single moment's rest. Since then, I have sought in vain for a trace of Corinne; she has disappeared from the world, the stage, as completely as from myself— and I am come here at last in despair to demand where she is hidden.

(Music without).

Abbé. From me? Amazement? Really—I must go!

Victor. I know full well what foul hand forged the bolt that struck us down. I know by whose malignity that gentle woman's heart was broken, and her brother consigned to the Bastille, and I come to you, *Abbé de Larome*, priest, coward, libertine, to seek my wife!

Abbé. Control yourself, I beg!

Victor. Where is she? Answer me? [*Seizing him.*]

Abbé. Lord Count—as I live—

Victor. Wretch! think not I forget the hour when with hideous sollicitation you wooed her to infamy. She trampled on that loathsome suit, for which you, vowed revenge. You tore us asunder at the altar. Did your malignity pause even there? No! With church and law as your familiar devils, you drove her from the world and hooted her off the stage!—She disappeared.—Into what gulf as loathsome as your love have you impelled her?

Abbé. *(Frightened).* As I live, I am innocent of the lady's whereabouts; indeed, indeed you wrong me!

Victor. Lives she?—or—is—she—dead?

Abbé. I know not.

Victor. Liar!

[*Seizes him violently.*]

Abbé. Lord count!

Victor. Speak !

Abbé. To be honest, I have made enquiries.

Victor. Ah !

Abbé. I wished to help the lady. I sought her, but I found her fled !

Victor. Thank heaven ! *[Throws him off.*

Abbé. What ?

Victor. Snake of the church !—Better, a thousand times better, the grave itself than your help ! If she escaped thy pursuit, thank heaven for that ; for had you triumphed in your accursed purpose, I would have hunted you down like a dog, and torn your heart out. To think of it ! If in her despair, she had listened to thee, she might this very day be walking here among your playthings and your parasites. (*Music*). Hark ! they sound the hymn of worship.—Go, go, to thy devotions and thy devotees. (*Exit ABBÉ quickly, L. VICTOR sinking on a seat*). Is he lying to me ? He is capable of that, or aught else diabolical ! To such as he, the pursuit of virtue is a gay hawking-match, in which no artifice is spared to ensure success. What gold fails to buy, force even may secure. I have it on his own word, that he pursued her. My poor Corinne !—If he has wronged thee, you shall be bitterly avenged ! (*VICTOR rises. Music*). I will dog him yet, step by step ; I will search each face here till I find a clue. *[Going.*

Enter CLARISSE.

Clar. So !—I have found you again !

Victor. Clarisse !

Clar. The Prince hath come, but he hath brought such news !—The mob has risen in Paris, and broken into the shops.

Victor. Ah ! a riot !

Clar. Something of that sort ! What horrid people !—they are never satisfied.

Victor. They are hungry, and demand bread.

Clar. How absurd, when there is such profusion.

Victor. Precisely, when our worthy Abbé spends daily on one mistress gold enough to feed a thousand hungry mouths.

Clar. Now you are sarcastic ! I hate sarcasm ; how do you think it will end ?

Victor. Oh ! as usual.—There will be so many mouths less and so many widows more. Our good government has an excellent remedy for difficulties of this sort—grape shot, my dear !

Clar. Then there is no danger ?

Victor. I believe not ; they have been hungry before, and will be hungry again ; naturally our wild beasts growl when they are not fed.

Clar. Horrid animals !

Victor. Very, my dear ; there is nothing so demoralising as an empty stomach. If my pretty Clarisse were denied the dainty food her fond keepers thrust through the bars of her cage, she would become a wild beast too. Well ! what can I do for thee ?

Clar. Take me into the supper room, the Prince is there.

Victor. (*Aside*). Shall I ?—I will, and from the

prattle there, I may learn something of the secret I seek.

Clar. Well!—

Victor. (*Aloud*). I am at your service!

[*Offers his arm with assumed gaiety to CLARISSE.*]

Enter HENNEQUIN.

Hark! what was that?—It sounds like firing!—

Henne. A riot, I believe, my lord, and they are firing on the mob. [*Exit L.*]

Victor. What did I tell thee?—Come to supper! and *vive la bagatelle!* While we are drinking out of cups of gold, and tasting all the dainties of the earth, the wild beasts are roaring for their food! (*with sudden solemnity*) Heaven help them! All they seek is a crust of bread and a drop of water, but all they will gain this night will be fire and lead! [*Music.*]

Exit VICTOR and CLARISSE, R. V. E. Stage becomes darker. Enter CORINNE and DORE L. N. E. CORINNE is poorly dressed, and wears a mask. DORE is habited as a layman, shabby and poor.

Cor. 'Twas he! I could not be mistaken.

Doré. Control yourself, my child!

Cor. (*unmasking*). 'Twas he! and a woman smiling on his arm. I have tracked him all day to save him, and I find him in these gardens of pollution, the guest of my bitterest foe. I find him here, here! clasping the same hand that struck us asunder at the altar!

Doré. Be patient!

Cor. Father! the hour is past for patience! This day, at sunrise, I could have listened, for I believed him true. This night I cannot listen, for I know him to be base. Let us return as we came. Let him perish with the rest.

Doré. Such speech belies thy better nature. Fulfil thine errand, and the blessing of heaven will be upon thee.

Cor. How?—How?—

Doré. Forgetful of his cruelty to thee, thou didst resolve to warn him of the doom now imminent! The people have risen; and first among the names marked for destruction is that of Victor de Beauvoir, thy husband! Aye! thy husband! for such still I hold him, though my devotion to this truth has cost me my priestly office, my worldly honour—almost my daily bread! Let no mists of passion obscure this heavenly truth, that you are one!

Cor. One? no, no!—He has forgotten me! See what he is!

Doré. See what thou art—his wife! measure not thy duty by his transgression.

Cor. To be so soon forgotten?

Doré. If he forgets, do thou remember!

Cor. I could have borne all, all but this. The world's contempt, the church's ban—but to find him what he is—a libertine—it is too much to bear. Why should he live? To break more hearts—to drive more women to despair!

Doré. Say rather to repent and to atone.

Cor. Repent?—Atone? You know him not, father.

When this man starved for food, I fed him from my hand. When his own kin denied him a roof to cover him, I sheltered him ; I loved him. Father ! my brother and the rest speak truth. There is no goodness in these men.—No goodness, no love, no honour ! I will not save him !

[*Crosses to R.*

Doré. (*Holding up his finger—listening*). Hark !

Cor. What's that ?—

Doré. The sullen monster Paris roaring for its prey. Another hour it will be too late, child ! hesitate no longer ! How often in my silent retreat, when we two sat alone, have I blessed thy pity and thy gentleness.

Cor. I loved him then ! I loved him then !

[*Weeping on column.*

Doré. And now ! Heaven forbid thy love so soon should die. Come, save thy husband !

Enter a Courier, L.

Cour. I seek the Count D'Artois ; Is he here ?

