THE

UN-DIVINE COMEDY

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BY

ZYGMUNT KRASIŃSKI

TRANSLATED BY

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AND

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Preface

by G. K. CHESTERTON

Introduction

by ARTUR GÓRSKI

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PREFACE.

The Undivine Comedy may be said to have appeared in the most tragic period of the tragedy of Poland. What that ordeal was like is still very little understood in England; and its shadow on these pages may still perplex the reader. Indeed most English people will probably live to accept the Polish triumph without having ever realised the Polish tragedy. For indeed it was a tragedy to which western nations could conceive no parallel, since nationality arose out of mediaeval Christendom. There is no other case of a separate, self-respecting nationality not robbed but murdered, or rather cut up alive. Apply it to any other concrete case and it will seem fantastic; the fancy will seem as comic as the fact was tragic. We have to imagine that some conference at Lausanne or Stockholm had comfortably arranged that East Anglia, Essex, Sussex and Kent should be given to France, along with London and part of the Midlands, that everything north of the Trent should go to Germany and that all the remaining land, covering Wales and the West Country, should very properly and naturally become part of the United States. Nobody knows what an Englishman would say if there were not an inch of England to walk on. But we may be pretty sure what

his enemies and oppressors would say; they would say exactly what the enemies and oppressors of Poland said, and they would have quite as much justification for saying it. They would say that England had been weakened by a great deal of feudal liberty and even anarchy; which is quite true. They would say that England had become too much of an aristocratic state, which is quite true. They would say that the ambition of such aristocrats weakens the nucleus of national monarchy; which is also quite true. The Polish aristocrat who wrote this play draws darkly enough the shadows of Polish aristocracy. But there is hardly a word ever said against Polish aristocracy that could not have been said against English aristocracy. There is scarcely a word about Polish liberty and laxity that could not have been said against English liberty and laxity. The reason that no such horrible and inconceivable fate befel this island was not merely that it had a considerable strength and security as an island. It was also that it happened to be surrounded by civilised nations while Poland was surrounded and is still surrounded by savages. Neither Louis of France nor Philip of Spain nor any President in America would have dreamed of dealing with a Christian nation exactly after the fashion of the monkey tricks of Frederick of Prussia and the mad Czars, working in a sort of innocence of infamy, only faintly modified by the real remorse that mingled with the hypocrisy of Austria.

The unnatural strain in the Polish tragedy is the first thing to be realised in the interpretation of this strange and rather stern

drama. The writer is not directly concerned with the national indignation. He is in a sense seeking distraction from it, as men always desperately seek distraction from the memory of defeats. He is in a sense even doubtful about it, as he was I believe in his personal and political attitude; for in such cases it is always doubtful whether the next step is to be hopeless resistance or compromise or the support of more moderate elements among the enemy. But the subconscious pressure of the abnormal national condition is felt everywhere; in the bitter invocations of the artistic ideal as something that can deceive and destroy mankind; in the suggestion of the historic past as something rather heraldic and antiquated and inevitably passing away; in the image of the haughty hero who breaks because he will not bend, and goes to death believing that he is going to damnation; and even in the vision of the victorious Christ at the end, who is still the Man of Sorrows even when He comes in the clouds in glory.

An imaginative work is almost impossible to criticise on the imaginative side, which is the important side. The criticism which is easiest to suggest is that there is something a little disjointed and disproportionate between the first part, which deals with poetic imagination as a kind of curse, leading the husband to sin, driving the wife to a sort of mimetic madness and bearing fruit in a blind and sickly child, and the second half which pursues rather the theme of pride and the suicidal scorn of the noble for the madness of the mob.

But even here it may be suggested that the drama has deeper harmonies than a superficial reading might reveal. It is not for nothing that it ends almost with the name of Christ; for a profoundly Christian spirit, delicate and tenacious, runs through the whole story. The mother, who is mad, dies happy; the child who is blind, dies happy; it is only the man who is proud who dies with the sense of something between himself and God. But if criticism can hardly reveal the primary imaginative impression, it has secondary problems of a very interesting kind. Perhaps the most interesting of these is the combination of elements which may be called historic, in the sense that they belong to to the past or the period in which the play was written, with other elements which may well be called prophetic, for their originality anticipates much that has developed long after the great Polish poet died.

The drama was written early in the nineteenth century, in the thirties I think; and in some ways it has the spirit of its generation; a touch of a sort of brilliant melodrama. There is something in it of Byron; it is typical of it that it was paraphrased by Lytton. But there are other things which a man can hardly read without the sense that he is reading something written after Ibsen and Maeterlinck and the allegorical eccentricities of the Russian drama. The very creepy scene in the madhouse, where voices come from above and below claiming to be the voice of God or of Antichrist, anticipates and improves upon much more modern studies in the ma-

cabre fashion. In a political sense the prophesy is even more startling. Any uninformed Englishman, merely dipping into the scenes of social revolt in eastern Europe, would take it for granted that it had been written after those lands had been overshadowed by the Babel tower of Bolshevism. In one particular the point will strike him as singularly significant. It is evidently taken for granted that, whatever the real excuses for the revolution, at the earlier stage when the revolution is a conspiracy, it must be a conspiracy of the Jews. It is notable that it is especially a conspiracy of the Jews who do not call themselves Jews; or, as the poet puts it, of the baptised Jews. The whole story of the popular revolt begins in a sort of secret sanhedrim; in which these Jews plot the destruction of our society almost in the exact terms which have since been attributed to the Elders of Zion. To an average Englishman this notion was quite new when the newspapers first began to hint at it a year or two ago. But the Polish poet positively takes it for granted in the early days of the great liberal century. This is a curiosity of literature and history that is really illuminating. There was not a word of either Semitism or Anti-Semitism in the French Revolution or the first liberal movements of the West. Krasinski must have perceived this element of Bolshevism, either because it was quite obvious even then in Eastern Europe, or because he was a man of extraordinary penetration and prevision. In any case he was certainly a man of extraordinary imaginative sincerily and originality, and his work

may yet penetrate to the west, in spite of the inevitable difficulties of all translation, and awakeu us to the international importance of the literature as well as the liberty of Poland.

G. K. CHESTERTON.

DEAR MISS KENNEDY,

Having been called upon by you to write a few words of explanation concerning the life of the author of the "Undivine Comedy" I seize the opportunity to thank you not only for all the literary labour connected with the work involved in such a faithful and understanding translation, but also for the intention expressed by you more than once in the course of conversation, of helping to bring about a cultural understanding between our two nations through better mutual acquaintance.

By a special concatenation of circumstances you chose for your first subject the work of an author who during the time he was creating it made a countryman of yours his confidant, namely Henry Reeve, the author's young friend, later on Editor of the "Times" and of the Edinburgh Review and a member of the King of England's Privy Council. It is this Mr. Henry Reeve whom we have to thank for the most important collection of documents connected with the history of young Krasinski's thought. When, in the year 1892, the poet's young grandson stood before his grandfather's octogenarian friend, old Mr. Reeve handed over to him a whole collection of letters written sixty years before and all from

Krasinski's pen. This collection was published in a two-wolume edition, in French, in the year 1902.

Even as early as about the year 1832, that is at the time when The Undivine Comedy was being written, these two twenty year old youths raised the question of the necessity for an international front, which should be formed by the educated classes of Europe in defence of the ideals of European culture. This was then considered to be impracticable and Krasiński, at least during the period when he was writing the Undivine Comedy, was a fatalist. But to-day it would be a symptom of want of ingenuousness not to agree with your assertion that the question of taking such action has matured more and more and has now assumed the form of a historical responsibility. We saw but yesterday, how the supposed idea of the solidarity of the proletariat did not for one moment hinder the German Social Democrats from rushing, in the late war, npon the French workman. The interests involved in conquest, which were closer to their hearts, in one moment made short work of the whole kit of class interests. We see the same thing to-day, after the war, when the old generation of politicians is again poisoning the blood of humanity with the gospel of national selfishness. In spite of the fiery whirlwind and in spite of the millions of slain, the old god of supremacy and money-getting has remained in his place with all his clergy and the only change is, that his cult in the east of Europe has become protestantized and its rites have been modernized.

But its devotees from one place and from another will shake hands, grasping in their left hands, behind thelr backs, knives to cut their victims' throats with. The "Undivine Comedy" is still being played.

Who then will remain by the altar of life's divinity, who will take up the further building of the temple of human conscience and honour? Will it not be just that educated class, which is outside class limits and unofficial in the bosom of every nation, those physicians, teachers, lawyers, writers, philosophers, men of learning, and artists—in a word people who, as individualists in life and as spiritual universalists are capable of attaining to a religious attitude towards existence, both as concerns national and, what goes with it, international questions.

Your tendencies move along this line. There are not a few among us who share your views. In the name of these please accept thanks for those efforts of yours. The present work, received by you out of Polish hands and placed by you in the hands of the English public, is, if due allowance is made for the time that has passed since it was written, a well-chosen expression of the ideas mentioned above; and this of course independent of the literary importance of these translations, of which, in all probability, more will appear.

Please accept the expression of my deep and continued respect,

ARTUR GÓRSKI.

INTRODUCTION.

And now a few words of the explanation you asked for.

Zygmunt Krasiński was born in 1812. He was the son of a General in the Polish army and was brought up in Warsaw, in an atmosphere which was overcharged with literary and philosophic dispute between the Classic and Romantic Schools and with conflicting political tendencies, Conservative and revolutionary. The latter got the upper hand and gave rise to the Polish revolt against Russia in 1831. At the shameful Congress of Vienna in 1831, Russia was given the administration of the Kingdom of Poland.

Krasiński, while abroad in 1832, wrote the "Undivine Comedy", which is a vision of social conflagration, deduced from the earliest formulas of the theoretical precursors of Communism. Although the scene is laid as it were on the eastern borders of Poland (which to-day belong to the Russian Soviet Republic), yet the work is European.

It is a bitter work, the fruit of despair, but it is at the same time a document which has the value of a prophetic warning. The poet, when writing the "Undivine Comedy" saw the Galilean's Cross above a battle-field slippery with blood; but he did not see the way

to that Cross for the generation which was to provide the actors in the drama. "Our civilization is near its death" he wrote to Reeve. "New crimes will come to punish the old ones and to damn themselves before the face of God".

Brought up amid a generation which breathed the corrupted atmosphere of the "Holy Alliance", the son of a nation which just then was living through a defeat in its war for independence, a witness of the emigration of groups numbering many thousands of the very flower of the nation, Krasiński began as a youth a life devoid of hope, without respect for the contemporary world and not knowing what there was in the life surrounding him which he could really love. And so the "Undivine Comedy" is a drama of men without hearts.

But in this passionate pessimism of the twenty-one year old author there was youth. The whole further process of Krasiński's creativeness is one emergence from the abyss: the next great work of his, "Irydion" is a picture of conflict with a "historic" Satan. In it the author created the type of a historical Satan who appears on the background of the fight between Greece and Rome and of the catacomb world. In it he dealt too with the troubling problem of a national vengeance, and by the Christian solution of that riddle he liberated himself and his countrymen from the feeling of hatred in the old sense of the word.

The third work by Krasiński written in defence of the ethical

meaning of life was his "Psalms". They proceeded from his anxiety about his nation and about its moral strength in the long-drawn-out period of its slavery; but the special thing about them is that they proceeded out of the soul of a man who by the logic of circumstances in his life was driven into scepticism and a divided will. His father, in opposition to the community, remained faithful to the Tsar Nicholas, being in favour of a policy of conciliation, and young Krasiński had to bear the pressure of the Imperial hand. Having naturally a philosophic type of mind, his mind as well as his will was divided and oscillated between Christianity and pantheism. Finally, as a member of the aristocratic caste, he lived as one crucified by his sentiments and tendencies on the cross of his love of the past and his desire to build up a new to-morrow.

There are five divisions in Krasinski's psalmody: he writes psalms of faith, hope, love, grief and good-will. The psalms have played their part in shaping the psychosis of the last few generations in the poet's country. If the Polish educated class showed moral energy formerly against a policy of conciliation with the Tsar and now shows it against Soviet policy, the merit of this belongs to no small extent to writers of the type of Mickiewicz, Słowacki, Norwid and also Krasinski, who, by their works, built up the moral ideology of the community to which thy belonged.

Mention is made in this short sketch only of the poet's three fundamental works and nothing is said of his others, of his

long poems and tales in verse, of the symbolism of his work and of his peculiar style, which is already apparent in the "Undivine Comedy".

He died in 1859.

Of all the poet's works only the "Undivine Comedy" has been translated into English up to the present time. The translation was made by Lord Lytton, son of Bulwer Lytton and was published with the title "Orval, the fool of time". This is, however, not so much a translation as a recasting of the original and Krasinski's style has not, it seems, been preserved.

ARTUR GÓRSKI.

THE UN-DIVINE COMEDY.

"TO THE ERRORS ACCUMULATED BY THEIR FOREFATHERS THEY ADDED YET OTHERS WHICH THEIR FOREFATHERS KNEW NOT—HESITATION AND TIMIDITY:—AND SO IT CAME TO PASS THAT THEY VANISHED FROM THE FACE OF THE EARTH AND EVER SINCE THEIR VANISHING THERE HAS BEEN A GREAT SILENCE".

Anonymous.

"TO BE OR NOT TO BE, THAT IS THE QUESTION".

Hamlet.

PART I.

Stars about thy head—and under thy feet the waves of the sea—On the sea-waves a rainbow rushes before thee and rends the mists in twain. What thou seest is thine—the coast, the towns and the people are thy possessions—the sky is thine—and it seems as though thy glory were unequalled.

. . . . . .

Thou playest in the ears of others inconceivable delights of melody. Thou bindest and unbindest the heart as though it were a garland with which thy fingers played—Thou dost press out tears and again thou driest them with a smile, and yet again thou strikest that smile from the lips of the smiler—for a moment, sometimes forever. But what dost thou feel thyself? What dost thou create or think? Through thee flows a stream of beauty but thou art not beauty thyself. Woe unto thee! woe! The child that weeps at its nurse's bosom, the field flower that knows not of its own perfume, has more merit before the Lord than thou.

. . . . . .

Whence comest thou, vain shade?—Thou that dost witness of the light but knowest not the light, neither hast seen it nor perceived it? Who created thee in wrath or in irony—who gave thee thy vile life, so delusive that thou canst seem an angel a mo-

ment ere thou sinkest into the mud, ere, like a reptile, thou creepest into the mire and art stifled by it? Thy conception and a woman's are one.

. . . . . .

But thou, too, dost suffer, though thy pains create nothing and are of no avail. The groan of the meanest wretch is counted among the tones of the celestial harps, but thy despair and thy sighings flee downward and Satan harvests them, adds them joyfully to his lies and his delusions—and the Lord will one day deny them as they have denied the Lord.

. . . . . .

Not for this do I reproach thee, oh poetry, mother of beauty and of salvation! But only, he is unhappy who, having been conceived on one of the worlds that is doomed to perish, must remember thee or foresee thee, for thou dost but ruin those who have consecrated themselves to thee, who have become the living voices of thy glory.

. . . . . .

Blessed is he in whom thou dwellest, like as God dwelt in the world, unseen and unheard, in His every part magnificent and great, the Lord, before Whom created things bow and say:—"He is here!" Such an one will wear thee like a star upon his forehead and will not separate himself from thy love with the abyss of a word.—He will love mankind and will walk as a man among his brethren. And he who doth not train thee but who betrayeth thee too soon, who delivereth thee up to be the vain de-

light of men—thou wilt scatter a few flowers on his head and wilt turn away, and he will play with the faded flowers and all his life will weave his funeral wreath. His conception and a woman's are the same.

THE GUARDIAN ANGEL Peace on earth, good-will towards men—Blessed among created things is he who has a heart.—He may yet be saved—Oh good and modest wife, come thou forth for him and may a babe be born in your house! *(it flies past).*

. . . . . .

CHORUS OF EVIL SPIRITS. Onward, onward, ye phantoms! Fly toward him!—And thou, the foremost, before all others, oh shade of his concubine who died yesterday, shade freshened by the mist and wreathed in flowers, oh maiden, the poet's mistress, forward!

And thou also onward, oh fame, old eagle, stuffed in hell, taken down from the stake on which the hunter hung thee in autumn, fly, spread thy great wings, white with the sun, over the poet's head.

Come forth from our shops, oh rotten picture of Eden, Beelzebub's work—Let us stop up thy holes and varnish them over—and then, oh magic canvas, roll thyself into a cloud and fly to the poet, then swiftly unroll thyself around him, gird him with rocks and with waters, night and day by turns—oh Mother Nature, encircle the poet!

. . . . . .

A village—A church—above the church the GUARDIAN ANGEL hovers.

If thou dost keep thy oath forever, thou shalt be my brother before the face of the Heavenly Father. *(It disappears).*

The interior of the church—Witnesses—A tall taper on the altar.—

THE PRIEST
(performing the marriage rite).

Remember ye this!

The wedded pair stand up—THE MAN presses his wife's hand aud yields it to a kinsman—all go out—he remains alone in the church.

I have descended to earthly vows for I have found her of whom I dreamt—May curses fall upon my head if ever I cease to love her.

. . . . . .

A room full of people—A ball—Music—Lighted candles—Flowers—The bride is waltzing and after a few turns she stands still, comes upon her husband by chance in the crowd and leans her head upon his shoulder.

THE BRIDEGROOM. How beautiful you are to me in your weakness, in the disorder of the flowers and pearls upon your hair—You are flushed with modesty and with weariness—Oh endlessly, endlessly shall you be my song!

THE BRIDE. I will be a faithful wife to you, as my mother bade me as my heart bids me be—But so many folk are here—It is so hot and clamorous.

THE BRIDEGROOM. Go, dance once more and I will stand here and look at you, as once, in thought, I looked at gliding angels.

THE BRIDE. I shall go, if you will it—but almost my strength fails me.

THE BRIDEGROOM. I pray you go, my beloved.

(Dancing and music).

*

A cloudy night—AN EVIL SPIRIT in the form of a waiden flying past.

A little while ago I still ran about the earth just at this hour, now devils urge me on and bid me feign to be a saint.—

(She flies ovar a garden).

Flowers, pluck yourselves and fly into my hair!

(She flies over a cemetery).

Oh freshness and charm of dead maidens, poured out into the air, floating above the graves, fly to my cheeks!

Here a black-haired maiden turns to dust. Oh shade of her curls overhang my forehead! Beneath this stone are two blue eyes from which the light has fled—Come to me, come! oh fire that gleamed in them! Behind those bars a hundred tapers burn—a princess was buried to-day—Oh satin dress, as white as milk, come off from her! The dress flies to me through the bars, fluttering like a bird. On, on!

. . . . . .

A bedroom—A night-lamp stands upon the table and shines palely upon the Man sleeping beside his wife.

THE MAN *(in his sleep).* Whence comest thou unseen, unheard of for so long? As water flows, so do thy feet, like two white waves.—There is a holy peace upon thy brow—All that I dreamt and loved has joined in thee *(he awakes)* Where am I? Ha! Beside my wife! This is my wife! *(He look fixedly at her).* I thought thou wert my dream and behold, after a long break that dream has returned and it is unlike thee. Thou art good and dear—but she..... My God! What see I? With waking eyes!

THE MAIDEN. Thou hast betrayed me *(she disappears).*

THE MAN. Accursed be the moment in which I took to wife a woman, in which I forsook the mistress of my youth, the thought of my thoughts, the soul of my soul...

THE WIFE *(awakes).* What is it—Is it day already—Has the carriage come? For to-day we are to drive, and to purchase various things.

THE MAN. It is deep night—Sleep! Sleep soundly!

THE WIFE Perhaps you have become suddenly ill, my dear? I will rise and give you some ether.

THE MAN. Go asleep!

THE WIFE. Tell me, my dear, what ails you? For

your voice is changed and your cheeks are flushed with fever.

THE MAN *(rising suddenly).* I want fresh air—Stay—For God's sake don't come after me—Do not rise—once more I tell you. *(He goes out).*

. . . . . .

A moonlit garden—Beyond a fence is a church.

THE MAN. Since the day of my marriage I have slept the sleep of a torpid man, the sleep of a glutton, the sleep of a German manufacturer by the side of his German wife. It was as though the whole world slept around me, like as I slept—I journeyed from kinsman to kinsman, from doctor to doctor, from shop to shop, and since a child is to be born to me, I have been thinking of a foster-mother.

(The church clock strikes two).

Come to me oh former realms of mine, populous, living, assembling under my thought—hearkening to my inspiration—Long ago the sound of the night bell was your watchword *(he walks up and down and wrings his hands).* Oh God! Didst Thou thyself sanctify the union of two bodies? Didst thou pronounce their inseparability, though the souls that inhabit them repulse each other, go their own ways and leave the bodies like two corpses each by each?—

Again thou art beside me—oh my own, my own, take me with thee.—If thou art an illusion, if I have imagined thee, and

if thou dost emanate from me and now appearest to me, let me, too, be a wraith, let me turn into mist and smoke, that I may be united to thee.

THE MAIDEN. Wilt thou come with me whenever I come flying for thee?

THE MAN. Oh every moment I am thine!

THE MAIDEN. Remember!

THE MAN. Remain! Dissolve not like a dream! If thou art the beauty above all beauties, the idea above all thought, wherefore dost thou not endure longer than one wish? than one thought?

(A window opens in the house near by).

M WOMAN'S VOICE. My dear, you will take cold in your chest. Come back, my best one. I languish alone in this great, dark room.

THE MAN. I will come at once.—

The spirit has vanished, but it promised that it would return, and then farewell, little garden and house and you, who are created for a little garden and house, but not for me!

THE VOICE. For mercy's sake—it grows colder as morning comes.

THE MAN. And my child—Oh God! *(Exit).*

. . . . . .

A drawingroom—two candles on the piano—a cradle with a baby sleeping in it in the corner. THE MAN is stretched out on a chair, with his face hidden in his hands. THE WIFE is at the piano.

THE WIFE. I was at Father Benjamin's. He promised me to come the day after to-morrow.

THE MAN. Thanks.

THE WIFE. I sent to the confectioner's telling him to prepare some cakes, for it seems you have invited many guests for the christening—you know—chocolate cakes with George Stanislas'monogram.

THE MAN. Thanks.

THE WIFE. Thank God, the rite will be performed at last—our little Georgie will become completely a Christian, for, though he has been baptized privately it has always seemed to me that something was lacking *(she moves towards the cradle)*. Sleep, my baby! Did you dream something, that you have thrown off your coverlet? Now, thus—lie that way. My Georgie is uneasy to day, my little one, my darling. Sleep!

THE MAN. *(aside)*. Its sultry—its stifling. A storm is coming—Will a thunderbolt soon fall out there and in here will my heart break?

THE WIFE. *(comes back, sits down to the piano, plays, then stops playing, again begins to play and again ceases)*. To-day—yesterday.—Ah, my God, and all

through the week and for three weeks, for a month, you have said no word to me, and all whom I see say that I look badly.

THE MAN. *(aside)*. The hour has come. Nothing can put it off. *(aloud)*. On the contrary, I think you look well.

THE WIFE. To you it is all the same, for you don't look at me now, you turn away when I come in and you cover your eyes when I sit near you. I was at confession yesterday and I called all my sins to mind—but I could think of nothing that might have offended you.

THE MAN. You have not offended me.

THE WIFE. My God! My God!

THE MAN. I feel that I ought to love you.

THE WIFE. You have given me the last blow with that one word "ought". Ah, it were better to stand up and say:—"I do not love you". Then at least I should know all—all! *(She rises suddenly and takes the baby out of the cradle)*. Do not forsake him, and I will sacrifice myself to your anger. Love my child, my child—Henry! *(she kneels down on one knee)*.

THE MAN. Don't mind what I have said, bad moments come upon me—hours of weariness.

THE WIFE. I beg you only for one word—Only one promise. Say that you will always love him!

THE MAN. Both you and him—Believe me! *(He kisses her on the forehead and she encircles him with her arms. Then a clap of thunder is heard and immediately after it music—one chord after another, wilder and wilder).*

THE WIFE. What does that mean? *(She presses the baby to her breast).*

(The music ceases).

THE MAIDEN *(enters).* Oh my loved one, I bring thee blessing and delight, follow me!

Oh my loved one, cast off the earthly chains which bind thee! I come from a new world, endless, where night is not—I am thine!

THE WIFE. Most holy Virgin, save me—This phantom is pale, like one dead—Its eyes have no light in them, its voice is like the creaking of a cart on which a corpse lies.

THE MAN. Thy forehead is bright, thy hair is interwoven with flowers, oh, loved one!

THE WIFE. A shroud in rags is falling from her shoulders.

THE MAN. Light streams about thee—Let me hear thy voice once more and then perish!

THE MAIDEN. She who is keeping thee is an illusion. Her life is transient, her love is like a leaf that dies amid a thousand faded leaves—But I shall not pass away.

THE WIFE. Henry, Henry, shield me, don't give me up! I smell sulphur and the odour of graves.

THE MAN. Oh woman of clay and mud, be not jealous, speak no insults, blaspheme not! Look, that was God's first conception of you, but you followed the counsel of the serpent and became what you are.

THE WIFE. I will not let you go.

THE MAN. Oh loved one! I leave my home and follow thee! *(Exit).*

THE WIFE. Henry, Henry! *(She faints and falls with the child in her arms. A second thunderclap is heard).*

. . . . . .

(The christening—guests—Father Benjamin—the Godfather—the Godmother—the Nurse with the baby. The Wife sits on a sofa at one side. In the background there is a servant-man).

FIRST GUEST. *(in a low voice).* It is a strange thing where the count has gone to.

SECOND GUEST. He is dawdling somewhere, or writing.

FIRST GUEST. And his wife there is pale, as though she

had not slept, she has said no word to any.

THIRD GUEST. To-day's christening reminds me of a ball, the host of which has lost his all at cards the night before, and then receives his guests with the courtesy of despair.

FOURTH GUEST. I left a beautiful princess and I came. I supposed there would be a plenteous breakfast and, instead of that, as the Scriptures say, there is weeping and gnashing of teeth.

FATHER BENJAMIN. George Stanislas, dost thou accept the holy oil?

THE GODFATHER AND GODMOTHER. I accept it.

ONE OF THE GUESTS. Look, she has risen and walks like one asleep.

SECOND GUEST. She has stretched out her hands before her and, tottering, moves towards her son.

THIRD GUEST. What do you say? Let us give her an arm, for she is fainting.

FATHER BENJAMIN. George Stanislas, dost thou renounce Satan and his pride?

THE GODFATHER AND GODMOTHER. I renounce them.

ONE OF THE GUESTS. Hush! Listen!

THE WIFE. *(placing her hands on the baby's head).* Where is your father Georgie?

FATHER BENJAMIN. Please do not interrupt.

THE WIFE. I bless you, Georgie, I bless you, my baby. Be a poet that your father may love you and that he may never cast you off.

THE GODMOTHER. But come, now, May dear!

THE WIFE. Serve your father and make yourself pleasant to him and then he will pardon your mother.

FATHER BENJAMIN. For Heaven's sake, Lady Countess!

THE WIFE. I curse you if you will not be a poet. *(She faints and the servants bear her away).*

THE GUESTS. *(all together).* Something strange has happened in this house. Let us go away—away.

(Meanwhile the rite has come to an end. The crying baby is borne back to its cradle).

THE GODFATHER. *(standing before the cradle).* George Stanislas, you have only just become

a Christian and entered into human society, and later on you will become a citizen, and, through the efforts of your parents and by God's grace, an eminent official. Remember that you should love your country and even that it is fine to die for your country.

(Exeunt omnes).

. . . . . .

A beautiful scene—Hills and woods—Mountains in the distance.

THE MAN. This is what I asked for, for this I prayed for long years and at last I am close to my goal—I have left the world of men behind—Let every ant there run about and play with its blade of grass and when it is deprived of that, let it leap in despair or die of grief.

THE MAIDEN'S VOICE. This way! This way! *(She passes by).*

. . . . . .

Mountains and cliffs—Thick clouds—A storm.

THE MAN. Where hast thou gone to? The perfumes of the early morn have melted suddenly away, the sky is clouded over—I stand upon this peak, with a precipice before me and the winds roar horribly.

THE MAIDEN'S VOICE. *(in the distance).* Come to me, my loved one.

THE MAN. How far off it is now, and I cannot leap over the abyss!

THE VOICE. *(near at hand)*. Where are thy wings?

THE MAN. Evil spirit that mocks me, I scorn thee!

ANOTHER VOICE. On the mountain edge thy great, immortal spirit dies, which was to take one flight to heaven and, poor thing, it prays thy feet to go no further – Great spirit, great heart!

THE MAN. Show yourselves to me! Take on a form which I may bend and overthrow—If I fear you, may I never have Her for mine own!

THE MAIDEN. *(on the other side of the abyss)*. Twine thine hands in mine and fly over!

THE MAN. What has happened to thee? The flowers fall from thy temples to the earth and, as I touch them they slip away like lizards, they creep like serpents.

THE MAIDEN. My loved one!

THE MAN. By God, the wind has torn thy dress from thy shoulders and rent it into rags.

THE MAIDEN. Why delayest thou?

THE MAN. Rain drips from thy hair—The bones show at thy bosom.

THE MAIDEN. Thou hast promised—sworn!

THE MAN. The lightning has burnt out thine eyes.

CHOIR OF EVIL SPIRITS. Old one, return to hell! Thou hast seduced a great and proud heart, admired by men and by itself. Oh, great heart, follow thy loved one!

THE MAN. Oh God, dost thou damn me because I have believed that Thy beauty is a whole heaven above the beauty of this earth—because I have gone after it and wearied myself for it, to become the mockery of devils!

AN EVIL SPIRIT. Hearken, hearken brethren!

THE MAN. The last hour is about to strike—The storm twists in black whirlwinds—the sea reaches up to the rocks and nears me. An unseen force urges me ever further, on, ever nearer the abyss. Behind me a crowd of folk sit on my shoulders and push me toward the precipice.—

AN EVIL SPIRIT. Rejoice, brethren, rejoice!

THE MAN. To struggle is vain—The charm of the abyss draws me—My soul is giddy—Oh God—Thine enemy conquers!