Doré. Within the *Château*. From thy face, thou bearest bad news ?

Cour. Thou art right—I do !

Doré. A riot, I believe ?

Cour. Something of that sort ! An *émeute* in the Faubourg St. Antoine. [*Exit Courier R.*

Doré. You heard ? Not a moment is to be lost ! If you would save him, speak at once ; should you hesitate, I must perform that duty.

Cor. No !—I will go.—No harm shall come to him through fault of mine. I will seek him even here

(*tender and loving*) and save him—Yes! I will save him yet!

[CORINNE goes across, as windows of château are thrown open, disclosing a brilliant interior.

The PRINCE, ABBÉ, VICOMTESSE, CLARISSE, VICTOR, etc., discovered drinking, etc.

Cor. Ah!

[*Shrinks back.*

D'Artois. (*In the room*). Another toast—the beautiful Marie.

Abbé. (*In room*). More wine! more wine!

D'Artois. Marat, you drink nothing! I pledge you, monster.

Marat. Your Highness does me honour.

[*They drink.*

D'Artois. Say something savage, my democratic healer of horseflesh—something tart as blood and sour as vinegar. You are nothing if not horrible.

Marat. I was thinking how tragic Mdle. Corinne the actress would look if she could now behold her noble friend, the Count of Calvador.

Omnes. Ha! ha! ha! ha!

Cor. (*Aside to DORE and pointing to VICTOR, who is sitting at the side of CLARISSE*). See! see!

D'Art. Count! To the Venus smiling by thy side I drink again. By heavens! Lord Count, thou art a philosopher; thy bride was snatched from thee by the churlish hands of Rome, but wherever beauty smiles, I see there is consolation to be found.

Omnes. Ha! ha! ha!

Cor. (*aside*). Oh misery!

[*Half swooning.*

Abbé. Close the windows again, the night wind is

too cold ! [*As curtains close there is a noise of laughter.*

Cor. Father, you saw, you heard. Would you have me speak now ?

Doré. My child, I would !

Cor. To him ? To that smiling mass of infamy ? Did you mark his face ? As Nero and his parasites of old when Rome burned round them, sit these painted things ; and in their midst the man thou call'st *my husband*. Vile, vile, to the finger tips ! I tear him from my soul ! I uproot him from my life, now and for ever ! Come away ! come away ! [*Going up wildly.*

Doré. Go then ! I will remain.

Cor. Father !

Doré. I will follow.

Cor. You would speak to him ?

Doré. I would—and will.

Cor. To warn him ?

Doré. Aye ! to warn him.

Cor. Enough, he shall be warned ! (*with a wild laugh*). I'll be the funeral knell within his ear ; mine be the face to come upon his revel, and speak the fate we weave for him and all his shameless kind ; I—his victim—will be the ghost to uprise before him, cold as Até, terrible as Death ! Yes ! yes ! you are right. He shall be warned !

Doré. Corinne ! My child !

Cor. I would not have him die before his soul had felt this last reproach. Father, withdraw, I hear foot-steps. Away, away ! Nay, never stare at me so questioningly ; I tell you I will do your bidding.

[*Exit Father Doré.*

Cor. (looking off). A shadow! a man! He comes this way. No! it is not Victor! Perchance 'tis one who'll bear a message.

Enter ABBÉ.

Abbé (smiling). What a jest! a riot in Paris at this hour! Well might the Prince smile when the courier delivered the message. A few rounds of grape shot will soon settle their business. Now to give the signal for the illumination; 'twill be a brilliant surprise for the Prince! Hennequin!

Enter HENNEQUIN from Château.

Hen. Monsieur!

Abbé. Light up the gardens. [*Exit HENNE., L.*

Cor. (Approaching). Monsieur! (*Recognising him aside*). Ah! the Abbé De Larose. [*Going.*

Abbé. A woman! Stay!

Cor. Release me!

Abbé. I should know that voice! No — yes! Amazement! It is the beautiful Corinne, long sought and never found till now. What in the name of all that is pleasant brings you here?

Cor. I seek my husband, who is to-night your guest.

Abbé. Indeed. (*Aside*). What shall I say to her? They must not meet. (*Aloud*). My guests are very numerous. Are you sure he is here?

Cor. Within there, at the Prince's side, joining in your vile orgy. No matter! I would speak to him!

Abbé (smiling). Do you really think it advisable?

Cor. Why not?

Abbé. To be honest, my guests are merrily engaged. I do not know your errand, nor can I guess it, but I should fancy—he! he!—the last person in the world he would care to see at this moment is yourself! Confide in me as a friend. If I can help you, be assured I will. Ever since that unhappy scene in Nôtre Dame de la Garde, I have diligently sought you to assure you of my respect, my sympathy! Believe in my disinterested admiration, my friendship, my esteem!

Cor. Peace! Peace! (*Noise of laughter from within ; listening*). His voice!

Abbé. Precisely.

Cor. (*with a wild look of horror*). And he is your guest.

Abbé. He is. In truth he came uninvited, with yonder lady on his arm. If you hope to make any impression on his heart, I fear it will be in vain. Better console yourself otherwise *à la mode*. (*Snuffing airily.*) In society, when one favourite refuses to smile or is unfaithful, it is the custom to choose another; and why not? Unless nature has decreed that passion is to be exhausted by one episode. You see De Beauvoir is already consoled, why not follow his example?

Cor. Horror! horror!

Abbé. The Count de Calvador is rich, but the Abbé De Larose is powerful. Confide your griefs to me, and I will save, nay more, avenge you.

Cor. (not heeding him, but listening intently). They are coming this way.

Abbé. Madame, I fear you were not listening, I was saying—

Cor. (fiercely). Silence, man ! *[Listens again.]*

Abbé. I cannot be silent. Not a moment is to be lost ! I offer you my protection—my love ! Beautiful creature, you know not what I can confer upon you in homage ; the world shall envy thee.

Cor. Release me ! they approach !

[Laughter without R.]

Abbé. Not until you smile ; not until as a pledge I print my loving kiss upon your lips. Come this way ! Here are parterres where we can wander at will ! Only listen to me, coyest and most beautiful of women.

[Struggling with her. Gardens behind suddenly lighted up with variegated lamps. Gay music.]

Enter D'ARTOIS, LAVERNE, VICOMTESSE, CLARISSE, MARAT, GUESTS and VICTOR, R.

D'Art. Splendid ! Superb ! What's this ? The Abbé !

Abbé (confused). Your Royal Highness !

D'Art. And with a petticoat, as I live. My fair one, never hide your face and turn aside. All here, even Marat, are friends to beauty. Though your secret affection, it seems, is for the church, pray condescend to look upon the laity. Marat, detain her !

Marat. Certainly. *[Approaches Corinne.]*

Abbé. On no account. This lady is a stranger. I beg you to let her depart. She is—

[As CORINNE goes up, she meets VICTOR face to face.]

Cor. Victor!

Victor. Corinne! (*aside*) Alone! by night! in that man's company! The worst has befallen as I feared.

D'Art. A recognition.

Lav. (*aside to D'ARTOIS*). It is Corinne, the actress. Your Highness knows the story.

D'Art. I do! *corbleu*!

Cor. (*to VICTOR*). I was looking for you.

Victor (*coldly*). You have found me! Well?

Cor. I would speak to you alone.

Victor. Pardon me, madam, there is no communication you can have to make to me which I could hear patiently in private. Speak your message aloud, if you have any fit for honest men to hear.

Cor. (*aghast*). Victor de Beauvoir! Have you forgotten me?

Victor. Pardon! I know you only too well. You are Corinne Recamier, whom once I knew.

Cor. Once! O God!

Victor. If you have any shame left in you get you gone, or find some secret place within these walls to hide your face from honourable men.

Cor. (*with sudden passion*). Victor! Beware!

Victor. Beware? Pshaw!

Cor. I have been wronged too much already. I'll bear no more, and least of all from thee.

Victor. Farewell. [*Going.*]

Cor. Stay, I command thee! Thou, Victor de Beauvoir, who, with a lying oath and lying face, first won my pity and then stole my soul; thou, the false friend, the false lover; thou who, when fortune came

and brought thee power, turned from thy benefactress at the altar, and, like a coward, dropped the hand that saved thee. Thou! thou! prate to me of honour!

D'Art. Splendidly performed!

Lav. Her Clytemnestra was nothing to this.

Cor. Go then thy ways, and when thy hour doth come (*with peculiar emphasis*)—who knows, it may be soon—remember me! Cast up thy protestations and thy vows, thy rank deceits, thy follies and thy lies, and then cast up my boons, my kindnesses against thy treachery and forgetfulness. Place next the fatal famine of my love, my agony, my despair, my broken heart. Sum up the black account between our souls (*solemnly*), and, in the hour of death, remember me!

Lav. Egad! I almost think she is in earnest.

Victor. Spare me these heroics. All the world knows your dramatic powers. It is enough that I have found you here, and know you for what you are.

Cor. (eagerly). What's that?

Victor (shrugging his shoulders). In one word—I will use no stronger epithet—a consummate actress!

D'Art. Egad! So she is!

Omnes. (Laugh).

Lav. Her talent is indisputable!

D'Art. My dear Abbé! This has been an evening of surprises. I had no idea you intended to conclude with so fine a peroration.

Abbé. Your Highness—I—

[*Snuffs.*

Omnes. (Laugh).

Cor. When I came hither to thy haunts this night, I knew my greeting might be scorn and jeers, the insolence, the laughter of the vile, such as I hear around me even now. I came to save thee, but I came in vain. I did not know that thou hadst fallen so low.

[*Going up.*]

D'Art. By heavens, she must not leave us thus! Entreat her, Abbé!

Abbé. Mademoiselle--

Victor (*eagerly*). Corinne! Depart not thus! One word before you go! Answer me, on your soul! What brought you here this night? Did you not come to meet *that man*?

Abbé. Your Highness!

[*Shrugs his shoulders and snuffs.*]

Marat. If she did we all exonerate her! Certainly, seeing your aristocrat had treated you so vilely, you had a perfect right to seek consolation where so many find it—in the bosom of the church. [*Points to ABBÉ.*]

Omnes. (*Laugh*).

Cor. (*horrified*). My God!

[*Going.*]

Lav. Pray, do not depart! All here are slaves to beauty.

[*Bowing.*]

D'Art. And to love!

[*Bows.*]

Omnes. (*Laugh*).

Marat. And to liberty.

Cor. Your Highness! Gentlemen! Victor! as you are a man, protect me!

Omnes. (*Laugh*).

Victor. Answer my question then: What brought you here to-night?

Cor. (with sudden fury). Away! I will not answer thee! Thy very look is insult, and thy question outrage! Rest here in thy belief that I, like *thee*, am infamous and base! (*Staggering up*). Oh help! help! I—I—all darkens! I—

As CORINNE is about to fall, enter RAOUL L. and catches CORINNE in his arms. RAOUL is in his shirt sleeves, wild, and carries a sword in his hand. From this point music—distant shouts at intervals. Father DORE follows RAOUL.

Raoul. Courage! I am here!

Doré. And I!

D'Art. What man is this? [*Points to Raoul.*

Abbé. An escaped prisoner! Raoul Recamier.

D'Art. Arrest him! [*General movement.*

Marat. Nonsense! Arrest the whirlwind!

D'Art. (amazed). Marat!

Marat. Yes; the man Marat! thy pet monster! He has amused you a long time, now it is your turn to afford him amusement.

Doré. Save yourselves, gentlemen, for Paris hath arisen and clamours for its prey. The Bastille is taken, and the people already surround Versailles!

Cor. Ah! [*Recovering with a loud cry.*

D'Art. Mon Dieu!

Cor. It has come then, as I warned thee; the earthquake! Victor de Beauvoir, the laws of thy Church tore us asunder; the laws of thine accursed caste slew my love, and smote me down! King, Church, Law—all were leagued against me, and I fell.

Woe to them all! Woe to these men! Woe unto thee! Man will no longer be a slave, moaning for bread; woman an outcast famishing for justice! In the name of the rights that have been betrayed, of the hearts that have been broken, and the heaven that has been blasphemed, I call upon their heads, and on thine, the curse of the Revolution!

*Seizes red banner from Raoul on the word Revolution.
Sensation.*

Victor (springing forward). One word, Corinne!

Cor. (clinging to banner, and repulsing him with a supreme gesture). Touch me not, aristocrat!

[VICTOR falls back astonished.]

GENERAL TABLEAU.

*[COR. and RAOUL up C., MARAT by RAOUL;
D'ARTOIS, CLARISSE and others in frightened
groups.]*

ACT IV.

SCENE I.—*Courtyard of the Abbaye Prison; large prison-gate, C., before which a National Guard is patrolling. Doors in walls, etc., R.L.*

Enter a National Guard.

Guard. Citizen Captain!

Raoul. Well!

Guard. A young citizeness is at the gate, demanding to see you.

Raoul. Admit her. [*Exit Guard.*]

Re-enter Guard, followed by CLARISSE, hooded, wearing the dress of a workwoman.

Raoul (coldly). Well, citizeness, your business?

Clar. First, dismiss that man.

Raoul. Citizen, withdraw! [*Exit Guard.*]

Now citizeness, speak, my time is precious.

Clar. (unveiling). M. Raoul!

Raoul. Clarisse! Madame La Comtesse!

Clar. Hush! not so loud; for should others hear my name, I am lost.

Raoul (sternly). What brings you hither?

Clar. Oh, monsieur! I seek protection.

Raoul. Of me?

Clar. Of thee!

Raoul. (fiercely). This is madness! Madame, surely you forget to whom you speak?

Clar. I forget nothing. In this hour of despair, when all my relatives lie at the mercy of their enemies, I have but one friend left; if he fail me, I must perish!