THE GUARDIAN ANGEL. *(above the sea).* Peace, waves, be calm!

At this moment holy water is being poured upon thy baby's head. Return home and sin no more—Return home and love thy babe!

. . . . . .

(A drawingroom with a piano—Enter THE MAN. A servant-man follows him with a candle).

THE MAN. Where is your mistress?

THE SERVANT. My lady is ill.

THE MAN. I was in her room. It is empty.

THE SERVANT. My lord! For my lady is not here.

THE MAN. And where is she?

THE SEPVANT. They took her away yesterday...

THE MAN. Whither?

THE SERVANT. To a madhouse. *(He runs out of the room).*

THE MAN. Listen, Mary, perhaps you are pretending, perhaps you are hiding somewhere to punish me? Speak, please, speak, Mary, May!

No, none answers—John! Katherine! The whole household has gone deaf—has gone dumb.—

I have cast her to whom I swore fidelity, whose happiness I swore to guard, into the ranks of the damned here in this world. All that I have touched I have destroyed and finally I shall destroy myself—Did hell let me loose that I a little longer might be its living image here on earth?

On what a pillow does she lay her head to-day? What sounds are round her in the night? The whining and the singing of the mad. I see her—with her brow from which quiet, welcoming, kind thoughts ever beamed. Now she keeps her head bent and has sent her good thoughts away into unknown expanses, perhaps after me, poor soul, and weeps.

A VOICE FROM SOMEWHERE. Thou dost compose a drama!

THE MAN. Ha! My Satan speaks! *(he runs to the door and pushes it wide open).* Saddle Tartar for me, bring my cloak and pistols!

. . . . . .

A madhouse with a garden round it in a monotonous locality.

THE DOCTOR'S WIFE. *(standing at the door with a bunch of keys in her hand).* Perhaps you are a relation of the Countess?

THE MAN. I am her husband's friend, he sent me here.

THE DOCTOR'S WIFE. Well, you know, the case cannot be called a very promising one. My husband is away, he would have explained the matter better. She was brought here the day before yesterday. She was in convulsions. How hot it is! *(she wipes her face).* We have many patients but none so dangerously ill as she. Imagine, this establishment costs us two hundred thousand—Look! What a view of the mountains there is! But you, I see, are impatient,—Isn't it a fact that the Jacobins kidnapped her husband in the night? Please go in.

. . . . . .

A room with barred windows, a few chairs aud a bed. The wife is sitting on a sofa.

THE MAN. *(entering).* I want to be alone with her.

VOICE FROM BEFIND THE DOOR. My husband would be angry if—

THE MAN. Leave me alone, Madam!

VOICE FROM ABOVE THE CEILING. They have chained up God. One god is dead already on the cross. I am the second god and I, too, am among torturers.

VOICE FROM UNDER THE FLOOR. To the scaffold with the heads of kings and lords! The freedom of the people begins with me.

VOICE FROM BEYOND THE WALL ON THE RIGHT. Kneel ye before the king, your lord!

VOICE FROM BEYOND THE WALL ON THE LEFT. Already a comet shines in the sky. The day of dreadful judgment is nigh at hand.

THE MAN. Do you recognize me, Mary?

THE WIFE. I swore to be true to you till death.

THE MAN. Come, give me your arm! Let us go out from this place.

THE WIFE. I can't stand up—My soul has left my body and gone into my head.

THE MAN. Let me raise you up.

THE WIFE. Leave me a few moments yet, and I shall become worthy of you.—

THE MAN. What do you mean?

THE WIFE. I prayed for three nights and God heard me.

THE MAN. I don't understand you.

THE WIFE. Since the time I lost you I am changed. "Lord God" I said, and beat my breast, and held a taper to my breast, and did penance "Send down the spirit of poetry upon me". And, on the third day, in the morning, I became a poet.

THE MAN. Mary!

THE WIFE. Henry, you don't despise me now—I am filled with inspiration—you won't forsake me now at evening time?

THE MAN. Never! Never!

THE WIFE. Look at me. Have I not grown to be your equal? I can conceive, understand, express, play and sing everything—The sea, stars, a storm, a battle,—Yes, the stars, a storm, the sea—Ah, something has escaped my memory—A battle—You must bring me into a battle—I shall look upon it and describe it—A corpse, a shroud, blood, a wave, dew, a coffin.—

Infinity surrounds me quite
And, like a bird in its expanse,
With wings I cleave its azure height,
Flying I fade into black night
A nothingness of trance.

THE MAN. Damnation! Damnation!

THE WIFE. *(embraces him and kisses him on the mouth).* My Henry! My Henry! How happy I am!

VOICE FROM UNDER THE FLOOR. I have killed three kings with mine own hand—there are ten still and a hundred priests singing mass.

VOICE ON THE LEFT. The sun has lost a third part of its brilliance—the stars begin to stagger in their courses—alas—alas!

THE MAN. The Day of Judgment has come for me already.

THE WIFE. Unknit your brow! You sadden me again. What do you lack? Do you know, I will tell you something more!

THE MAN. Speak and I will fulfil your every request.

THE WIFE. Your son will be a poet.

THE MAN. What?

THE WIFE. At the christening the first name the priest gave him was—Poet! The following ones you know—George Stanislas. That was my doing—I blessed and then I cursed. He will be a poet. Ah, how I love you Henry!

VOICE FROM THE CEILING. Forgive them, Father, for they know not what they do!

THE WIFE. That one has a strange mania, hasn't he?

THE MAN. The strangest of all.

THE WIFE. He knows not what he babbles, but I declare to you what would be if God went mad *(she takes his hand in hers)*. All the worlds fly about, some upward, some downward. Every man—every worm cries:—"I am God". Every moment, one after the other, the comets and suns die, go out. Christ saves us no more—He has taken His cross in both His hands and cast it into the abyss. Do you hear how that cross, the hope of millions, breaks against the stars. It is broken, it bursts, it flies into pieces, ever lower and lower it falls, until a very dust-cloud is formed from its fragments? The Most Holy Mother of God alone prays yet, and the stars, her serving maids, have not yet abandoned her, but She will go too, where the whole world is going.

THE MAN. Mary, perhaps you wish to see your son?

THE WIFE. I fastened on his wings. I sent him out among the worlds that he might imbibe all that is fair and terrible and lofty. One day he will return and rejoice you. Ah!

THE MAN. You feel ill?

THE WIFE. Someone has hung a lamp in my head

and the lamp rocks to and fro unbearably.

THE MAN. Mary my dearest, be quiet as you were before.

THE WIFE. He who is a poet lives not long.

THE MAN. Here—To the rescue—help!

(Some women and the doctor's wife rush in).

THE DOCTOR'S WIFE. Pills—powders—No—Nothing solid! Of course, some liquid medicine. Maggie, run to the medicine chest! This is your fault. My husband will scold me well.

THE WIFE. Farewell, Henry!

THE DOCTOR'S WIFE. Then you are the Count himself!

THE MAN. Mary, Mary! *(he embraces her).*

THE WIFE. It is well with me, for I die near you. *(her head falls back).*

THE DOCTOR'S WIFE. How red she is! The blood has gone to her brain.

THE MAN. But no harm will come to her.

(The doctor enters and approaches the sofa).

THE DOCTOR. Already nothing harms her—She is dead.

PART II.

Wherefore, oh child, dost thou not ride upon a stick, play with a doll, torment flies or transfix butterflies? Why dost thou not roll on the grass-plots, steal dainties or water with thy tears all the letters from A to Z? Oh king of flies and butterflies, oh Punch's friend, oh little imp, why art thou so like an angel? What mean thy bright blue eyes, downcast yet lively, full of memories, though thou hast scarce seen a few springs? Wherefore dost thou lean thy brow on thy little, white hands and seem to dream, and, why is thy brow, like a flower weighed down with dew, burdened with thought?

And when thou blushest it is like a rose with a hundred leaves, and, with thy curls falling back, thy young glance would penetrate heaven. Tell me what thou hearest, what thou seest, with whom thou dost converse? For wrinkles like fine threads come upon thy brow—like threads from an unseen reel, for in thine eyes sparks glitter, which none understandeth—and thy nurse weeps and calls thee and thinks that thou dost not love her—and thy kindred call thee and think that thou dost not recognize them—thy father alone keeps silence and looks gloomily, till a tear forms in his eye and, falling, disappears.

The doctor tried thy pulse, he counted its beats and said

that thou wert nervous. Thy godfather brought thee cakes, patted thee on the arm and foretold that thou wouldst be a citizen of a great nation. A professor came and felt thy head and declared that thou hadst a talent for the sciences. The poor folk to whom thou gavest alms as thou didst pass promised thee a beautiful wife on earth and a crown in heaven. A military man jumped towards thee, seized thee and then set thee down and cried:—"Thou wilt be a colonel". A gipsy read in thy right and left palm for a long time but could make out nothing. Groaning she went away and refused to take a ducat. A magnetizer waved his fingers before thine eyes, encircled thy face with thin fingers—and took fright, for he felt that he would go to sleep himself. A priest prepared thee for thy first confession—and would have knelt before thee as before a holy picture. A painter came when thou wast angry and didst stamp thy little feet; he sketched an imp in thy form and set thee in a picture of the Judgment Day among the spirits that were lost.

Meanwhile thou grewest in stature and in beauty—not with that strawberries-and-cream freshness of childhood but with a beauty born of strange, inconceivable thoughts, which must flow to thee from another world—for though often the light in thine eyes fades, thy face is pale and thy chest hollow, everyone who looks upon thee stops and says:—"What a lovely child!" If a flower that fades had a soul of fire and inspiration from heaven, if on every little leaf that bends towards the earth an angel thought lay instead of a dewdrop, that flower would be like thee, oh my child—Perchance so children were before Adam's fall.

A cemetery. The man and Georgie at a tomb which has Gothic pillars and pinnacles.

THE MAN. Take off your hat and pray for your mother's soul.

GEORGIE. Hail, Mary, full of the grace of God, Queen of Heaven, Lady of all that blooms on the earth, in the fields and by the streams.

THE MAN. Why do you change the words of the prayer? Pray as you have been taught to do, for your mother who died ten years ago, just at this very hour.

GEORGIE. Hail, Virgin Mary, full of the grace of God, the Lord is with thee, blessed art thou among the angels, and each of them when thou approachest takes one rainbow from his wings and casts it before thy feet. Thou walkest upon the rainbows as upon waves.....

THE MAN. George!

GEORGIE. You see, those words run in my head and pain it so that please Papa, I must say them.

THE MAN. Stand up! A prayer like that does not

go up to God. You do not remember your mother—you cannot love her.

GEORGIE. I very often see Mamma.

THE MAN. Where, little one?

GEORGIE. In my sleep, that is, not quite in my sleep, but just when I am falling asleep; for instance, the day before yesterday.

THE MAN. My child, what are you saying?

GEORGIE. She was very white and thin.

THE MAN. And did she say anything to you?

GEORGIE. It seemed to me that she was walking in the midst of great, wide darkness. She herself was very white and said:

I wander all around,
Everywhere I make my way,
To the universe's bound
Where sounds the angels'singing,
And cull for thee all day
Forms many and fine,
Oh baby mine!
Thoughts, inspiration bringing.

And from the spirits higher,
And from the lower choir,

Shades and colours bright,
Sounds and rays of light
Gather I for thee,
That thou, oh son of mine,
Like souls in heaven mightst be
And that father of thine
Might loving be.

You see, father, I remember it word by word—Father dear, please, I'm not telling a lie.

THE MUN. *(leaning on a pillar of the tomb).* Mary, would you destroy your own child and would you lay upon me the burden of two deaths? What am I saying? She is somewhere in heaven, quiet and peaceful as she was in her life on earth. The poor boy is only dreaming.

GEORGIE. And now I hear her voice but I do not see her.

THE MAN. Where, on what side?

GEORGIE. As if she were coming from those two larch trees, on which the light of the setting sun is falling.

Lo, I inspire
Thy lips with fire
Of melody and might.
Thy brow I do wreathe
With a ribbon of light.

I awake in thee
All thy mother's love—
All that men here on earth or the angels above
Have called beauteous to see—
That this father of thine,
Oh little son mine!
Might loving be.

THE MAN. Do our last thoughts at death accompany the spirit although it goes to heaven? Can you be a happy, holy spirit and at the same time mad?

GEORGIE. My mother's voice grows faint, it almost dies away behind the wall of the mortuary chapel—There—there, it repeats again:

Oh little son mine,
That this father of thine
Might loving be!

THE MAN. God, have mercy upon our child, for it would seem that Thou hast, in thy wrath designed him for madness and premature death! Lord, deprive not Thine own creature of understanding, forsake not the temple which Thou hast built for Thyself! Look down upon my torment and do not deliver this angel over to hell! Me, at least, Thou hast endowed with strength to endure crowding thoughts, passion and feeling,—but he! Thou hast given him a body like a spider's web which any great thought might rend asunder. Oh Lord God, Oh God!

For ten years I have not had a quiet day—Thou hast sent many people upon me who congratulate me upon my fortune, who have envied me and wished me well—Thou hast sent down upon me a hail of pain, of fleeting images, of forebodings and of dreams. Thy grace has fallen upon my mind and not upon my heart. Let me love the child in peace and let there be peace at last between the Creator and the creature! Sonny, cross yourself and come with me. Eternal rest.... *(Exeunt).*

. . . . . .

A promenade. Ladies and gentlemen. A philosopher. The Man.

THE PHILOSOPHER. I repeat that there is an irrefutable, obstinate faith within me that the time is coming when women and negroes will be liberated.

THE MAN. You are right.

THE PHILOSOPHER. And besides there will be great changes both particular and general in human society, whence I deduce that the human race will be regenerated through blood and the destruction of old forms.

THE MAN. Does it seem so to you?

THE PHILOSOPHER. Just as our globe straightens itself or leans on its axis by sudden revolutions.

THE MAN. Do you see that rotten tree?

THE PHILOSOPHER. With young leaves on its lower branches?

THE MAN. Good! What do you think—how many years can it stand yet?

THE PHILOSOPHER. How can I tell? A year—two years.

THE MAN. And yet to-day it shot out a few fresh leaves, though the roots rot ever more and more.

THE PHILOSOPHER. And what then?

THE MAN. Nothing—Only that it will fall down and turn into coal and ashes, for it will be of no use even to a joiner.

THE PHILOSOPHER. But we were not talking of that.

THE MAN. And yet that is a picture of you and all yours and of your age and your theory. *(They pass along).*

. . . . . .

A pass among the mountains.

THE MAN. I have worked for many years to discover the final end of all knowledge, delight and thought and I have discovered—a grave-like vacancy in my heart. I know every feeling by its name and there is no desire, no faith, no love in me—a few forebodings only haunt that desert—that my son will go blind, that the society in which I was brought up will fall apart—and I suffer, as God is happy, alone within myself, for myself alone.

THE GUARDIAN ANGEL'S VOICE. Love the sick, the hungry, the despairing, love thy neighbours and thou shalt be saved.

THE MAN. Who speaks?

MEPHISTO. *(coming up.)* Your most humble servant. I sometimes like to detain travellers with a display of the gift which nature has given me. I am a ventriloquist.

THE MAN. *(raising his hand to his hat).* I once saw a face like that in an old engraving.

MEPHISTO. *(aside).* The Count has a good memory. *(Aloud).* Praise be—

THE MAN. For ever and ever, amen!

MEPHISTO. *(going in among the rocks).* To you and your folly!

THE MAN. Poor child, foredoomed for his father's fault and for his mother's madness to eternal blindness—incomplete, passionless, living only by dreams the shadow of a passing angel cast on the earth and wandering in its perishableness. What an immense eagle soared up over the place where this man disappeared!

THE EAGLE. I greet thee! I greet thee!

THE MAN. It flies towards me, all black. The rush

of its wings is like the rush of a thousand bullets in battle.

THE EAGLE. With the sword of thy fathers, fight for their honour and power!

THE MAN. It spreads its wings above me—It sucks my eyes out with its rattlesnake gaze. Ha! I understand you!

THE EAGLE. Don't give way, never give way! The sword of thy foul foes will turn to dust.

THE MAN. I bid thee farewell among the rocks, amidst which thou hast disappeared—However it be, false or true, victory or ruin, I believe thee, oh ambassador of glory! Oh past, come to my help—and, if thy spirit has gone back to God's bosom, let it leave that place once more and enter into me, let it become thought, force and deed.—*(He casts a viper from him).*

Go, vile reptile—Just as I cast thee away and there is no regret for thee in Nature, so they shall fall down and there will be none to regret them—no fame will remain behind them—no cloud will remain behind them—no cloud will turn round as it floats to look behind it at so many sons of earth perishing together.

They first—I afterwards.

Oh unsounded firmament that dost enfold the earth—that earth which is as a babe, grinding its teeth and weeping—But

thou dost not quiver, thou dost not listen to her, thou flowest on in thine infinity.

Oh Mother Nature, farewell! I go to transform myself into a man—I go to fight together with my brethren.

. . . . . .

A room. The Man. A doctor. George.

THE MAN. Nothing has done him any good. Our last hope is in you.

THE DOCTOR. I am greatly honoured...

THE MAN. Tell this gentleman how you feel—

GEORGIE. Now I cannot recognize you, father, or this gentleman. Sparks and black threads fly before my eyes, and sometimes the shape as it were of a very thin snake comes out of their midst—and then a yellow cloud forms—that cloud flies upward, falls down and a rainbow bursts forth from it. And nothing of all that hurts me!

THE DOCTOR. Stand in the shade, Master George! How old are you? *(he looks into his eyes).*

THE MAN. He has turned fourteen.

THE DOCTOR. Now turn round to the window.

THE MAN. And what then?

THE DOCTOR. The eyelids are beautiful, the white of the eyes transparent, the veins are all

in order and the muscles strong *(to George)*. You may laugh at it all. You will be as well as I am. *(To the man)*. There is no hope.—

Look at the pupils yourself, Count. They are not sensitive to the light. There is a complete weakening of the optic nerve.

GEORGIE. Mist covers everything from me—everything.

THE NAN. True, they are open—and grey—and lifeless.

GEORGIE. When I shut my eyes I see more than when they are open.

THE DOCTOR. Thought has spoilt his body through and through—catalepsy is to be feared.

THE MAN. *(taking the doctor aside)*. Everything you ask for—half my property!

THE DOCTOR. Disorganization can't reorganize itself *(he takes his hat and stick)*.

Your most humble servant, Count; I must go and operate on a lady for cataract.

THE MAN. Have mercy—Don't leave us yet.

THE DOCTOR. Perhaps you would like to know the name of this illness.

THE MAN. Is there no hope at all?

THE DOCTOR. It is called in Greek" amaurosis" *(Exit)*.

THE MAN. *(pressing his son to his breast).* But you still see a little, don't you?

GEORGIE. I hear your voice, father.

THE MAN. Look at the window, the sun is shining there, the weather is fine.

GEORGIE. A host of forms float round and round between my eye and eyelid. I see faces that I have seen before, well-known places—the pages of books I have read.

THE MAN. Then you still see?

GEORGIE. Yes, with the eyes of my spirit, but the others have lost their light.

THE MAN. *(falls on his knees).*

A moment of sitence.

Before whom have I knelt? Where am I to claim justice for my child's wrong? *(Standing up).* Rather let us keep silence. God laughs at prayers, Satan at curses—

A VOICE FROM SOMEWHERE. Thy son is a poet, what more wouldst thou have?

. . . . . .

The doctor—The Godfather.

THE GODFATHER. Of course it is a great misfortune to be blind.

THE DOCTOR. And quite extraordinary at so young an age.

THE GODFATHER. He always had a weak constitution and his mother died a little—

THE DOCTOR. What do you say?

THE GODFATHER. To a certain extent—Yes—You understand—A little cracked.

Enter the Man.

THE MAN. I beg your pardon for calling you so late, but for the last few days my poor son has been waking about twelve, getting up and talking in his sleep—Please come with me.

THE DOCTOR. Let us go. I am very curious about this phenomenon.

. . . . . .

A bedroom—A maid-servant—Kinsmen—the Godfather—the Doctor—the Man.

A KINSMAN. Hush!

ANOTHER KINSMAN. He has awakened but he does not hear us.

THE DOGTOR. Please, gentlemen, don't speak.

THE GODFATHER. This is a very strange thing.

GEORGIE. *(getting out of bed).* Oh God—oh God!

A KINSMAN. How slowly he steps!

ANOTHER KINSMAN. Look, he has his hands folded on his breast.

A THIRD KINSMAN. He does not wink—He scarcely opens his mouth but a sharp, long-drawn-out voice comes from it.

A SERVANT MAN. Jesus of Nazareth!

GEORGIE. Away, darkness! I was born the son of light and song. What would you have of me? What do you want with me?

I will not surrender to you though my sight has gone to the four winds and flees somewhere through the expanses of the universe. But it will return one day, rich with rays from the stars and will light my eyes with a flame.

THE GODFATHER. Yes, he babbles he knows not what, like his dead mother. This is a sight worthy of attention.

THE DOCTOR. I agree with you.

THE NURSE. Most holy Virgin of Czenstochova, take my eyes and give them to him!

GEORGIE. Mother mine, please, mother mine, send me pictures and thoughts now, that I

may live inwardly, that I may create another world within myself, as good as the world I have lost.

A KINSMAN. What think you, brothers, must we hold a family council?

ANOTHER KINSMAN. Wait—Hush!

GEORGIE. You do not answer me—oh mother—don't forsake me—

THE DOCTOR. It is my duty to speak the truth.

THE GODFATHER. So it is—It is the duty and the virtue of doctors—Mr. Physician!

THE DOCTOR. Your son is a sleep-walker and has extraordinarily sensitive nerves, which sometimes brings about, if I may say so, a state of sleep and waking simultaneously, a state similar to that which we obviously have here.

THE MAN. *(aside)*. Oh God, he is explaining Thy judgments to me!

THE DOCTOR. I would ask for a pen and ink—Two grammes of cerasi laurei—etc. etc.

THE MAN. You will find what you need in that room there—Please, all of you, go away!

MINGLED VOICES. Goodnight, till to-morrow!

GEORGIE. *(awakening)*. They wish me goodnight—

say "long night" perhaps "eternal", but not "good" or "happy".

THE MAN. Lean on me and I will lead you back to bed.

GEORGIE. Father, what does it mean?—That—

THE MAN. Tuck yourself well in and sleep quietly, for the doctor says you will regain your sight.

GEORGIE. I feel so ill—Voices broke my sleep.

THE MAN. May my blessing rest upon thee—I can give thee nothing more, neither happiness nor light nor fame—And the hour is all but striking in which I must fight, act with a few on my side against many. Whither shalt thou go, alone among a hundred abysses, blind, weak child, who art a poet too?—Poor singer without an audience, living by the spirit beyond the bounds of earth, and chained to the earth by the body—oh, thou unhappy, unhappiest of the angels, oh my son!

THE NURSE. *(at the door)*. The doctor asks for you, sir.

THE MAN. My good Katherine, stay with the child. *(Exit)*.

PART III.

To song—to song!

Who shall begin it, who shall end it? Give me a past armoured with steel, full of the waving of the feathers on knightly helms! I conjure up Gothic steeples before your eyes, I cast the shadow of holy cathedrals on your heads. But it is not that—it will never be that!

. . . . . .

Whoe'er thou art, tell me in what thou dost believe. It were easier to kill thyself than to find a faith or to awaken faith within thyself. Shame, shame to all of you both, small and great—but in spite of you, in spite of your mediocrity and misery, your heartlessness and brainlessness, the world goes onward to its goal, drags you after it, rushes forward, plays with you, throws you about, casts you away, the world waltzes round and round, couples disappear and appear and soon fall down, for it is slippery—for there is much blood—blood everywhere—much blood, I tell you.

. . . . . .

Seest thou those crowds standing at the town gates among the hills and the poplar plantations—the tents cast, the boards set, covered with meat and drink, propped up with stumps of

trees and poles? The tankard flies from hand to hand and where it touches a mouth, from that mouth comes forth a threat, an oath or a curse. It flies, it comes back, it circles, it dances, it is ever full, clinking and shining among the thousands. Long live the cup of drunkenness and comfort!

. . . . . .

Seest thou how impatiently they wait—they murmur among themselves, they prepare to shout, all of them wretches with the marks of drudgery on their foreheads, with tousled hair, in rags, with flushed faces, their hands wrinkled with labour—Some hold scythes, other shake hammers, planes—Look—this tall one holds an axe by his side—and that one there waves an iron prop above his head: further on, on one side, under a willow, a little boy is putting a cherry into his mouth and he grips a long awl in his right hand. Women have come too, mothers, wives, hungry and poor, like the men themselves; too early faded, without a trace of beauty—on their hair the dust of a beaten track—on their bosoms torn garments—in their eyes something of fading light, gloomy, as it were an imitation of sight—But very soon they grow livelier. The tankard flies averywhere, runs all around. Long live the cup of drunkenness and comfort.

. . . . . .

And now a great hum begins in the assembly—Is it joy or despair? Who can recognize any feeling in the voices of the thousands? This man who has come up, has climbed on a table, has jumped up on a chair and dominates them, is speaking to

them. His voice is long drawn out, sharp, expressive. You can distinguish and understand every word. His movements are slow and easy and accord with the words as music with a song. He has a high, ample forehead, a head without one hair upon it, for they have all fallen out, plucked off by thought. The skin has dried to the skull, to the cheeks, the yellow skin sinks in between the bones and muscles and, from the very temples downward a black beard surrounds the face like a wreath—never blood, never a change of colour on the cheeks—unmoved eyes, staring fixedly at his hearers—yet one could not see one moment's doubt or confusion; and when he lifts his arm, when he stretches it out and reaches it over them, they bend their heads, it seems as if in a moment they would kneel before that blessing of great understanding, not of heart—Away with heart, away with superstition, and long live the words of comfort and of murder!—

. . . . . .

This is their fury—their love—the ruler of their souls and of their zeal—He promises them bread and a livelihood.—Cries have risen up—they are drawn out, they break forth on every side: "Long live Pancras—Bread for us, bread, bread!" and, at the speaker's feet there leans on the table his friend or comrade or servant.—

. . . . . .

This friend has an eastern eye, black, shaded with long lashes, flabby arms, bowed legs, his body awkwardly bent to

one side, something lascivious, something wicked about his mouth, gold rings on his fingers—and he, too, in a harsh voice cries:—"Long live Pancras!" The speaker has just glanced at him a moment and said:—"Citizen Christened Jew, give me my handkerchief!"

. . . . . .

Meanwhile the applause and shouting goes on—"Bread for for us, bread, bread!" "Death to all masters and merchants!" "Bread, bread!"

A hut—Some lamps—An open book on the table—Baptized Jews.

THE BAPTIZED JEWS. Vile brethren mine, vengeful brethren mine, loved brethren mine, we suck the pages of the Talmud as it were a breast full of milk, a living breast, whence strength and honey flow for us but for them bitterness and poison.

CHORUS OF BAPTIZED JEWS. Jehovah is our lord and none other. He hath scattered us abroad in all places, he hath entwined the world of those who honour the cross, the world of our masters, proud, stupid and illiterate, with us, as with the folds of a measureless reptile. Let us spit three times, calling down ruin upon them, thrice do we curse them!

Rejoice, brethren mine! The cross, our enemy, cut down and mouldy, stands to-day above a pool of blood, and, if it once falls, it will never rise again. Till now the masters have defended it.

CHORUS. The work of ages is complete, our grievous, painful, rancorous work. Death to the masters! Let us spit three times, calling down ruin upon them—Thrice do we curse them!

THE BAPTIZED JEWS. Upon liberty without order, upon endless slaughter, upon contention and

wrath, upon their foolishness and pride do we found the power of Israel. Only we must push down those few masters more—only those few—and add their corpses to the ruins of the cross.

CHORUS. The Cross, our holy sign—the water of baptism has united us to mankind—the scorner has believed in the love of the scorned.

The liberty of men is our law—the good of the people is our aim. The sons of the Christian have believed in the sons of Caiphas. Ages ago our fathers tortured the Enemy—to-day we torture Him again and He shall arise no more from the dead.

THE BAPTIZED JEWS. A few moments yet, a few drops more of the serpent's venom and the world is ours—ours, oh brethren mine!

CHORUS. Jehovah is the Lord of Israel and none other! Let us spit three times, calling down ruin upon the peoples—Thrice do we curse them!

(A knocking is heard).

THE BAPTIZED JEWS. To your work—and thou, oh holy book, hence, lest the glance of the accursed should soil thy pages! *(He puts the Talmud away).*

Who is there?

VOICE FROM OUTSIDE THE DOOR. A friend. In the name of liberty, open!

THE BAPTIZED JEWS. Brethren, to your hammers and ropes! *(He opens the door).*

LEONARD. *(entering)*. It is well, citizens, that you watch and sharpen your daggers, for to-morrow. *(He goes up to one of them)*.

And you, what are you making in that corner?

ONE OF THE BAPTIZED JEWS. Halters, citizen.

LEONARD. You do wisely, brother. He who falls not in battle by the sword shall die on a branch.

THE BAPTIZED JEWS. Good citizen Leonard, is to-morrow's business sure?

LEONARD. He who thinks and feels most powerfully of us all, summons you by me to converse. He himself will answer your question.

THE BAPTIZED JEW. I am going—And ye, stay not in your work! Jankiel, see to them well! *(Exit, with Leonard)*.

CHORUS OF BAPTIZED JEWS. Halters and daggers, sticks and sabres, the work of our hands, come forth to their ruin! They kill the masters in the pasture lands—They hang them in the gardens and in the forests—And we shall afterwards kill the killers, we shall hang them. The scorned will arise in their anger and will clothe themselves in the glory of Jehovah; the word of His salvation and His love for us is destruction for all. Let us spit three times calling down ruin upon them. Thrice do we curse them!

. . . . . .

A tent—Bottles and cups thrown about in disorder.

PANCRAS. Fifty of them were carousing here a moment ago and at every word of mine they cried "Vivat!"—But did even one of them understand my thought or conceive the end of the road at the beginning of which he raises riot? Ah! *servile imitatorum pecus.*

(Enter Leonard and the Baptized Jew).

Do you know Count Henry?