Raoul (with an icy smile). His name?

Clar. M. Raoul Recamier.

Raoul. Perdition!

Clar. Do not turn away, but hear me to the end. In these dark days you hold in your hand the keys of life and death. You are a leader of the people, a

guiding spirit. You have but to raise your little finger, and I, and those I love, may live !

Raoul (Smiling grimly). You over-estimate my power.

Clar. Not so ! from one end of Paris to another rings the name of the good patriot, Raoul Recamier. In the name of our former friendship grant me your protection !

Raoul (hurriedly). Speak not of that ! Speak not of the past ! lest a devil arise within my heart and hurry you to that very doom you fear. I knew you women of the aristocracy had no hearts, but I did not guess till this moment that you had no *memories*. Are you mad—raving—that you come to *me* ? To *me* of all living men ! to *me*, whose heart still bleeds with your cruelty and pride !

Clar. (Looking down). I know you loved me once !

Raoul. Loved you !—merciful heaven !—loved you ! And with what guerdon did you repay my love ? You lured me on with your siren words and smiles ; then, when I spake, you stabbed me with your scorn ! I left your presence, like a stricken beast, in anguish and in shame, but as I went I swore an oath of vengeance ! I sowed a seed in the night ; I have watered it with blood and tears, year after year ; it has grown and thriven, and now Madame la Comtesse de la Vallée the hour has come to pluck its fruit.

[Goes up in intense passion.]

Clar. Stay ! What will thou do ?

Raoul. Summon the gaolers of the Abbaye and add one more to the number of those who await their doom within.

Clar. Me ?

Raoul. Thee!

Clar. (*Setting her lips firmly*). Very well—call your bloodhounds—

[*A pause.* CLARISSE turns, sees

RAOUL irresolute.

Why do you delay?

Raoul. Are you then so ready to die?

Clar. Perfectly! since I know now that the one man I respected is a coward.

Raoul. I?

Clar. Thou!

Raoul. Madame, beware!

Clar. Do not threaten. I know the worst you can do and am prepared to face it, rather than sue again to one whom I despise. Until this hour I believed that I had wronged you; I know now I only did you justice; you were unworthy of a noble lady's love.

Raoul. (*Fiercely*). I know it! Because I belonged to the people.

Clar. No, because you belonged to the *canaille*.

Raoul. (*Starts angrily.*)

Clar. I trifled with your heart, I judged you lightly, I thought you were, what common lovers are, no worse nor better; but when you left me, I repented—O! how bitterly! Your face haunted me, I could have gone upon my knees to ask forgiveness, but too late; I was misled, sir. The man whose passion I treasured up, as something noble beyond measure, crept back into obscurity to nurse a malignant and mean revenge.

Raoul. (*Reproachfully*). Clarisse!

Clar. (*Scornfully*). O! sir, spare me your protestations. I came to you under a misconception. (*Music.*)

I may have trembled once in pity for your pain—I do not tremble now in fear of your revenge!

[*Music. Voices heard without.*

Voice. Attention! To the Abbaye!

Raoul. Perdition! The guards are coming this way.

Clar. So much the better, your work will be shorter.

Raoul. Clarisse! have pity.

Clar. Pity!

Raoul. Yes, each word you utter pierces my heart. You know I cannot denounce you.

Clar. Enough! I will denounce myself. [*Goes up.*

Raoul. (*Detaining her*). For heaven's sake, silence; I was mad! I know not what I thought or said when I talked of vengeance; you knew my soul better when you determined to fling yourself on my protection. If one man's love can save you, you shall be saved; but you stand beneath an avalanche which a word, a breath, may bring upon your head.

Clar. (*Listening with a smile*). They are coming nearer.

Raoul. Fear not! In that disguise no soul will recognise you, and should peril seize you, cry at once to me. Meantime I will devise some means for furthering your escape from Paris. Hush! not another word!

[*Exit CLAR., R.D.*

Enter Officers and Private of National Guard, conducting VICTOR as prisoner.

Officer. Another prisoner! We are in luck to-day.

Soldier. This way.

Raoul. Whom have you there, citizen?

Officer. An aristocrat. Behold him !

Raoul. Victor de Beauvoir !

Victor. Raoul !

Officer. You know each other ?

Raoul. Certainly. The prisoner and I have a long account to settle, and this is the day of reckoning. (*Mockingly.*) Victor de Beauvoir, welcome to the Abbaye ; you will find within there many of your acquaintance who are also receiving our hospitality for the few moments they remain on earth.

Officer. A good joke ! ha ! ha ! ha !

Victor. If Raoul Recamier is my gaoler, I have fallen into evil hands indeed ; but think not I tremble before your malignity. You have at last, I perceive, discovered your true profession—that of a butcher—but for my part I am ready for the sacrifice. I have little left to live for.

Raoul. Mistake not, De Beauvoir, we are no assassins. You will be fairly tried by a tribunal of the people. Ask thy own heart what crimes thou hast committed, and if they are large enough to deserve death. Against the people thou hast sinned ; the people alone will be thy judges.

Victor (scornfully). Butchers !

Raoul. Say rather executioners ! De Beauvoir, my sister lies sick. Her days are numbered ; she is stricken unto death. May such measure as thou hast meted her be given to thee. Lead in your prisoner.

Victor. One word !

Raoul. Well !

Victor. Tell Corinne from me, from Victor de Beau-

voir, her husband, that I go to a doom from which no hand can save me, the doom of my order, my race, but tell her that before I died I besought her forgiveness. It was an evil hour for her when she first met me, but if I have wronged her, she is revenged to the full. Give her my blessing, Raoul, and farewell.

[*Exit* VICTOR, *Officers, etc., into C gate.*

Raoul. (*Going to the door*) Madame! Clarisse!

Clar. I am here bewildered by an enigma, and that enigma is—you.

Raoul. Me!

Clar. Yes, I think you contain two natures, an angel's and a devil's. When your heart melted in memory of our friendship, the angel looked forth, I almost loved you, but as you spake with my poor cousin, all changed—the devil was there, and I hated you again with all my heart.

Raoul. You are candid.

Clar. Why not?

Raoul. Are you not afraid?

Clar. Of nothing—least of all of you. Besides, I am a De Beauvoir, and if I die for it I must speak my mind.

Raoul. You forget how little cause I have to love that man!

Clar. You have still less cause to love this woman! Remember this, if he perishes, I perish too!—

Raoul. My own wrongs, my sister's shame, and all, cry out against him. His hour is come, and he must die! (*Distant cheering heard.*) Hush! What was that? Cover thy face, silence!—Be care-

ful, or all is lost!—A crowd of people in the street without, and among them, as I live, Corinne! Heavens! what can have brought her forth? She speaks! and they applaud her to the echo. My God! Physicians say one strong emotion to her poor broken heart will wreak a surer death than any Marat could decree. (*Cheers again.*) They surround her with cries and cheers! She passes through their midst—She comes this way—She enters the prison gates—She is here!—

[*Enter CORINNE—her dress wild and picturesque, the tricolor pinned to her breast, but her face is deadly pale, and she seems as if just risen from a sick bed.* [*Voices from crowd without.*]

Voices. Long live the citizeness Corinne!