THE BAPTIZED JEW. Great citizen, rather by appearance than by converse. Once only, I remember, passing by on Corpus Christi Day, he shouted at me:—"Make way" and looked upon me with the look of a master—and for that I vowed him a halter in my soul.

PANCRAS. To-morrow, at earliest morn, you are to go to him and tell him that I would see him, face to face, secretly, the night after to-morrow's night.

THE BAPTIZED JEW. Will you give me many men to accompany me, for'twould be foolhardy to go forth alone?

PANCRAS. Go forth alone, my name shall be your guard—the gallows on which you hanged the baron two days since shall support you.

THE BAPTIZED JEW. Oh dear!

PANCRAS. Say that I will come to him at midnight the day after to-morrow.

THE BAPTIZED JEW. And should he order me to be imprisoned—should he beat me?

PANCRAS. You will be a martyr for the liberty of the people.

THE BAPTIZED JEW. All, all for the liberty of the people! *(Aside).* Oh dear!

PANCRAS. Goodnight, citizen!

(Exit the Baptized Jew).

LEONARD. Why this delay, these half measures, negociations, converse? When I swore to honour and obey you, it was because I took you for a hero of finality, an eagle, flying straight to its goal, a man staking himself and all of his on one card.

PANCRAS. Be silent, child!

LEONARD. All are ready—the baptized Jews have forged weapons and twisted ropes—The crowds shout, they call for an order; give the order and it will go like a spark, like lightning and will turn into a flame and pass into a thunderbolt.

PANCRAS. The blood has gone to your head—that is inevitable at your age—You cannot fight it down—and you call that zeal.

LEONARD. Consider what you are doing! The aristocrats in their weakness have fortified themselves in the fortress of the Holy Trinity and await our

coming, as it were the knife of the guillotine. Forward, Master, without delay, forward and upon them!

PANCRAS. It is all one! They have lost the strength of their bodies in voluptuousness and the strength of their understanding in idleness. To-morrow or the day after, perish they must!

LEONARD. Whom do you fear? Who keeps you back?

PANCRAS. None. My will alone.

LEONARD. And must I believe in it blindly?

PANCRAS. Verily I say unto you, blindly.

LEONARD. You are betraying us.

PANCRAS. Like a refrain in a song, so comes treachery at the end of every speech of yours—Do not shout, for were we overheard—

LEONARD. There are no spies here, and what then?

PANCRAS. Nothing—Just five bullets in your chest because you dared to raise your voice one tone higher in my presence. *(He goes up to him).* Believe me, and leave yourself in peace.

LEONARD. I lost my temper, I confess, but I do not fear punishment. If my death may serve as an example, may reinforce our strength and dignity, order it.

PANCRAS. You are quick, full of hope, and you believe deeply. Happiest of men, I will not deprive you of your life.

LEONARD. What do you say?

PANCRAS. Think more, talk less, and some time you will understand me. Did you send to the store for two thousand cartridges?

LEONARD. I sent Deytz with a troop.

PANCRAS. And has the shoemakers' offering been placed in our treasury?

LEONARD. They every one paid in with the sincerest zeal and brought a hundred thousand.

PANCRAS. I will invite them to-morrow to a supper. Did you hear aught new about Count Henry?

LEONARD. I scorn the masters too much to believe what men say of him—falling races have no energy—they should not—they cannot have it!

PANCRAS. And yet he is assembling his village folk, and, confident in their attachment, he is preparing to raise the siege of Holy Trinity Castle.

LEONARD. Who can oppose us? For in us is incarnate the idea of our age.

PANCRAS. I would see him—look into his eyes—penetrate to the depths of his heart—win him over to our side.

LEONARD. He is an inveterate aristocrat.

PANCRAS. But he is a poet too. Now leave me alone.

LEONARD. Do you forgive me, citizen?

PANCRAS. You may sleep peacefully. Had I not pardoned you, you now would sleep forever.

LEONARD. Then nothing will happen to-morrow?

PANCRAS. Goodnight and sweet dreams!

(Exit Leonard).

Ho! Leonard!

LEONARD. Citizen leader!

PANCRAS. In two days, at night time, you shall go with me to Count Henry.

LEONARD. I hear and obey.

(Exit Leonard).

PANCRAS. Why should one man stand in my way, in the way of a leader of thousands? His force is small compared with mine—a few hundred peasants, who blindly believe his word, attached to him as animals are to their master... It is wretchedness, it is nothing. Why do I so long to

see him, to cajole him? Has my spirit met its equal and does it stand a moment still? This in the last obstacle to me on this plain—it must be overcome, and then, oh thought of mine, canst thou not delude thyself as thou deludest others? Shame on thee, thou knowest thine aim, for thou art thought, mistress of the people, the will and power of all doth concentrate in thee, and that which is a crime for others is a glory for thee. To vile and unknown men thou hast given names, to men without a sense of faith thou hast given the world, made in thine image. Thou hast formed a new world round about thee, and thou thyself wanderest and knowest not what thou art. No, no, no, thou art great! *(he sinks into a chair and meditates).*

A forest. Linen is hung up round about the trees. In the centre of the scene there is a meadow, on which stands a gallows. Huts. Tents. Campfires. Barrels. Crowds of people.

THE MAN. *(disguised in a black cloak, with a red cap of liberty on his head, enters, holding the Baptized Jew by the arm).* Remember!

THE BAPTIZED JEW. *(in a low voice).* Honoured Sir, I will conduct you round about. I will not betray you, on my honour!

THE MAN. Just wink your eye or lift your finger and I will shoot you through the head! You may guess that I care not for your life, since I have ventured thus.

THE BAPTIZED JEW. Oh dear! You clutch my hand with iron talons. What am I to do?

THE MAN. Speak to me as to an acquaintance, a newly arrived friend What dance is that?

THE BAPTIZED JEW. It is the dance of the free people.

(Men and women dance round the gallows and sing).

CHORUS. Bread, means of earning, wood for fuel in winter, rcst in the summer! Hurrah! Hurrah!

God had no mercy on us—Hurrah, hurrah!
Kings had no mercy on us—Hurrah, hurrah!
Masters had no mercy on us—Hurrah, hurrah!
To-day we leave the service of God. the king and our masters. Hurrah, hurrah!

THE MAN. *(to a girl).* I am glad you are so rosy and so merry.

THE GIRL. Long have we waited for this day, and I, of course, washed plates and rubbed forks with a cloth and never heard one good word. Now it is time—high time—for me myself to eat and myself to dance. Hurrah!

THE MAN. Dance, Citizeness!

THE BAPTIZED JEW. *(softly).* For heaven's sake, honourable Sir, someone might recognize you! Let us go!

THE MAN. If I am recognized, you perish! Let us go on.

THE BAPTIZED JEW. Beneath this tree sit the members of a lackeys'club.

THE MAN. Let us approach them!

FIRST LACKEY. Now I have killed my former master.

SECOND LACKEY. I am still looking for my baron. Your health!

A BUTLER. Citizens, once bent over the boot-trees in sweat and humiliation, shining boots, cutting hair, we felt what our rights were. The whole club's health!

CHORUS OF LACKEYS. The President's health! He will lead us along the road to honour.

THE BUTLER. Thank you, citizens!

CHORUS OF LACKEYS. Out of the ante-rooms, our prisons, we rushed together, with one accord, one impulse. Hurrah! We know the absurdity of drawingrooms well, and their lasciviousness. Hurrah, hurrah!

THE MAN. What voices are those, harder and wilder, proceeding from that thicket on the left?

THE BAPTIZED JEW. That is the butchers' chorus, honoured sir!

CHORUS OF BUTCHERS. The axe and the knife are our weapons, the shambles is our life. It is all the same to us whether we slaughter cattle or masters.

We, children of strength and blood, look with indifference on weaker and whiter folk. He who calls upon us has our services. For the masters we shall kill oxen and for the people masters!

The axe and the knife are our weapons. The shambles is our life. The shambles, the shambles, the shambles, the shambles!

THE MAN. I like these men. At least they mention neither honour nor philosophy. Good evening, madam!

THE BAPTIZED JEW. *(softly)*. Honoured sir, say "citizeness" or "free woman".

THE WOMAN. What does that title mean? Whence came it? Fie, fie you stink of old clothes!

THE MAN. My tongue got tangled.

THE WOMAN. I am as free as you, a free woman, and, since society has acknowledged my rights, I distribute my love to its members.

THE MAN. And again society, in return for that, gave you those rings and that chain of amethysts. Oh doubly beneficent society!

THE WOMAN. No, those trifles I tore, before my liberation, from my husband, from mine enemy, from the enemy of liberty, who kept me bound.

THE MAN. I wish the citizeness a pleasant walk. *(He passes on).*

Who is this strange soldier, leaning on his two-edged sabre, with a death's head on his cap, another on his baldric, and another on his breast? Is he not the famous Bianchetti, to-day such a mercenary of the peoples, as others were formerly of princes and governments?

THE BAPTIZED JEW. It is the same, Honoured Sir—He only came to us a week ago.

THE MAN. What were you meditating about, general?

BIANCHETTI. Do you see, citizen, that gap among the maple trees? Look hard—You will descry a castle there on a hill. I see its walls, its trenches and its four bastions quite well through my telescope.

THE MAN. It will be hard to take it.

BIANCHETTI. A hundred thousand kings! One might surround it with a ditch, undermine it and—

THE BAPTIZED JEW. Citizen General!

THE MAN. *(in a low voice).* Do you feel that pistol cocked under my cloak?

THE BAPTIZED JEW. Oh dear! *(Aloud)* So how have you arranged it, citizen General?

BIANCHETTI. *(musing).* Although you are my brothers in liberty, you are not my brothers in genius. After the victory all will come to know of my plans.

THE MAN. *(to the baptized Jew).* I advise you to kill him, for so begins every aristocracy.

AN ARTISAN. Curse it! Curse it!

THE MAN. What are you doing there, under that tree, poor man—Why do you look so wildly, with such dim eyes?

THE ARTISAN. Curses on the merchants, on the factory directors—I wearied in a narrow room at a silk loom, through my best years, in which other men love girls, fight in the open field or sail on the open seas.

THE MAN. Empty the goblet you hold in your hand.

THE ARTISAN. I have no strength—I cannot raise it to my mouth. I have scarce crept here, but the day of liberty will never dawn for me now. Curses on the merchants who sell silk and on the masters who wear it—Curse them—curse them! *(He dies).*

THE BAPTIZED JEW. What an ugly corpse!

THE MAN. Oh coward of liberty, citizen Jew baptized, look on that lifeless head inundated with the bloody glow of the setting sun! Where now are your

phrases, your promises—your equality, the perfection and happiness of the human race?

THE BAPTIZED JEW. *(aside).* May you, too, die before your time and may dogs tear your corpse in pieces! *(Aloud)* Let me go—I must report on my mission!

THE MAN. You will say that I took you for a spy and therefore kept you. *(He looks round him).* The echoes from the feast grow faint behind me. Before us there are but pines and red firs, bathed in the rays of the setting sun.

THE BAPTIZED JEW. Clouds are gathering above the trees. You had best return to your own people. Besides they have been awaiting you a long while in Saint Ignatius' ravine.

THE MAN. Thank you for your care, master Jew! Back! I want to look at the citizens once more in the twilight.

A VOICE AMONG THE TREES. The son of boors bids the old sun goodnight!

A VOICE ON THE RIGHT. Your health, oh former enemy of ours, who drove us to work and labour—Tomorrow, when you rise, you will find your slaves seated at meat with pots of drink beside them. And now, glass, go to the devil!

THE BAPTIZED JEW. A procession of peasants is passing this way.

THE MAN. You won't get away. Stand behind that tree trunk and be silent!

CHORUS OF PEASANTS. Forward, forward! To the tents, to our brethren! Forward, forward! To the shade of the maple trees, to sleep, to pleasant, evening gossip! There girls expect us, there slaughtered oxen, once harnessed to the plough, await us.

A VOICE. I am pulling him and dragging him but he grows wrath and resists me. Come on to the recruiting station, come!

A MASTER'S VOICE. My children, mercy, mercy!

A SECOND VOICE. Give me back all my days of socage.

A THIRD VOICE. Restore my son to life, oh master, from under the Cossacks' whips!

A FOURTH VOICE. The boors drink your health, master! They beg your pardon, master!

CHORUS OF PEASANTS. *(passing by).* The vampire sucked our blood and sweat—we have the vampire—we will not let the vampire go—by the devil, by the devil, you shall die high up, like a master, like a great lord, lifted high above us all. Death to the masters and the tyrants—It is for us, the poor, the hungry, the weary, to eat, sleep and drink. Like sheaves on a field shall their corpses be, like chaff on the threshing floor, like the ashes of their castles!—Forward, by our scythes, hatchets and sickles, brethren, forward!

THE MAN. I could not descry the face amid the troop.

THE BAPTIZED JEW. Perhaps he was some friend or kinsman of yours, honoured Sir!

THE MAN. I scorn them and I hate you—Poetry will gild all that rabble one day. Go on, Jew, go on! *(He runs in among the bushes).*

. . . . . .

Another part of the forest—A hill with fires lit—A gathering of people by torchlight.

THE MAN. *(at the bottom of the hill, coming out from among the trees, with the Baptized Jew).* The bushes have torn my cap of liberty to rags. And what hill is this, with its ruddy flames, rising between two walls of woods, 'twixt those two piles of darkness?

THE BAPTIZED JEW. We have gone astray, seeking the Saint Ignatius gorge. Back into the shrubs, for here Leonard is celebrating the rites of the new faith!

THE MAN. *(ascending the hill).* Forward, forward, by God! This is just what I wished. Do not fear for none will recognize us.

THE BAPTIZED JEW. Carefully, slowly!

THE MAN. All round lie the ruins of some giant thing, which must have stood for ages ere it fell—pillars, plinths, capitals, quartered statues, scattered

ornaments, with which ancient vaulting was encircled, and now a broken pane glimmered beneath my feet—it seems as though the face of God's Mother looked out a moment from the darkness and now it is dark again. Here, look, lies a whole arcade—here is an iron grating, covered with rubble. Up higher the flash of a torch gleamed. I see half a knight, sleeping on half a grave—where am I, guide?

THE BAPTIZED JEW. Our people worked tooth and nail for forty days and nights, until at last they had demolished the last church on these plains. Just now we are passing the cemetery.

THE MAN. Your songs, oh new people, sound bitter in mine ears! Black forms press in behind, before, on both sides, and the gleams and the shadows, driven by the wind, move about in crowds, like living souls.

A PASSER BY. I greet you both in the name of liberty!

ANOTHER PASSER BY. By the death of the masters, I greet you both!

A THIRD PASSER BY. Why don't you hasten, there the priests of liberty are singing?

THE BAPTIZED JEW. We cannot stand against the crowd—They push us on every side.

THE MAN. Who is that young man standing on the ruins of the sanctuary? Three camp fires

are burning below him and amidst their smoke and glow, his face burns, his voice has a sound of madness!

THE BAPTIZED JEW. That is Leonard, the inspired prophet of liberty—round him stand our priests, our philosophers, our poets, our artists with their daughters and mistresses.

THE MAN. Ha—Your aristocracy—Show me the man who sent you.

THE BAPTIZED JEW. I don't see him here.

LEONARD. Give her to me that I may press her to my lips, my breast, that I may embrace her, give me my beautiful one, independent, liberated, stripped of coverings and prejudices, chosen among the daughters of liberty, my betrothed!

A GIRL'S VOICE. I burst forth towards thee, my beloved!

SECOND VOICE Look! I stretch out my arms to thee—I fall fainting I roll among the ruins, my beloved!

THIRD VOICE. I have forestalled them, through ashes and glowing faggots, through fire and smoke, I step toward thee, my beloved!

THE MAN. With loosened hair, with panting breast, she makes her way up the ruins, with passionate leapings.

THE BAPTIZED JEW. It happens thus each night.

LEONARD. Come to me, come, oh my delight, oh daughter of liberty! Didst thou quiver in divine frenzy? Oh inspiration, possess my soul! Listen all, now I will prophesy to you!

THE MAN. She has bent her head, she is fainting.

LEONARD. We two are an image of the human race, liberated, arising from the dead. See, I stand on the ruins of the old forms, of the old divinity. Glory be to us, for we tore his limbs apart, now they are dust and powder—and our spirits have conquered his—his spirit has gone down into nothingness.

CHORUS OF WOMEN. Oh happy, happy, betrothed of the prophet, we stand down here below and envy her glory!

LEONARD. I proclaim a new world. I give Heaven to a new God. Oh Lord of liberty and of delight, oh people's god, let each victim of vengeance, the corpse of each oppressor, be thine altar! The old tears and sufferings of the human race will drown in an ocean of blood. Its life will henceforth be happiness, its law equality. — And the man who makes another law will have the halter and cursing for his portion.

CHORUS OF MEN. The edifice of oppression has fallen—Death and a curse unto him who raises even a stone of it!

THE BAPTIZED JEW. *(aside)*. Oh blasphemer of Jehovah, I spit three times, calling down ruin upon you!

THE MAN. Oh eagle, keep thy promise, and here, upon their necks, I will build another church to Christ!

MINGLED VOICES. Freedom, happiness, hurrah, hey, hallo, hurrah, hurrah!

CHOIR OF PRIESTS. Where are the masters, where are the kings, who lately walked about the earth, with sceptres and in crowns, in pride and wrath?

A MURDERER. I killed King Alexander.

ANOTHER. I killed King Henry.

A THIRD I killed King Emmanuel.

LEONARD Go without fear and murder without remorse; for you are chosen among the chosen, holy among the most holy, for you are martyrs, heroes of liberty.—

CHORUS OF MURDERERS. Let us go in the dark night, gripping our daggers in our hands, let us go!

LEONARD. Awaken, my beautiful one!

(A clap of thander is heard).

Now, answer to the living God—Lift up your songs—Fol-

low me all, of you, all! Let us once more go round and trample the temple of the dead God.

And thou, lift thine head, arise and awaken!

THE GIRL. I burn with love toward thee and toward thy God, I deal this love of mine out to the whole world—I flame—I flame.—

THE MAN. Someone has crossed his way—has fallen on his knees—is wrestling with himself, babbling something, moaning something.

THE BAPTIZED JEW. I see, I see, that is the famous philosopher's son.

LEONARD. What do you want Herman?

HERMAN. High priest! Give me the murderer's consecration!

LEONARD. *(to the priests)*. Give me oil, a dagger and poison. *(To Herman)*. With the oil with which kings were formerly anointed, I anoint thee to-day to the ruin of kings.

I place the weapon of former knights and masters in thine hands, that they may perish. I hang upon thy breast this medal, full of poison. There where thy iron cannot reach, let it eat and burn the inner parts of tyrants. Go and destroy the old generation on all sides of the world!

THE MAN. He has left his place and, at the head of a procession, moves over the hill.

THE BAPTIZED JEW. Let us get out of his way.

THE MAN. No, I want to see the end of this dream.

THE BAPTIZED JEW. I spit upon you thrice. *(To the man)*. Leonard may recognize me, Honoured Sir, look how the knife hangs on his breast!

THE MAN. Cover yourself with my cloak. What women are those that dance before him?

THE BAPTIZED JEW. Countesses and princesses who, having left their hushands, have been converted to our faith.

THE MAN. Once my angels! The common people have quite surrounded him—I have lost sight of him in the crowd. Only by the music I recognize that he is moving further from us. Follow me! Hence we can see better.

(He climbs on to a fragment of wall).

THE BAPTIZED JEW. Oh dear! Oh dear! Anyone can see us here.

THE MAN. I see him again. Other women press after him, pale, insane, in convulsions. The philosopher's son is foaming and shaking his dagger. Now they have reached the ruins of the northern tower.

They have stood still. They are dancing on the ruins. They are tearing down the arcades that remain standing yet. They are scattering sparks on the fallen altars and crosses. The flame catches and chases pillars of smoke before it. Woe unto you, woe!

LEONARD. Woe unto those who still are kneeling before the dead God!

THE MAN. The black billows are turning round and rushing towards us.

THE BAPTIZED JEW. Oh Abraham!

THE MAN. Oh eagle! But my hour is not yet so near.

THE BAPTIZED JEW. It is all over with us.

LEONARD. *(coming up to them and stopping).* And who are you, my brother, with such a proud face?

THE MAN. I have hastened from afar at the sound of your uprising. I am a murderer belonging to the Spanish club, and have only come to-day.

LEONARD. And this other who is hiding in the folds of your cloak.

THE MAN. He is my younger brother, who has vowed not to show himself to human eyes until he has killed at least a baron.

LEONARD. And you, in whose death do you glory?

THE MAN. Only two days before I set forth did the elder brothers consecrate me.

LEONARD. Who are you thinking of?

THE MAN. Of you first of all, if you break your faith with us.

LEONARD. Brother, take my dagger for that purpose. *(He draws the dagger from his belt).*

THE MAN. *(draws his own dagger).* Brother, my own will do for that.

VOICES OF THE PEOPLE. Long live Leonard! Long live the Spanish murderer!

LEONARD. Present yourself at the General's tent to-morrow.

CHORUS OF PRIESTS. We hail thee, guest, in the name of the spirit of liberty. In thy hand lies partly our salvation. He who fights continually, who murders without weakness, who day and night believes in victory, will win at last. *(They pass by).*

CHORUS OF PHILOSOPHERS. We have dragged the human race out of childishness. We have torn truth out of the womb of darkness into the light of day. It is thy affair to fight, to murder, and to perish for its sake. *(They pass by).*

A PHILOSOPHER'S SON. Brother comrades, I drink to yo ur health, out of the skull of an old saint. Goodbye. *(He throws the skull down).*

A GIRL. *(dancing).* Kill Prince John for me!

ANOTHER GIRL. And Count Henry for me!

CHILDREN. Do please give us an aristocrat's head!

OTHER VOICES. May good fortune attend your dagger!

CHORUS OF ARTISTS. On the Gothic ruins of the temple we build another. There are neither statues nor pictures in it, the vaulting is in the form of long poniards. The pillars are as eight human heads, and the top of each pillar has, as it were, hair from which blood drips. The altar alone is white. There is but one symbol upon it—a cap of liberty. Hurrah, hurrah!

OTHER VOICES. On, on, the day is breaking now!

THE BAPTIZED JEW. Very soon they will hang us. Where is the gallows?

THE MAN. Be silent, Jew! They are rushing after Leonard, they are no longer looking at us. I take in with a glance, for the last time I grasp the thought that has animated this chaos, this chaos which is drawn out of the deep of time, out of the womb of darkness, to the ruin of one and all my brothers—Pursued by frenzy, borne away by despair, my thought whirls round with all its might.

God, give me that power which Thou didst not deny me aforetime — and I will comprehend this whole new, immense world in one word—it does not understand itself. But that word of mine will be the poetry of all the past.

A VOICE IN THE AIR. You're composing a drama.

THE MAN. Thanks for your counsel. Revenge for the shamed ashes of my fathers! A curse on the new generation! Their whirlpool is all around me, but it shall not draw me with it. Oh eagle, eagle, keep thy promise! And now, come down with me to Saint Ignatius'gorge!

THE BAPTIZED JEW. The day is near at hand. I will go no further.

THE MAN. Find the way for me and then I will let you go.

THE BAPTIZED JEW Where do you drag me to, amid mists and ruins, thorns and ashes? Have mercy, mercy!

THE MAN Forward, forward and downward with me. The last song of the people dies into the distance behind us. Now scarcely a torch glimmers. 'Mid these pale vapours, these dew-bathed trees, do you see any shadow of the future, do you hear sounds of mourning?

THE BAPTIZED JEW. The mist swathes all things. We go ever downward.

CHORUS OF SPIRITS FROM THE WOOD. Let us weep for the Christ, for the exiled, tortured Christ! Where is our God, where is His church?

THE MAN. Swifter and swifter—to arms, to the fight!

I will give Him back to you. I will crucify His enemies on a thousand crosses.

CHORUS OF SPIRITS. We have guarded His altars and the memorials of the Saints—We faithful ones have borne upon our wings the echo of His bells. Our voices were in the tones of the organ—In the gleams from the cathedral panes, in the shadows of its pillars, in the shining of the holy cup, in the blessing of the Lord's Body was our life. Whither shall we go now?

THE MAN. The light is growing brighter—Their forms fade in the rays of the rising sun.

THE BAPTIZED JEW. This is our way. There is the mouth of the ravine.

THE MAN. Hey! Jesus and my sword! *(Tearing off his cap and folding some money in it).* As a memorial take the thing and its symbol at once.

THE BAPTIZED JEW. Honoured Sir, you have given me your word for his safety who comes this midnight.—

THE MAN. A noble does not repeat his given word. Jesus and my sword!

VOICES AMONG THE BUSHES Mary and our swords! Long live our master!

THE MAN. Faithful, souls, come to me. Farewell, citizen. Faithful souls to me!—Jesus and Mary!

. . . . . .

Night—Shrubs—Trees.

PANCRAS. *(to his men).* Lie down with your faces on the grass—Lie very silently. Light no fire, not even for a pipe, and, on the first shot rush to my help. If no shot is heard, stir not till day has come.

LEONARD. Citizen, once more I conjure you—

PANCRAS. Stand you close to that pine, and meditate.

LEONARD. Take me at least with you. He is a master, an aristocrat, a liar.

PANCRAS. *(commands him by a gesture to remain behind).* The old gentry sometimes keeps its word.

. . . . . .

An oblong room—Pictures of ladies and knights hanging on the walls—In the background there is a column with a coat of arms hanging npon it. The Man is sitting at a marble table ou which there is a lamp, a pair of pistols, a broadsword and a watch. Opposite him is another table with silver jugs and goblets.

THE MAN. Once long ago, at the same time of night, 'midst threatening dangers and thoughts like mine are now, Brutus saw Caesar's genius.

And I, to-day, await a like appearance. In a moment there will stand before me a nameless man without forefathers or guar-

dian angels, a man who made his way out of nothingness, and who, perchance, will begin a new epoch if I do not repulse him, dash him down into annihilation. Forefathers mine, inspire me with that which made you masters of the world! Put all your lion hearts into my breast. Crown my brows with all the glory that wreathes yours! May there enter into me that blind, inexorable, seething faith in Christ and His Church which inspired your deeds on earth—that hope of immortal glory in Heaven—and then I will kill and burn the enemy—I, the son of a hundred generations, the last heir of your thoughts and actions, your virtues and your faults! *(Midnight strikes).*

Now I am ready! *(He gets up).*

AN ARMED MANSERVANT. *(entering).* Honoured Sir, the man who was to come is here and waiting.

THE MAN. Let him come in!

(Exit the servant).

PANCRAS. *(entering).* Count Henry, I greet you! That word "Count" sounds strangely in my throat. *(He sits down, throws off his cloak and cap of liberty and fixes his eye upon the column on which the coat of arms hangs).*

THE MAN Thank you that you have trusted my house. Following an old custom, I drink to your health *(he takes up a goblet, drinks from it and offers it to Pancras).* Guest mine, into your hands!

PANCRAS. If I mistake not, those red and blue signs

are called armorial bearings in the language of the dead. May there be ever fewer of those signs upon the earth! *(He drinks).*

THE MAN. With God's help, you shall soon see thousands of them.

PANCRAS. *(taking away the cup from his lips).* There spoke the gentry of old! Always sure of its own way! Proud, persevering, with a blooming hope but without a farthing, without arms or soldiers—threatening, like the dead man in the fable, the coachman at the cemetery gate—believing or pretending to believe in God—for it were hard for it to believe in itself. But show me the thunderbolts sent down in your defence and the angel hosts come down from heaven! *(he drinks).*

THE MAN. Laugh at your own words! Atheism is an ancient formula. I expected something new from you.

PANCRAS. Laugh at your own words! I have a stronger, immenser faith than yours. The groan drawn forth by despair and pain from thousands upon thousands—the hunger of the artisan—the misery of the peasant—the shame of their wives and daughters—the humiliation of humanity, enslaved by superstition, hesitation and by the custom of the herd, that is my thought—my power—which will distribute bread and honour to them forever and forever. *(He drinks and throws down the goblet).*

THE MAN. I have set my strength in the Lord who gave my fathers rule.

PANCRAS. And all your life you have been the devil's plaything.

Besides, I leave that discussion to divines, if any pedant of that profession still lives in all this neighbourhood. To business! To business!

THE MAN. Then what do you want with me, oh Saviour of the nations, oh citizen god?

PANCRAS. I came here because I wished to meet you, and then, to save you.

THE MAN. For the first I am grateful to you—for the second—trust my sword.

PANCRAS. Your sword is—glass, your God—a phantom. You are damned by the voices of thousands, encircled by the weapons of thousands—A few acres of earth remain with you—scarce enough for your graves. You cannot hold out twenty days. Where are your guns, your equipment and your stores—and then, where is your courage?

Were I you, I know what I should do.

THE MAN. I am listening. See how patient I am!

PANCRAS. Then I, Count Henry, would say to Pancras:—"All right, I dissolve my one troop. I shall not go to the relief of the Holy Trinity castle—

and, in return, I shall keep my name and property, the integrity of which you secure me by your word".

How old are you, citizen?

THE MAN. Thirty six, citizen.

PANCRAS. Fifteen years more at most—for such men live not long. Your son is nearer the grave than youth. One exception will not hurt the masses. Be then, the last count on these plains. Reign till your death in your forefathers' home. Have their pictures painted and their arms carved and think no more of these wretches. Let the decree of the people be carried out upon the villains. *(He pours himself out a second goblet).*

Your health, last count!

THE MAN. You offend me with every word you speak. You seem to be trying if you can make me a slave in the moment of your triumph. Cease, for I cannot resent it on you! The providence of my word is your guard.

PANCRAS. Holy honour, knightly honour has come upon the scene—that is a faded rag in the standard of humanity. Oh, I know you, I see through you. You are full of life and you join the dying, for you deceive yourself, for you wish to go on believing in caste, in your great-grandmother's bones, in the words "my country" and so forth. But in the depth of your soul you know yourself that your brethren should be punished, and, after that, forgotten.

THE MAN. And with you and yours it should be otherwise?

PANCRAS. For us victory and life. One only law I recognize and before it I bow my head—By that law the world sweeps round in ever wider circles. That law is your ruin and cries now through my mouth:—

"Oh ye decrepit, ye worm-eaten, ye full of food and drink, make way for the young, the hungry and the strong!"