Raoul. Corinne, what brings thee from thy room?

Cor. Canst thou not guess?

Raoul. Not I.

Cor. I seek him—Victor!

Raoul. You come in good time. De Beauvoir is a prisoner.

Cor. A prisoner! Then they told me truth!

Raoul. Undoubtedly.

Cor. A rumour reached me in my sick chamber that he was arrested. I rose and came forth to learn the worst. My way lay through the mob that surrounds the Court of the Four Nations, where they are even now trying the aristocrats. As I crept along some one cried—"There goes the citizeness Corinne." In a moment the cry spread; I was surrounded; a thou-

sand eager hands were thrust in mine ; they decked me with the tricolor, crowned me with the cap of liberty, and I was hurried along as on the waves of the sea ! Suddenly a man whispered in mine ear. "Courage, citizeness, you will be avenged ! De Beauvoir was taken to the Abbaye this day." I looked at the speaker and recognized the old carpenter of the Théâtre Français. "To the Abbaye !" I repeated, and swift as thought I flew this way.

Raoul. There was no cause to hasten—the bird is safely caged—in yonder.

Cor. Denounced ! Attainted ! Lost !

Raoul. Just so.

Cor. I must see him. I must speak with him.

Raoul. Impossible ! having once passed that threshold, he cannot return, until he crosses it for the last time, to face his judges, and to hear his doom.

Cor. His judges !—Raoul ! listen ! Every moment is precious. At St. Juste, at l'Ursulius, at La Force, they are murdering the prisoners, aye, butchering them in cold blood ! The mob with Marat at its head reject even the bare forms of justice, and turn the courtyard of each prison into a shambles. Another hour and they will be here. Who commands the guards within these gates ?

Raoul. I !

Cor. Thou !—Thank heaven !

Raoul. What ?

Cor. One word from thee, and he is saved ! Listen Raoul ! I forgive him all ! He must not die ! The old love surges back upon my heart ! Oh ! what are

we, to sit in judgment on our fellows! We must be pitiful.—Have mercy!

Raoul. It is mercy to remove obstructions to liberty.

Cor. Liberty! a name—a word—a phantom we have conjured up with bloody rites, but which with all our feeble strength we seek in vain to lay. Liberty! a monster! Kneel at its feet—look in its eyes—sue to it—cry to it—it is dumb, and cannot see, nor hear; passive it broods, though all men shriek its name—this phantom you name Liberty!

When from my bed of wrong, I saw it rise,
I thought it beautiful, yet terrible;
A sphinx-like face, with calm eternal eyes;
God-like—the hope of man; but in this hour
I know it better, and I see it stand
Passive to all men's agony and despair,
Bastened from brow to foot with human blood,
Pitiless, silent, dumb, and horrible.

O! had this thing a soul to know itself,
A tongue to speak, be sure 'twould curse itself,
To think what deeds of darkness and of blood
Are done in its own name of Liberty!—

Raoul. Is this Corinne?—Sister, how oft of old
Have I beheld thee stand upon the stage,
And as some antique queen, cry out aloud
For vengeance, till the mighty theatre
Rose echoing thee! Yet now the hour has come,
The lioness has turned into a lamb!

Cor. I did not know my soul.—I know it now.

Raoul. What then hath changed thee, sister?

Cor. (*In a low intense voice.*) Love!
Love, though it brought me bitterness and tears,

Has made me wise, and I am taught by love
To hate this thing you men name "Liberty!"

Raoul. Beware!—shouldst thou be overheard—

Cor. I care not. If he is doomed, doom me, for
now I know that life is death without him!

[*Crosses to L.* CLARISSE *who has been listening*
comes down.

Clar. (*Clapping her hands*). Excellent! And so
say I!—

Cor. (*Cold and surprised*). Thou!

Clar. With all my heart, madam,
I beg your best forgiveness. I have wronged you ;
I was a child—a doll—and little knew
The world in which I dwelt : but now, alas !
I have been lesson'd very bitterly ;
They told me you were wretched and unworthy ,
But now I know you are an angel !

[*Takes CORINNE's hand.*

And now, sir, speak ! You see we are two to one !
Is't peace or war ?

Raoul. (*Amazed*). What mean you ?

Clar. Simply this—

My cousin lies yonder. Tell us how to set him free ?

Raoul. (*Angrily*). Perdition ! What ! turn traitor !
Madame, you trifle with my tenderness.

Clar. You will not aid us ?

Raoul. Never ! To shame the cause I serve.

Clar. Very well ! No more is to be said.

[*Going up C.*

Raoul. Where are you going ?

Clar. In yonder—to join the victims. I have only to mention my name, and they will instantly admit me.

Raoul. (*Seizing her*). Are you mad!

Clar. (*Struggling*). Not at all! 'Tis you who are mad!

Raoul. Perdition! As you love your life, desist!—
Clarisse—for my sake—

Clar. Promise, then.

Raoul. What?

Clar. To save poor Victor!

Raoul. *Clarisse!* *Corinne!* Hark! that sound!—
As I live, it is the mob approaching from the Court
of the Four Nations! (*Looking off*). See! They
already gather at the gates.

[*Voices without.*—"To the Abbaye! Death to the
Aristocrats!"

Raoul. You hear! The wild beasts are loose!
Look, *Corinne!* *Clarisse!* who leads them?

[*Points off L.*

Cor. (*runs forward, looking off L., then recoils with a
cry of horror*). *Marat!!!* [*Murmurs off L.*

Raoul. The same, fresh from butchering the aristocrats at the other prisons. They rush hither! Fly, for your lives!

Cor. Fly! never! [*Stands proudly, C.*

Clar. Never! [*Taking her hand, and standing by
her. Louder noise and murmurs, L.*

Raoul. (*In consternation*). Too late! They are here!
[*Clamour and noise approaching.*

Enter MARAT, GAVROL, FAVROCHE, followed by a wild mob of Sans-Culottes, National Guards, etc. MARAT wears a red cap, carries a drawn sword, sleeves rolled up to elbow.

Mob. This way! this way!

Raoul. (*Interposing*). Citizens! stand! What means this?

Marat. Well met, Recamier. We find thee at thy post as ever, a good patriot! (*Seeing the women*). But what's this? Petticoats! *Corbleu!* a good patriot should have but one mistress, Liberty. Let the citizeness stand forward!

Raoul. You know my sister Corinne!

Marat. Excellent! Citizeness, we could not have encountered at a more opportune moment. We are about to avenge thee in true Roman fashion, and thou shalt stand by to see the sport. (*Whispering and jerking with his thumb over his shoulder toward C. gate*). We have him safe within there.