But I would save you—you alone.

THE MAN. May you perish miserably for that pity of yours! I too, know the world and you. I looked amid the shadows of night upon the dancing of the rabble, upon whose necks you climbed. I saw there all the old crimes of the world, dressed in new robes, whirling in a new dance. But their end will be the same as it was thousands of years ago—vice, gold and blood. And you were not there, you did not deign to step down among your children, for, in the depths of your spirit you scorned them. A few moments yet and, if your reason fail you not, you will scorn yourself as well.

Torment me no more! *(He sits down under his coat of arms).*

PANCRAS. My world has not yet deployed out in the field—there I agree—It has not yet reached a giant's growth. Up to this present time it longs for bread and ease—But the time will come—*(he stands up, goes towards the Man and leans against the pillar on which hangs the*

coat of arms). But the time will come when the people understands itself and says:—"I am!" and there will be no other voice in the world which will then be able to answer "I am".

Of this generation which I nurse with my strength of will, there will come a race, the last, the highest, the bravest. The earth has not yet seen such men. They are free people, her masters from pole to pole. And she herself is one flourishing town, one happy home, one workshop of wealth and industry.

THE MAN. Your words lie—but your pale, moveless face cannot feign inspiration.

PANCRAS. Interrupt not, for there are men who have begged me on their knees for such words as these and I stinted them.

There rests the God who will never die, the God from whose face the labour and torment of ages has torn the veil, the God conquered in heaven by His own children, whom He once cast down to earth, but now they have penetrated to the truth and hold it. The God of humanity has appeared to them.

THE MAN. And to us, centuries ago—Humanity has been saved by Him already.

PANCRAS. I wish it joy of such salvation—Two thousand years of misery, proceeding from His crucifixion.

THE MAN. I saw that cross, blasphemer, in old, old Rome. At its feet lay the ruins of a might-

ier might than yours. A hundred gods like yours had gone down into the dust and durst not raise their mutilated heads towards Him. And He stood on the heights, stretching out His holy arms to the east and west, bathing His holy brow in the sun rays—and it was plain that He was Lord of all the world.

PANCRAS. An old tale, empty as the clatter of thy coat of arms! *(he hits the shield).*

But I read your thoughts long ago, and if you can reach into infinity, if you love the truth and seek it sincerely—if you are a man made in man's image and not in the image of a nurse's song, listen and do not cast away this moment of salvation! Of the blood we both will shed to-day there will be no trace to-morrow. For the last time I say it. If you are he who once you seemed to be, arise, forsake your house and follow me!

THE MAN. You are Satan's younger brother *(he rises and walks about).* Vain dreams—who shall fulfil them? Adam perished in the wilderness—we shall not reenter paradise.

PANCRAS. *(aside)* I have bent my finger beneath his very heart—I have touched the nerve of poetry—.

THE MAN. Progress, the happiness of the human race—I once believed in it. There you have it, take my head, if only... The die is cast!—A hundred years ago—two centuries ago we might yet have come to terms—

but now I know, there must be mutual murder—for now there is alone in question the changing of a race.

PANCRAS. Woe to the vanquished! Hesitate not! Repeat "woe" only once and win with us!

THE MAN. Have you threaded the maze of destiny? Did destiny, in visible form stand by the entrance to your tent at night and bless you with a giant hand? Or did you in the day time hear its voice at noon, when all slept in the heat and you alone did meditate?—that you thus menace me with victory, oh man of clay, as I am, slave to the first chance bullet, the first chance sabre cut!

PANCRAS. Do not delude yourself with vain hopes, for lead will not scathe me nor iron touch me whilst one of you resists my work. What may come later is not your affair.

(The clock strikes).

Time mocks us both. If you are weary of life, save your son at least.

THE MAN. His soul is pure, already saved in heaven, and on earth his father's fate awaits him. *(He bows his head between his hands and stands still).*

PANCRAS. So you refuse?

(A moment of silence).

You speak not—You meditate—God! Let him meditate who stands above a grave.

THE MAN. Hands off the mysteries which, beyond the bounds of your thought, are taking place within the depths of my spirit! The world of flesh belongs to you—fat it with food, pour blood and wine over it—but go further—and away, away from me!

PANCRAS. Oh servant of one thought and of its forms, oh pedant knight and poet, shame on you! Look on me—thoughts and forms are as wax under my fingers!

THE MAN. It is in vain. You will never understand me, for each one of your fathers was buried with the common rabble, like a dead thing, not like a man with strength and spirit. *(He stretches out his hand toward the pictures).*

Look on those figures—The thought of their country, their home, their family—that thought, your enemy, is writ in lines upon their brows—and that which was in them and passes on, that lives in me to-day—But you, oh man, tell me where is your land? At evening time you pitch your tent on the ruins of another's home. At sunrise you strike your tent and camp further on. Till now you have not found your home and will not find it until a hundred men say after me "Glory be to our forefathers!"

PANCRAS. Yes, glory to your ancestors on earth and in heaven—Of a truth they are something to see!

That one, a starost, shot from behind the trees at old women and roasted Jews alive. That one with the seal in his hand, sign-

ing himself "Chancellor", falsified documents, burned records, bribed judges and hastened legacies with poison. Hence come your estates, income, power. That one, with blackish hair, committed adultery in his friend's house. He with the Order of the Golden Fleece, in Italian chain-mail, served, it is plain, with foreigners and that pale lady with the dark ringlets polluted herself with her page—That one, again, reads now her lover's letter, and smiles, for night is near—She with the small dog lying on her dress was a king's mistress. There is your pedigree, unbroken, without stain. I like that man in the green doublet—He drank and hunted with his brother gentry and sent the peasants to chase the deer with dogs. The folly and misfortune of the whole land—that is your sense and power. But the Judgment Day is nigh at hand and in that day I promise that I shall forget none of you, none of your fathers and none of your glory.

THE MAN. You err, oh townsman's son! Nor you nor one of yours would be alive had not the kindness of my fathers fed you and their power defended you. They dealt out wheat to you in times of famine, they built you hospitals when pestilence was rife—and when you rose from beasts to babes, they built you schools and churches. In war they let you stay at home, knowing you were not for the field of battle.

Your words break against their glory, as did the arrows of the heathen on their holy shields long ago—They do not even stir their ashes—they are lost like the whining of a mad

dog that runs and foams till it dies somewhere by the wayside. And now it is time for you to leave my house. Oh guest, I let you go free!—

PANCRAS. Goodbye, until we meet in the trenches of the Holy Trinity—and when powder and bullets run short...

THE MAN. Then we shall approach each other at our sabres' length. Goodbye!

PANCRAS. Two eagles are we, but our nest is shattered by a thunderbolt. *(He takes his cloak and cap of liberty).*

Passing over this threshold I curse it, with the curse that is due to things old. You and your son with you I devote to destruction.

THE MAN. Here, James!

(Enter James).

Conduct this man to my furthest outposts on the hill.

JAMES. So help me God! *(Exit).*

PART IV.

From the Holy Trinity bastions up to the tops of all the rocks, on the right and on the left, behind and before lies snowy mist, pale, motionless, silent, a phantom ocean, which once had its shores, where there are black summits, sharp and ragged, and its depths, where there is an unseen valley and a sun which has not yet pierced the mists.

On a bare, granite island stand the towers of a castle, sunk deep into the rock, by the toil of former men, as 'twere its very part, like the human breast and backbone of a centaur. Above them floats a standard, alone, on the highest point, against the grey of the sky.

Slowly the sleeping distances awake. On the mountain the roaring of the winds is heard—below the sun-rays break their way, and the cloud drift rushes over that sea of vapour.

Then other, human, voices mingle with the light storm and, borne on its misty billows, beat against the base of the castle.

A precipice is seen in the plain's midst, where that plain has broken in twain. Down in its depths it is black with human heads. The whole valley is covered with men's heads as the depth of the sea with rocks.

The sun moves downward from the hills to the rocks. The clouds rise up in gold and melt, and, as they disappear, the tumult grows more audible, the moving crowd below is better seen.

The mists have lifted from the hills and now they die in the nothingness of the heaven, The valley of the Holy Trinity is flooded with light, gleaming with weapons and the people move towards it from evcry side, as to the plain of the Last Doom.

The Cathedral in Holy Trinity Castle.
Gentlemen, senators and dignitaries are sitting on both sides, each below the statue of some ktng or knight. Behind the statues there is a erowd of gentry. Before the high altar, in the background is the Archbishop, in a gilt chair, with a sword upon his knees. Behind the altar there is a choir of priests. The Man stands for a moment upon the threshold, and then begins to move slowly, with a standard in his hand, towards the Archbishop.

CHOIR OF PRIESTS. Thy last servants, in Thy Son's last church, implore Thee for the honour of our fathers—Save us, oh Lord, from the enemy!

FIRST COUNT. See how proudly he looks upon all!

SECOND COUNT. He thinks he has conquered the world.

THIRD COUNT. And all he did was to make his way by night through a peasants' camp.

FIRST COUNT. He laid a hundred low and lost two hundred of his own.

SECOND COUNT. We will not let him be chosen leader.

THE MAN. *(kneels before the Archbishop).* I lay my spoils at thy feet.

THE ARCHBISHOP. Gird on this sword, once blessed by Saint Florian's hand!

VOICES. Long live Count Henry! Long may he live!

THE ARCHBISHOP. And receive, with the sign of the Holy Cross, leadership in this castle, which is our last state. By the will of all I name thee leader.

VOICES. Long may he live—long may he live!

ONE VOICE. I forbid it.

OTHER VOICES. Out with him—out! Put him out! Long live Henry!

THE MAN. If any man has aught to reproach me with, let him come forward, and not hide amid the crowd.

(A moment of silence).

Father, I take this sabre and may God ordain for me an early death, before my time, if I fail to save you with it!

CHOIR OF PRIESTS. Give him strength, Give him the Holy Spirit, Lord! Save us, oh Lord, from the enemy!

THE MAN. Now swear all that ye will defend the faith and honour of your fathers that hunger and thirst may bring you to death but not to shame or

surrender or to the yielding up of even one of God's rights or your own!

VOIGES. We swear!

(The Archbishop kneels and raises the cross. All present kneel).

CHOIR. May he who breaks his oath be burdened with Thine anger! May the timid be burdened with Thine anger! May the traitor be burdened with Thine anger!

VOICES. We swear!

THE MAN. *(draws the sword).* Now I promise you glory—Win victory from God by prayer! *(Exit, surrounded by the crowd).*

. . . . . .

One of the courtyards of Holy Trinity Castle. The Man—Counts—Barons—Dukes and Gentry.

A COUNT. *(leading the Man aside).* How goes it? Is all lost?

THE MAN. Not all, unless your hearts fail you before the time.

THE COUNT. Before what time?

THE MAN. Before death.

A BARON. *(leads the Man aside in another direction).* Count, it seems you met that dreadful

man. Will he have even a little pity on us when we fall into his hands?

THE MAN. Verily I say unto you, that none of your fathers ever heard of such pity as his—

It is called the gallows.

THE BARON. We must defend ourselves, then, as we can.

THE MAN. What do you say, Duke?

THE DUKE. A few words with you apart! *(He moves away with him).*

That's all right for the common herd, but, between ourselves, 'tis plain we can't hold out.

THE MAN. What then remains?

THE DUKE. You were chosen leader, and so it is your part to begin negociations.

THE MAN. Not so loud—Not so loud!

THE DUKE. Why?

THE MAN. Because, Your Grace, you deserve already to die. *(He turns away to the crowd).*

The man who speaks of surrender shall be punished with death!

ALL. With death! With death! Hurrah! *(Exeunt omnes).*

. . . . . .

A balcony at the summit of a tower—The Man—James.

THE MAN. Where is my son?

JAMES. He is sitting in the northern tower, on the threshold of the old prison and singing prophecies.

THE MAN. Garrison the Eleanor bastion most strongly! Move not thence, and every few minutes look with a telescope at the rebels' camp!

JAMES. 'Twould be worth while, as God is my help, to deal out, for encouragement, a glass of brandy to each man.

THE MAN. If need be, order even the cellars of our counts and dukes to be opened.

(Exit James—the Man goes up a few steps to the standard itself, on a flat terrace).

With all the sight of mine eyes, with all the hatred of my heart do I encircle you, oh encmies of mine! Now not alone with my poor voice or fainting inspiration will I fight with you but with iron and with the men who have made me their leader.

How good it is to be a master, a ruler—to look, though from a deathbed, upon the wills of others gathered round me, and upon you, my adversaries, plunged in the abyss, crying to me from out its depths as the damned cry to heaven.

Yet a few days and perhaps I shall perish with all these wretches who have forgotten their great fathers—But, be it as it

may, a few days still remain, I shall enjoy their blisses to the full. I shall rule, I shall fight, I shall live. That is my final song.

The sun is rising above the mountains in a long, black coffin of vapour. Blood from all sides is poured in rays upon the valley.—Prophetic omens of my death, I greet you with a sincere and more open heart than erstwhile I greeted the promises of mirth, the illusions of love!

For not by way of mean labour, not by stratagem nor yet by craftiness have I reached my goal—But suddenly, by surprise, as I had always dreamt to do.

Now here I stand on the frontier of endless sleep, leader of all those who but yesterday were my equals!

. . . . . .

A room in the castle, lit by torches. George is sitting on a bed. The Man enters and puts his weapons on the table.

THE MAN. Leave a hundred men on the redoubts—Let the others rest after so long a battle.

VOICE FROM OUTSIDE THE DOOR. So help me God!

THE MAN. No doubt you heard the shots and echoes of our sally. But be of good cheer, my child, we shall fall neither to-day nor to-morrow.

GEORGIE. I heard, but that did not touch my heart. The din passed and is gone. But there is something else that makes me tremble.

THE MAN You feared for me?

GEORGIE. No, for I know that your hour has not yet come.

THE MAN. We are alone—a load has fallen from my soul for to-day, for there in the valley lie the bodies of conquered enemies. Come, tell me all your thoughts—I shall listen to them as once at home.

GEORGIE. Follow me, follow, father—for there a dreadful judgment is every night repeated! *(He goes towards a door hidden in the wall and opens it).*

THE MAN. Whither are you going? Who showed you that passage? There are eternally dark dungeons, there rot the bones of former victims.

GEORGIE. Where your eye, used to the sun, sees not—there can my spirit walk.—Darkness, go down to darkness! *(He goes down the steps).*

. . . . . .

Underground dungeons—Iron bars, chains and instruments of torture, broken and lying on the ground. The Man stands holding a torch, at the base of the rock on which Georgie is standing.

THE MAN. Come down, I implore you, come down to me!

GEORGIE. Do you not hear their voices and see their forms?

THE MAN. There is a grave-like silence, and the torch only lights up a few steps before us.

GEORGIE. Nearer and nearer, more and more visible—They come from under the low vaulting and sit there in the depths.

THE MAN. In your madness is my damnation—You are mad, child—and you destroy my strength when I need it so much.

GEORGIE. I see with my spirit their, pale, serious forms, assembling for that dreadful judgment. The accused is coming now, floating like mist.