Cor. (*pale in horror*). Him!

Marat. The aristocrat whom you once called husband. Wait! patience! Thou shalt see all in good time.

Cor. What would you do? Murder him?

Marat. Softly, citizeness; murder is a strong word to use to a good patriot. Enough! Be certain we will do thee full justice. Who is this other?

Raoul. The citizeness Benoist.

Marat. Her occupation?

Raoul. Laundress of the Rue Tivoli, 29.

Marat. Her hands are too white for her trade, her feet too small.

Raoul. I can vouch for her patriotism ; I know her well.

Marat. (*After a look of suspicion*). Enough ; then to work !

Raoul. What would you do ?

Marat. Do ? (*With a fierce laugh*). Arraign the prisoners.

Raoul. They await the moment of summons to the proper tribunal, where they will be fairly tried.

Marat. The tribunals are too slow and their proper judges are the people. What say you, citizens ?

Omnes. To the Abbaye ! to the Abbaye !

Marat. You hear them ? The voice of the people speaks, and there is no more to be said. To work, citizens, fetch forth chairs, tables, and the prison books, we must proceed in due form. You others on before bring in the prisoners one by one, no matter who comes first.

[*Exeunt some, C. gate.*]

Now for the executioners ! Who volunteers ?

Voices. I—I—I—

Marat. Good ! A dozen good patriots will do. Pass out by that door and wait in the courtyard ; and whatever aristocrat comes that way, do your work swiftly and silently.

[*Exeunt several citizens armed with swords, pistols, etc., by D. R.*]

Cor. (*Aside to Raoul*). Raoul, for heaven's sake—

Raoul. (*Aside*). I tell thee another word is death to

all of us. If you must stay here, be silent! I can say no more.

(Enter several of the mob with table, writing materials, chairs, etc., L.C.)

Marat (Sits L.C. and writes). Citizen!

Raoul. Well!

Marat. May I offer your sister a chair on the tribunal? No? She will be welcome, and her patriotism deserves such recognition. Mark me, citizens, we must do all things elegantly. Each life will be put to the vote, and hang on your suffrages; if the verdict is "Not Guilty," you will lead him forth to the left gate, and escort him forth in peace; but when I say "Escort the prisoner to La Force", he will pass by the right gate, where our good brethren will be ready to receive him. Good! Bring forth number one! *(L. gate opens, enter Doré escorted by two citizens).* A priest to begin with! Lead him down.

Cor. (recognising him). Father!

Doré. Corinne! Thou here!

Marat. You know each other? Who is this person?

Doré. (coldly). We have met before, in a holier and securer place. My name is Doré, curé of Nôtre Dame de la Garde.

Marat (bowing). I know you now, citizen, why were you a prisoner?

Doré. For protesting against the horrors ye wreak in the name of liberty—for raising my weak voice against the enormities of monsters such as thou.

Citizens. Death to the priest!

Cor. Father! are you mad?

Citizens. Death to him!

Marat (smiling). Patience, citizens! If I mistake not, the prisoner and I are old friends. He calls me a monster. Good, I accept it as a compliment. On my life he is a good patriot, though a little free-spoken.

Citizens. No! Death to him!

Marat. If you must have it so, so be it; but I must remind you that this is the priest who stood solitary by the side of the citizeness Corinne when all the thunderbolts of the Church were levelled at her head, who was cast forth, for so doing, penniless, homeless, a wanderer, and who has ever since been persecuted by the authorities of the Church! Is not this true, citizeness?

Cor. It is! it is!

Marat. That being so, what say you, citizens? Shall he live or die?

Omnes. Live! Live!

Marat. I thought you would agree with me. Citizen Doré, pass out by the left gate.

Doré. (*Pauses, and appears about to speak.*)

Marat. Not one word! If you desire to reverse your fate, you had better harangue these good citizens and patriots. [Exit DORÉ D.L.]

Cor. Thank heaven! One at least is saved.

Clar. But Victor, thy husband?

Cor. Hush! some avenue of escape may be found yet. Hush!

Marat. Bring forth number two.

C. gate opens. Enter DE LAROSE, conducted by two citizens; he is pale as death and trembling.

Cor. (In a whisper). The Abbé De Larose!

Abbé. Mercy, citizens, mercy! On my life I am a good patriot, though I wear the livery of the Church. Mercy! Mercy!

Citizens. This way then. [*Dragging him down.*

Abbé. I will come, only use me gently; I will come willingly, quite willingly. O mercy!

Marat. Softly, citizens. Whom have we here? What, another priest! Ah, my little Abbé, is it thou? I am delighted to see thee.

[*Bows politely, taking off his hat.*

Abbé. O, M. Marat, my friend, my noble friend, protect me. You know me, you can explain to these good citizens who and what I am.

Marat. Certainly.

Abbé. Bless you! bless you!

Marat. This, citizens, is the famous Abbé De Larose, the splendour and delight of the Church, the daintiest dresser, the delicatest gourmet, and the sweetest sonnet writer of the court. You see, he knows me. At his château I was frequently a guest, taking notes in the interest of the people, and I can assure you, on the honour of a good patriot, that his feasts were most *recherché*. One I particularly remember, which is said to have cost some thirty thousand francs, and it is particularly impressed on my memory by the circumstance that at that very moment occurred the great Parisian famine of bread.

Abbé. M. Marat! for heaven's sake——

Marat (with a grim smile). Rely on my discretion. Citizens, regard him well—a man in a thousand—his own worst enemy, believe me. No one ever loved good things better; a slave to beauty, he placed all his patrimony at its feet. The best of his fine deeds is yet to be chronicled. He it was who caused the Church to forbid the marriage of the citizeness Corinne with an aristocrat, for an excellent reason—he adored the citizeness himself.

Citizens. Death to him!

Abbé. Mercy, M. Marat.

[*Falls clinging to MARAT's feet.*]

Marat. I tell you we are friends, M. l'Abbé. Rise, no one here shall harm thee.

Abbé. Bless you! bless you!

Marat. In consideration of your high position you will simply be escorted to another prison, where you will sleep much sounder and be more at peace. Citizens, I am sure you are all agreed that the worthy Abbé should be led with all due honours to *La Force*!

Citizens. To La Force! to La Force! (*Laughing*).

Marat. Pass through that gate to the right, and believe in the assurance of our most distinguished consideration.

[*Bowing to ABBÉ, with hat off.*]

Abbé. Saved! (*Recovering his genteel air*). I shall not forget this service.

[*Bows profoundly.*]

Marat. Charmed to be useful to so old an acquaintance, whose merits I know so well. That way—pray

avoid the door-step. Gavrol, escort him—to his place of rest.

[*ABBE profoundly bows to MARAT, and exits R., preceded by GAVROL, bowing him off. MARAT laughs.*

Cor. Horrible! horrible! [*Murmurs heard off R.*

Raoul. Peace. If ever man deserved his fate, 'twas he.

[*Re-enter GAVROL, R. D.*

Marat. Is it done? (*GAVROL nods and waves sword*). Very well; an excellent beginning. Citizens, I congratulate you on being rid of your worst enemy, save one. To the next case, number three.

[*C. gates open. The two citizens lead on VICTOR.*

Cor. Horror! 'Tis he!

Clar. (*As if going to him*). Victor!

Raoul. (*Repulsing them*). Peace! Peace!

Marat. As I live, another old acquaintance!

Citizens. His name! his name!

Marat. Victor de Beauvoir, called Count of Calvador.

Omnes. Death to the aristocrat!

Marat. Patience! all in due form. Try him first, dispose of him afterwards. Fortunately we have president, jury, and witnesses in *this* case all present; we shall be brief, however. Citizen Recamier!

Raoul. Here!

Marat. Is this the aristocrat who beguiled thy sister Corinne with a mock marriage, and then at the instigation of the Church, insulted and deserted her at the public altar?

Raoul. (*Hesitating*). 'Tis he!

Citizens. Down with him!

Marat. Softly! To the statement of the citizen

Recamier let me add mine. I know the prisoner to be a traitor to the state, a pseudo democrat, and a veritable aristocrat ; but you shall have stronger testimony.—Call the citizeness Corinne ! (*Sensation*).

[CORINNE *advances slowly, deadly pale*.

Victor. Corinne !

Marat. He recognises his victim—good ! (*To CORINNE*). Citizeness, in 1780 you performed a secret marriage with an aristocrat, which was afterwards annulled by the Church ?

Cor. I did.

Marat. The aristocrat's name ?

Cor. Victor de Beauvoir, called Count of Calvador.

Marat. Is this the man ? Regard him well !

Cor. (*After a pause*). This is the man.

Marat. Are you certain of his identity ?

Cor. Certain !

Marat. Do you denounce him ?

Cor. I do.

Victor. (*Appears horrified*). Ah !

Marat. Do you demand judgment on his head ?

Cor. I do.

Victor. Thou too—Corinne !

Marat. This being so, no more is to be said. We may sum up his accusation in one word—he is an aristocrat, and he has outraged a citizeness of the Republic. Citizens, do you pronounce him guilty or not guilty ?

Omnes. Guilty !

Marat. His doom ?

Omnes. Death !—Death !—Away with him !

[*Surround VICTOR midst murmurs.*

Cor. (*Interposing*). Stay !

Marat. Citizeness !

Cor. I protest against your sentence ! It is too generous, too kind. Do you forget all the indignities—the outrages this man has heaped upon my head. Do you forget the long weary years of sorrow and disgrace, the scorn and ignominy I have suffered at his hands ? Day by day, week by week, year by year, my torture has endured. Should not his endure as long.

Omnes. It should !—It should !

Cor. What is death ?—sleep—peace—forgetfulness ! I have prayed for it a hundred times, stretched on the rack he made for me ; it never came. I had to live on, outcast, miserable, despised—to wait on hopeless till my heart was broken ! Should I spare him for this ? I say that death is too good for him ! Give him to me ! that from my hand he may eat the bitter bread he broke for me !—Hour by hour, day by day, I will watch him, drinking with eager eyes my revenge ! For every indignity he heaped on me, he shall suffer tenfold ; for every tear I shed, he shall shed a thousand ! I will crush his spirit as he has crushed mine ! I will break his heart as mine was broken !—Citizens ! this man is mine ! See how he shrinks away from me ! From your hands—from the hands of the Republic, I demand what the Church denied me—my husband !

[*CORINNE points fiercely to VICTOR.—Sensation.*

Gavrol. The citizeness says well.

Omnes. Yes, yes! give her her husband.

Marat. Are you mad, citizens? she is trifling with you.—Death to him!

Omnes. Aye! Death to him!

Cor. Stand, I say! What! citizens, is your sense so dull, that you refuse me this? Look at him? (*Pointing to VICTOR, who appears horrified at her malignity*). How he quails before me! How he hates me! this Aristocrat! He denied me at the altar, and he would die a thousand times rather than recognize me as his wife; but he *shall* recognize me, and I shall bless the great Republic that gave him to my hands!

Vic. Corinne!

Cor. He pleads to me! ha! ha! ha! you see! It is *his* turn now, citizens. He would rather die! (*With mad eagerness*). Give him to me! I was *his* victim, but he shall be my slave! my servant! He shall hew my wood! draw my water! light my fire! No task shall be too mean for him, and when we walk forth all good citizens shall know he is mine, mine! O! the rare jest! ha! ha! ha! Citizens, as you love me, as you are good patriots, deny me not! Give me my husband!

Omnes. Ha! ha! ha! (*they push Vic. to Cor.*) Take him! Citizeness—Take him!

[*Cor. seizes Vic. savagely by wrist—picture.*]

Raoul. (*savagely.*) Citizens!

Clar. (*interposing.*) Silence! Her wrong was as great as thine! Speak one word against him, and I die too.

[*Clar. leads Raoul up C.*]

Enter an Officer.

Officer. Bad news, citizens, the quarter is in a tumult, and the aristocrats are escaping by hundreds; they clamour for citizen Marat to address the people! Where is he?

Marat. Here! but busy.

Officer. The affair is desperate! Away, citizens, at once!

Marat. Perdition! (*rising*). At once, then, citizens! To the Four Nations. Citizeness Corinne! the life of that prisoner is spared for the present; but watch over him well! Come, come, citizens!

Omnes. This way! This way!

[*Exeunt* MARAT, GAVROL, FAVROCHE, and the rest. Gate C. is closed. CLARISSE comes down and embraces VICTOR, R.C. During the following dialogue CORINNE joins RAOUL, who sits at table, speaks to him eagerly; he writes and gives her a paper.

Victor. Clarisse!

Clar. Victor! Thank heaven you are saved.

Victor (*Coldly glancing at CORINNE*). I know the consequence of my respite. Let her lead the way, I will follow her, as in duty bound.

Clar. Hush! Don't you see that she was only acting? Thanks to her tragic art you have escaped a tragic end. O, Victor! she loves you still.

[*VICTOR seems moved and amazed as CORINNE now slowly approaches, and speaks with assumed coldness.*

Cor. You heard the conditions on which your life was spared. Do you reject them?

Victor (*With feeling*). No, Corinne.

Cor. In the name of the Republic you have been given over to me ; your life, your liberty, are mine to take or spare (*a pause*). Enough, take your life, enjoy your liberty, for as you and the Church reject me, I and the Republic reject you. (*Speaking rapidly.*) Fly by that door with your cousin. Here is the order, signed by my brother's hand, which will pass you beyond the barriers. Away ! and farewell for ever !

Victor. Let us not part thus. I see all now—your love, your noble heart. Come with us, Corinne, *my wife*.

Cor. Too late ! Fear not for me. I am safe here with the great Republic, for which I prayed.