CHORUS OF VOICES. With the strength given us as recompense for our torments, we, once chained, once scourged, tortured and torn with iron, we, given poison for our drink, we, stoned with bricks and gravel, let us torment and judge, judge and condemn, and Satan will see to the punishment!

THE MAN. What do you see?

GEORGIE. The accused — There, he wrung his hands.

THE MAN. Who is he?

GEORGIE. Father! Father!

ONE VOICE. With thee ends the accursed race—In thee, the last, it has gathered all its strength, all its passions and all its pride—to die!

CHORUS OF VOICES. Because thou hast loved nothing, honoured nothing save thyself and thine own thoughts, thou art condemned, condemned forever.

THE MAN. I can see nothing, but I hear from underground, above ground and at each side, sighs and mourning, dooms and threats.

GEORGIE. And now he has raised his head, like you, father, when you are angry—he has answered with a proud word, as you do, father, when you scorn.

CHORUS OF VOICES. In vain! In vain! There is no refuge for him either on earth or in heaven.

ONE VOICE. Yet a few more days of earthly, fleeting fame, of which thy forefathers deprived me—and then thou shalt perish—thou and thy brethren and your burial shall be without the tolling of funeral bells—without the sobs of friends and kinsmen—as ours was once on this same rock of pain.

THE MAN. I know you, vile spirits, vain will o'the wisps, flitting amid the angelic immensities *(he advances a few steps)*.

GEORGIE. Father, don't go far in—By Christ's holy Name, I conjure you, father!

THE MAN. *(turns back)*. Tell me, tell me, whom you see?

GEORGIE. There is a form.

THE MAN. Whose?

GEORGIE. That second one is you—quite pale—bound—now they torment you—I hear your groans *(he falls on his knees),* Forgive me, father! My mother came in the night and ordered me. (*He faints).*

THE MAN. *(Catches him in his arms).* This only was lacking! Ha, my own child has led me to the threshold of hell! Mary, inexorable spirit! Oh God, and thou, other, Mary to whom I have prayed so much!

There begins an infinity of torment and of darkness—Back—I must still fight with men and, afterwards, the eternal fight! *(Exit, running, with his son).*

CHORUS OF VOICES. *(in the distance).* Because thou hast loved nothing and honoured nothing except thyself—thyself and thy thoughts, thou art damned, damned, forever!

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A hall in the Castle of the Holy Trinity—The Man—Women and children—A few old men and Counts—all kneeling at the Man's feet. The Godfather stands in ihe centre of the hall. There is a crowd in the background. The walls are hung with weapons. There are Gothic pillars, ornaments and windows.

THE MAN. No—by my son—by my dead wife, no, once more I say, no!

WOMEN'S VOICES. Have pity! Famine burns our vitals and our children's. Fear devours us by night and by day.

MEN'S VOICES. Still there is time—Hear the envoy—Don't send the envoy away!

THE GODFATHER. My whole life has been such as befitted a good citizen and I do not fear your reproaches, Henry. If I undertook to be an envoy, which I now am, it was because I know the times I live in and can estimate their whole worth. Pancras is a representative citizen, if I may say so.—

THE MAN. Out of my sight, old man!

(Aside, to James).

Lead in a troop of our men!

(Exit James. The women stand up and weep. The men retreat a few steps).

A BARON. You have doomed us, Count.

ANOTHER BARON. We refuse you obedience.

A DUKE. We will settle with this worthy citizen the conditions for the surrender of the castle.

THE GODFATHER. The great man who sent me promises you life if you join him and recognize the tendency of the age.

A FEW VOICES. We recognize it.

THE MAN. When you called upon me, I swore to perish on these walls. I shall keep my word and you all shall perish with me.

Ha, you would still live!

Ha, ask your fathers why they oppressed and reigned!

(to a Count).

And you—why did you oppress those under you?

(to another).

And you—why did you spend your youth in playing cards and travelling afar from your country.

(to another).

And you corrupted those above you, despising those below.

(to one of the women).

Why did you not bring up children to be your defenders? Knights—now they would have served you well. But you loved Jewish lawyers—ask them now for your life!

(He stands with outstretched arms).

Why do you hasten so to shame? What tempts you so to render your last moments vile? Rather forward with me, forward, gentlemen, where bullets fly and bayonets are at work—not there where waits the gallows and the silent hangman, with a halter for your necks in his hand.

A FEW VOICES. He says well. Let us fix our bayonets.

OTHER VOICES. Not even one piece of bread remains.

WOMEN'S VOICES. Our children—Your children!

MANY VOICES. We must surrender. Negociations, negociations!

THE GODFATHER. I promise you the wholeness of your bodies, if I may say so, the inviolability of your bodies and persons.

THE MAN. *(approaches the Godfather and seizes him by the chest).* Oh sacred envoy's person, go, hide your grey head under baptized Jews' and cobblers' tents, lest I should stain it with your blood.

(An armed troop enters with James).

Aim at that brow, furrowed with the wrinkles of vain learning—that cap of liberty, quivering at the breath of my words, on that brainless head!

(The godfather scuttles away).

ALL. *(together).* Bind him—Hand him over to Pancras!

THE MAN. A moment yet, gentlemen!

(He walks from one soldier to another).

With you, it seems to me, I climbed the mountains, hunting wild deer—you remember—I saved you from falling down a precipice.

(To others).

With you I was shipwrecked on the Danube rocks – Jeremy—Christopher—you were with me on the Black Sea.

(To others).

I rebuilt your cottages, destroyed by fire.

(To others).

And you escaped to me from a bad master, and now, say—will you follow me, or will you leave me alone, to laugh because, among so many folk, I have not found one man?

ALL. Long live Count Henry! Long may he live!

THE MAN. Deal them out all the meat and brandy that remains — and then — to the ramparts.

ALL THE SOLDIERS. Brandy — meat — and then to the ramparts!

THE MAN. Go with them, and in an hour, be ready for the fight.

JAMES. So help me God!

WOMEN'S VOICES We curse you for our innocent children's sake.

OTHER VOICES. We, for our fathers' sake.

OTHER VOICES. We, for our wives'.

THE MAN. And I you, for the baseness of your hearts.

(Exit).

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The trenches of Holy Trinity Castle. Corpses all around. Broken guns. Weapons lying on the ground. Soldiers running here and there. The Man, leaning on an entrenchment, Jacob beside him.

THE MAN. *(sheathing his sabre)* There is no delight like playing with danger and always winning—and when the time comes to lose, 'tis only once.

JAMES. Hailed upon by our last bullets, they have retreated, but there below they collect their forces and soon they will attack again—It is in vain—None since the world was made has yet escaped the fate predestined for him.

THE MAN. Are there no more cartridges?

JAMES. There are neither bullets nor cartridges nor small shot. Every cup brims over at last.

THE MAN. Bring me my son, then, that I may kiss him once again.

(Exit James).

The smoke of battle has dimmed my eyes. It seems to me as though the valley had heaved up and then fallen back. In a hundred corners the rocks break and cut each other. My thoughts, too, take a strange direction. *(He sits down on the wall).*

'T is not worth while to be a man. 'Tis not worth while to be an angel. The first of the archangels, after a few ages, as we after a few years, felt weariness within his heart, and longed for mightier strength. One must be God or nothing.

(Enter James with Georgie).

Take a few of our men, go round the castle halls and drive all you meet with to the ramparts.

JAMES. Bankers, counts and dukes! *(Exit).*

THE MAN. Come son, put your hand on mine. Touch your brow to my lips. Your mother's brow was once as white and soft as yours.

GEORGIE. I heard her voice to-day before your soldiers rushed to arms. Her words flowed lightly as a perfume and she said: — "This evening thou shalt sit beside me".

THE MAN. And did she even mention my name?

GEORGIE. She said: — "This evening I await my son".

THE MAN. *(aside).* Will my strength fail at the road's end? Keep me from that, oh God! For one hour of courage Thou shalt have me as Thy prisoner throughout eternity. *(Aloud).*

Oh son, forgive me that I gave you life—We must part—Know you for what a space of time?

GEORGIE. Take me and do not let me go—Don' let me go, I'll draw you after me.

THE MAN. Our ways are different—You will forget me among the angelic choirs. You will never cast one drop of dew down on me! Oh Georgie, oh my son!

CEORGIE. What are those cries? I am all a—tremble. More and more menacing and nearer—the roar of guns and musket shots resounds. The final, foretold hour draws near.

THE MAN Haste, haste, James!

(A procession of counts and dukes passes throught the lower courtyard. James follows them with some soldiers).

A VOICE. You give us broken bits of weapons and bid us fight:

ANOTHER VOICE. Henry, have mercy!

A THIRD VOICE. Do not drive us, weak, faminc-stricken as we are to man the ramparts!

OTHER VOICES. Whither are they driving us, whither?

THE MAN. To death. *(To his son).*

With this one clasp I would unite with you for all eternity, but I must go elsewhere.

(George falls, struck by a bullet).

A VOICE FROM THE MOUNTAIN. To me, pure spirit! To me, my son!

THE MAN. Hey, follow me, my men. *(He draws his sabre and places it on the lips of the fallen boy).*

The blade is as bright as it was before. Breath and life have fled together.

Hey—here—forward! Now they storm in within my sabre's length. Back down the precipice, oh sons of freedom!

(Confusion and fighting).

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(Another part of the trenches. Echoes of the fighting are heard. James lies stretched out upon the walls. The man runs up, blood-stained.

THE MAN. What ails you, my faithful, old servant?

JAMES. May the devil pay you back in hell for your stubbornness and my torments. So help me God! *(He dies).*

THE MAN. *(Casting away his cloak)* I am no longer needful. My faithful ones have perished. Those others, on their knees, are stretching out their arms towards the victors and bellowing for mercy. *(He looks about him).*

They are not coming up yet on this side. There is yet time, let us rest a moment. Ha, now they have stormed their way into the northern tower—New troops have stormed into the northern tower and they are looking if Count Henry is not hiding there. Here I am, here—But you shall not judge me. Already I have started on my way. I am going towards God's Judgment—seat. *(He mounts a fragment of bastion overhanging the very precipice).*

I see it, all black, with dark expanses, flowing toward me, my boundless eternity without an island or an end, and in its

mists is God like an ever-burning sun, ever shining and lighting nothing.

(He advances a step further).

They run—They have seen me—Jesus and Mary! Cursed be thou, O poesy, as I am cursed for all the ages! Arms of mine, go before and force your way through those ramparts. *(He jumps down the precipice).*

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The castle courtyard—Pancras—Leonard—Bianchetti at the head of crowds of men. The counts and dukes with their wives and children, all in chains, pass before them.

PANCRAS. Your name?

A COUNT. Christopher of Volsagun.

PANCRAS. You have spoken it for the last time. And yours?

A DUKE. Ladislas, lord of the Black Wood.

PANCRAS. You have spoken it for the last time. And yours?

A BARON. Alexander oi Godalberg.

PANKRAS. Wiped out from among the living. Go!

BIANCHETTI. *(to Leonard)* Two months they have kept us at bay, with one poor line of guns and good-for-nothing parapets.

LEONARD. Are there many of them still?

PANCRAS. I hand them all over to you. Let their blood flow as an example for the world. Whichever tells where Henry is shall be spared.

VARIOUS VOICES. Just at the end he disappeared.

THE GODFATHER. I stand now as a mediator hetween you and your prisoners — those citizens of high race who, oh great man, placed the keys of Holy Trinity Castle in your hands.

PANCRAS. I know no mediators where, with my own strength, I have conquered. You shall see yourself to their killing —

THE GODFATHER. My whole life has been such as befits a citizen, of which there are no mean proofs, and if I joined you it was not to kill my own brethren.

PANCRAS. Take the old proser away—on the one road with them!

(The soldiers surround the godfather and the prisoners).

Where is Henry? Has none seen him, alive or dead? A sack of gold for Henry! Even for his corpse!

(An armed troop descends fram the ramparts).

And you, did you see Henry?

THE LEADER OF THE TROOP. Citizen chief, in accordance with General Bianchetti's order, I moved towards the western ramparts; just at the entrance by which we

were to come into the fortress and on the third convolution of the bastion, I saw a man wounded and weaponless standing beside a body. I told my men to double, so as to seize him, but ere we reached the place, that man went one step lower down, stood on a swaying stone and looked for a moment round him with wandering gaze. Then he stretched out his arms as a swimmer about to plunge and dived forward with all his might. We all heard the sound of his body falling among the cliffs. Here is the sabre which we found a few steps further on.

PANCRAS. *(taking the sabre).* Traces of blood upon the hilt—beneath them the arms of his house.

That is Count Henry's sabre—He alone of you all has kept his word—and for that, praise to him and for you the guillotine! General Bianchetti, see to the dismantling of the fortress and the carrying out of my sentence.

GENERAL BIANCHETTI. Leonard! *(He mounts the bastion with Leonard).*

LEONARD. After so many many sleepless nights, you should rest, master. Your features show your weariness.

PANCRAS. Not yet is it time to sleep, child, for only half the work is done when they utter their last sigh. Look out on those expanses, on those vast distances that lie there yonder between me and my thought.

These wastes must be peopled these rocks must be climbed over, these lakes must be united. - The ground must be dealt out to each in such a way that twice as many should be born upon these plains as the corpses that lie on them now. For otherwise the work of destruction will not be redeemed.

LEONARD The God of liberty will give us strength.

PANCRAS. What words are these of God? Here it is slippery with the blood of men. Whose blood is this? Behind us are the castle courtyards, we are alone and yet it seems as though a third were here.

LEONARD. There is none except that one pierced body.

PANCRAS. His faithful friend's body—A dead body, but here some spirit rules—and that cap! There are the same arms on it. Further on, look, a stone projects above the abyss. There his heart broke—

LEONARD. You grow pale, master.

PANCRAS. Do you see there, high up, high up?

LEONARD. Above the pointed summit I see a brooding cloud, touched by the last rays of the setting sun.

PANCRAS. An awful sign is burning on it.

LEONARD. Surely your eyes deceive you.

PANCRAS. A million of the people obeyed me but a moment past — Where are my people now?

LEONARD. You hear their shouts—They call, they wait for you.

PANCRAS. Women and children babbled that so He must appear, but only in the Last Day.

LEONARD. Who?

PANCRAS. Like a column of snowy brightness He stands above the abyss. He rests both hands upon the cross, like an avenger on his sword. His crown of thorns is woven of thunderbolts.

LEONARD. What has come to you? What ails you?

PANCRAS. Surely all living men must die from the lightning of His glance...

LEONARD. Your face grows paler and paler. Come away, come, do you hear me!

PANCRAS. Put your hand over my eyes. Crush in my eyeballs with your fists. Oh separate me from His look — It turns me into dust.

LEONARD. Is that well?

PANCRAS. Oh wretched hands of yours — like

a ghost's hands that have no bones or flesh. — Transparent as water is. — Transparent like glass. — Transparent like the air. I still see!

LEONARD. Lean on me.

PANCRAS. Give me one little scrap of darkness!

LEONARD. Oh my master!

PANCRAS. Darkness, darkness!

LEONARD. Hey! Citizens! Hey! Brothers — democrats! Help—Hey, to the rescue! Help, to the rescue!

PANCRAS. GALILAEE, VICISTI! *(He staggers into Leonard's arms and dies).*