Raoul. (*Who has been listening down C., comes down rapidly*). Do not linger, or you are lost ; I am imperilling my own life to save you. (*To CLARISSE.*)

Cor. Yes ! yes ! Fly from Paris, from France ; at any moment Marat may return. Victor, we may meet again, but if we meet no more on earth remember that I loved thee (*Sobbing*). Farewell ! farewell ! Think sometimes of Corinne.

[*They move rapidly to door L., VICTOR kneels reverently and kisses CORINNE'S hand—she weeping.—*RAOUL *whispers to Gaoler, who suffers VICTOR and CLARISSE to pass. Exeunt rapidly.* RAOUL *goes up C.*

Cor. (*Crossing slowly from L. to C.*) It is done, and I am happy, Heaven is merciful, and now I could rest in peace. O ! that death would come now to close mine eyes, for I am weary of the world.

Raoul. Corinne, they are returning !

Cor. Already! No matter, since those we love are safe. Yes, they will soon be beyond pursuit. Your pass will bear them on; in a little space they will gain the barriers. Heaven help them on to life and liberty.

[*Murmurs without.* CORINNE goes up gate C.
It opens suddenly and shows MARAT at the
head of the mob. He recoils and comes back.

Marat. Ah! citizeness, where are you going? Where is De Beauvoir? What, are you dumb? Why do you look at me so strangely with that white face? Where is the aristocrat? [MARAT and the mob flock in.

Cor. (*Down L.*) Not here!

Marat. (*R.C.*) Not here! (*Moves from group to group*). By heavens, citizens, she is right—the aristocrat has escaped. My suspicions were correct. It was a trick of this woman to save him. What? Some of you sound the hue-and-cry.

Cor. It is useless, Marat; he is beyond your reach.

Marat. What? Citizens, here has been treason; (*murmurs*) that woman has betrayed us, and assisted her accursed aristocrat to fly. Corinne Recamier, you are a traitress. I, Marat, accuse you, and demand blood for blood (*they surround her wildly threatening; she stands calm*).

Raoul. (*Interposing*). Marat!

Marat. And you too, Recamier, shall answer this with your life. Disarm, and guard him. (*RAOUL is seized and disarmed*). For that woman, she is, and has always been an aristocrat herself at heart. Away with her.

[*Murmurs.*

Cor. For once, Marat, thou art merciful. I do not wish to live, and I thank thee. Raoul, farewell!

[RAOUL runs over and embraces her, then is dragged back.

Marat. You have cheated us of one life. Your own shall supply its place. Your doom is death! You have betrayed the Republic!

[Murmurs. Guards surround CORINNE, and cross swords on her breast. MARAT stands pointing her off. She turns calmly and solemnly to him.

Cor. No, Marat! It is thou who hast betrayed the Republic. 'Tis thou who hast stained the holy shrine of liberty with blood. It is thou who hast called up the spectre of death to overshadow France, and blight the hopes of man! (*Music—Piano till end of Act.*) Death comes for me to-day, and I go in peace! But do thou judge of thy fellow men, beware! The shadow will darken thy path! The sword will fall upon thy head! (*CORINNE walks slowly up to step of door C., pauses there, and looking back.*) Think then of the hearts thou hast broken, and plead for mercy there!

[*She points solemnly upwards—music swells.*

MARAT crouches down stage, RAOUL sinks in chair hiding his face, and guarded. The various groups compose themselves into a picture resembling "*Les derniers jours de la Terreur.*") In the back ground, through door C., is seen a bright red light.

CURTAIN.

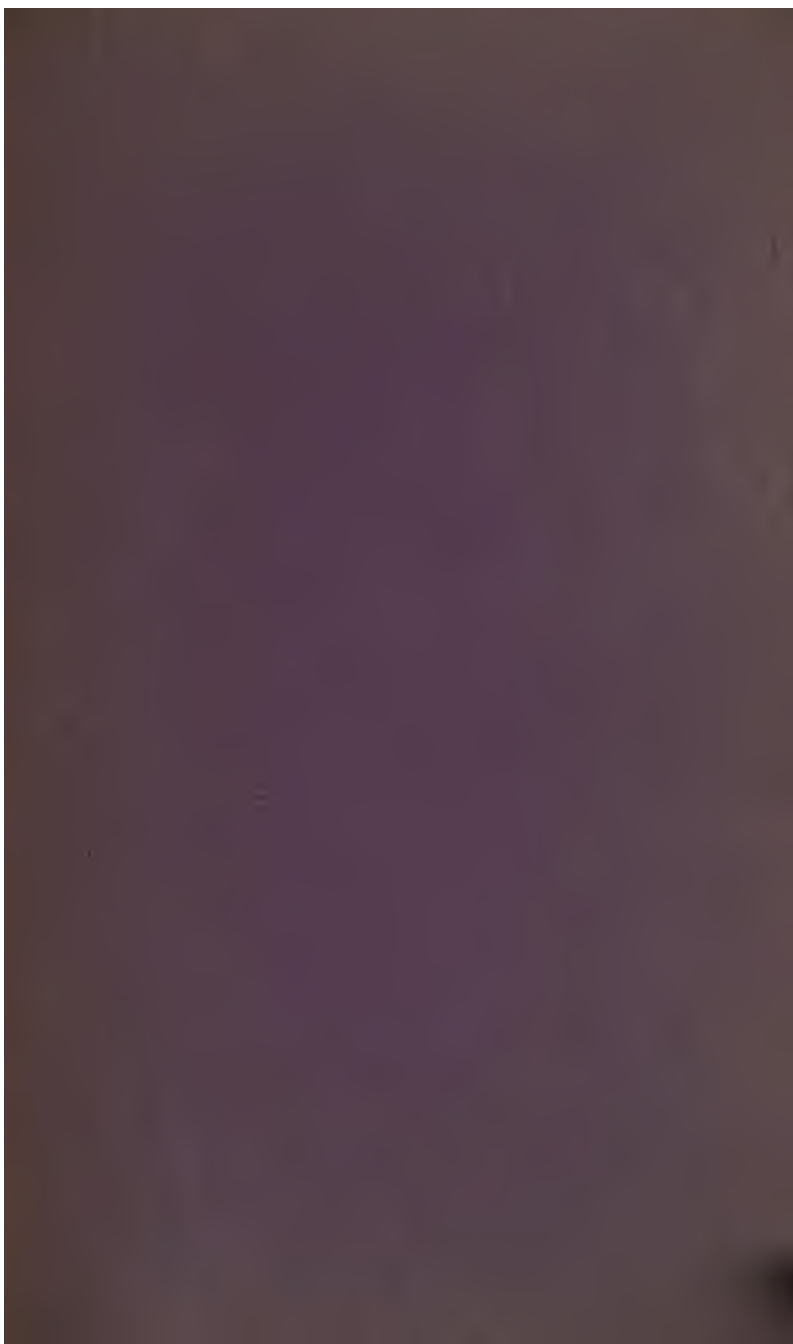
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